



THE OUTSIDE PROJECT TRANS+ WINTER NIGHT SHELTER REPORT 2026

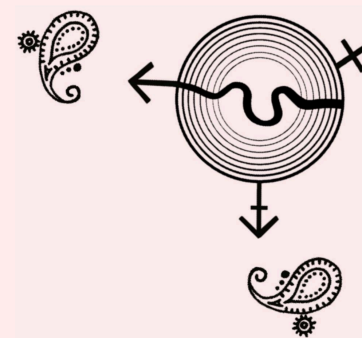
Written by Lorne Flutter, informed and shaped by a series of research conversations with residents of the TWNS and members of The Outside Project Team.

Art / Design: Carla and Laik Ecola



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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

By-and-for - an organisation which is designed, led and delivered by the community it serves. This can include holding a protected characteristic (e.g. LGBTIQ+) and having lived experience of an issue (e.g. domestic abuse).

Care leaver - someone who spent time in local authority care as a child or adolescent.

Cis/cis gender - someone whose gender correlates with the gender assigned to them at birth.

Conversion practices - harmful interventions that intend to alter someone's sexuality or gender identity.

Domestic abuse (DA) - an umbrella term for abuse that includes domestic violence, 'honour'-based violence and conversion practices.

Familial abuse - a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated by family members, which can include 'honour'-based violence and conversion practices.

Global Majority - a collective term encompassing the non-white 85% of the world's population who are of African, Asian, Indigenous, Latin-American or mixed-heritage backgrounds.

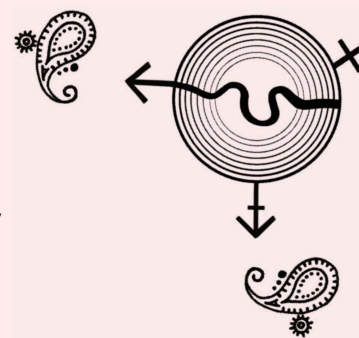
Hidden homeless - forms of homelessness that are not visible or obvious within public space such as sleeping on public transport or forms of homelessness obscured by 'private' space such as sofa surfing or squatting.

'Honour'-based violence (HBV) - a form of abuse which is controlling, coercive or threatening, with the aim of maintaining the honour and respect of a family or community.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) - a form of domestic abuse which takes place in or after romantic relationships.

Local connection - a place someone has lived most recently, for the longest period, or has other strong connections to either through vital social ties, family, work or specialised healthcare.

Mainstream services - support and healthcare services that are designed for the general public and not aimed at a specific group that share a protected characteristic.



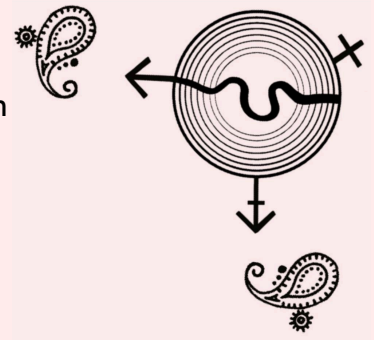
Rough sleeping - a form of homelessness which involves sleeping on the street and/or in public spaces. This form of homelessness might also be referred to as 'street homeless.'

Specialist service/support - support services intended to help specific groups of people and/or address nuanced or complex problems that may not be met by mainstream services. Used here primarily in reference to by-and-for LGBTIQ+ DA services.

Temporary accommodation (TA) - is short-term accommodation provided for people who are experiencing homelessness and do not have immediate access to long-term housing. TA is managed by councils, housing associations and charities.

Trans+ - used here as an umbrella term to encompass all people whose gender identity fits under the trans umbrella. This includes trans-femme, trans-masc, non-binary, gender-fluid, gender-queer and agender people.

Trans-masc/-femme - Trans+ people who identify with masculinity (trans-masc) and/or femininity (trans-femme). Also refers to non-binary and other gender non-conforming individuals who may identify more with one of these identities or both.



FOREWORD

The need for a specialist crisis shelter for Trans+ people has been a driving force behind The Outside Project since our founding in 2017.

Like many grassroots organisations, we are often asked to produce data to demonstrate the need for a service before funding is considered. In 2018, we participated in the government-commissioned research 'LGBT People's Experiences of Homelessness' (MHCLG 2024). Despite being completed several years prior, it was not published until September 2024 after researchers and campaigners repeatedly called for its release. The Outside Project declined to participate in further research projects during this period.

Our position has always been that the complete absence of specialist LGBTIQ+ housing provision is evidence of the need itself. A community should not have to repeatedly prove their suffering before the systems designed to support people recognise that support is needed.

Each new service we have opened has been campaigned for and crowdfunded by our dedicated team

alongside the generosity and solidarity of London's LGBTIQ+ community.

The Trans+ Winter Night Shelter (TWNS) was born from years of experience, campaigning for change, and responding to the gaps we saw every day. This report provides insight into the impact of the service, the people we supported, the barriers they faced, and the lessons we have learned.

My hope in publishing this report - the first public report we have produced on our frontline services since our founding - is that communities in smaller towns and rural areas will not have to face such a long road to establishing LGBTIQ+ crisis shelters in their own areas.

I hope that sharing our journey and learnings contributes to a future where no one is left without safe shelter because systems were not designed with them in mind.



Carla Ecola,
Co-Founder - Managing Director
The Outside Project



INTRODUCTION

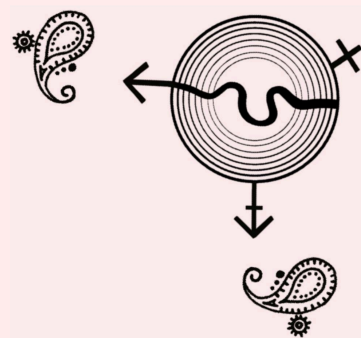
The Trans+ Winter Night Shelter (TWNS) is an independent night shelter created by Trans+ people who have lived experience of homelessness. The Outside Project set up the TWNS in 2024 in response to the lack of safe crisis shelter for Trans+ people who are homeless, escaping domestic abuse, seeking asylum, refugees, or at risk of sleeping rough.

'Having worked frontline the past five winters with The Outside Project, it's been clear how disproportionately Trans+ people are affected by homelessness. Gender identity is so often a core reason why Trans+ people have been made homeless: due to domestic violence, persecution in their country of origin, stigma and prejudice, and, with unequal and non-affirming access to mainstream services, Trans+ people are further pushed to the margins.'

- Nik Hann, TWNS Operations Manager

This report reflects on setting up and running the TWNS across two winter seasons - 2024-25 and 2025-26 - the people it has supported and our thoughts on the future of the project.

