

BUILDING INCLUSIVE QUEER SPACES

A Community Toolkit



**By Friends of the
Joiners Arms
& Partners**

JOIN US!

Friends of the Joiners Arms (FOTJA) is a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society aiming to open an accessible, radical and intersectional venue run by and for London's queer communities. We believe that **building LGBTQIA+ spaces that are accessible and affirming is a minimum requirement**. We must work to ensure that all queer people live safe, fulfilling lives – with secure accommodation, money in our pockets, access to opportunities and places to go where we feel safe, loved and powerful.

The insights and activities included here are inspired by groups and individuals** already doing that work. They have been collected through **research led by LGBTQIA+ people who are homeless and/or have moved to the UK from elsewhere** – people who have experienced Britain's hostile state policies and environments firsthand and who know what it takes to end exclusion.

This Toolkit is for anyone who wants LGBTQIA+ spaces to be welcoming, inclusive and supportive of everyone in our community. By 'supportive' we mean actively working to change the social structures that exclude people from mainstream venues, spaces and services. We mean actively working to improve marginalised people's material realities.

It is for people who want to better understand our communities and who want queer spaces to do better – **to offer everyone meaningful opportunities to get involved, learn new skills, share ideas, get jobs, and grow new networks, projects and communities of their own.**

It is for venue owners and managers; service providers and users; organisations' staff and volunteers; trustees and grant-givers; promoters, punters, performers and participants; people young and old, whatever their dreams or desires.

** We use LGBTQIA+ in this Toolkit but other acronyms appear as used in quotes or by organisations*
*** JOIN project contributors have chosen if their quotes are anonymous or cited. All project contributors who wanted to be named are listed inside the back page*

JOIN US in creating new queer ways of working, with and for each other!
Grab a pen and dip into the topics you want to explore. Work on your own or in a group. Read, reflect, edit, remix or adapt the pages to fit your needs. Create action plans. Share your ideas or pass blank slates on to others to spark new conversations.

* TOPICS *

PAGES 2 - 9 *** UNDERSTANDING EXCLUSION**

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What change(s) do YOU want to see in queer community spaces?



CC I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept – **Angela Davis**

A QUEER SCENE

Queer spaces are under threat. Between 2006-2022, 3 in 5 London LGBTQIA+ venues closed. Those that remain are mostly for-profit businesses catering to white cisgender gay men and other wealthier sections of the community. These spaces are often inaccessible, unaffordable and/or unsafe for other LGBTQIA+ people.

As a result of capitalist dynamics – profit over people, private ownership, gentrification, rising rents, insecure jobs and low wages – we have lost not only queer and trans-led spaces, but also the routes into affirming and rewarding employment, training and volunteering opportunities they can provide. These opportunities are especially important for people who don't have the 'right' credentials, experience or connections for mainstream venues.

Queer people are also under threat. Demonising rhetoric and the rollback of trans rights has accompanied rising anti-LGBTQIA+ hate crime, hate speech and discrimination. Racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are spreading, including within LGBTQIA+ spaces.

Politicians have cut back benefits, public services and workers' rights. Education and training reforms have deepened inequality. Low wages, insecure work, high rents and rising living costs have become an accepted norm. These dynamics overwhelmingly impact LGBTQIA+ people who are trans, women, disabled, neurodiverse, homeless, migrating, of colour or at the intersections of those identities.

SNAPSHOT

Stonewall surveys* with LGBTIQ+ people in the UK have found that...

- * Only **half** of us feel able to be open about our sexuality or gender to everyone in our family
- * **One in eight** report unequal treatment from healthcare staff – with **70%** of trans people reporting transphobic experiences in healthcare settings
- * **18%** say they have faced anti-LGBTIQ+ discrimination while trying to get a job
- * **Two-thirds** had experienced homophobic/transphobic violence or abuse
- * **Over half** of Black, Asian and minority ethnic queer people had experienced discrimination or poor treatment within their local LGBTIQ+ community
- * **Half** of us experienced depression within the last year

**Research with LGBTQIA+ people is under-funded and poorly supported. These surveys – the most comprehensive available – were conducted 2017-2021. Stats only paint a partial picture of our complex lives. We must keep telling our own stories!*

TRANSFORMATION REQUIRED

This Toolkit is designed to help break down embedded social structures that exclude homeless and migrant LGBTQIA+ people from training, work, leadership and volunteering opportunities. Those structures include capitalism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, anti-working class elitism, racism and patriarchy.

Systemic discrimination and exclusion will not be solved by re-training. Expecting people to fit into structures that were never designed to meet their needs, experiences, or talents will not end exclusion. We must do more than open a few doors, for a few people, to access an exclusive club. This Toolkit can help us jam open the doors – and welcome everybody inside.

Existing skills training and work access programmes often focus on English and CV-writing, job searching, interview preparation and placements in mainstream companies. These can be useful and important – but they are not enough.

Our research project set out to flip the script. It asked:

- * How can LGBTIQ+ venues be more welcoming and supportive to people experiencing insecure housing or insecure immigration status?
- * What training, volunteering and employment opportunities should those venues provide?

This Toolkit presents some answers – with space for YOU to explore more. Use it to explore what you want and need from – and what you can offer to – your community's queer spaces. If you help run a venue or organisation, use it to plot out what you could do better – and how.

Set out your goals for using this Toolkit here:

MAKE SPACE FOR HOMELESS QUEERS

Some LGBTQIA+ people without safe and stable housing get by on the streets, or move between temporary accommodation, hotels or shelters. Some rely on friends or lovers for a sofa or bed, or use party spaces or buses to shelter overnight. Others secure places to sleep through sex work, domestic work or other informal jobs. Many stay in unwanted or unsafe relationships because they have nowhere else to go.

These experiences can be called **hidden homelessness**. They can be hard to recognise, even for the person living through it.

Because of discrimination and structural exclusion, LGBTQIA+ homeless people often don't know what benefits and supports they are entitled to, don't feel that they deserve them, or don't believe they'll find support when exercising their rights.

SNAPSHOT

- * Stonewall reports that **1 in 5** LGBTQIA+ people – **1 in 4** trans people – experience homelessness at some point in their lives.
- * AKT found that **77%** of young LGBTQIA+ homeless people listed 'family rejection, abuse or being asked to leave home' as a cause – and **59%** of them reported discrimination or harassment when seeking housing support through state, local authority or charity services.
- * The London Queer Housing Coalition estimates that **33,000** queer Londoners are currently homeless, with queer community housing organisations supporting over **2,250** people in the city each year. There are only **49** beds at spaces run specifically by and for queer people in London.
- * Generation Rent research found that discrimination in the private rental sector makes it far harder for LGBTQIA+ to find housing – and more likely they'll live in unsafe, damp and mouldy homes. This discrimination is made worse through racism, ableism, and landlords refusing to accept housing benefits (all illegal under the Equalities Act 2010 but very hard to prove).
- * Micro Rainbow found that **41%** of LGBTQIA+ people seeking asylum, and **39%** of LGBTQIA+ refugees – who are eligible for government housing support – had experienced homelessness.

Government support for people who are homeless, refugees, ill or disabled, and/or have low or no incomes is hard to understand and complicated to access. The Universal Credit system, for example, has strict rules about volunteering, education, training or paid work opportunities. Fear of breaking the rules and losing support can cause anxiety and isolation.

LGBTQIA+ organisations and venues must make time to understand and carefully navigate these ever-changing systems – and not let fear or lack of knowledge prevent them from offering opportunities to marginalised people.

CARLA ECOLA THE OUTSIDE PROJECT

CC When I was homeless, I never thought about approaching a homeless service – I didn't think I was homeless 'enough'. When I finally did go to a mainstream service, they didn't understand my experiences. I didn't feel safe. It was very cis-, very straight, very gendered. The staff didn't seem to feel safe around me, or to trust me. They wouldn't leave me on my own. They didn't try to build up trust. People whose experiences of statutory services are negative have reason not to be trusting.

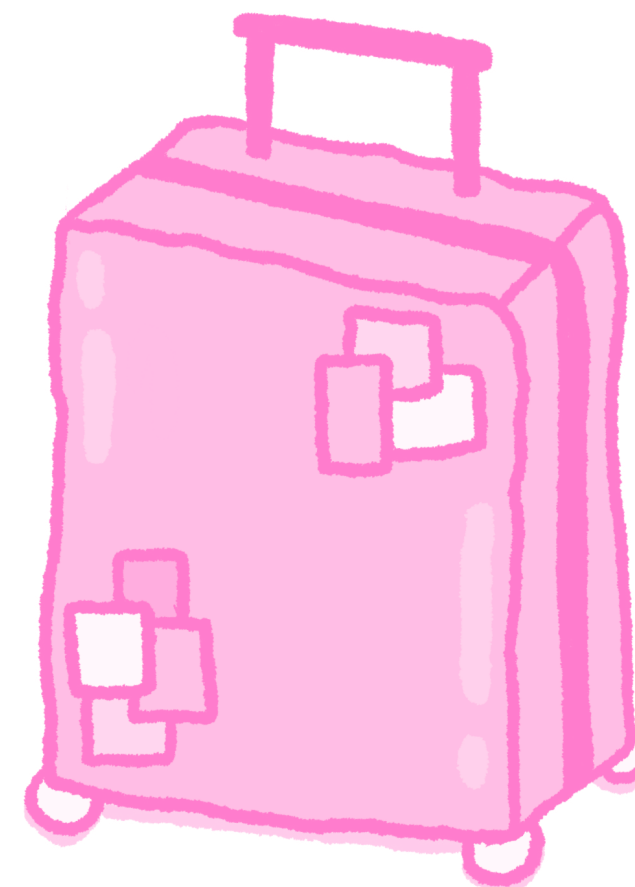
We set up The Outside Project in response to working in the charity sector, and recognising that it wasn't representative or safe for trans and queer people. We started as a campaign for action, then realised: 'We need to do this ourselves'. We run an LGBTQIA+ Community Shelter, Centre and outreach service in Westminster. We set up the UK's first LGBTQIA+ Domestic Abuse Refuge during COVID that has now become an independent organisation – Star Support.

