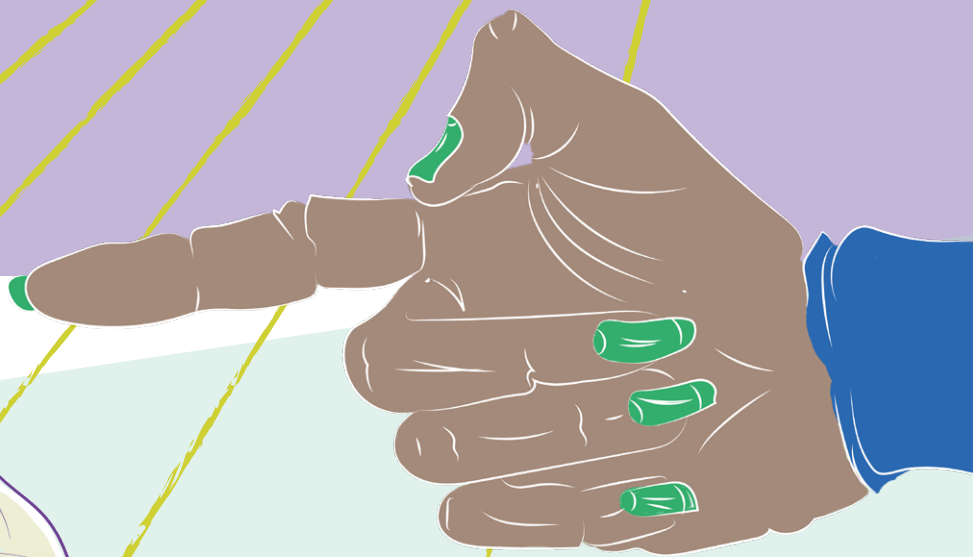
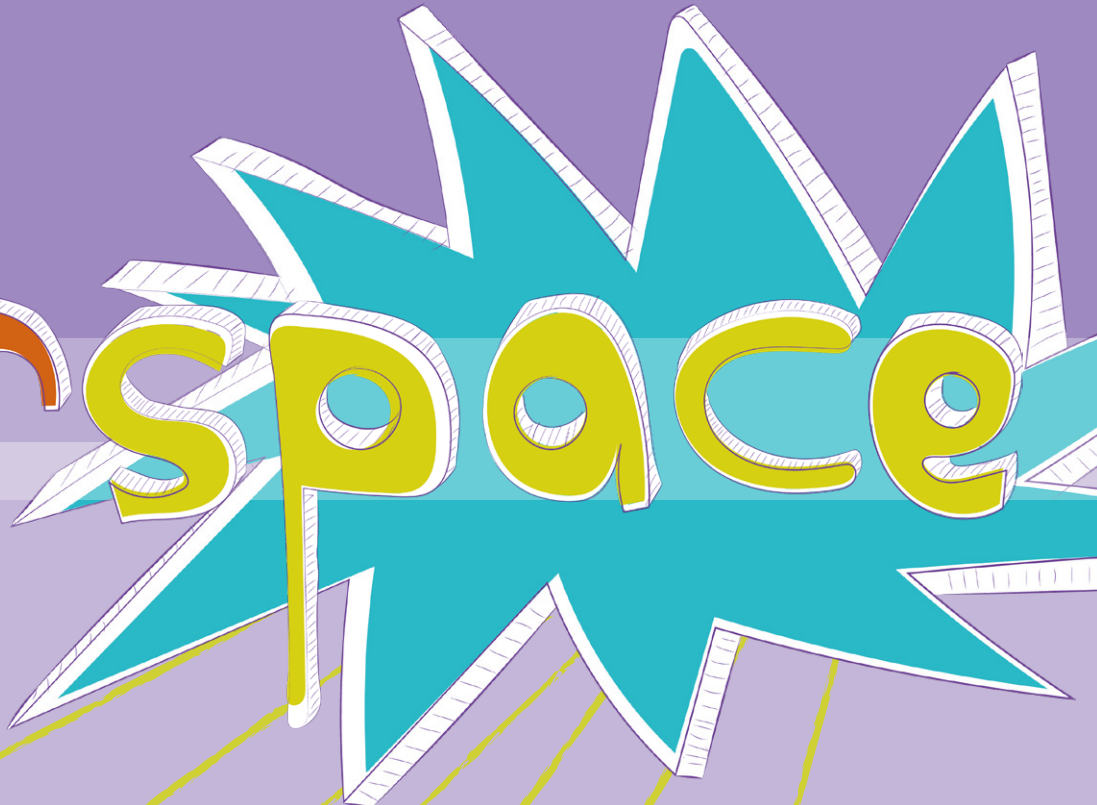


herspace

SPRING 2021



Women's
homelessness matters

Time

FOR

Change

women's homelessness
can be ended



THANK YOU for
attending the women's
homelessness matters
conference!

