

THE LONDON QUEER HOUSING COALITION



A Manifesto for London Queer Community Housing Mayoral Election Campaign 2024

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THE LONDON QUEER HOUSING COALITION

The London Queer Housing Coalition recommends actions for the prospective next Mayor of London to commit to that will make a significant difference to the lives of the most disadvantaged queer people in the Capital. It will show an understanding and commitment to queer Londoners that goes far beyond the City Hall Pride reception.

This group was first formed in 2019 as the London LGBTQIA+ Community Housing Coalition (LLCHC) with support from Stonewall UK, Galop and the LGBT Consortium and a Manifesto was created for the 2020 Mayoral Election.

A MANIFESTO FOR LONDON QUEER COMMUNITY HOUSING MAYORAL ELECTION 2024 CAMPAIGN

This manifesto has been co-created in partnership by the London Queer Housing Coalition with consultation from members of our queer communities.

This iteration of the coalition is made up of "by and for" LGBTQIA+ Organisations working in the Housing and Homelessness sector in London and is actively open for new members.





WHY A MANIFESTO FOR QUEER COMMUNITY HOUSING?

There is a chronic lack of provision of queer community housing in London reflecting an absence of understanding the specific issues, needs and disadvantages facing many queer Londoners. This historic deficiency of awareness and investment must be rectified through the creation of a London wide pathway which is distinct from mainstream services (current services that are not identity specific) and is based on the expertise of all parts of the queer community.

We have used the latest available statistics in this manifesto to highlight the issues but we acknowledge that these often do not include many members of our communities as they can be limited to what has been collected by government agencies.

It is interesting to note that some of the research quoted in this document was also quoted in the previous manifesto, demonstrating the gaps in research and data collection for our communities.

Throughout this document the term 'queer' is used instead of the LGBTQIA+ acronym to include all gender and sexual orientations as an attempt to be as inclusive as possible to everyone in our communities. We acknowledge that not everyone describes themselves as queer and that for some this word brings negative connotations.

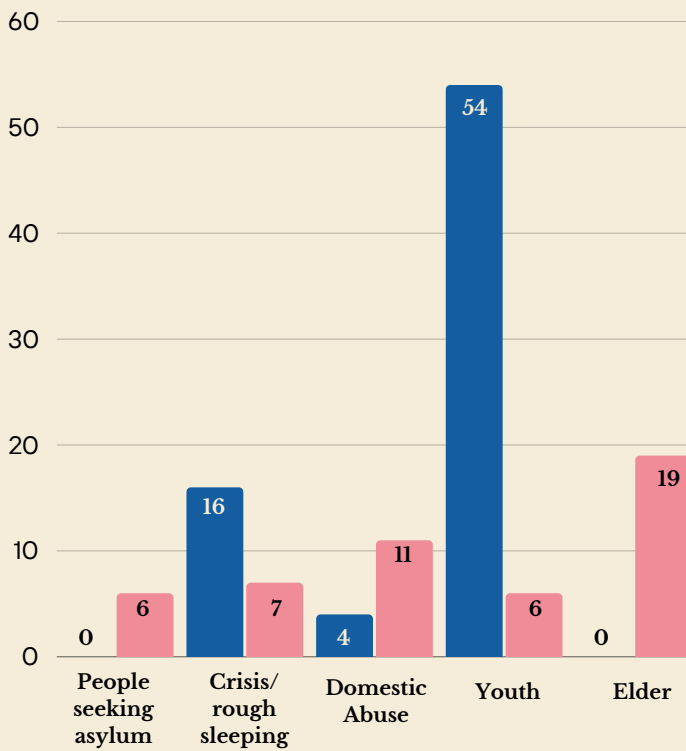


Members of The London Queer Housing Coalition have excellent relationships with the Greater London Authority, MOPAC and the Mayor's Office and the majority partner with them to deliver specific by and for housing schemes within the Capital.

This manifesto recognises the positive contribution the current Mayor's office provides to the Queer Housing and Homelessness Sector, however the recommendations mirror those produced in 2020.

These recommendations seek to further develop strategic engagement to ensure

*every
LGBTQIA+
Londoner has
somewhere safe
to call home.*



CHANGES FROM THE 2020 MANIFESTO

We no longer use the word Citizen to describe Londoners in recognition of the fact that not all queer homeless people are citizens of the UK.