The Shelter doesn't operate a waiting list. The team refers people from the community when a space becomes available. People usually stay 3-6 months while we find longer term solutions. Seven beds in our crisis shelter and 11 beds in the domestic abuse refuge are not enough for a city with an estimated LGBTQIA+ population of over 100,000.

The LGBTQIA+ Centre is a way in for people who aren't sure if they need homeless support, or don't think they deserve it. They can try out art classes, sports, a group, then realise: 'Yeah, this is here for me and I need this support'. We don't have a single service offer; it's not all or nothing. We don't close the door on people who don't take our advice.

We're a small team. Volunteers are always people who have lived with us, or ex-residents. Sometimes they move into learning and development roles – if they're interested in running events, we can commission and pay them for projects like running a Trans Day of Visibility event. Some people want to be involved, but aren't interested in anything formal or training. Helping welcome people, making food, organising the library or clothes, when they can, can be enough for them.

We always communicate to potential employers, or 'opportunity providers', that paying people for their work is essential – that could be paid traineeships; housing; in-kind support. You see jobs advertised encouraging applications from people with lived experience, but employers need to really understand the challenging backgrounds and issues that people can face – and provide supportive routes in (page 32-33).



VISIT: lgbtqioutside.org
TAKE ACTION: see page 38

NO ONE IS ILLEGAL

Borders have been used to police and exclude queer people for centuries, through bans on 'deviants', 'criminals' and perceived 'threats to the public good'. Today, LGBTQIA+ people migrate to the UK for many reasons: to escape homophobic/transphobic persecution, to seek asylum or as a refugee, to study or work, accompanying family or a partner, or other reasons.

People who migrate to the UK are demonised in the press, parliament and society. 'Hostile Environment' policies reach into every area of life, turning employers, doctors, teachers, landlords, local authorities and service providers into border guards by mandating passport and papers checks. In a context of intersecting structural discrimination, queer migrants face particular, painful exclusions.

SNAPSHOT

- * Work visas tied to specific companies can trap migrants in unsafe or exploitative jobs.
- * High processing fees and 'income thresholds' for work and family visas make it extremely difficult for people on low incomes to apply – or to get by during the process.
- * Home Office culture is of disbelief around all asylum claimants. LGBTQIA+ claimants are expected to 'prove' intimate life histories and to fit stereotypical, British ideas about how LGBTQIA+ people look and behave.
- * Only qualified professionals can give legal advice on individual cases, limiting the support many organisations can provide. Legal aid cuts have made it hard to find lawyers who understand LGBTQIA+ experiences. Applications can drag out for years.
- * People seeking asylum are only eligible to work if they have not received a decision within a year of submitting a claim. They can only work in jobs on 'shortages' lists.
- * While waiting, people seeking asylum receive a maximum of £49.18 a week – just £8.86 if living in catered accommodation. That's meant to cover expenses: food, travel, phone data, clothes, sanitary products... If appealing a decision, they can be cut off entirely: A 'No Recourse to Public Funds' status forces people into destitution.
- * Home Office accommodation has poor safety and hygiene standards. Some places limit residents' movements or use curfews. Most require people to share rooms with strangers. People who feel at risk are forced to hide their identities, even within their 'private' space. The government does not offer LGBTQIA+-specific accommodation.
- * People awaiting immigration case decisions are encouraged to volunteer to help 'integration' – but finding LGBTQIA+ affirming opportunities is difficult, especially with limited money or information.

Queer spaces can refuse to police people on the move. Do not ask people their immigration status unless it is absolutely essential – e.g. to make a formal referral to a specific support service.

MOUD GOBA MICRO RAINBOW

CG Most people we work with don't have access to queer spaces because of poverty. Lots of people are facing exploitation, doing things for a roof over the head – a domestic servitude situation; help with the kids. When you're homeless, the thing that clouds your mind at any point is: 'Where will I sleep?'

There are other access challenges: people used to get turned away from one well-known gay club because their ID was an [asylum] application registration card. Spaces need to know the type of ID people might have. Within the community, there's still a lot of rainbow racism. You see that at Prides, in bars, the dating apps, comments on Pink News... People might be misinformed or just following the propaganda.

LGBTQI centres and organisations often need to learn what it means to be a refugee, or asylum seeker. They're not sure where to do referrals. It's work in progress. Education is important. Outside of people being refugees, they're just people. They have the same interests. They just want to be in a space and have fun and be treated with dignity. Venues can be clear in saying: 'This venue does not tolerate any kind of racism or xenophobia; is welcoming of refugees.'

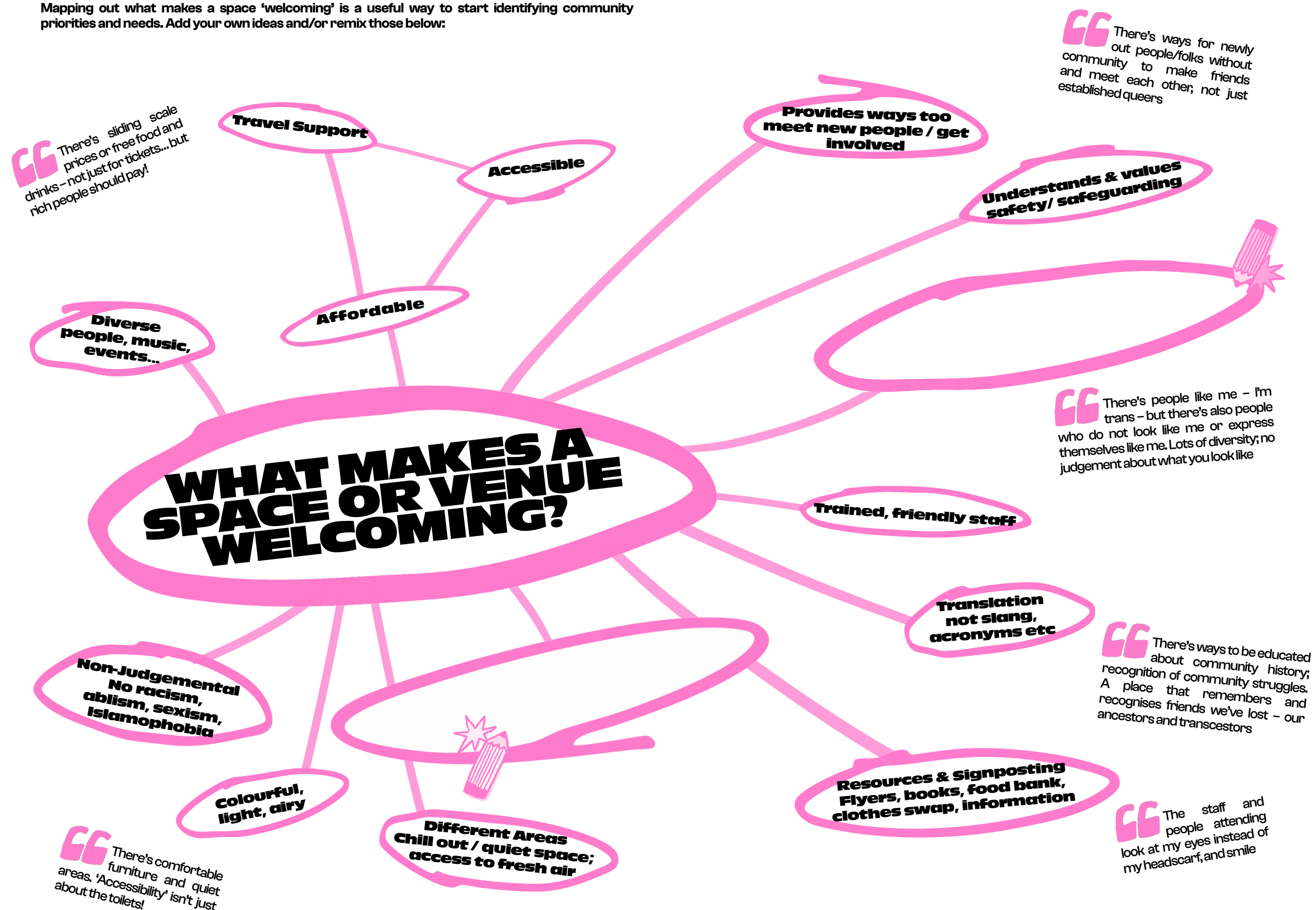
Micro Rainbow takes a holistic approach. We have housing, social inclusion, and moving on programmes. We're not funded by the government for those programmes – we fundraise, so it doesn't matter if somebody has No Recourse to Public Funds, they can still access support. We have employability sessions: writing CVs, interview techniques, support to find jobs, pairing with mentors in the same field. We give people autonomy. They can choose what to attend. Refugees are as diverse as the general population. We've supported a lesbian doctor from Afghanistan; someone else highly qualified in IT and banking with qualification conversion costs, printing. They don't need a CV workshop – they could deliver one themselves.

