



Leaving no one behind

THE LGBTIQ+ PLAN FOR LONDON

A recovery and renewal plan for
London's LGBTIQ+ communities



INTRODUCTION

The LGBTIQ+ Plan for London was developed through a series of working groups and wider engagement with London-based Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQ+) organisations between January and May 2021.

The plan echoes the challenges, ideas and visions of 95 organisations across London, who have all been integral to designing and developing the content of this document.

In 2020, the Mayor of London published the London Recovery Programme as a long-term plan to address the impact of Covid-19 and reinvigorate among other London's communities, economies, and environments.

While we acknowledge the limitations to this plan, we also want to emphasise that our aim is to maintain the plan as a living document and roadmap for change within and beyond London's LGBTIQ+ sector.

The LGBTIQ+ Plan for London aims to (1) Prevent London's LGBTIQ+ communities from being left behind, and (2) Ensure that they will play an instrumental role at all stages of the recovery and renewal of our city.

THE LGBTIQ+ PLAN FOR LONDON AIMS TO

(1) PREVENT LONDON'S LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITIES FROM BEING LEFT BEHIND, AND

(2) ENSURE THAT LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITIES WILL PLAY AN INSTRUMENTAL ROLE AT ALL STAGES OF THE RECOVERY AND RENEWAL OF OUR CITY.

The LGBTIQ+ Plan for London is aimed at community organisations, funders, local and pan-London authorities (incl. the GLA), London Councils, NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local businesses – and anyone who shares our core principles and vision of transforming London into the world’s safest and most welcoming city for all LGBTIQ+ people.

Background

Even though London has the highest LGBTIQ+ population in the UK, experiences of discrimination, prejudice, and violence are still common for many LGBTIQ+ Londoners.

Discrimination, violence and prejudice against LGBTIQ+ people fall within a wider range of structural inequalities, which may impact a person’s access to basic needs such as housing, meaningful employment or education, health services and financial security and the like.

The ways in which LGBTIQ+ Londoners are affected by structural inequalities varies across individual identity aspects such as

race, class, age, gender identity, faith, disabilities, intersex variations, immigration status, health conditions, sexual orientation and more.

What we know

It is a complex task to disaggregate meaningful data on London’s LGBTIQ+ communities as the experiences of many communities are underrepresented in research, and few LGBTIQ+ research projects focus solely on London. We do, however, know that



LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE ARE AT A MUCH HIGHER RISK OF EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, SELF-HARM AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE THAN THE CISGENDER HETEROSEXUAL POPULATION DUE TO CONTINUOUS DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE AND PREJUDICE.¹

1. Mental Health Foundation (2021) Mental health statistics: LGBTIQ+ people

MANY LGBTIQ+ LONDONERS ARE OSTRACISED BY THEIR COMMUNITIES AND RELATIVES AND ARE OFTEN LEFT WITHOUT ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING. LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUTH ARE AT A HIGHER RISK OF LIVING IN INADEQUATE HOUSING.²

MORE THAN ONE IN THREE LGBTIQ+ LONDONERS STRUGGLE TO HAVE ENDS MEET DAILY DUE TO EARNING FAR BELOW THE MINIMUM WAGE.³

ACCORDING TO PARAPRIDE, MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY IS RECOGNISED AS HAVING A DISABILITY, YET ADEQUATE SPECIALIST SERVICE PROVISIONS AND ACCESSIBLE SPACES ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN.⁴

A HIGH NUMBER OF LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY TRANS, NON-BINARY AND INTERSEX PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR FACE SERIOUS HEALTH INEQUALITIES, VIOLATIONS AND HATE CRIMES ON AND OFFLINE, AS WELL AS HARMFUL PRACTICES SUCH AS SO-CALLED "CONVERSION THERAPIES" AND UNETHICAL INTERSEX GENITAL MUTILATION PRACTICES.