We wanted to raise awareness of the needs of women experiencing homelessness at a time when there is a unique opportunity to review and re-set what could be on offer.

Across the three themes of health, housing and motherhood, we heard a call for a gendered approach to that review, with particular attention to women from more marginalised or migrant groups.

We aimed to promote the voices of people who have experienced homelessness.

Our peers were open and willing to share their experiences and we are calling for their input into the design and delivery of future services – including homelessness, health or family.

Let us make sure that past inequalities are not built into future plans, and that services for women are designed around and by those who use them.

We are very grateful to all our speakers for giving up their time so generously and bringing their valuable insights and contributions.

We're also grateful to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for its funding and enabling us to send you this incredible zine, which was created throughout the conference by Dr Carmen Byrne as a record of what was said and a reminder of the key themes that were covered.

We hope it challenges, inspires and makes you think as we work together to end homelessness for everyone.

If you want to talk about any of this, or take any of the themes further then please get in touch at bestpractice@crisis.org.uk

EMMA, Rachel and Sarah



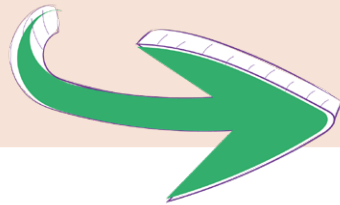
Together
we will end
homelessness



Solace
Peer Support

WINSTON
CHURCHILL
MEMORIAL
TRUST

THE JOURNEY in numbers



20

speakers and panel members shared research, good practice and ideas for change

MORE THAN

500



people joined the audience over three days

MORE THAN

230



ideas and interactions were added to our themed question boards by our audience

KEY CONFERENCE

notes

Themes from across the conference



Women's experiences of health, homelessness, family and motherhood are interconnected, so policy and approaches to services also need to be interconnected

We need wrap around support with gender and trauma informed approaches, which recognises that women have different needs at different times of their lives

Time is important... whether taking the time to listen to women, taking the time to build trust or giving services more time (through longer term funding) to work with women



There should be no judgement about women's experiences

Women should legally be seen as mothers whether their children are currently living with them or not

Women need to be involved in all decisions made about their lives and futures



There's a big awareness of what needs to change... now we need to work together to make those changes happen

WOMEN WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS WANT YOU TO KNOW THESE IMPORTANT THINGS

Homeless women
are the unseen

Women are more likely to
have undiagnosed conditions

Make it easier for
women to stay with their
children

listen

Isolation is even worse when
homeless during Covid. There's
isolation & surveillance in institutions
which are supposed to help you.
Not everyone is making good lifestyle
choices which impacts everyone

It's not just about Covid...
with extra restrictions in place
it can decline someone's mental
health very rapidly



There are more women who are homeless than those you see rough sleeping

Women are sleeping on the buses as too afraid to sleep outside... it's difficult to get help