Some of our beneficiaries want to volunteer; some don't – some just want to move on. Often, they want to volunteer in translation, so they can support others. When anyone wants to volunteer with us, because of the safeguarding aspect and time commitment, we need to be clear how long you want to be there. We have a confidentiality agreement, a volunteer agreement and – if you're working more with people – a DBS check. We don't open it up to just anyone.



VISIT: microrainbow.org
TAKE ACTION: see page 39

Mapping out what makes a space 'welcoming' is a useful way to start identifying community priorities and needs. Add your own ideas and/or remix those below:



LISTENING IN

Listening and learning is the first step towards creating more supportive spaces.

We put anonymous comment card boxes across queer spaces in London to ask people what they think – and what they want:

HOW COULD LGBTIQ+ VENUES BE MORE SUPPORTIVE & INCLUSIVE?

- * Quiet room / Fidget toys / Alcohol free calm corner / sanitary products / Gluten free beer / Diverse + POC employees
- * Captioning also helps ESL people! (English as a second language)
- * LGBTQIA+ venues are staffed by people who can be racist, ableist, transphobic, biphobic, etc. I set the bar higher for queer spaces. They need to be better than just a bar/ a space for queer people.
- * Lockers / spaces to get changed (it's not always safe to do that before getting to a space)

NEW IDEAS

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING, VOLUNTEERING OR WORK OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD LGBTIQ+ VENUES PROVIDE?

- * Flexible working hours
- * Fundraising
- * Accessible praying space
- * Basic BSL at the bar
- * English through games
- * Sensitive for neurodivergent folks
- * Training in daytime
- * Queer song circles

WRITE OR DRAW YOUR RESPONSES

STEP UP, STEP BACK

Transformation demands solidarity, not charity. Use this page (now or later) to outline your own hopes, dreams and action plans. We encourage people who have experienced marginalisation to step and speak up – and ask people in privileged positions to step back, helping open up space and opportunities for others.

- * Reflect on your position and goals. What could YOU do to help transform queer spaces?

- * What RESOURCES and SKILLS could you use, access or develop to help reach those goals?

- * Who could you COLLABORATE with?

- * What CHALLENGES might you encounter?

- * Who could you LEARN from?

- * What SUPPORT can you offer to others?

“ Revolution comes from the bottom up. You have to prioritise voices and experiences not given enough space – everybody benefits from that. You can't have a white team leading a space, but not people who are trans, Black (dark skinned specifically), people from the global South or colonised places. You need to have those voices in the room whenever you're making decisions about queer life. It's not a bad thing to acknowledge you have privilege. It gives you the tools to learn more and to make sure that everyone is heard and feels safe, feels seen – **Wura** ”

CC 'Inclusive' means that something is welcoming and accommodating to all individuals, regardless of their background, identity, or abilities. Everyone is valued and respected, and efforts are made to ensure that no one is excluded or marginalised. This could refer to inclusive language, diverse representation, and equal opportunities for all...

ACCESSIBILITY

- * No signing, captions or translations for performances
- * No accessible or gender neutral toilets
- * No space to be quiet / chill out; lack of options for people with neurodiversity or mental health needs
- * 'Spaces often have stairs, are too small, with heavy furniture... places at full capacity limit access for anyone with a mobility aid'
- * 'Most barriers for me are time and COVID. I prefer things going on in the day so i can go home. Or virtual options. And more emphasis on COVID precautions.'

COST

- * Tickets/entry
- * Food, drinks
- * Travel: '...it can get really expensive to get to places, especially if its not safe to use public transport'
- * 'I kind of get tired of saying this, but why don't people have Uber funds or transport funds whenever they have night events?'
- * 'You can have tight budgets, or no budget, because of your immigration status or lack of income'
- * 'Low cost and PWYC [pay what you can] options are often essential for me to attend anything!!'

BARRIERS TO INCLUSION

STAFF

- * Unfriendly; not understanding; judgemental
- * Not alert to predatory behaviour
- * Not trained to respond to inappropriate behaviour

ID

- * 'Everywhere asks for ID. It's not easy. For trans people, it might not match how they look, their pronoun, name. Or a non-UK ID might be rejected. Some people also don't want to use an ID card that shows immigration status'

ACCOMODATION

- * Distance
- * 'Some accommodations have curfews, or times when you have to be there. Sometimes they're watching you, asking where you go. It can feel like a prison'

INFORMATION

- * Accessibility information is missing, vague or incorrect
- * 'You can't find out about events, or if its the right event for you, when you don't know anyone. There should be ways to find out what kind of space it will be, what kind of people'
- * Translation: '...everything is in English - especially acronyms and slang are hard to know'

MORE
ACCESSIBLE
SPACES



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

CREATE MORE SPACES!

- * Transform existing LGBTQIA+ for-profit businesses into a community-run model (types include: non-profit, Community Benefit Society, Community Interest Company, Co-Operative etc.)
- * Campaign for local authorities to create more LGBTQIA+ specific spaces/ repurpose empty spaces, and fund services (see page 38-39)



MAXIMISE ACCESSIBILITY (P18)

- * Sober events
- * Lower capacity events
- * Provide BSL, captioning, translation
- * Clear signage to spaces/ resources
- * Toilets: wheelchair accessible; gender neutral and state which stalls have free sanitary products and bins
- * Offer quiet/ chill out areas

CHILL OUT SPACE

TRAINED, FRIENDLY STAFF (P36)

- * Train all staff in safeguarding policy, signposting etc
- * Pay attention to door staff/ security
- * Identify staff and volunteers' roles, e.g. mental health first aider

SPACE TO CHANGE

- * Opening doors early and offering space to change/ store items can help people avoid attention at or travelling from and to their home/ accommodation

ORGANISED WELCOME (P24)

- * Host 'meet up' events for solo visitors; volunteers open to talk with new people

PROVIDE CLEAR INFORMATION

- * Detail accessibility information (inc. support available) on event pages and socials posts
- * Describe the vibe and space
- * Signpost community values/ anti-prejudice policy (page 22)
- * Give content warnings where needed (e.g. for performances)
- * Provide a contact address for questions (and check that inbox!)
'...it is easy to give info so I can stay informed or confident asking for what I need'
- * *'Venues need to be transparent about what their spaces can offer. You need to manage expectations so that people know what they can find – and what they won't get'*



REDISTRIBUTE COSTS

- * Promote sliding scale ticket prices, including free options – with 'no questions asked'/ no justification required
- * Add a drink/ food voucher with discounted/ free entry tickets
- * 'Pay it forward' options – encourage solidarity from wealthier people



ACCESS ALL AREAS

Creating inclusive queer spaces means maximising accessibility – and listening to community members' feedback about what that means to them. A JOIN project contributor started this checklist for venues to work towards...

CC What makes an accessible, supportive space...? For starters...

- ☐ Wheelchair accessible, including an accessible toilet (that actually works and has a working red cord), bars with lower counters, and reduced capacity events so a wheelchair user could actually move about inside
- ☐ Gender neutral toilets
- ☐ Disabled staff
- ☐ A chill out/quiet area (inclusive kink spaces will often have a space like this for aftercare, and it's also really nice for neurodivergent people)
- ☐ Bar staff and bouncers trained in disability accessibility by people from a Deaf and Disabled Organisation
- ☐ Ear defenders to borrow
- ☐ Alternative formats of bar menu
- ☐ Carer tickets to events without requiring 'proof'
- ☐ Having day events as well as evening events
- ☐ Whatever it does: providing detailed information about access online

CC We explored more ideas together – listed here and spread through this Toolkit. Add your own below...

- ☐ Translations/ bilingual/ multilingual events
- ☐ Tactile flooring for visually impaired people
- ☐ Fire Safety plans (eg evacuation, alarms) designed for people with impaired hearing, vision and/or mobility
- ☐ 'COVID conscious': use air purifiers; ventilation; remind people to use facemasks
- ☐ Sanitary products in stalls (for all genders)
- ☐ Reserved seating, low seating (not high stools)
- ☐ Captions, BSL [British Sign Language] and descriptions for visually impaired people during performances
- ☐ Visible Mental Health First Aid staff
- ☐ Gluten-free beer
- ☐ Online events / live streaming events



CHILL OUT SPACE



CC WHAT'S IN YOUR CHILL OUT SPACE?

- ☐ Low lighting
- ☐ Quiet/ calm music
- ☐ Soft seating
- ☐ Comfortable temperature
- ☐ Fidget toys
- ☐ Weighted blanket
- ☐ Tissues
- ☐ Ear defenders/ plugs



get home safe



NO COMPROMISES

PRINX SILVER LÈSE MAJESTÉ / FOTJA

We started our cabaret night, Lèse Majesté, at Set Dalston back in 2018. We moved it to Bethnal Green Working Mens Club (BGWMC) after lockdowns in 2021. Then we got a small grant and were like: 'We need to invest in accessibility!' So we had BSL and captions, and streamed two events online. We could not manage to keep the streaming because of connectivity and quality issues, but we kept BSL and live captions. We were selling out every event so we could sustain it with sales.