**MORE THAN
50%**

OF LGBTIQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE WORRY ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH DAILY⁵



2. London LGBTIQ+ Community Housing Coalition (2021) A Manifesto for London LGBTIQ+ Community Housing: Mayoral Election 2021 Campaign 3. McDermott, D. T. Luyt, R (2016) Still Out There: An exploration of LGBT Londoners' unmet needs. A technical report produced for Trust for London 4. Parapride (Not dated) Pride in Everyone 5. Just Like Us (2021).LGBT+ young people twice as likely to feel lonely and worry daily about mental health than peers

The Covid-19 pandemic has deepened pre-existing inequalities, challenges and further isolated our communities. Our communities have suffered losses and faced isolation at an unparalleled scale, and especially people of colour and disabled people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic due to structural inequalities. In addition to posing a serious physical health risk, the pandemic has also negatively impacted LGBTIQ+ people's safety and mental health.

Through closures and lockdowns the Covid-19 pandemic has diminished the ways in which our communities connect and find support. It has forcibly kept many in toxic and harmful housing environments, all while pushing the capacities of the few existing LGBTIQ+ specific services far beyond their limits.

61% of LGBTIQ+ service providers, who are largely volunteer led with limited geographical reach, have experienced unprecedented demand while also losing funds.⁶

For example, nearly half of Consortium member organisations are worried about their financial capacities to deliver core services⁷ over the next six months.

The recovery of London is without doubt an unprecedented challenge for both stakeholders and community organisations. Ensuring those most marginalised are at the forefront of decision-making will be key to its success.

Now more than ever, there is a need for bold action to address the stark inequalities LGBTIQ+ people have been facing in the capital. London is long overdue for a true meaningful collaboration and partnerships across sectors and institutions, led by communities most impacted by the pandemic.

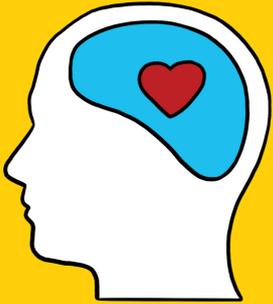
We call on all stakeholders to commit to building the most just, equitable and safest city for all LGBTIQ+ Londoners, regardless of race, ethnicity, faith, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, sex characteristics, disability, economic background and immigration status. Let us build a London together where everyone can thrive being their whole selves.

Our key asks

- Greater London Authority, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders commit to meaningfully advancing all missions in this document, focusing their efforts on London becoming the safest, most inclusive and welcoming city for LGBTIQ+ people by 2025.
 - Development of a joint cross-sectoral LGBTIQ+ recovery strategy led by the Greater London Authority that will address housing, safety, and the need for adequate provision of services and community spaces.
 - LGBTIQ+ communities and organisations are meaningfully involved at all levels of the design and implementation of the Recovery Programme for London.
 - Commitment to a strong and visible support in combating the hostile messaging and environment for trans and non-binary communities by adopting our suggested initiatives.
- A Pan-London commitment to providing specialist LGBTIQ+ service provision across the Greater London area.
 - Equitable and easy access to jobs, opportunities and services for LGBTIQ+ Londoners, with tailored support for LGBTI women, and queer, trans, and intersex people of colour.
 - A commitment to the protection of existing community spaces, centres and venues; as well as long-term investment into (1) new fully accessible spaces and (2) ownership pathways for LGBTI women, queer and trans people of colour and/or faith.

The following missions are aligned with parts of GLA's Recovery Programme and focus on areas highlighted by the community. Whilst we recognise that these missions do not fully encompass all needs of our communities, we centre the needs that our communities have identified as most pressing at this point in time.