We are sharing this report, which includes information on how we set up and run the TWNS, as well as our strategy for developing projects like this, to encourage others to do the same.



ABOUT THE OUTSIDE PROJECT

The Outside Project is a London-based LGBTIQ+ Centre, Shelter, Domestic Abuse Refuge, Outreach Service, and the organisation behind the Trans+ Winter Night Shelter.

We support LGBTIQ+ people who are homeless, hidden homelessness, at risk of harm or who feel pushed to the outside of services due to historical and ongoing prejudice in society, their families, and within support systems.

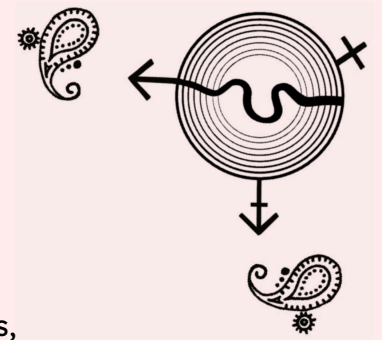
The organisation is designed and run by-and-for LGBTIQ+ people with lived experience of homelessness and domestic abuse. We provide identity-responsive and knowledge-by-experience-led support services to our community, recognising that safety, trust, and belonging are essential foundations for effective support and recovery.

“From the house rules and braver spaces agreements to the artwork on the walls- our culture is solidarity not charity.”

- Carla Ecola, Co-Founder and Managing Director

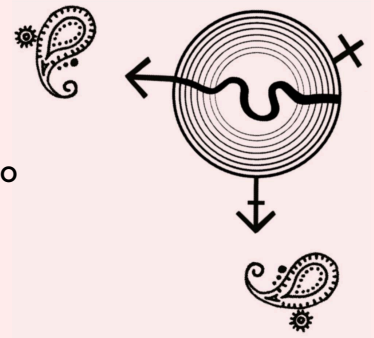
To meet our communities’ needs, we work in partnership with housing advocacy, domestic abuse, youth, drug and alcohol, needle exchange, sexual health, housing, migrant rights organisations and a library to ensure people can access a network of specialist and community based support.

Alongside our frontline services, we develop training and community-led research to improve understanding of the unique and complex needs of LGBTIQ+ people and to advocate for identity-informed, community-centred responses to homelessness, domestic abuse and recovery.



CREATING OUR CRISIS SHELTER SERVICES

Since opening The Outside Project, we have found ways and spaces to provide crisis shelter services for our community. Our campaigning focuses on securing empty buildings in London and demonstrating how these spaces can be repurposed for housing, homelessness and winter night shelter provision.



December 2017: The opening of our first LGBTIQ+ Winter Night Shelter on the back of a tour bus in East London.

December 2018: Our LGBTIQ+ Winter Night Shelter moves off the bus and reopens in a community centre hall in Kings Cross.

April 2019: The Winter Night Shelter receives funding to remain open all year round as a shelter and LGBTIQ+ Centre in our own building, a disused fire station in Islington.

March 2020: During the COVID Pandemic our LGBTIQ+ Centre is forced to close but our night shelter stays open, becoming a 24hr service.

April 2020: Our 'MAKE SPACE FOR HOMELESS QUEERS' campaign for emergency housing during the pandemic begins, leading to community and government-funded emergency hotel provision in Soho between May 2020 - April 2023.

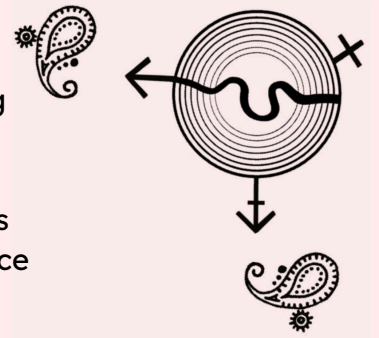
June 2020: STAR Refuge opens on the 4th floor above our shelter, providing a dedicated space for LGBTIQ+ survivors of domestic abuse and a recovery room 'STAR Lounge'.

January 2023: We support the development of an LGBTIQ+ Shelter opening in Brighton. This, alongside our experience in running the emergency hotel project, brings us back to looking for buildings for a Trans+ specific Winter Night Shelter.

November 2024: We are offered a disused building in Hackney and opened the Trans+ Winter Night Shelter on Christmas eve - April 2025, funded solely by The Outside Project and community donations.



This approach to creating LGBTIQ+ crisis shelters has involved taking direct action and campaigning alongside the community for the services and spaces we need. Without this activism, it is unlikely that we would have received funding for the shelters we currently run. This is despite the lack of specialist LGBTIQ+ crisis shelter and the evidence of need demonstrated within our own services and increasingly through broader research.



EVIDENCE OF NEED

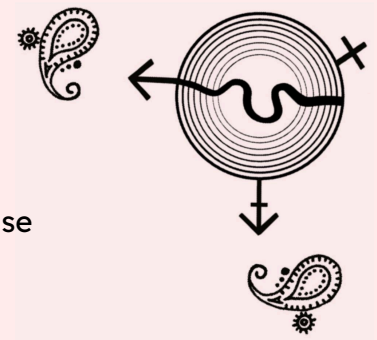
Since setting up The Outside Project, Trans+ people have been consistently over-represented in our homelessness and domestic abuse services. Last year 82% of our residents at STAR Refuge and 87% of residents at Anira House were Trans+, despite both services being open to anyone who identifies at LGBTIQ+. While wide-scale data on the prevalence of Trans+ homelessness is vastly limited, the factors contributing to Trans+ people's homelessness are being explored within research.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2024) LGBT People's Experiences of Homelessness report finds that discrimination within housing and employment, a general lack of safe housing for LGBTIQ+ people and 'homophobic, biphobic and transphobic family conflict and abuse during young adulthood' all contribute to the disproportionate rates of homelessness experienced by LGBTIQ+ people (MHCLG 2024; Pedrick 2015).

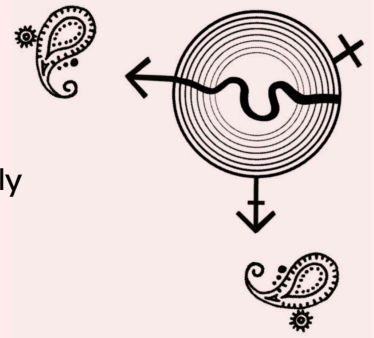
Homelessness and the factors that increase someone's likelihood of experiencing it can be elevated for certain members of the LGBTIQ+ community. TransActual's (2021) Trans Lives Survey reports that 27% of Trans+ respondents had experienced a form of homelessness, which sits alongside stark evidence of discrimination against Trans+ people within education, employment, healthcare and housing (Bachman and Gooch 2018).