The moment we incorporated those things, new people joined the group – people who just got excited, came to our night for the first time and saw that we really care about accessibility. We were trying our best but they – people like Becky Dann and Tatum Swithenbank – really brought knowledge and lived experience. We learned a lot and had to interrogate ourselves, because BGWMC is not wheelchair accessible. That wasn't good enough. It had been a great year there – the events were successful, but it just didn't represent us. We decided to leave.

The only venue that could tick off all of our boxes was Rich Mix. Unfortunately it's an expensive venue, because it's a charity itself, but they've been very supportive of the work we do and have tried to keep their fees as affordable as possible for us. It still ends up costing a lot for a queer grassroots cabaret, but we decided that Lèse Majesté would only exist if we can offer that level of accessibility. It's not fair if we take it to another venue, but lose wheelchair access, or lose BSL – that's basically excluding people from our community.

Another reason why Rich Mix is a great venue is because they also have queer staff and they train all of their staff before events. Like Security – the door guys are amazing, super friendly, and very used to working with different types of people. Safe Only is also a great organisation to work with – they do welfare and security, are queer and trans, abolitionist, and take a harm-reduction approach (page 41).



SOBER SPACES

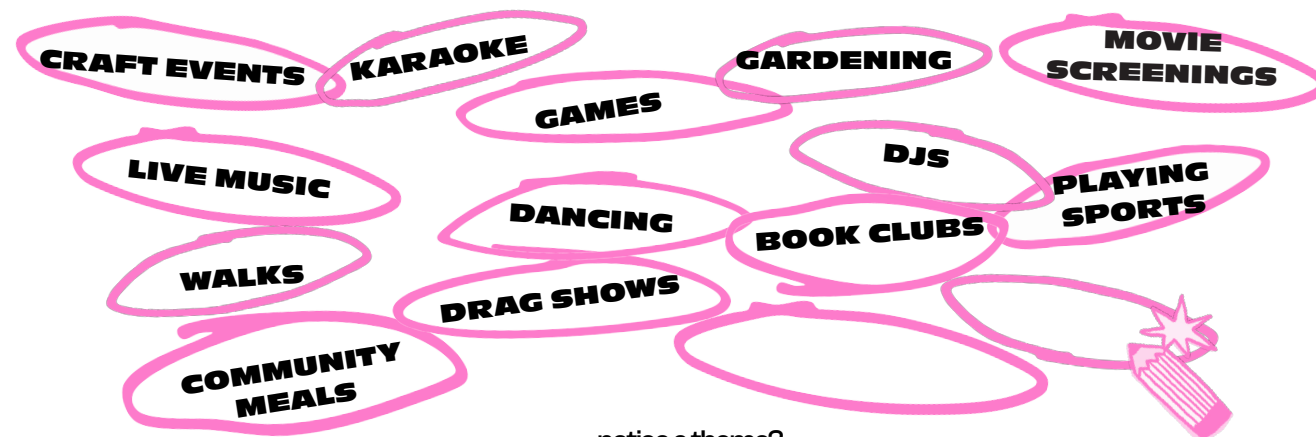
CC Why are so many queer events always around nightlife, prioritising alcohol? Are we meant to think that's where we fit? We are part of the world! – **Sophrane**

CC Sober spaces after 5.30pm are desperately needed – design for the margins!

Hosting completely sober events opens up queer spaces to people who are not only sober themselves, but also unable to be around alcohol or around people under the influence of substances.

Who benefits? Everyone! People with children, some people with religious or other beliefs concerning alcohol, some people with health needs, people in recovery and many, many more – including people who simply prefer sober spaces. They are also useful for people who are 'sober curious' – thinking they might like to be sober and looking for a supportive environment to explore it.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT CAN BE RUN AS SOBER EVENTS...

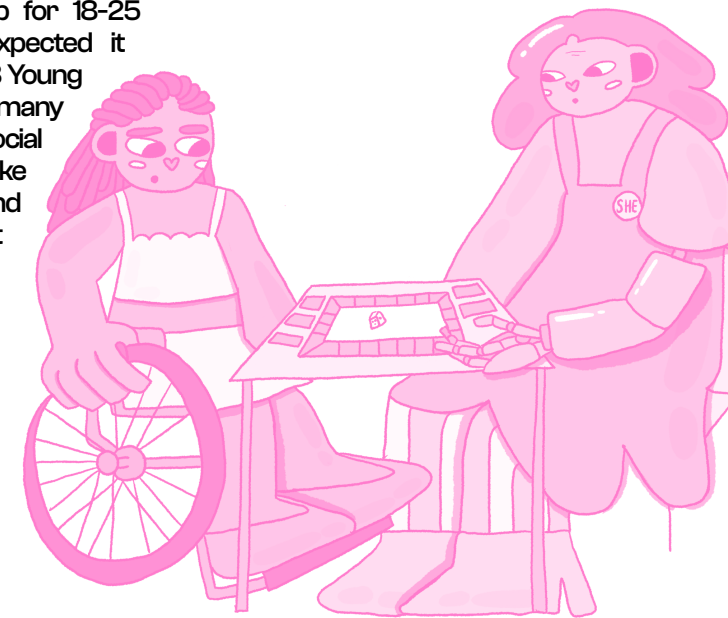


...notice a theme?

ANY queer event can be held in a sober space and sober events can be for EVERYBODY

Clearly advertise sober spaces and events – and set clear boundaries and expectations about who will be allowed entry (or not)

CC When we started our group for 18-25 LGBT+ Young Adults, we expected it would mostly be for alumni of our 12-18 Young Persons' Club. We quickly saw that so many young adults really wanted a sober social space where they could have fun, make friends, engage with queer history and culture, and get connected to support and work/ volunteering opportunities. We were also pleasantly surprised by the number of care leavers, asylum seekers, and refugees who told us that the group offered them something that they couldn't find easily elsewhere. – **Rachel Padilla, Mosaic Trust**



SAFER SPACES

CC As a black Muslim cisgender female I hope and pray for a day where I can find safety (from Islamophobia) and confidently enjoy LGBTQIA+ spaces

Despite our best efforts, none of us can promise a space is 'safe' for all people who enter it. Being open, honest and realistic about that fact helps guide intentional, reflective work towards building safer spaces – an on-going process that requires **PLANNING**, **STRUCTURES** (page 34) and **SAFEGUARDING POLICIES & TRAINING** (pages 35).

Establishing clear expectations, values and boundaries helps make queer spaces, venues, events and opportunities safer for everyone. This can be done through **POSTERS**, verbal **REMINDERS**, **CODES OF CONDUCT**, and volunteer or work **AGREEMENTS**.

We all get triggered by things, and in queer spaces there's often alcohol, potentially drugs and a lot of trauma. It could be a safer space, but it's utopic to think there's going to be a 'safe space' where nothing is going to happen. I've been in situations that were intense, and I'm glad I've had welfare training myself. It's really needed.

At Lèse Majesté we have a welfare person, a Mental Health First Aider. Topics that can come up on stage may be triggering. People have made use of that option after watching some performances and then needing to leave. We have content warnings and I mention consent at the beginning of every show, very clearly – and keep repeating it if possible when I have the mic. It's not enough to see signs or someone wearing a [high-vis] gilet. Saying it on the mic reaches more people.

It's important to remind people of consent, that if they feel unwell or just don't feel comfortable, they can go speak to someone in private. We approach it from a compassionate, non-judgmental lens – or mediation if there's an issue between people.
– **Prinx Silver, Lèse Majesté / FOTJA**



CHILL OUT SPACE

A Safer Spaces policy can cover many areas and be adapted for events and spaces as needed. It should be clear, short and accessible. We've suggested some key points below – edit or add your own priorities alongside. Make sure that staff and volunteers understand and agree to follow it!

- * Creating more supportive, inclusive LGBTQIA+ spaces is a shared goal. Everyone has a responsibility to act with care and respect.
- * Honour people's boundaries. Do not make physical contact or take photos of anyone without explicit consent. Don't intrude on someone's personal space. Physical violence and sexual harassment are unacceptable.
- * We do not tolerate oppressive language or behaviour (including ableism, ageism, biphobia, classism, colourism, fatphobia, racism, religious discrimination, sexism, transphobia, xenophobia).
- * _____
- * Don't make assumptions about people's identities. Use all-gender inclusive language. Ask people their pronouns.
- * Help make spaces more accessible: avoid blocking entrances and strong scents. Respond to people's requests, for space or for support.
- * _____
- * We all make mistakes – and we all have the responsibility to be accountable. If someone tells you your behaviour is harmful, or asks you to stop doing something, listen to them. Try to repair any harm caused.
- * If you think that someone is uncomfortable with someone else's language or behaviour, gently ask if they are OK – and listen to their response.
- * Notify staff or volunteers about any issues related to these guidelines. We will take them seriously.
- * We will engage with people in a non-judgmental way, explaining harmful behaviours. If necessary, and in keeping with what those affected want, we will ask them to leave.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

In our survey, 59% of people said “not knowing anyone there/ felt out of place” was a barrier to taking part in queer spaces. It was 69% for people who had experienced homelessness and 57% for people with insecure migration status. For every group, it was a bigger reported barrier than cost, venue accessibility or lack of information.