MISSIONS



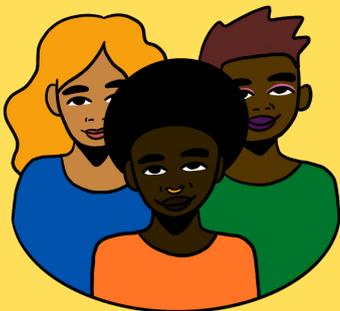
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MENTAL
HEALTH



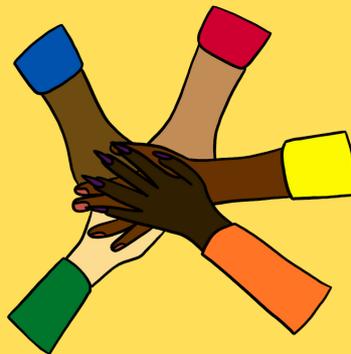
2
TRANS AND
NON -BINARY
LONDONERS



3
HOUSING



4
YOUTH



5
COMMUNITY
SPACE AND
SAFETY



6
CULTURE
AND
SPORTS

MENTAL HEALTH



LGBTIQA+ MENTAL HEALTH

Our mission

By 2025 every LGBTIQA+ Londoner is guaranteed access to LGBTIQA+ specific and intersectional mental health provision that sustains their wellbeing.

What we know

There is a distinct lack of LGBTIQA+ specialist mental health services across London. Most mainstream services do not understand or meet the needs of LGBTIQA+ people.

Queer, trans, and intersex people of colour are especially at risk of being without an adequate mental health offer.⁸

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on LGBTIQA+ mental health.

The Queerantime study found that 61% of queer and trans Londoners asked reported symptoms of depression,¹⁰ with young trans and non-binary people being disproportionately affected.¹¹

The pandemic has highlighted the need for more specialised mental health services with higher capacity that understand, meet and reflect the needs of London's LGBTIQA+ communities.

THE QUEERANTIME STUDY FOUND THAT 61% OF QUEER AND TRANS LONDONERS HAD EXPERIENCED DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS DURING LOCKDOWN.

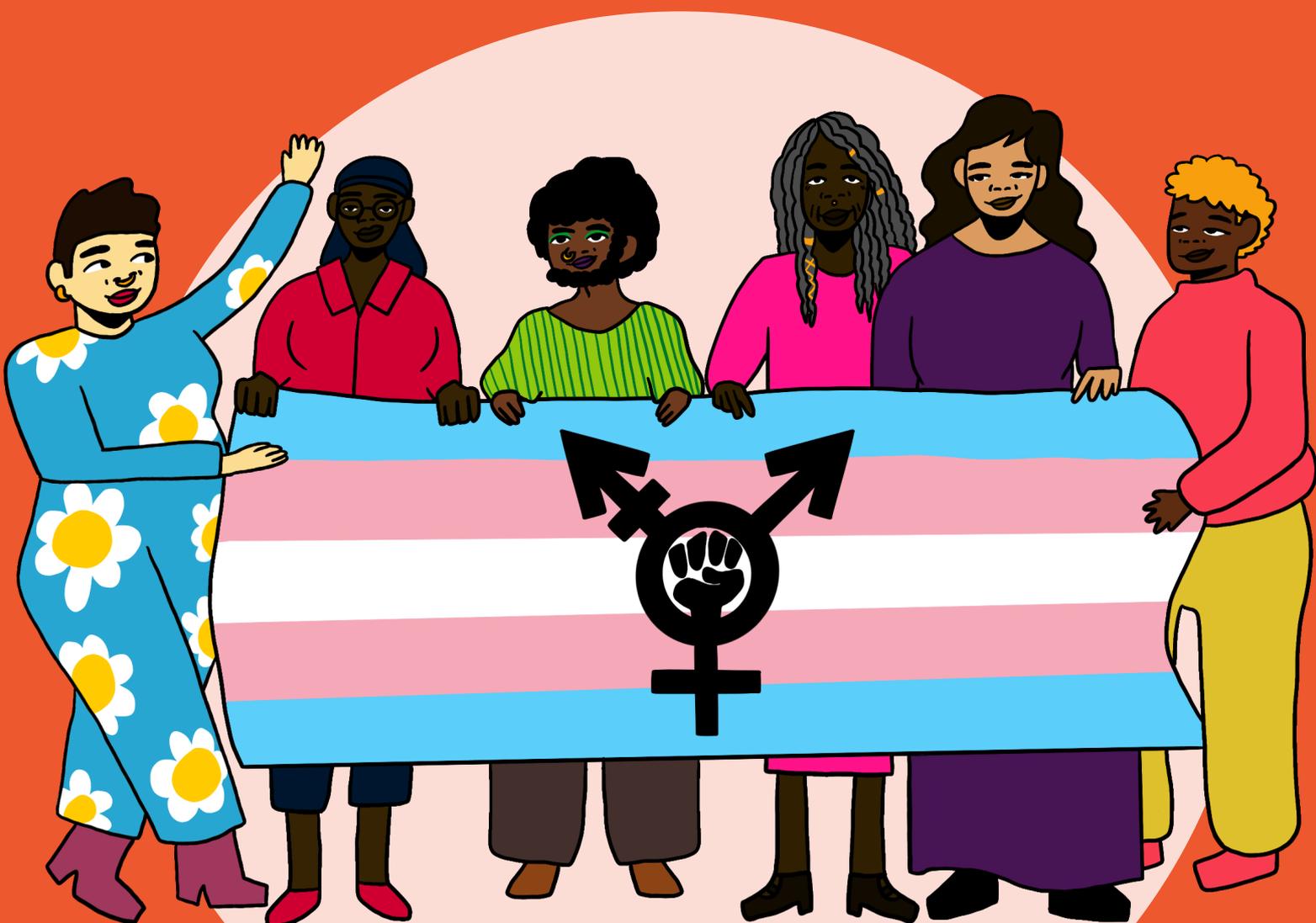
8. O'Mara, L (2019) This is what therapy is really like for queer people of colour 9. Greater London Authority (2020) Building Strong Communities 10. UCL News (2020) Survey finds majority of LGBTQ+ community showing signs of stress and depression 11. Batty, D (2020) Lockdown having 'pernicious impact' on LGBT community's mental health