Alongside institutional exclusions, Trans+ people are at heightened risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) and familial abuse, which can take the form of 'honour'-based violence and conversion practices, compared to cis-gender LGBTIQ+ people (Galop 2022; Bachman and Gooch 2018; Roch et al 2010). These experiences can have a direct impact on residential stability and notably impacts young Trans+ people still living at home who are experiencing abuse from family members (Galop 2022).

The risk of homelessness is furthered for those with intersecting identities, such as Trans+ people from the Global Majority, disabled Trans+ people, and people seeking asylum or with refugee status (Tunåker 2025; TransActual 2021; Micro Rainbow 2024). TransActual



(2021) found that Trans+ people from the Global Majority were 10% more likely than white Trans+ respondents to have experienced homelessness, while disabled Trans+ respondents were 15% more likely to experience homelessness than non-disabled Trans+ respondents (TransActual 2021).



Trans+ people can also find it difficult to access mainstream systems, services and spaces. This is due to exclusionary same-sex policies, psychological, systemic and structural barriers and experiences of LGBTIQ+ phobia (Sperring and Grassian 2026; TransActual 2021; Bachman and Gooch 2018). A lack of access to mainstream services is compounded by limited access LGBTIQ+ or Trans+ specific services, meaning that many Trans+ people go without appropriate support.

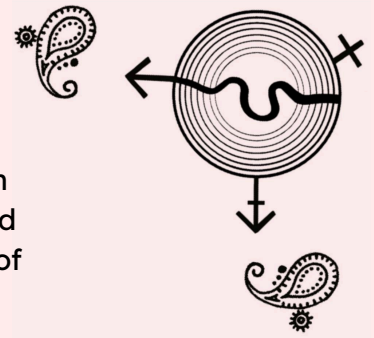
Crucially, these issues sit within and are the product of a broader political and social climate. Over the last five years, we have seen a roll back in funding for LGBTIQ+ specific services. This has sat alongside a significant rise in hostility towards Trans+ people, heavily directed by the right wing and gender critical movements. Anti-trans agendas have increasingly influenced and translated into Trans+ exclusionary government policy. This is exemplified by the Supreme Court ruling on same sex spaces (For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers 2025).

Since opening The Outside Project in 2017, we have observed both sudden and progressive restrictions placed on Trans+ people, limiting equal access to society and further cementing barriers to basic needs and services. As an LGBTIQ+ support service, we observe the impact of systemic harm experienced by Trans+ people before research has evidenced it. This means our services are set up in response to the experience of supporting our community and the knowledge we have built from running them.



THE TRANS+ WINTER NIGHT SHELTER

We set up the TWNS on Christmas Eve in 2024 in a disused building in Hackney. The TWNS was set up to provide safe, identity-informed and inclusive Trans+ specialist crisis shelter, responding to the high rates of homelessness and barriers to mainstream housing services experienced by Trans+ people.



TWNS FAQ's

How long has the TWNS been running?

The Trans+ Winter Night Shelter has operated for two winter seasons, opening between December and 1st April in 2024-25 and 2025-26.

How do people access the TWNS?

We publish the self-referral form online a week or so before the shelter is due to open. Our Outreach and LGBTIQ+ Centre teams have intake meetings to establish if the TWNS is the right fit for someone and talk through the guest agreement.

What are the opening times?

The TWNS is open seven days a week from 6pm to 9am. The shelter closes during daytime hours, when guests access wider support services, appointments, activities, and move-on pathways. In 2025-26, we extended our opening hours to remain open all day on Sundays.

What is the building like?

The TWNS building has a large reception area, two large communal bedrooms with four beds each separated by shelving partitions, and four private bedrooms. Bed spaces are allocated based on guests' medical needs, personal circumstances, and safety considerations.

The shelter can accommodate up to 12 guests at a time, with flexibility to provide additional space if needed. The building



includes a shared communal kitchen and lounge where guests cook, eat together, and spend time in community. There are shower and laundry facilities, as well as a large storage area, allowing guests to bring and safely store their belongings.

Who provides support?

The shelter is staffed by the TWNS crew who rotate across evening and overnight shifts throughout the week. Each night, a crew member prepares dinner, welcomes guests, and provides opportunities for check-ins and support. TWNS guests are also assigned a dedicated Support Worker from The Outside Project's LGBTIQ+ Centre and Outreach teams, who provide one-to-one advocacy and support outside of shelter hours.

What is the role of a winter night shelter and why did we open one specifically for Trans+ people?

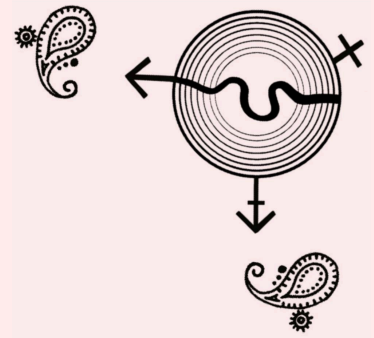
Winter night shelters are a public health emergency response designed to preserve life during cold weather. They should not be considered a replacement for long-term housing.

During periods of cold weather, the Mayor of London activates the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), requiring local authorities to provide emergency shelter for people at risk of sleeping rough. It is rare, however, for The Outside Project to secure SWEP placements for people from our community. Many LGBTIQ+ people have experienced discrimination within services, have distrust of statutory systems, or have had little previous connection with homelessness provision. This is one of the core reasons we created a winter night shelter specifically for the LGBTIQ+ community in 2017, and later the Trans+ Winter Night Shelter in 2024.

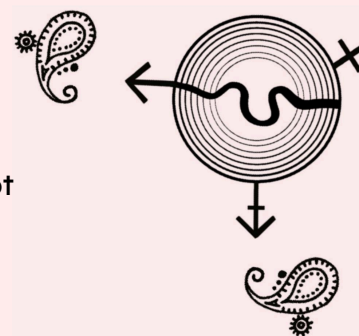
Are night shelters safe?

Night shelters can be unsafe due to overcrowded environments that are not designed around people's safety and dignity.

At The Outside Project, we are intentional about the design, layout, security, staffing and induction processes within our



services. There will sometimes be disagreements between guests - as there are in any shared community space - but managing conflict safely is the responsibility of the service, not the people who need to access it.



“The atmosphere is really safe here, I feel safe here around people who care and want to help.”