Queer spaces can offer intentional, structured routes to making friendships and community. Drawing on our experiences, we've listed ideas below – keeping safer space/ safeguarding policies in mind:



POP-UP DYKE BAR (@popupdykebar) events offer stickers for people to flag if they're keen to meet new people for a friendly welcome

CC Shyness can be a barrier. Sometimes you need other people to make a proactive hello

CC Badges that identify staff and people open to welcoming/ talking to new people would be good.

A WHOLE ORANGE (outsavvy.com/organiser/a-whole-orange) runs structured, facilitated meet-ups in accessible venues to 'make it easier for LGBTQIA+ folks meet new people and connect'. PWYC [Pay What You Can] events include craft sessions and community meals at Spitalfields City Farm, coffee mornings to work, read or study, and Every Body Queer events for people who are queer and disabled

CC We need more events specifically for new people looking for community

CC You could also have the option to use a name/ pronoun badge showing you're new to the space.

IDEA: Venues can organise and advertise pre-event time and/or spaces specifically for people coming alone, with staff to welcome and facilitate introductions. They can encourage people to reach out/ comment on social media posts to connect with other people going alone.

CC We need pre-event/show meet-ups, for people coming alone! I go to so many events where I just talk to no one cos I'm not with a friend/partner & everyone else is & it almost feels more lonely than if I'd stayed home

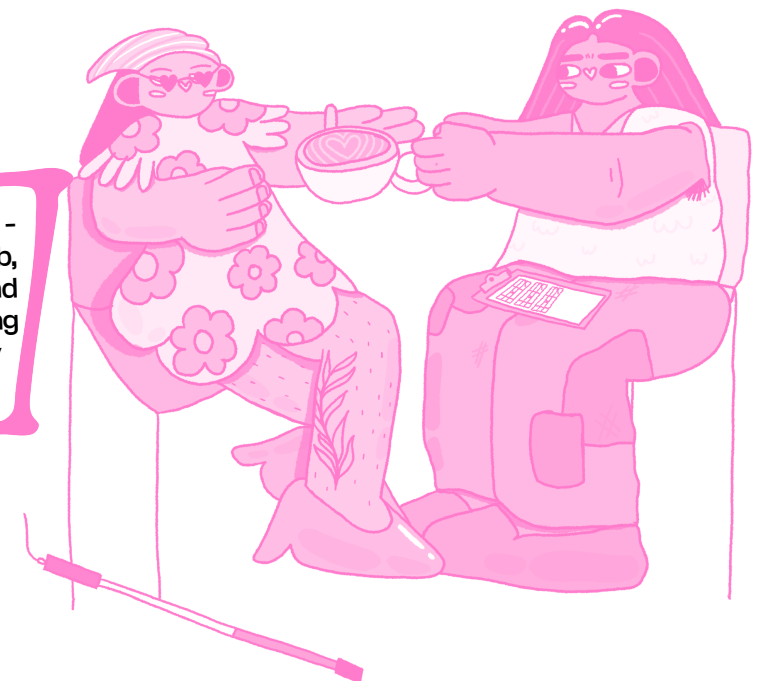
CC I've gone to events where everyone is much older, there's no one trans... It doesn't feel safe. Venues need to be clear about who events are for, who's going to be there

IDEA: Match people up with a buddy or mentor with something in common – established, trusted community members with new people

CC Introductions and ice-breakers can be good – at trainings, meetings, even at social or party events

AFRICAN RAINBOW FAMILY runs a private monthly community social for LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum – advance registration required (info@africanrainbowfamily.org)

MOSAIC TRUST (@themosaictrust) - hosts weekly 12-18 Young Persons' Club, monthly 18-25 Young Adults Group, and regular social events to support young LGBT+ persons looking for community



QUEERING WORK

While London offers queer people community, services and opportunities that are hard to find elsewhere, living costs are extremely high. In and out of the city, there are simply **not enough secure, fulfilling work opportunities for queer people**. Everywhere, social prejudices and exclusions often push queer people out of mainstream work into the night-time economy. This is often badly paid and insecure, in spaces that are rarely sober and/or validating.

LGBTQIA+ NGOs, charities, arts and social justice organisations can offer different opportunities. Currently, however, their stable, salaried positions tend to go to people who are middle-class or financially secure, white, able-bodied, university educated or at the intersections of those identities. There are fewer routes into work for people with little free money or time; or who do not have the 'right' look, accent, experience, credentials or contacts to get a foot in the door.



VOLUNQUEERING

We explored what makes volunteering in queer spaces feel inclusive, accessible and rewarding. Circle the factors below that matter to you and add any we've missed – then use this page as your checklist when you're preparing to recruit volunteers or thinking about signing up to volunteer:

SOLIDARITY

FREE

AFFORDABLE

- ☐ Covers travel costs
- ☐ Fits with my interests and values
- ☐ Takes my accessibility needs seriously
- ☐ Brings me into community
- ☐ Provides food, snacks, drinks
- ☐ I learn or develop new skills
- ☐ I meet new people/ spend time with friends
- ☐ Having fun!
- ☐ Our roles and goals are clear
- ☐ Covers other expenses, e.g. free entry, clothes etc.
- ☐ I know I'm contributing to something important
- ☐ I feel appreciated

Some people prefer FLEXIBILITY and VARIETY in their roles... others prefer REGULARITY and SPECIFIC TASKS – everyone is different: create space for people to share their own interests, skills and needs.

☐ In some contexts, a CERTIFICATE or RECORD of participation, or REFERENCE can be useful – don't hesitate to ask for or offer something like this!

What is your ideal volunteer experience?

INVITING IN

The Outside Project has a simple, **effective sign-up form** for anyone interested in 'volunqueering'. It tells people what to expect, explains options available, says who is prioritised and asks about accessibility needs. It's a useful example template – practice drafting a response or adapt the form for your own space.

VOLUNTEER WITH THE OUTSIDE PROJECT

NOTE: We currently have a waiting list of people who would like to volunteer with us. We prioritise applications from people who have lived in our accommodation or are members of our LGBTQ+ Centre. It might be several months before a volunteering role of your choice becomes available.

ACCESS: We provide travel and lunch reimbursements. We aim to make volunteering as accessible as possible to people with barriers to employment eg: disability or neurodiversity so please let us know what we can do to make your application or volunteering experience as successful as possible.

ADVICE from our crew: If you have no experience of living with us or volunteering before then becoming a 'befriender' is a great way to start. This role involves welcoming guests into the Centre or Shelter; making hot drinks, playing video / board games, general tidying up and lots of snacks.

What would you like to do?

- ☐ Befriending – LGBTQ+ Centre
- ☐ Assisting with cleaning and laundry – LGBTQ+ Centre
- ☐ Library Assistant – Book 28 Library at the LGBTQ+ Centre
- ☐ Events and Fundraising
- ☐ Creative Assistant
- ☐ Office and Specialist Skills
- ☐ Other – Please give details below

Have you stayed or volunteered with us before? If so, what did you do?

NAME:
PRONOUNS:
EMAIL:
PHONE NUMBER:

Please tell us a bit about yourself, why you would like to volunteer with us and when / how would be best to contact you.

If you have any questions or would like to apply in a different way then please let us know

BUILDING COMMUNITY

JAMIE KING FORT

CC People need opportunities to be creative, feel valuable and contribute to their own communities' liberation in a radical way. That could be through creating or co-creating a space or project, to explore ideas – or just to meet other queer people and create together.

FORT came from that place of need. We didn't have any money, so we found models which made it possible, like fundraising and just asking people: 'Would you like – or do you need – this space to exist? And would you like to help build it?'

Hundreds of people contributed to making the studio. Some came for an hour, painted a bit of pipe, then left. Some came for a week and a half – every day, angle-grinding a floor. People would message me on Instagram: 'My neurospicy brain just wants to help organise something!' then be there, categorising and labelling tools in the corner. That dynamic isn't new – queer history is rooted in using and misusing space. Think Harvey Milk in a camera shop; gathering round, putting our efforts together. Recreating, creating and building homes, ways of existing outside of the economic system.

Our social media callouts for helpers are very casual. We try to keep it accessible with welcoming and inviting language. You can just come and hang out: be the DJ, make cups of tea. For a print project, I'll say: 'Hey! We're looking for a team to help us do this project. Experience is not necessary – but if you have experience, let us know so we can pair you up with people who don't'. Slowly but surely, more and more people

Sometimes responding to callouts can be really intimidating. If people aren't feeling like they have value to add, they won't even apply in the first place – especially folks on the receiving end of benefit systems, and that narrative of 'you are taking, but don't have anything to give'. NO! Every single person has something to give!

We have to be meticulous in holding space for people – to make projects ethical, fun and enjoyable; to optimise what helpers gain from it. As long as there's safeguarding (page 35) and people feel listened to, and respected – as long as there's transparency – it's a beautiful process. We're getting out of it what we're putting in so it's really important that people aren't doing horrible jobs, or getting really stressed and overwhelmed.