LGBTIQA+ MENTAL HEALTH

What we want

- Targeted investment in protecting existing LGBTIQA+ specific mental health services.
- Investment into the development of specialist mental health services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer and asexual people who are over 50.
- Stronger and better coordinated collaboration between LGBTIQA+ mental health support services, with a consistent mental health assessment, 24 hour support, and guaranteed continuity of care.
- Targeted funding for physical spaces and LGBTIQA+ specific counselling and therapy, including early intervention, suicide prevention, IAPT and specialist crisis support with specific focus on people of colour and people of faith.
- Investment into delivering public sector training led by LGBTIQA+ service providers focused on LGBTIQA+ people across all intersections and their mental health, the long-term effects of living with HIV and other medical conditions.
- A support system for new LGBTIQA+ Londoners (incl. international migrants, people seeking asylum and refugees) to ensure that they are aware of the services available to them, and are better able to find support and participate in London's LGBTIQA+ communities.

TRANS AND NON-BINARY LONDONERS



TRANS AND NON-BINARY LONDONERS

Our mission

By 2025, London will be the most trans-inclusive city in the world, offering a range of publicly funded, safe, accessible trans-led specialised services and community spaces.

What we know

Trans incl. non-binary people in Greater London face multiple disadvantages and barriers to accessing services and support, as well as housing, employment and healthcare.¹²

DURING THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF LOCKDOWN IN 2020, THE LGBT FOUNDATION'S HELPLINE EXPERIENCED A 100% INCREASE IN CALLS ABOUT TRANSPHOBIA.