STATISTICS ESTIMATE

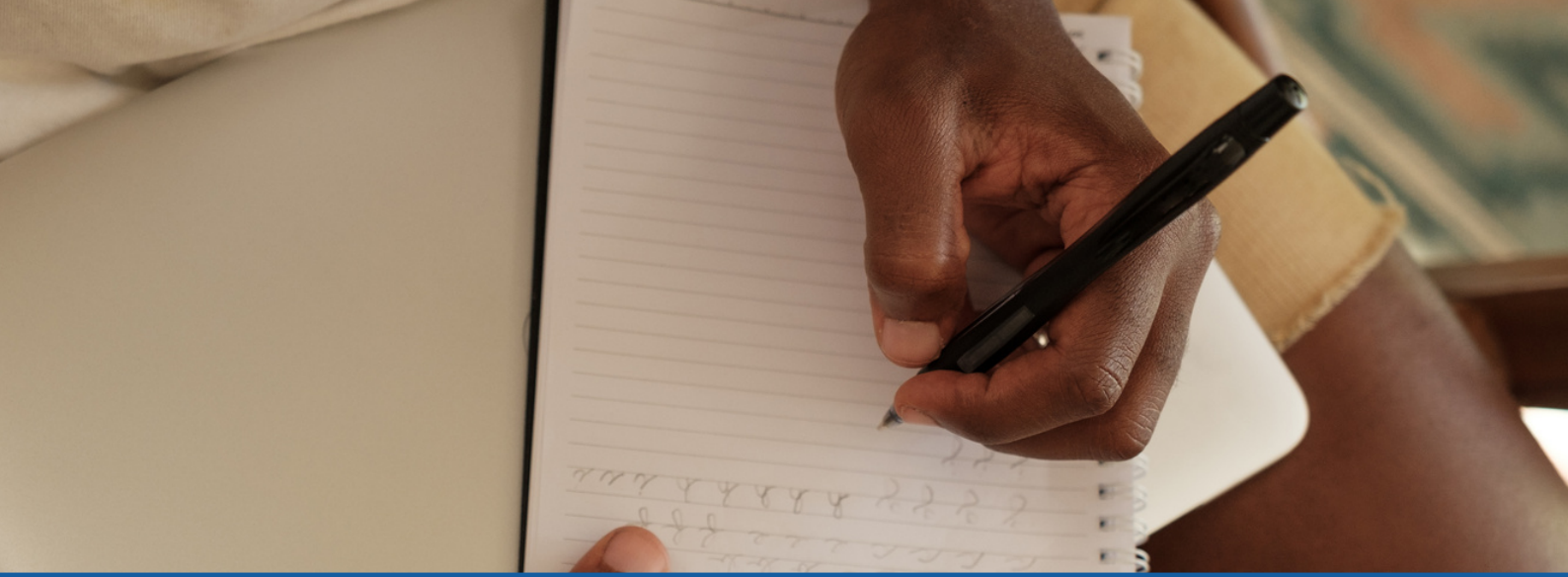
A number of the statistics used in this document are estimated which points to the fact that there is a gap in research for queer communities.

*Chart detailing LGBTQIA+ "by and for" beds available in London.
Data from the London Queer Housing Coalition*

KEY STATS

1. London has the highest proportion of people who openly identify as LGB in the UK, estimated to be at least 380,030 Londoners (4.27% percent of the population in 2021).
2. In the 2021 Census 0.9% of Londoners reported that they have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth, estimated to be at least 80,100 people.
3. Fraser et al (2019) argue that at least 20% of the homeless population are queer and Shelter (2023) estimate London's homeless at 167,469. This means more than 33,000 queer Londoners are currently homeless.
4. Almost one quarter (24%) of young people facing or experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQIA+.
5. A quarter (25%) of older LGBTQIA+ Londoners have a disability or health issue that required specific housing; 57% of whom had no care or support provision and 64% of whom said their housing did not meet their needs.
6. There are only 49 queer by and for specific community housing bed spaces in the Capital. 6 for those seeking asylum, 7 crisis accommodation beds, 11 domestic abuse, 6 youth and 19 shared ownership properties for older LGBTQIA+ people.
7. Queer community housing organisations support over 2250 people in London each year.
8. HouseProud & University Surrey research 'No Place Like Home' (2017) on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ social housing residents and found a third felt their housing provider was not able to deal with issues affecting them such as harassment.