- TWNS Guest

“This is such a unique service, it’s keeping people alive. It feels great to be a part of it again this year.”

- TWNS Crew

SETTING UP

Community DIY Crew: In November 2024, we got the keys to a disused building in Hackney and over the next three months, our 60-person strong DIY crew turned it into a cosy, welcoming night shelter. They painted the walls, kitted out the kitchen, built beds, stocked the linen cupboards, put up artwork, learnt how to hang curtains, fix locks and fit a washing machine.

“When I reached out to friends within the Lesbian and Gays Support the Migrants network [to prepare the building for the first TWNS season in 2024] everyone was so excited to help create such an important space. It was so satisfying knowing we were putting in the effort not just to make somewhere fine to stay but somewhere actually comfortable.”

- Siobhán, DIY Crew member



FUNDING

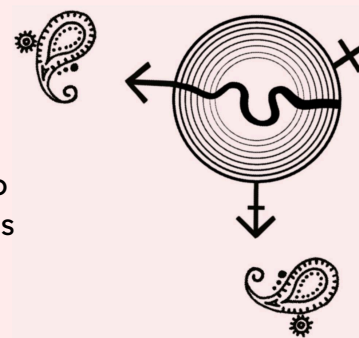
In 2024 we applied to Homelessness and LGBTIQ+ specific funders to support the TWNS, but we were unsuccessful. This was a huge blow as we had secured the building and winter was around the corner.

Setting up the TWNS was only financially possible due to us already having a lot of kit in storage from our shelter in the fire station, voluntary hours from the community DIY crew, voluntary hours from Managing Director Carla and TWNS Operations Manager Nik to open and run the service, and a bucket of free coffee from our friends at HEJ Coffee.

In 2025, we submitted ourselves for the London Homelessness Awards for the work we had done at the TWNS the previous winter winning a cash prize of £10,000. The TWNS successfully received funding from two further foundations.

This funding meant that we could:

- Reduce crowdfunding from our own community.
- Hire a full staff team and not rely on the volunteering of Carla and Nik.
- Extend our opening hours to remain open all day on Sundays.
- Increase our support worker hours, both while the TWNS was open and through the summer to ensure continued supported resettlement of guests after the TWNS season.
- Provide a dedicated welfare fund for Black guests.
- Support guests who had experienced domestic abuse to access the private rented sector (PRS) through a young person's rent-deposit scheme.



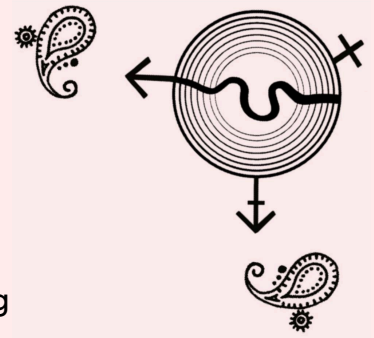
WHO WHO STAYED WITH US

Over two seasons of running the TWNS, we received 97 self-referrals and hosted 40 guests.

In this report, we reflect on both years of running the TWNS, collating data from the 40 Trans+ people who have stayed with us across both seasons. This data is reflected on and presented alongside knowledge we have gained through nine years of delivering LGBTIQ+ shelter and refuge services.

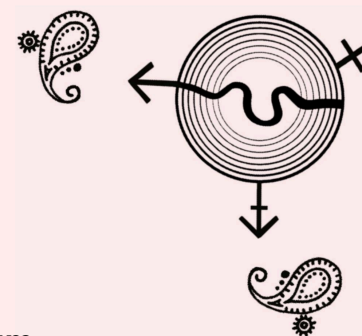
The Outside Project collects demographic data in a way which aims to capture the identities and language of our community without forcing people into preconceived categories. As we are reflecting on a small cohort of people (40 people who have stayed at the TWNS across two seasons) we have limited and aggregated demographic data to protect the anonymity of our guests.

Case studies are anonymised composite accounts created by combining experiences of multiple people we have supported. They are intended to illustrate the realities faced by Trans+ people experiencing homelessness while protecting the privacy of our community.



GUEST DEMOGRAPHICS:

- **50% were trans-femme, 13% trans-masc, 15% non-binary, 13% gender queer**
- **60% were between the age of 25-34 years old**
- **20% had current or prior engagement with the asylum process**
- **55% were from the Global Majority**
- **60% were British nationals**
- **60% had a physical health condition**
- **33% were rough sleeping before staying at the TWNS**
- **65% were neurodiverse**
- **83% had a mental health condition**



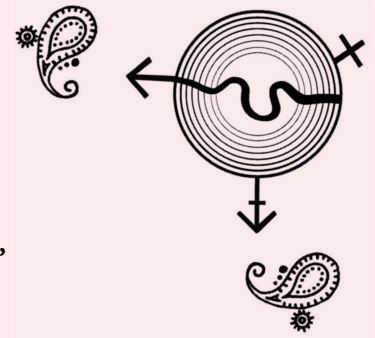
The TWNS has supported people from diverse backgrounds, with similar themes seen over the two years across most demographic categories. In both year one and two, trans-femme people were the largest group in terms of gender identity, with trans-masc people considerably less represented. There has been a consistently high representation of people with physical health and mental health conditions, as well as people who are neurodiverse.

People within the 24-35 year old age range represent 60% of TWNS guests. These guests sit in the 'working homeless' age range of young people who, if in work are typically on a lower income, do not have access to the higher rate of housing benefit and have no access to youth services. This can create high levels of need and limited access to services for people within this age group, which is a theme we see across our services.

In our experience, winter night shelter circuits often support higher numbers of people with exclusions to mainstream services based on their immigration status and a lack of access to public funds. Contrary to this theme, the majority of guests (78%) at the TWNS were British nationals and /or with access to public funds.