The rise in transphobic hate crimes across London is extremely worrying, with Galop UK recording a 50% increase in transphobic hate crimes since December 2016.¹³

The pandemic has led to a further increase in transphobia. For example, during the first three weeks of lockdown in 2020, the LGBT Foundation's helpline experienced a 100% increase in calls about transphobia.¹⁴

Trans-focused groups and organisations are largely informal and volunteer-run, receiving little or no funding. There is very limited tailored support for trans people of colour in London and research into their needs.

Many trans Londoners, particularly older trans people and trans people of colour are at risk of falling through the gaps between services and systems, left with no support and inadequate care.

12. Bachmann L., C. Gooch, B (2018) LGBT in Britain: Trans Report. 13. Kelley, P. Paterson, P (2008) Filling in the Blanks: LGBT Hate Crime in London 14. LGBT Foundation (2020) Hidden Figures: The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities in the UK (third edition)

TRANS AND NON-BINARY LONDONERS

What we want

- Active support and funding of existing and new trans including non-binary community spaces at least in every cardinal direction of London (South/East/North/West), hosting a variety of services such as counselling, wellbeing initiatives, information and advice, and peer support.
- Advancing trans and non-binary people's health and wellbeing by aligning the waiting time for Gender Identity Development Services (GIDS), Gender Identity Clinics (GICs) and specialist individual counselling with NHS waiting times for other services.
- Mandatory trans awareness training to be introduced in the public sector at a pan-London level, including but not limited to local authorities, education, domestic violence refuges, primary care and London GPs.
- GLA to host and fund a representative body led by diverse trans groups. They must be provided with support, resources and opportunities to focus on trans representation, counteract transphobic narratives pushed by mainstream media, and address hate crimes on and offline.
- A London wide Trans Action Plan by and for trans people, ensuring that trans including non-binary people across all ages are included in mainstream services and are guaranteed access to public spaces safely and with dignity.
- Investment into existing and new QTIPOC-led and focused projects and initiatives such as new community centres, research, employment schemes and public sector reviews of inclusion and best practice.

HOUSING



LGBTIQA+ HOUSING

Our mission

By 2025, there will be a coordinated pan-London approach to LGBTIQA+ housing services with a clear pathway of access to services and accommodation for everyone.

What we know

Access to adequate housing is a key barrier in the lives of many LGBTIQA+ people.¹⁵ Research shows that almost 1 in 5 of LGBTIQA+ people have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.¹⁶

These numbers rise to 1 in 4 for trans people, and nearly 1 in 3 among LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities.¹⁷ Moreover, 1 in 4 older LGBTIQA+ Londoners have a disability or health issue that requires specific housing, yet 64% said their housing does not meet their needs.¹⁸

The Covid-19 pandemic has put many LGBTIQA+ Londoners in precarious housing situations.

For instance, drivers of LGBTIQA+ youth homelessness have been accelerated: a recorded a 118% increase in new referrals from April to August in 2020, compared to the same time in 2019.¹⁹

The few LGBTIQA+ specific services that host bed spaces in London are experiencing an unprecedented demand but have limited resources to meet it.

In order for London to be a city where all LGBTIQA+ people can thrive, these and wider housing and support issues must be addressed immediately to ensure that LGBTIQA+ Londoners can live safe and dignified lives.

**RESEARCH
SHOWS THAT 1
IN 5 LGBTIQA+
PEOPLE HAVE
EXPERIENCED
HOMELESSNESS.**

LGBTIQA+ HOUSING

What we want

- GLA to work with community housing organisations to produce a LGBTIQA+ Housing Strategy for London.
- GLA and local councils to work with community housing organisations local councils to build a London wide support pathway of access to accommodation and support services for LGBTIQA+ people.
- Adequate funding for existing and new provision for LGBTIQA+ community led housing in the capital, including crisis support and emergency accommodation.
- Adequate funding to enable a coordinated LGBTIQA+ awareness training to be rolled out for commissioners and delivery staff in local councils in the capital and local authorities.
- GLA to require local authorities to monitor sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics within housing and homeless services, to ensure LGBTIQA+ people of all ages and intersections and their specific needs are counted.