1 and 2. Office of National Statistics (2021) UK Census Data 3. Fraser et al (2019) LGBTIQ+ Experiences of Homelessness and Shelter (2023) At Least 309000 Homeless in England Today. 4. akt (2015) LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of cause, prevalence, response and outcome. 5. Stonewall Housing, Tonic Housing, Opening Doors London (2020): Building Safe Choices 2020 'Our voices: LGBT+ later life housing demand in London' 6 and 7. LQHC Statistics 8 'No Place Like Home' (2017) HouseProud and University of Surrey



Key recommendations

1. Produce a queer housing strategy for London.

This will provide a policy context of understanding the specific issues queer people face and the required housing related interventions to address disadvantage. Placing clear information and evidence in a policy document will start to address the requirement for improved awareness of the needs of all our communities and why we become homeless, experience isolation and multiple disadvantages.

A Queer Housing Strategy and adequate investment in queer service provision will show that the housing policy focus must be deeper than just delivering housing numbers and tenures. In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, it must look at the equality of impact of access to services on queer people, and seek to remedy disadvantages.

The Strategy would look in detail at the needs and experiences of all queer Londoners at all stages of their lifespan and scrutinise provision for those that require crisis and high support accommodation. The strategy must demonstrate a clear understanding of the issues

surrounding queer homelessness and related issues such as mental health and the need for queer community support networks.

The Strategy should also consider why queer community spaces are essential as many people will not access services through the mainstream routes and/or mainstream services may lack awareness.

2. A London wide housing and support pathway for queer Londoners.

Individual Borough requirements for a local connection has a significant impact on the poor access to housing services for queer people.

Mayoral leadership should be pivotal in influencing local authorities to enable a London-wide approach to queer access to housing services, raising awareness of the issues of London being a queer Beacon City and therefore a local connection is not always legally required.

An understanding of the issues involved and need for specialist housing support options that are not available in all boroughs must underpin this approach, with the outcomes for queer people critical in measuring its success.

3. Establish a member portfolio area for queer housing and a complimenting officer role.

This role would be crucial to ensure the development and practical delivery of the queer Housing Strategy for London.

The role would be the link between the different departments of the Greater London Authority, the London Boroughs and the queer community housing groups.

The Greater London Authority portfolio would work alongside the London Queer Housing Coalition and ensure regular meetings with the community housing groups in order to ensure progress against targets and to use their expertise.

4. Fund queer training for commissioners to delivery staff.

The GLA should fund the development of strategic commissioning guidance developed in collaboration with queer people with lived experience of queer housing need, homelessness, domestic abuse and queer people seeking asylum.

Joined-up strategic commissioning should be viewed as essential for local, multi-borough and pan-London commissioning of LGBTIQIA+ services.

In addition to this, the GLA should fund a training review to identify the service specific skills and expertise gaps in respect of queer communities and their housing needs. In order to put measures in place to develop a greater understanding and knowledge of the specific interventions and support required by queer communities. Any training needs identified should be resourced, and mandatory training provided that is informed by the queer communities.

5. A coordinated approach to data collection

There is very little data available on the housing outcomes of queer people.

There needs to be better information about the housing needs and aspirations of queer people.

The GLA should require local authorities to monitor sexual orientation and gender identity within housing and homeless services, to ensure queer people and their specific needs are counted.

It is recognised that often mainstream organisations are not able to obtain this information because some people may not be prepared to come out to them.



Therefore, the Mayor should also support the queer community housing sector to gather robust data that will inform delivery and strategy. This should include the provision of a data recording system across queer networks and a revision of queer data recording within mainstream services and the Greater London Authority system CHAIN.

Local Authority data collected in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity in the context of housing and homelessness services should be published on the London Datastore to better inform commissioners and providers.

6. ‘Nothing About Us, Without Us’ Community- led principles with required funding.


The absence of understanding of the specific issues, needs and disadvantages facing queer Londoners by decision makers and mainstream organisations - particularly those with intersecting and multiple disadvantages - is at the root of many of the housing and support issues that our communities face.