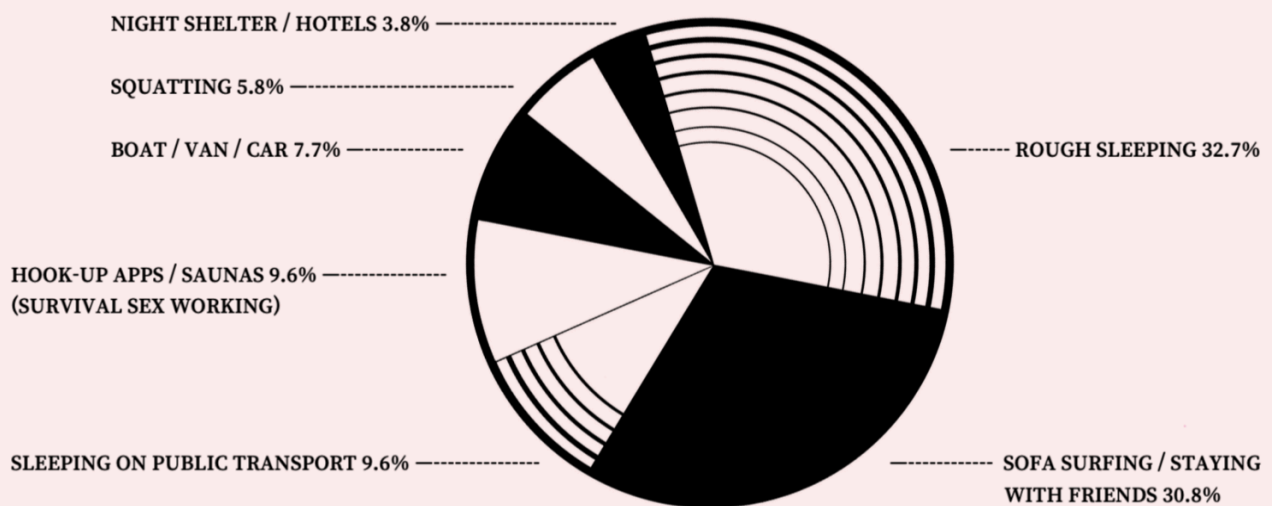
Despite having legal and financial access to statutory services, the majority of guests (and those who self-referred but did not stay with us) had not attempted to access another emergency housing service before self-referring to the TWNS. Those who had made contact with other services listed 'LGBTIQ+ housing and domestic abuse helplines' as the kind of service they had made contact with. This points to Trans+ specific barriers to mainstream crisis housing.



We received self-referrals from Trans+ people with a local connection to over 18-London boroughs: Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Merton, Islington, Westminster, Wandsworth, Lewisham, Southwark, Islington, Enfield, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Haringey, Barking and Dagenham, Lambeth and Croydon.

EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

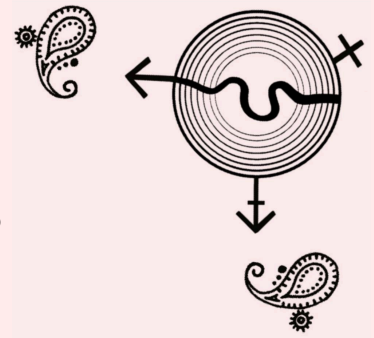
Before coming to the TWNS our guests experienced varied and multiple forms of street and hidden homelessness:



Around 30% of TWNS guests were sofa surfing and staying with friends, pointing to the role of informal support and mutual aid networks. However, those arrangements were often unstable, with eight of the thirteen guests sofa surfing and staying with friends also spending nights rough sleeping.

Some guests' experiences were connected to LGBTIQ+ practices and spaces, such as using hook-up apps and 24-hour saunas as a place to stay for the night. Others were squatting, living in other forms of precarious accommodation such as boats and vans, or spending nights sleeping on public transport.

These examples illustrate the varied and often obscured forms of homelessness experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, which can occur outside of or alongside rough sleeping.



EXPERIENCES INFLUENCING AND INTERSECTING WITH HOMELESSNESS

- **Eight guests were experiencing domestic abuse from one or multiple family members**
- **Six guests were care leavers**
- **Eight guests were engaging or had a history of engaging with the asylum process**
- **Three guests were sex working**

We supported eight Trans+ people who had experienced familial abuse (which can encompass 'honor'-based violence and conversion practices) which directly contributed to their emergency housing need. Across our services, we regularly support young Trans+ people who have experienced familial abuse and rejection, alongside a breakdown in emotional, financial and residential family support. This creates a significant risk of housing insecurity and homelessness for Trans+ people, especially those who do not live independently.



CASE STUDY 1 - Tara, they/them, 25 years old

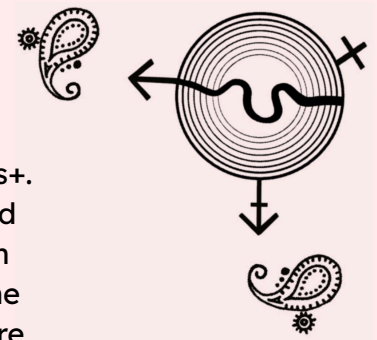
Over the Christmas period Tara's family found out that they are Trans+. Both of Tara's parents have become abusive. Tara's family had moved to the UK from Kenya when they were a child, and Tara's immigration status is dependent on their family. Following their departure from the family home, they spent several weeks sofa surfing with friends before one of those friends told them about The Outside Project. They found the TWNS self-referral on our social media.

Throughout their stay at the shelter, Tara continued their university studies and secured part-time employment. Tara was referred by their support worker to a specialist LGBTIQ+ migration organisation to obtain advice on resolving their immigration status and applying for a student visa. They also accessed counselling through their university to help process the trauma of family rejection and domestic abuse.

The LGBTIQ+ Centre recovery group connected Tara with a range of Trans+ affirming social groups and activities. Building new friendships and spending time with people who accepted their identity helped reduce the isolation they had experienced after leaving home.

Tara moved into STAR Refuge whilst awaiting the outcome of their visa application. Once their status was resolved, they were supported through The Outside Project's rent deposit scheme to secure accommodation in the private rented sector.

Tara's journey demonstrates how specialist support combining safe accommodation, immigration advice, mental health support and community connection can help young Trans+ people recover from family rejection and build stable, independent futures.



CASE STUDY 2 - Sarah, she / her, 61 years old

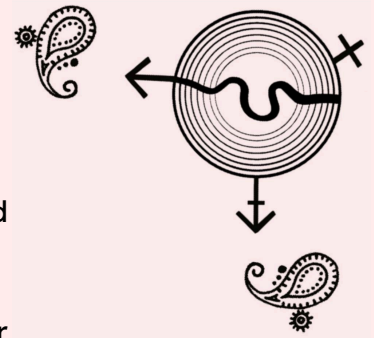
Sarah is a 61-year-old Trans+ woman who has experienced homelessness for much of her adult life alongside long-term drug and alcohol dependency. Sarah has cycled between care, rough sleeping, hostels, survival sex working, temporary accommodation and prison sentences. Repeated unstable environments have made it difficult for her to sustain recovery leading to relapse and homelessness.

Sarah saw a TWNS poster in a library and made a self referral. During intake we established that Sarah has access to a hostel but she has refused anything her outreach worker has offered even for SWEP. Sarah has experienced homophobic abuse and sexual harassment from men within the homelessness community who perceive her as a gay man. She wants to stay at the TWNS until her own self-contained housing becomes available.