The housing mission builds upon the London Manifesto for LGBTIQA+ Housing developed by the LLHC (London LGBTIQ Housing Coalition). The London Manifesto for LGBTIQA+ Housing is an integral part for achieving the vision of the overall London LGBTIQA+ plan.

YOUTH



LGBTIQA+ YOUTH

Our mission

By 2025, LGBTIQA+ youth in all London boroughs have access to coordinated and inclusive education and statutory services, as well as youth specific mental health support.

What we know

Many LGBTIQA+ young people still grow up in London facing discrimination and feeling unsafe to be themselves. With very limited service provision and spaces across the capital, many LGBTIQA+ young people are left out with no support and denied basic rights such as the right to shelter.

**TWO THIRDS OF
LGBTIQA+ YOUNG
PEOPLE
EXPERIENCED
DEPRESSION IN
THE LAST YEAR.**

The pandemic has exacerbated those challenges for young people and has further isolated many.

Over half of LGBTIQA+ youth worry daily about their mental health during the pandemic and are twice as likely to feel lonely compared to their straight peers, new research has found, as experts warn the pandemic is posing a huge risk to queer young people.²⁰

New research from LGBT+ charity Just Like Us asked 2,934 secondary school pupils how they are faring during the pandemic.

The charity found that more than half of LGBTIQA+ young people worry about their mental health daily, compared to just 26% of their straight peers.

It also found that Black LGBTIQA+ youth are more likely to be concerned about their mental health with almost two-thirds worrying about this on a daily basis, compared to just over half of white LGBTIQA+ young people.²¹

LGBTIQA+ YOUTH

What we want

- Designated London LGBTIQA+ youth centres with multiple holistic services to open by 2025.
- All LGBTIQA+ young people in London have access to personal mentoring and support, including employment and further and higher education opportunities regardless of borough.
- All trans, non-binary and gender diverse young people have access to the services they need without lengthy waiting times or additional barriers.
- Targeted funding for youth-led LGBTIQA+ organisations to develop programmes or training to counter HBTI bullying and discrimination in all forms and levels of education.
- A pan-London coordinated and sustainable LGBTIQA+ youth service provision, including specific mental health support designed for and by young people with clear referral pathways, reduced waiting times and continuous support.
- A platform for LGBTIQA+ young leaders is set-up to increase their visibility and their meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making, service-design, and policymaking to increase a sense of ownership and investment in London's future.

LGBTIQA+ COMMUNITY SPACE AND SAFETY



LGBTIQA+ COMMUNITY SPACES AND SAFETY

Our mission

By 2025, every LGBTIQA+ Londoner will be guaranteed access to alternative pathways to justice, safety and inclusive LGBTIQA+ run and owned community spaces.

What we know

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a severely negative impact on LGBTIQA+ Londoners' safety.

Safe spaces have been forced to close temporarily or permanently, and specialist LGBTIQA+ support services are stretched beyond capacity.

Cases of domestic abuse have risen, and many LGBTIQA+ people have been stuck in toxic housing arrangements and hostile environments with HBTI phobic relatives or flatmates.²²

93% REPORTED EXPERIENCES OF TRANSPHOBIA IN THE LAST YEAR.²³

LGBTIQA+ issues remain largely misunderstood within mainstream services and LGBTIQA+ experiences of abuse are often no exception.

Continuous high levels of hate crimes against LGBTIQA+ people are further cause for deep concern, with trans people particularly impacted.

There are only a few black and QTIPOC owned and led community spaces across Greater London. The absence of such spaces is held in place by an insecure funding landscape, lack of pathways to community ownership and competition over limited resources.²⁴

Going forward, existing and new spaces must be supported in developing (financial) sustainability so that LGBTIQA+ Londoners can easily access spaces in which they feel safe to be their whole selves.