If the project is paid – like our tattoo flash days – we make sure anyone helping is paid. If Queer organisations, non-profits, friends, bands and businesses are printing T-shirts or posters with us, that puts money back into the community rather than using external (often for-profit) printing businesses. We've built a space where people can also earn money – tattoo artists, designers, printers – but nobody is profiting off of someone else's labour.

In every project we do, the process is the reward. If FORT had to close tomorrow and nothing could continue, we would still have gained everything we needed to gain. For every person, at every point of every interaction, that day is the most important day we've ever had.



DREAM ROLES

CC In my experience, many queer people work at night because that's all they had. The choices we see are limited. We can use queer spaces to break that barrier – a decent venue, open in the day, let's try making it sober, to show what we're capable of, our training, our education! – **Sophrane**

A lot of important work behind the scenes in queer spaces is overlooked. With more thought and attention, we can identify varied roles for everyone – and support people within our communities to fill them. While there is no ideal work under capitalism, until the revolution comes we must ensure the jobs queer spaces offer are as fair, creative, dignified and rewarding as possible!

This list of 'dream roles' lays down a challenge to queer spaces and people to think more expansively about the wide range of training, volunteering, work shadowing and job opportunities we could explore:

CC Some LGBTQ people are more traditional or conservative. I personally don't need to see a rainbow to feel comfortable – I just need to feel safe. There should be spaces and roles for us, too

WHATS YOUR 'DREAM' QUEER JOB?

MAKE-UP TUTOR
DRIVER
TATTOO ARTIST/ PIERCER
BARTENDER
RESEARCHER
FUNDRAISING
POINT PERSON/ RECEPTIONIST / ADMINISTRATOR
COMMUNITY GARDENER
FIRE & SAFETY OFFICER
PHOTOGRAPHER
LAWYER
EVENTS PROMOTION
DANCE INSTRUCTOR
TRANSLATOR
MARKETING
ARTIST
ENGINEER
CLEANING, MAINTENANCE, REPAIR
PROVIDING SERVICES- HAIR/ WELLNESS/ MEDITATION/ YOGA
IT SKILLS/ IT TECHNICIAN
HISTORIAN
ACCOUNTANT/ FINANCE MANAGER
GENDER AFFIRMING HEALTHCARE PROVIDER
COMMITTEES, PLANNING EVENTS
TAILORING CLASS INSTRUCTOR
BOARD MEMBER/ TRUSTEE
COUNCILLOR / THERAPIST
PERFORMING

CC I do not dream of labour! My dream would be that I'm allowed to try things out and learn things without risk of losing my home. Performing. Writing. Making art. Creating community and sharing information

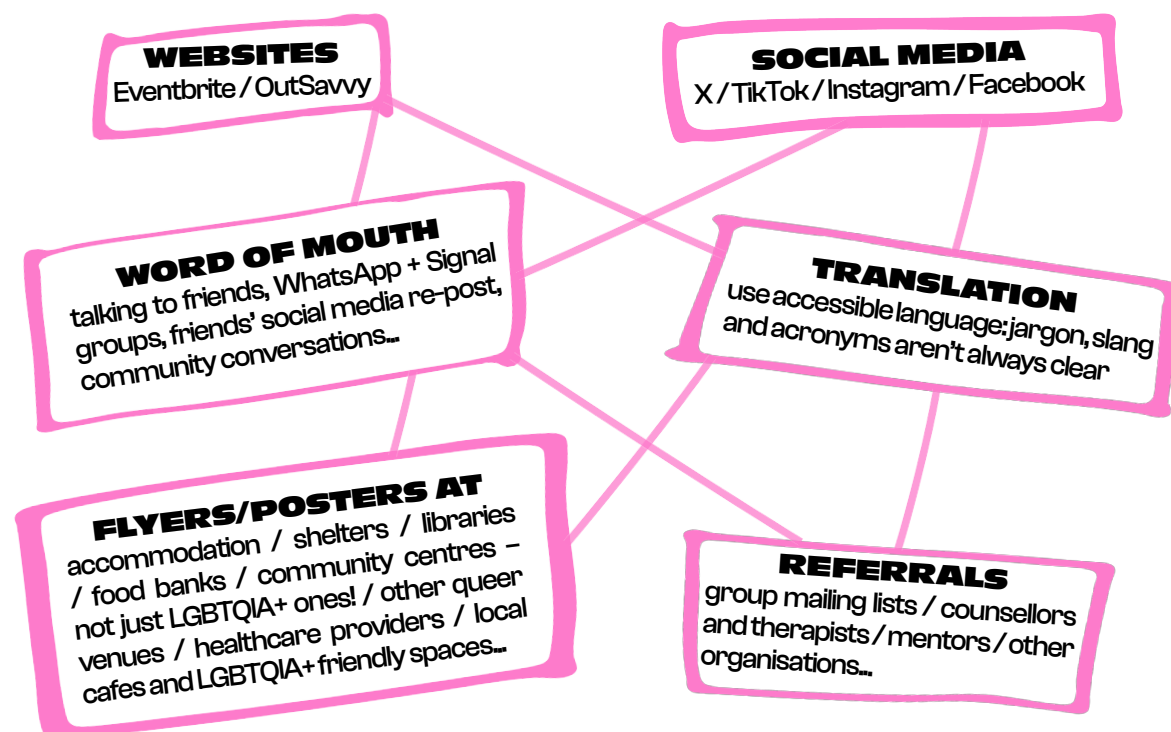
CC Diversity and inclusion (not specifically LGBT – I'm from Iran and that's dangerous for me), and to use my network. I know a lot of people and am good at creating networks, introducing folks, finding commonality

CC Virtual volunteering or work options would be sick [cool]! I know people who want to help or build portfolios or learn new skills etc but cannot regularly or ever attend a location in person

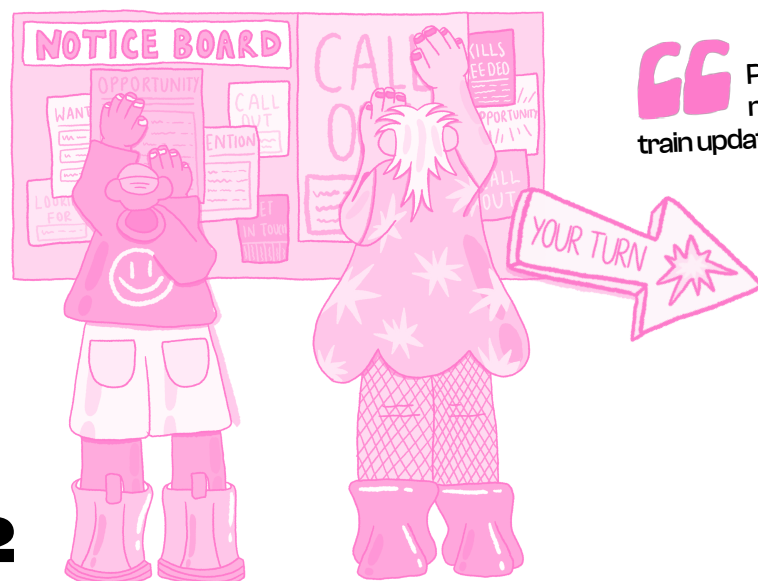
REACHING OUT

Different people find out about and look for opportunities in different ways. If they want to welcome and include people who are marginalised, queer spaces and organisations need to reach beyond their current networks.

Circle the resources you're NOT currently using to share or find out about opportunities and events. Add other ideas. For each one, make a plan for using them in the future!



CC Not everyone can speak English – that's a major obstacle. And it depends on the area that you're in – not everything is accessible. Organisations that pay for transport are good. Also: not knowing how to navigate the systems. It's difficult not knowing what's out there. Usually you hear about places through friends or people in the hotel: 'Oh, I know this place. It's good, they give that and do that'. It's mostly word of mouth – which is a major problem. A lot of organisations work alone – they don't do collaborations. 100% there should be a central hub for sharing LGBTQIA+ community information – **Mazen**



CC Phone data is expensive – I use WiFi a lot. I'm not always going to get messages or like train updates, or be able to call to say I'm running late



Job adverts and calls for volunteers often “encourage” applications from people in under-represented communities... then use intimidating or inaccessible application processes. Use the check list below to make simple changes to **open up opportunities to more people** – and make them sustainable in the long term:

- ☐ The role is clearly described in simple, concise language
- ☐ Time commitment, days and times etc. are clearly stated – including if and how the role can be flexible
- ☐ The pay / compensation (eg travel, stipend, food allowance etc) is clearly listed
- ☐ Advertised widely, via varied community partners, with enough time to reach people – no last minute announcements
- ☐ Run and widely promote informal info sessions for people to learn more before applying
- ☐ List a contact email / number for people to ask questions
- ☐ The application questions and format are appropriate to the role:
 - ☐ Open-ended questions work for some people/ roles, but can be intimidating for people
 - ☐ Be clear about what is needed for the role
 - ☐ Choose the format for a reason: why use a sign-up form? Can people apply via text, call or DM? Will you accept voice notes or video responses? Not everyone can present themselves the way they want in writing
 - ☐ Only ask for information relevant to the role and needed for the process
 - ☐ Don't expect people to be familiar with UK formal job applications – offer templates and guidance
- ☐ Avoid requiring ID checks wherever possible
- ☐ State clearly what support accessibility you can offer – for applications and in the workplace
- ☐ Can people request information in other formats (eg braille)?
- ☐ Have a long-term support plan for mentorship and training in place for every role
- ☐ Share your work agreements / safer spaces policies (page 23) – and stick to them!