Her outreach worker agrees that this is a realistic plan. She has a strong prospect of moving into self-contained accommodation, avoiding another cycle of homelessness.

The TWNS has given Sarah the security needed to focus on her recovery without the pressures and triggers that have undermined previous attempts. Staff continue to work closely with her outreach worker to support her resettlement into long-term housing.

Sarah's experience demonstrates how specialist safe shelter can create the conditions for recovery, not simply providing a bed for the night but an alternative intervention to break cycles of homelessness.



CASE STUDY 3 - Ayala, she / her, 34 years old

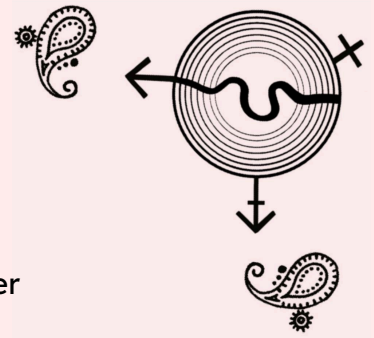
Ayala is a 34-year-old Trans+ woman who self referred to the Trans+ Winter Night Shelter after unexpectedly losing her job and housing.

Having moved to London as a teenager, Ayala has no contact with her family and has built her life independently. Until recently she was working in a hotel however a new manager started a few months ago and has been sexually harassing her. Ayala threatened to expose this to other workers and her shifts were dropped to infrequent, below what she needed to cover rent. She is seeking employment law advice to understand whether she has grounds for sexual harassment and unfair dismissal.

Following the loss of shifts Ayala was unable to cover her rent. She never had a formal licence agreement and was told by housemates that she wasn't allowed to claim housing benefit. Unsure of her rights, she left the house share to stay on a friend's sofa which was offered for free, however her friend increasingly asked her to look after her children and clean the house.

Staff are supporting Ayala to access legal advice regarding her employment, clarify her housing rights and access a rent deposit scheme. The stability of the shelter has enabled her to focus on securing a new job while reducing the immediate risks associated with hidden homelessness, gender-based violence and domestic servitude.

Ayala's experience highlights the intersection of transphobia, sexual harassment, insecure housing and hidden homelessness. Without access to a specialist Trans+ inclusive service, she would likely have remained hidden homeless and at continued risk of exploitation.



A TYPICAL NIGHT AT THE TWNS

Induction, 4-6pm - new guests are inducted by a member of the crew. They have a tour of the building, run through the TWNS schedule and are given things they need for their stay like cutlery, linens, toiletries and towels. Induction also gives new guests time to use the facilities, have some personal space and unpack before others start to arrive.

Handover, 5pm - a member of the TWNS crew arrives for their shift, opens up the space and goes through the daily handover. They have space to speak to other members of the team and meet new guests who are being inducted to the space. They check the whiteboard in the staff room to see what was made for dinner the night before and if there are any left overs before heading out to the shops.

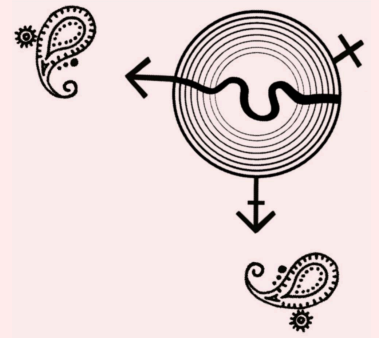
Reception, 6pm - some nice music is put on the bluetooth speaker in reception, guests start to arrive and are signed in. Everyone is able to unwind from the day, catch up and use their rooms, showers, lounge and kitchen.

Dinner, 7pm - 10pm - guests either cook their own delicious food or get involved with the communal meal which is made every evening. There's time to hang out in the lounge, shower, do laundry, eat together, read, listen to music or play games.

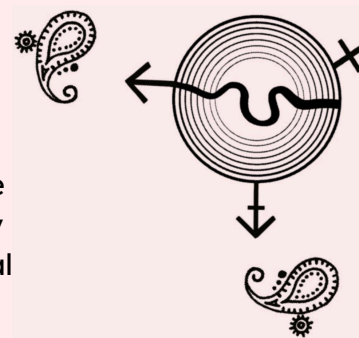
Quiet time, 11pm - lights out, unless it is a Saturday evening and there's still a game of Monopoly or UNO going on.

Breakfast, 7am - 10am - the kitchen is opened for breakfast and everyone gets ready for the day. Once the guests leave at 9am, the crew member tidies up, writes up handover notes and gets the TWNS ready for everyone to come back to later that evening.

Cleaning, 10am - midday - A professional cleaning company attends to clean the shelter, offices and communal areas.



FEEDBACK FROM CREW



“Saturday nights at the Trans Winter Night Shelter were fun. Guests loved the delicious vegan spag bol made by our amazing volunteer, alongside a singalong to musical theatre sound tracks. Guests would then stay up for a competitive game of either UNO, Show'em no Mercy, or Wizard of Oz Monopoly.”

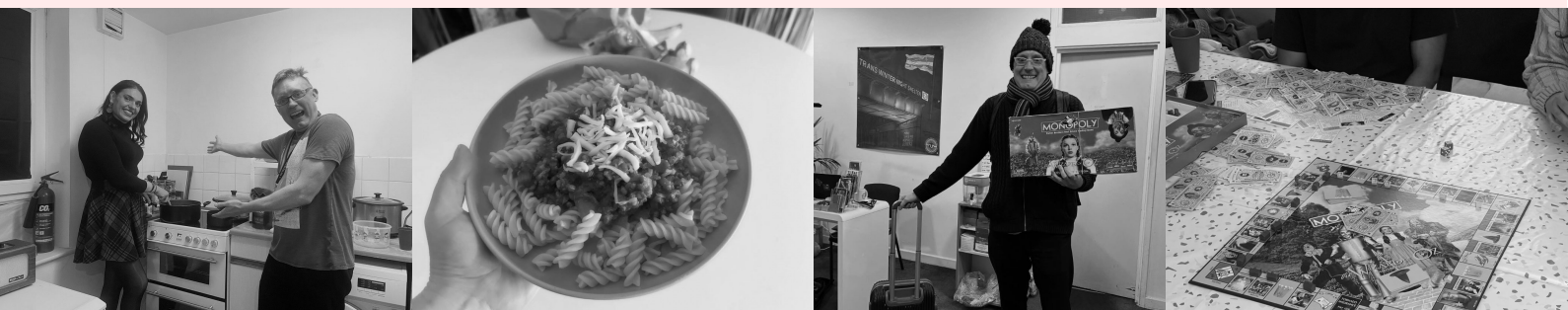
- *Matthew, TWNS Crew/Westminster Outreach Lead*