This lack of awareness has led to the lack of consistent and adequately funded ‘by and for’ LGBTQIA+ specific housing and support services across every borough of London. A queer community-led approach is essential to ensure that this disadvantage is addressed appropriately and sensitively.

A genuine community-led development of a queer housing strategy will deliver the safe housing needed by queer Londoners so that they can live their authentic lives without fear.

Funding will be needed to ensure that consultation and delivery plans are accessible to all queer people in London with an active bias towards those who are more marginalised within our community, including those with multiple and complex needs and those that require crisis support.

This will also ensure that housing will be shaped by those who will live there and access points to housing, support and care services will be led by queer people who have lived experience of harassment, homelessness and domestic abuse.



We ask the mayor to recognise the crucial role that queer community housing organisations play in supporting individuals and in the prevention of homelessness and to celebrate that it is specific to queer people and different to mainstream providers.

A Queer Housing Strategy should be developed in coalition with our communities and the housing solutions should be delivered by queer community housing organisations.

Steven McIntyre
Chair of the London
Queer Housing Coalition
CEO Stonewall Housing

Founding Coalition members



THE OUTSIDE PROJECT
lgbtiqoutside.org

Since 2017 we have delivered frontline services as a collective of LGBTQIA+ community members and housing professionals with lived experience of homelessness and domestic abuse.

Our services respond to people in crisis through provision of London's only emergency shelter for LGBTQIA+ people, an Outreach service in Westminster and the founding of Star Support, London's only LGBTQIA+ domestic abuse refuge.

Our LGBTQIA+ Centre provides prevention, recovery and crisis intervention services and is home to other LGBTQIA grassroots organisations such as Book 28 Library, African Rainbow Family and Star Support.

The Outside Project currently provides 7 crisis bed spaces at our shelter in London. The shelter was initially funded by the LGBTQIA+ community in 2017 and has been funded by the GLA since 2018.

We provided 986 nights of emergency hotel bed spaces over the winter period 22/23 funded predominantly by DLUHC and the GLA.

Additional emergency bedspaces are funded by community donations throughout the year.



STONEWALL HOUSING
stonewallhousing.org

Stonewall Housing was founded in 1983 and everything they do is about making sure LGBTQIA+ people are afforded their basic human right to be housed in safe accommodation where they can live authentically and free from fear.

The organisation provides specialist housing advice, advocacy and support for LGBTQIA+ people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

They have specialist Mental Health, Domestic Abuse, Substance Misuse and Supported Accommodation Services as well as specialist services for young people under 25 and those over 50.

Stonewall Housing delivers specialist and awareness training for social housing staff and tenants, provides consultancy and information to other agencies about LGBTQIA+ housing issues and is the delivery partner for the HouseProud Pledge Scheme, accrediting social housing providers in LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

Stonewall Housing worked with over 2200 individuals in 2023.



First Brick Housing
firstbrickhousing.co.uk

First Brick Housing is a democratically run, soon to be member-owned, housing focused project founded for the benefit of LGBTQIA+ people.

Our mission is to understand the national picture of LGBTQIA+ housing needs and positively respond to this by building homes and community spaces of belonging for those who need it.

Entirely non-profit and governed by members of our community, we are community-led. This means everything we do is dreamed up by LGBTQIA+ people and created by our hands.

First Brick Housing has no current bed spaces and is currently completing a national research project into LGBTQIA+ housing needs, with the University of Derby, with results to be published in June 2024.

The information from this research will help inform the first scheme we build.



Star Support
starsupport.org.uk

Star Support is a new LGBTQIA+ domestic abuse refuge and community support service.

We are here to support London's queer community by providing specialist safe accommodation, community-centred recovery support and advice.

Star Support is a by-and-for service. This means that our services are founded by LGBTQIA+ people with lived experience of domestic violence and homelessness. They are delivered by LGBTQIA+ people, for LGBTQIA+ people.

Star Support operates an 11 bed refuge service with an aim of working with 22 survivors over a 12 month period. In addition to this we operate our weekly community recovery support group known as Star Lounge.

Within the last year 67 people have attended the group.



TONIC HOUSING
tonichousing.org.uk

Tonic is a community led not for profit housing association creating vibrant and inclusive urban LGBTQIA+ affirmative retirement communities where people can share common experiences, find mutual support and enjoy their later life.