TOOLS: FEEDBACK LOOPS

Whatever work we're doing, communication, guidance and training is essential. We all need a clear idea of our responsibilities, expectations, processes and boundaries – especially when starting a new role. Having a more experienced 'buddy' or mentor can help people learn by shadowing someone doing similar work.

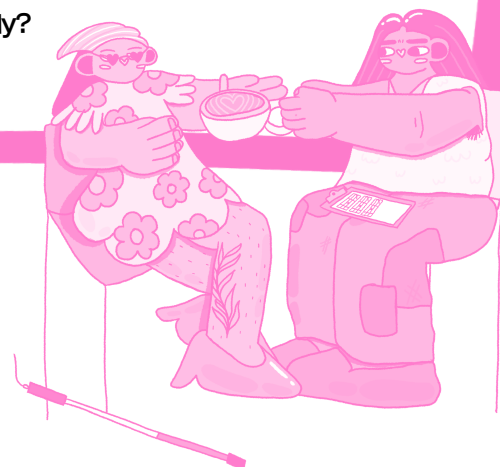
An **induction** (also called 'on-boarding' or 'orientation') should be the first step in a **long-term support plan** for staff and volunteers. Make time for regular, structured check-ins, where everyone can share constructive feedback. None of us are perfect – we all make missteps and have room to grow!

Here are some questions to talk through during induction and check-ins. Work through them in groups or pairs to identify any points of disagreement or actions needed

- * What are my core **responsibilities**?
- * What's my **schedule**? Is it flexible or fixed?
- * Who will give me **training**? How do I contact them?
- * Who else can I speak to, especially if I have any **concerns** or feel uncomfortable?
- * What **support** do I need to do my best work?
- * Is anything unclear? Do I have any other **questions**?

FOR LATER CHECK-INS, ANSWER THE ABOVE AND THE BELOW...

- * What parts of my role are **going well**?
- * Is there anything I'm **finding difficult**?
 - * What changes could help overcome these challenges?
 - * Who could support me with these challenges, and how?
- * What **training, support or new responsibilities** could let me grow in my role?
- * When is my **next check-in** with my mentor/ supervisor/ buddy?



TOOLS: SAFEGUARDING

CC It's nice to say 'everyone is welcome' in queer spaces, but we also need to protect against predatory behaviour – and be able to rely on confidentiality and accountability from staff – **Charlie**

RESOURCE: Safer Foundations offers free webinars on safeguarding processes responsive to the challenges of the hostile environment saferfoundations.co.uk

For formal organisations, 'safeguarding' is a legal requirement to help prevent abuse and neglect of people under-18, or adults unable to protect themselves. **But safeguarding processes can be adopted more broadly** – like Safer Spaces policies (page 23), they detail **specific actions** staff and volunteers must take to help keep everyone in our communities safe.

A policy should be written and reviewed with community members so that it fits their needs, and is relevant and accessible. The **'The Shape of Safety'** guide by Act Build Change, National Survivor User Network, Revoke and Voice Collective offers great tips on creating inclusive safeguarding practices. This checklist is adapted from that guide:



- Don't wait until reaching 'emergency' or 'crisis' points to discuss safeguarding – put time and resources into forward-planning. This helps sustain cultures of safety.
- Acknowledge wider contexts and structural harms that we cannot fully control (personal, organisational, social or political) and what we can do to address them.
- Be clear about the boundaries and limitations of support your group can offer, with honesty, accountability and transparency.
- Don't try to 'rescue' or 'save' people – support them in advocating for themselves and cultivating supportive networks.
- Don't make assumptions or generalisations. Ask people about their individual needs and wishes.
- Create spaces for peer support, honest reflection and collective responsibility.
- Focus on repair, not punishment.

USE THESE QUESTIONS TO HELP DEVELOP OR REVIEW YOUR OWN SAFEGUARDING POLICY:

- * What risks might people face in our space? Who may pose a risk? What situations may increase risk?
- * How can we ensure staff and volunteers are suitable to work with us?
- * How can people raise concerns about risks to wellbeing?
- * How should we respond to concerns or allegations of harm within our space?
- * How will we train staff and volunteers to identify and respond to wellbeing concerns?

THE RESEARCH IN PRACTICE 'RADICAL SAFEGUARDING TOOLKIT' ENCOURAGES ASKING FURTHER QUESTIONS:

- * How do/ can we uphold people's rights to live in safety whilst maintaining their autonomy?
- * How do/ can we show solidarity with people experiencing systemic oppression and harm?
- * How do/ can we recognise and respond to imbalances and abuses of power?
- * How do/ can we act with accountability in this most important area of work?

TOOLS: STAFF SKILLS

Queer spaces can train teams in skills that help create and sustain inclusive communities and accessible opportunities. There are always new things to learn! Here are a few more ideas...

LANGUAGE JUSTICE

As well as translated signs and resources, staff being able to communicate in multiple languages – including British Sign Language – is a great way to help create more inclusive spaces. Fluency isn't necessary – being able to ask and answer key questions can still be useful.

TIP: Organise group classes or skill-shares to support language learning between staff.



Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Just like first aid for physical trauma, MHFA can be lifesaving. Learning how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health or substance use issues can help individuals – and help change spaces and culture for the better.

Ensure someone MHFA trained is available at your space or event – and that it's clear who they are, e.g. they're wearing a high-vis vest, or angel wings.

RESOURCES:

MHFA England (mhfaengland.org/) offer online trainings, refresher courses and certification for workplaces and individuals

Stay Alive is a suicide prevention resource with information and tools to help people stay safe in crisis

Hub of Hope identifies mental health services nearby, using geolocation technology

YOUR TEAMS' NEEDS

What areas of training or new skills would you like to explore – or offer to teach others?



DOOR STAFF – QUEER SAFETY NEEDED!

A lot of queer spaces employ door staff to – in theory – help keep us safe. Too often, they end up doing us harm. As gatekeepers to our spaces, we need them to be...

- * From the community!!
- * Sensitive to why we might be uncomfortable showing ID – it might not match our name or presentation; it might not be from the UK; it might be an ARC [Asylum Registration Card] or BRP [British Residence Permit], or we might not have one at all, for valid reasons!
- * Consistent – 'seeing a familiar, friendly face makes a space welcoming'
- * Friendly – 'there's no need to be rude, and they can be so rude!'
- * Fair and professional – 'they explain what they're doing and why'
- * Asking for consent before touching us or our belongings
- * Focused on harm reduction, not policing – 'They understand why it can be triggering or re-traumatising for some of us to have to engage with people with power, in uniforms, asking us questions about ourselves...'
- * Multilingual
- * Trained in mental health first aid
- * Trained in basic BSL/ different languages – 'that is the dream!'
- * Trustworthy
- * **RESOURCE:** Safe Only is a professional welfare and service provider based in London that employs 'exclusively queer, highly trained, SIA licenced security personnel who know the party because it's their space too'. They pay fair wages (above London Living Wage) and take a trauma-informed, consent-led and harm-reduction approach to their work. VISIT: safeonly.co.uk for free information and resources

NO
JUDGEMENT
♡ SPACE ♡



JUSTICE CAMPAIGNS

MAKE SPACE FOR HOMELESS QUEERS

The London Queer Housing Coalition (akt, First Brick Housing, Micro Rainbow, Star Support, The Outside Project, Stonewall Housing and Tonic Housing) works together for community needs. Support and amplify their collective and individual work by...

- * Contacting the Mayor of London to support the Coalitions' call for a London-wide housing and support strategy and pathway for queer Londoners – with defined staff posts to oversee action.
- * Writing to your local MP, councilor and other elected officials to ask: Why do no London boroughs provide crisis housing for LGBTQIA+ people? /// What can you do if you or someone you know experiences LGBTQIA+ abuse and homelessness? /// What are they doing to secure more affordable housing in the city?
- * Look out for groups' call outs and 'wish lists' for household items for LGBTQIA+ people entering new housing or shelters. This can be via pre-paid shop vouchers or secondhand items.
- * Donate if you can – ask your rich friends, your boss at work etc. to run a fundraiser and/or give generously.

ACTION:

Circle the types of activities you feel comfortable with – then make a plan and take that action!

- * Sign a petition – and pass it on
- * Write to your MP: find them at writetothem.com – use the postcode of a place you spend a lot of time if you don't have a fixed address. Tell them about the issues above
- * Boost campaigns via social media and friend networks
- * Write about an issue for a community newsletter or zine
- * Sign up as a volunteer / join a campaign group
- * Attend a protest, rally, vigil or other awareness raising event – organising a group to attend (or even lead) is great for higher numbers
- * Distribute stickers, posters, flyers and badges – many organisations above have resources to download or order
- * Donate money and/or items – clothes, appliances, furnishings
- * Support people in detention – find local visiting / befrienders groups at: detentionaction.org.uk/people-in-detention/
- * Open up your home to someone – organisations including roomforrefugees.com can help find a match
- * Participate in direct action – after very carefully considering the associated risks

Individuals, organisations and business can give huge boosts to campaigns for rights, dignity and justice in and for our communities. Here are just a few ideas, tactics and actions you can take.