“The TWNS has been great at bringing the community together. In the first year -when resources were limited- our DIY volunteers really came through and helped to prepare the building to open. Funding in our second year meant we could bring new people into the project who helped bring a fresh perspective to shifts, as well as to develop a more sustainable staffing pattern for the longevity of the project”

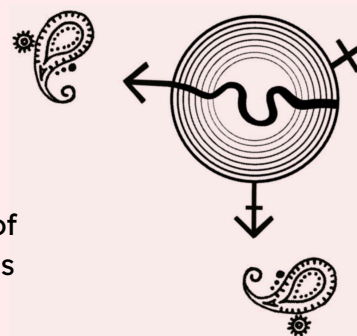
- *Cecily, TWNS Crew/Development Coordinator*

“After almost a decade of working with The Outside Project to deliver a range of shelters and projects, it's become clear to me that emergency accommodation needs to be about more than just a bed for the night. The TWNS brings together everything we've learned to create a shelter that is not only essential for the safety of the trans community, but also helps people build community, find confidence, eat great food, access services, and recover from what they've been through. Working at the shelter has been one of the highlights of my past two winters. My dog, Keith, also loves coming on shift with me and meeting everyone-it's a highlight for him too. I'm looking forward to many more!”

- *Harry, TWNS Crew / Anira House Lead Worker*



FEEDBACK FROM GUESTS



“Very supportive, lovely people who looked after us, I felt very safe and supported during a very difficult time, I felt a sense of community with everyone there, I loved monopoly game nights on Saturdays and watching X Files on Mondays.”

x

“I was so happy because they allowed me to cook my own food. I love cooking and love my South Asian food and they helped me to take my food properly and that gave me strength and mental satisfaction. I liked that the most.”

x

“[The] only negative was waking up to leave at 9, that was very difficult for me to do with a medical condition I have. It would be great if it was open more during the day. I appreciated having my own room because of my medical condition.”

x

“I think 9am leave time is good to establish a routine in crisis but maybe a tad bit too early.”

x

“It was such a wonderful experience staying in that Trans Winter Night Shelter where I had an opportunity to make some good friendships with my queer community... I am very happy and grateful for providing me with that shelter when I needed it the most.”

x

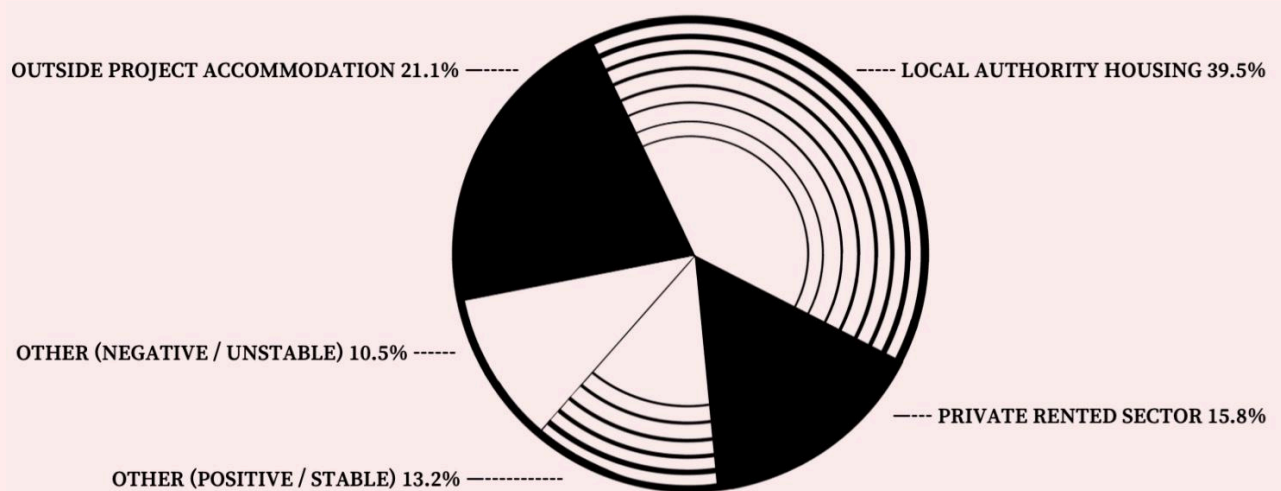
“If it’s possible to make those big rooms into small rooms, that would be good for everyone. Because everyone prefers a single room.”



WHERE OUR GUESTS MOVED ON TO

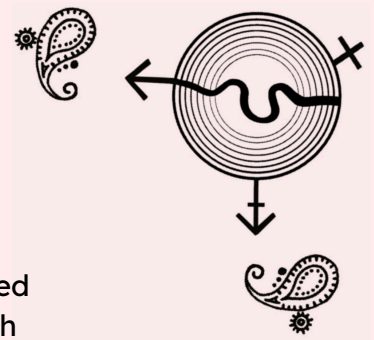
Our LGBTIQ+ Centre and Outreach workers provided one-to-one casework sessions to TWNS guests. These sessions offered guests trauma-informed, identity-responsive and person-centred advocacy, with a primary focus on securing safe and stable housing following their stay at the shelter. One-to-one support was complemented by The Outside Project LGBTIQ+ Centre programming of health, recovery, creative and wellbeing groups and activities.

TWNS guests moved on into:



We were able to place 20% of TWNS guests into our other shelter services - Anira House and STAR Refuge. These shelters are open 24/7 and provide a 3-6 months stay. This was important for those who needed more time and intensive support to find longer term housing, bring their case to the local authority or had experienced domestic abuse and needed specialist support of the STAR Refuge team.

In total, 40% of move on was into Local Authority housing, demonstrating a significant number of people meeting the 'priority need' threshold - defined by the local authority by higher risk factors such as fleeing domestic abuse, physical, mental health conditions and drug and alcohol support needs. Guests without priority need were supported to rent privately with access to our rent deposit scheme.



Over recent years, much of London's specialist LGBTIQ+ supported accommodation has closed, leaving fewer safe move-on options for people leaving emergency services.

The 10% of TWNS guests who moved on to accommodation considered 'negative or unstable' continued to be supported through contact with our LGBTIQ+ Centre and Outreach workers. For these guests, our LGBTIQ+ Centre activities and weekly Homelessness Recovery groups were integral in providing access points throughout resettlement. Several of these guests then moved into Anira House and STAR Refuge later in the year.