Tonic is the UK's first provider of LGBTQIA+ affirmative retirement housing, providing a unique offering of housing with care that celebrates LGBTQIA+ identities with the community at the very heart of their homes.

Tonic@Bankhouse opened in 2021 within a retirement community comprising 84 affordable apartments over 14 floors, located on Albert Embankment in the iconic area of Vauxhall, Lambeth.

Tonic owns 19 of these 1 and 2 bed apartments, purchased with a loan from the Mayor of London.



MICRO RAINBOW
microrainbow.org

Micro Rainbow's vision is to create a world where queer people are free from discrimination, persecution and have equal opportunities in life, including in accessing employment, training, education, financial services, healthcare, housing, places of faith, and public services.

Micro Rainbow opened the first safe house in the United Kingdom dedicated solely to queer asylum seekers and refugees. Our houses provide a safe and temporary shelter for queer asylum seekers and refugees.

Micro Rainbow currently has 6 bed spaces in London Boroughs and currently provides support to approximately 250 people each year in the Capital.

We have in the past also assisted in providing emergency accommodation in hotels through IARSF managed by Homeless Link with GLA funds.

We have a track record in working successfully with the GLA to support LGBTQIA+ migrants in the Capital.

We are currently working on a GLA funded project under the Migrant Advice and Support Fund which is due to end in May 2024.



akt
akt.org.uk

akt (formerly the Albert Kennedy Trust) is a charity that supports LGBTQIA+ young people aged 16-25 who are facing or experiencing homelessness or living in hostile environments to find safe homes, employment, education or training and to celebrate their identities in order to improve their life outcomes.

akt helps young people: stay safe in a crisis; find emergency accommodation; access specialist support; develop skills, identify and achieve life goals. It does this by offering: access to advice from housing specialists, live chat, connections to mentors for one-to-one support; access to emergency support packs or tenancy starter packs.

akt has no current bed spaces but has a small unit opening in Lambeth in 2024.

Last year akt supported around 350 young people with intense case work. 37% of our national live chat comes from London young people and we financially supported 72 emergency support packs to get people into immediate housing people last year in London.

Other key evidence sources on queer housing issues include:

1/3

In the 2018 National LGBT+ Survey one third of the 108,000 respondents said that there had been a serious incident in the home within the previous year.

44%

Recent research by akt found that less than half (44%) of LGBTQIA+ young people surveyed were aware of housing support services the last time they experienced homelessness.

45%

In 2011 Stonewall found that 45% of older LGB people experience discrimination while using social care services and that 73% of older LGB people express discomfort in disclosing their sexuality to care home staff.

35%

of LGBTQIA+ young people who accessed a service whilst homeless recall being asked by service providers to provide information about their gender identity and sexual orientation. Just one third (33%) felt safe to disclose this information.

60%

In the 2017 'No Place Like Home' study of LGBTQIA+ social housing residents 32% felt their neighbourhood was not a safe place to live as an LGBTQIA+ person; this was 60% amongst trans respondents.

79%

In 2020 Tonic Housing found that 79% of LGBTQIA+ older Londoners surveyed would prefer an LGBT+ affirming or accredited retirement community with only 1% stating that they would prefer a general retirement community. Of those who said that their current housing does not meet their needs 31% cited accessibility issues and 12% cited ASB and LGBT+ related abuse.

Further support

The LGBT Consortium are a national specialist infrastructure and Membership organisation working to strengthen and support LGBTQIA+ groups, organisations and projects so they can deliver direct services and campaign for individual rights.

They join the LQHC as secretariat. consortium.lgbt

We collectively use the term queer in our manifesto to express our commitment to include all members of our communities, although our individual organisations may use other terms in their own work.

We have used the latest available statistics in this manifesto to highlight issues, but we acknowledge that these often do not include many members of our communities as they are limited to what has been collected by government agencies.

1. Government Equalities Office (2018) National LGBT Survey report.
2. akt (2021) The LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness Report.
3. University of Surrey (2017) No Place Like Home
4. Stonewall (2011) Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual People in Later Life.
5. Tonic Housing (2020) Building Safe Choices 'Our Voices: LGBT+ later life housing demand in London'.