TIP: The most important advice is to make connections (online and IRL), reflect on how you can help and learn more, and always look out for more ways to support movements for social change!

JUSTICE AND DIGNITY FOR MIGRANTS

A number of **key campaigns** are working to dismantle the 'hostile environment' and help make life in the UK less painful for migrants – including LGBTQIA+ people...

- * **Lift the Ban** – fighting for people seeking asylum to have the right to work, unconstrained by the shortage occupation list and wait times (page 8). Learn more at: lifttheban.co.uk
- * **Abolish Reporting** – opposing surveillance and control practices that force people waiting for a decision on their application to live in the UK to 'sign on' or 'call in' at Immigration Reporting Centres, or wear dehumanising GPS tags. Learn more at: wallsmustfall.org/abolish-reporting
- * **Patients Not Passports** – opposing the NHS 'Immigration Health Surcharge' and fighting for medical care without border guards. Learn more at: patientsnotpassports.co.uk
- * **Solidarity Knows No Borders (SKNB)** – join a network of 'organisations, groups and individuals organising in solidarity to end hostility and racism against migrants and refugees'. Learn more at: sknb.org
- * **Anti-Raids Networks** – active across the UK, ARNs are local coalitions that use a 'diversity of tactics' to defend people from detention and deportation. Their diverse tactics include...
 - * distributing legal information in different languages
 - * running info-stalls at tube stations and in local neighbourhoods
 - * gathering neighbours to challenge raid squads, sometimes physically blocking vans
 - * lobbying airlines to refuse deportation flights
 - * organising in workplacesLearn more at: antiraid.net or local groups' social media accounts

TIP: Write down how much time you have and what skills you might contribute to campaigns – this will help you feel confident and manage expectations (including your own):



DIRECTORY

Friends of the Joiners Arms – non-profit Community Benefit Society on a mission to open UK's first community-run, accessible LGBTQIA+ pub in East London
Insta: @friendsjoinersarms / email: friendsjoinersarms@gmail.com / website: friendsjoinersarms.com

African Rainbow Family – Social support, referral for LGBTQ+ migrants
Insta @AfricanRainbowFamily / email: info@africanrainbowfamily.org / website: africanrainbowfamily.org/

Micro Rainbow – Housing, social support, 'moving on' training for LGBTQ+ migrants
Insta @MicroRainbow / email: info@microrainbow.org / website: microrainbow.org

Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust – adults group, educational workshops, mentoring, counselling, social events, residential, social action projects, and employability support for all young LGBT+ persons.
Insta @TheMosaicTrust / email: welcome@mosaictrust.org.uk / website: mosaictrust.org.uk/

Revoke – Social support, events, community building, casework and advocacy, therapeutic care, political education and transformative justice projects, for displaced young people who are displaced, including care-leavers and those criminalised by the criminal justice system.
Insta @RevokeCIC / email: bobby@revoke.org.uk / website: revoke.org.uk

The Outside Project – Community Centre, social activities, support, shelter for LGBTQ+ homeless/hidden homeless people
Insta @LGBTQoutside / email: lgbtqoutside.org/contact / website: lgbtqoutside.org



akt (formerly Albert Kennedy Trust) – national charity helping LGBTQ+ people 16-25 years old find safe homes, employment, education and training.
Insta: @aktcharity / Website: akt.org.uk

Common Press – intersectional bookshop, café and events space offering reading groups, writing circles, film screenings and more
Insta: @thecommonpress / Website: commonpress.co.uk

First Brick Housing – a 'democratically-run, soon-to-be member-owned organisation. Entirely non-profit and governed by members of our community, we are a first of its kind organisation in the UK'
Insta: @firstbrickhousing / Website: firstbrickhousing.co.uk/

Groundswell – supports people experiencing homelessness with pastoral care, pathways to employability and to address physical and mental health issues – all through peer advocacy
Insta: @itsgroundswell / Website: groundswell.org.uk

Imaan – community group for LGBTQ+ Muslims, based in East London with events across the country
Insta: @imaanlgbtqi

London LGBTQ+ Community Centre – sober, intersectional community centre and café offering a wide range of workshops and events
Insta: @ldnlgbtqcentre / Website: londonlgbtqcentre.org

Museum of Homelessness – community-driven social justice museum and direct service provider in Finsbury Park, created and run by people with direct experience of homelessness
Insta: @our_moh / Website: museumofhomelessness.org

New Horizons Youth Centre – supporting people 16-25 in London who are sleeping rough, in unsafe situations, in prison, on probation, or going through the court system. Offers housing, health, life skills and training support – plus social and sports events open to all, after initial contact made.
Insta: @nhyouthcentre / Website: nhyouthcentre.org.uk

Out and Proud African LGBT (Opal) – community organisation of queer refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, Netherlands and France, runs creative, party and legal advice events.
Insta: @opal_weexist / Website: africanlgbti.org

POMOC – LGBTQIA+ led, anti-racist organisation providing direct support for Eastern Europeans on immigration, housing and workers' rights as well as political education
Insta: @pomocorguk / Website: pomoc.org.uk

QueerCircle – creative, community, gallery and research space running arts events and workshops
Insta: @queercircle / Website: queercircle.org

Rainbow Migration – offers legal advice and information to LGBTQ+ people who are seeking asylum or who want to live in the UK with their partners. Also offers support to help reduce isolation and campaigns to improve the treatment of people seeking asylum
Insta: @rainbowmigration / Website: rainbowmigration.org.uk

Refugees at Home – registered charity that connects people with a spare room in their home to refugees and people seeking asylum in need of somewhere to stay. Other ways to support are available
Insta: @refugeesathome / Website: refugeesathome.org

Say It Loud Club – provides social, emotional, educational and advocacy support for LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK with regular workshops, social events and members meetings
Insta: @sayitloudclub / Website: sayitloudclub.org

Solace Women's Aid – trans-inclusive provider of advice, support and refuge and move on accommodation to women and children made homeless through domestic or sexual abuse
Insta: @solacewomensaid / Website: solacewomensaid.org

Star Support – refuge and community support service for LGBTQ+ survivors of domestic abuse in London, including weekly recovery group workshops
Insta: @starsupportlgbtq / Website: starsupport.org.uk

Stonewall Housing – provides referrals, advice, advocacy and support for LGBTQ+ people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the UK and to agencies supporting them. Offers a helpline (weekdays 10am-1pm, 0800 6 404 404), mental health support and specialist support for people fleeing domestic abuse, forced marriage or so-called honour-based violence
Insta: @stonewallhousing / Website: stonewallhousing.org

Tonic Housing – a community-led non-profit organisation building inclusive urban LGBTQ+ affirming retirement communities to help address loneliness and isolation of older LGBTQ+ people
Insta: @tonichousing / Website: tonichousing.org.uk

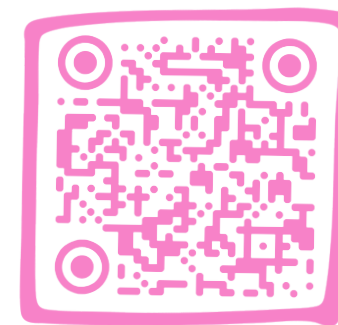


YOUR SPACE

Use this space however you want! Add contact details for spaces you value, make an action plan, doodle dreams, or anything else!



This toolkit is FREE and ready for you to use and share. If you like it, pass it on! You can access a PDF version plus links to other relevant resources at friendsjoinersarms.com or by scanning the QR code below:



The booklet was created by Friends of the Joiners Arms in collaboration with community partners African Rainbow Family, Micro Rainbow, Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust, The Outside Project and Revoke.

It was compiled and written by Siobhán McGuirk with expert input from over 100 contributors, including Ahed, Aiden, Ayan, Cassey, Charlie, Eriko, Mazen, Queen, Radhe, Sophrane, Tulsı, Violet, Wura, Xolisani, Yuma and Zarith as well as Adam, Ajara, Akram, Alexa, Amy, Asana, Athaliah, Ben, Boburkhon, Caleb, Chloe, Clement, Eddy, Elias, Emily, Emomali, Enofe, Erıco, Erika, Ezra, Fahema, Faith, Frederek, Godspower, Henry, Irene, Jamuna, Joseph, Judith, Jumal, Karuna, Kat, Kira, Kyra, Laura, Linda, Lorenzo, Louise, Magdalene, Maria, Mark, Meena, Mohammed, Nada, Nazir, Ngozi, Ocean, Oghenemine, Raf, Raissa, Reemaloshini, Rosie, River, Salah, Sam, Santi, Saranya, Sharissa, Shog, Stella, Tamara, Tay, Teddy, Tiana, Vigil, Wednesday, Xolie, Yasin, Yemi, and others who wish to remain anonymous.

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WELCOME

If you were making a welcome sign for a queer space, what would it say...?

W
E
L
C
O
M
E

WHATEVER YOU NEED

EVEN WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE SH*T

LIFE IS HARD

COMMUNITY, CONSENT, CARE

ONCE, WE ALL THOUGHT WE DIDN'T BELONG

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE

-JOIN PROJECT PEER RESEARCHER

YOUR TURN