Longer-term resettlement casework has been made possible through our second-year funding, increasing capacity beyond the TWNS season and enabling sustained support for guests with complex housing needs.

"I felt supported and encouraged as I went on to move to my own place. I liked the check ups with my support worker."

- TWNS Guest

x

"The TWNS project owes its success to our person-centred approach in our intakes and advocacy. We meet our residents where they are, from day one with their intakes, focusing on understanding them and their situation better. We then tailor our advocacy during and after their stay according to their needs and wants."

- Kubilay, LGBTIQ+ Centre Lead Worker



REFLECTIONS ON THE MODEL

The night shelter model allows us to provide a unique and essential service across the worst of the winter, ensuring safe and equal use of a limited community resource.

We are aware that for some guests, winter night shelters and guest agreements can feel institutional and restrictive. This is particularly relevant to the set time frames in which guests have to leave and return to the shelter, which can limit a sense of autonomy and flexibility. Acknowledging these limitations, our aim is for guests to stay with us for as short a period as possible.

For many of the people who have stayed at the TWNS, however, we also recognise how important their stay at the shelter can be. This is especially relevant for those who have not been in contact with the Trans+ community prior to staying at the TWNS.

“It felt like a home when I didn’t have one. Even though I have my own place now, I miss it sometimes. I miss the sense of community.”

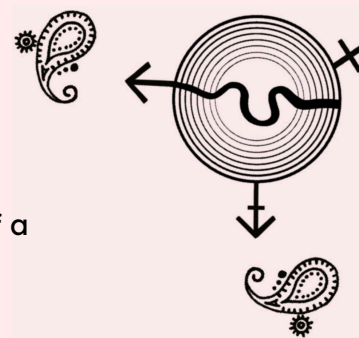
- TWNS Guest

The TWNS affirms why we centre community in our LGBTIQ+ services and our approach to supporting people who are recovering from homelessness. Services like the TWNS give Trans+ people a space to share, process and get back on their feet after experiences of hostility, but most importantly, to build friendships and a sense of belonging through chats in the kitchen, shared dinners, film nights and playing late night monopoly.

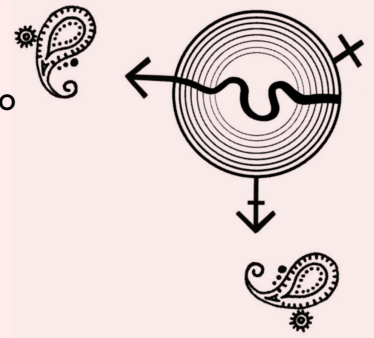
‘The TWNS exists because Trans+ people deserve more than simply a place to survive the night.’

- Carla Ecola, Managing Director

We are proud of how we have come together as a community and crew to provide this service, which offers Trans+ people who are experiencing homelessness somewhere to stay that is safe, affirming and rooted in togetherness.



While the TWNS provides an essential service, it is not our intention to 'fill the gap' in the absence of safe, supported and long term Trans+ housing across London - which we will continue to campaign for. Our intention is to ensure that there is a safe crisis provision for our community when in crisis and to advocate for their needs in mainstream services.



THE FUTURE OF THE TWNS

We aim to develop the TWNS into a permanent, Trans+ specific temporary accommodation service. Our approach has always been to demonstrate what is possible by creating community-led services in response to urgent need and then work with statutory partners to secure the sustainable funding needed for a specialist housing provision.

Despite the challenges our community and LGBTIQ+ support services have faced in recent years we have seen important new housing provision opening in London alongside ours with an LGBTIQ Youth house run by AKT in Lambeth and an LGBTIQ+ retirement community opened by Tonic Housing. A Trans+ domestic abuse refuge also opened in the north of England by a Trans+ specific organisation - Loving Me.

We want to see more services like the TWNS available to Trans+ people across London and the rest of the UK, responding to the demand we see across the city and beyond it. This is why we will continue to share our experiences of setting up and running this service, in the spirit of encouraging others to do the same.

“We hope to work alongside new grassroots community groups who want to make space for homeless queers in the near future. Our hope is that no Trans+ person facing homelessness has to hide who they are, wait for a service to be created or move to London before they can access safe shelter.”

- Carla Ecola Co-Founder, Managing Director

“It [emergency accommodation services] has to be Trans-led. Somewhere I can find community that’s like me.”

- TWNS Guest



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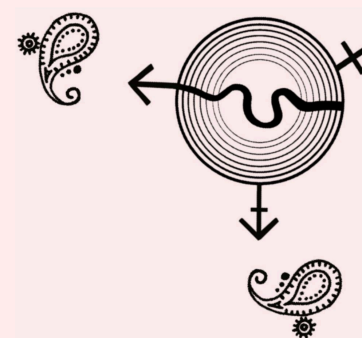
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RESOURCES

If you would like to get in touch with your local MP to discuss the lack of LGBTIQ+ housing services you can find their details here:

WRITE TO THEM .COM

If you don't have a place to stay:

Call your local authority/council's housing or homelessness prevention line

If it is out of hours (after 5pm) we would suggest contacting your local council's out of hours service for emergency accommodation.

SHELTER .ORG .UK has a guide on how to do this

Stonewall Housing LGBTIQ+ Housing Advice Line: 0800 6 404 404
Lines are open Mon-Fri 10am – 1pm, or complete their self referral form: **STONEWALL HOUSING .ORG**

If you are under 25:

AKT. ORG .UK

DEPAUL .ORG .UK

If you are experiencing domestic violence or abuse, or think you might be:

National Helplines -

Refuge: 0808 2000 247 Open 24 hours

Galop National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 999 5428

Monday – 9:15am to 8pm

Tuesday – 9:15am to 8pm

Wednesday – 9:15am to 4:30pm

Thursday – 9:15am to 4:30pm

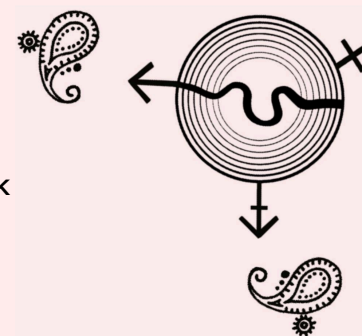
Friday – 9:15am to 4:30pm

Closed on weekends and for 1 hour daily between 1pm and 2pm.

Trans/Non-binary specific - Loving Me: 07902 478958

Monday to Thursday 10am until 4pm, Fridays 10am until 3pm

help@lovingme.uk



[illegible]