²². LGBT Foundation (2021) ²³. Bradley, C (2020) Transphobic Hate Crime Report: The scale and impact of transphobic violence, abuse and prejudice ²⁴. Greater London Authority (2021)

LGBTIQA+ COMMUNITY SPACES AND SAFETY

What we want

- GLA funds and supports the creation of more LGBTIQA+ specific support access points, including high support, crisis accommodation and emergency housing for LGBTIQA+ people with complex needs, and people with diverse family constellations.
- Guaranteed easy access to alternative sources of justice with additional hate crime support services across London.
- At least one LGBTIQA+ owned and run community centre in every corner of London with guaranteed long-term financial security, space and capacity to provide a variety of services (e.g. South/West/North/East London).
- Establish LGBTIQA+ forums in every borough and ensure that they have the opportunity to feed into community planning, policy and decision-making.
- GLA commits to an Action Plan against harmful practices against LGBTIQA+ people.
- Investment into protecting and further developing existing community spaces, with specific support, resources and tools for community ownership by queer, trans and intersex people of colour.
- Community-led review on trans women's access to mainstream domestic violence services, and establishing a mandatory trans-led training scheme for crisis support services, or other feasible alternatives.

LGBTIQA+ CULTURE AND SPORTS



LGBTIQA+ CULTURE AND SPORTS

Our mission

By 2025, every LGBTIQA+ Londoner will be able to produce, display and participate in LGBTIQA+ culture and sports in inclusive, accessible and affordable venues.

What we know

LGBTIQA+ culture and sports offers provide much needed spaces for LGBTIQA+ people to engage in meaningful activities, connect and find community.²⁵

The London LGBTIQA+ culture and sports scene share challenges of severe lack of venues, access to existing venues, limited funding opportunities for artists and poor coordination of resources.

DESPITE HAVING THE LARGEST LGBTIQA+ POPULATION IN THE UK, VERY FEW, SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE LGBTIQA+ SPACES EXIST IN LONDON.

Despite having the largest LGBTIQA+ population in the UK, very few, safe, inclusive, and accessible LGBTIQA+ spaces exist in London. In fact, since 2006 the number of LGBTIQA+ social venues in London have declined by 58%.²⁶

The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the situation for LGBTIQA+ venues, artists and freelancers, while LGBTIQA+ sports groups are facing issues of member retention, visibility and limited venue capacity.²⁷

When London emerges from the pandemic, it is expected that competition over venues will be unparalleled, for LGBTIQA+ artists and athletes alike. Guaranteeing higher access to venues, full accessibility and inclusivity is therefore essential for the recovery and further development of the LGBTIQA+ culture and sports London has to offer.

25. Lawley, S (2020) LGBT+ Sports and Physical Activity Groups: Coronavirus Lockdown Survey 26. Greater London Authority (2017) LGBT+ venues in crisis - London has lost 58 per cent since 2006 27. Lawley, S (2020)

LGBTIQA+ CULTURE AND SPORTS

What we want

- All venues in London incorporate a LGBTIQA+ safety policy and specialist queer, trans, intersex people of colour training for staff and security.
- Targeted outward promotion towards LGBTIQA+ people of colour communities so that all of London's diverse LGBTIQA+ population can easily access both its culture and sport scenes.
- Financial and practical support for freelancers and independent artists, as well as for events that are not bound to a specific venue or group.
- Establishment of a LGBTIQA+ liaison officer role which will support LGBTIQA+ sports groups in advocating their needs on a pan-London level.
- Funding towards existing and new accessible LGBTIQA+ multi use venues that can be used for both sport and culture purposes, as well as alcohol free spaces, pop-ups and other venues that nurture the art, heritage and talent LGBTIQA+ London has to offer.
- GLA, sports and culture bodies will support and engage more with LGBTIQA+ sports and culture provision, by e.g. backing bids for larger sports and cultural international events (such as Gay Games, EuroGames, WorldPride, Rainbow Cities, Arts and Film festivals etc).



***Illustrated and designed by
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