Feeling shame and you don't know who to trust

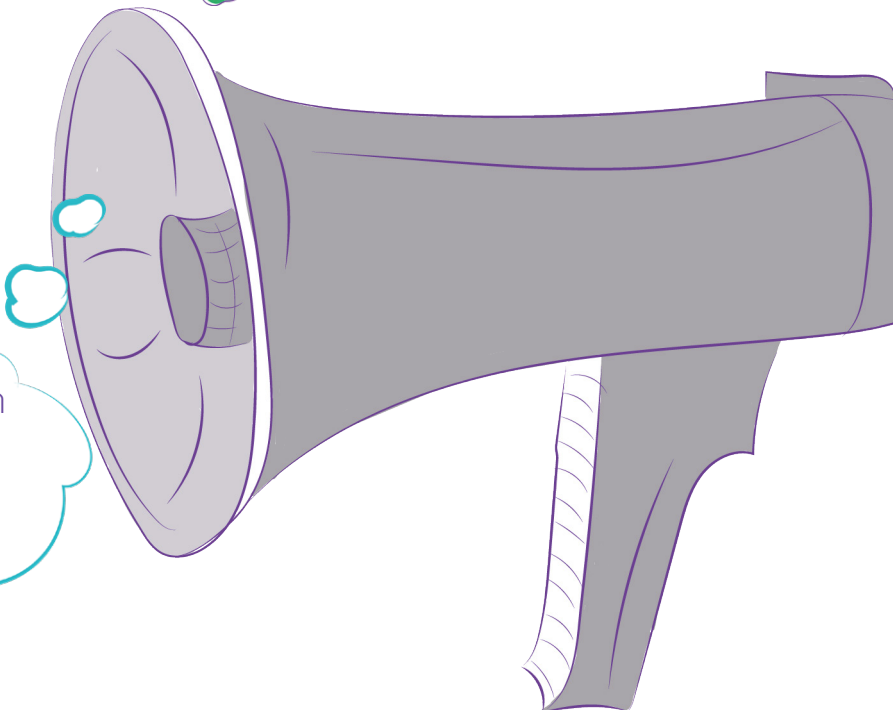
Budgets at shelters are given to condoms but not to sanitary products

Menopausal women are also experiencing homelessness

Knowledge (about systems) is power

It's very hard to ask for help... It's still taboo

Cis women and transwomen are more at risk of rape, abuse, manipulation if street homeless



There's a lack of support for women <35 who aren't mothers and haven't got a mental health diagnosis

It's hard to navigate the system, it's hard to move on

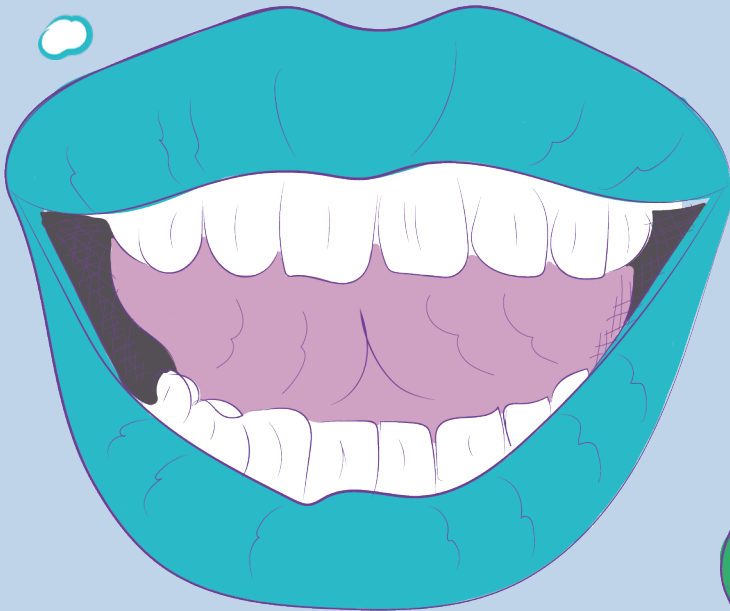
Women more likely to be pressured to be unpaid/ live-in carers and considered 'no fixed abode' rather than homeless

Cis women are more likely to be manipulated into sex-for-rent situations

More street homeless women have dogs, which aren't allowed in shelters/ temp accom/ many rented properties

It's harder for cis and trans women to seek help in the first place due to gendered social pressures

It's hard finding a safe place to sleep



Need different descriptions of homelessness... sleeping on sofa, staying in a relationship as nowhere else to go

Moving out of domestic violence should be the start of something better

Bring it to the fore

It's a double whammy... you look unkempt, when in society women need to look good

There are less single parent safe spaces

It's really isolating

Covid has negatively impacted women far more than men based on our already lower incomes and the lack of social/ economic value attached to the jobs we tend to fill



Domestic violence is often the start to women being homeless. There's nowhere to go, we need more safe houses

More refugee status cis women are affected by 'no recourse to public funds' than men (as many men leave their wives once they gain their own settled status)

WOMEN AND Health

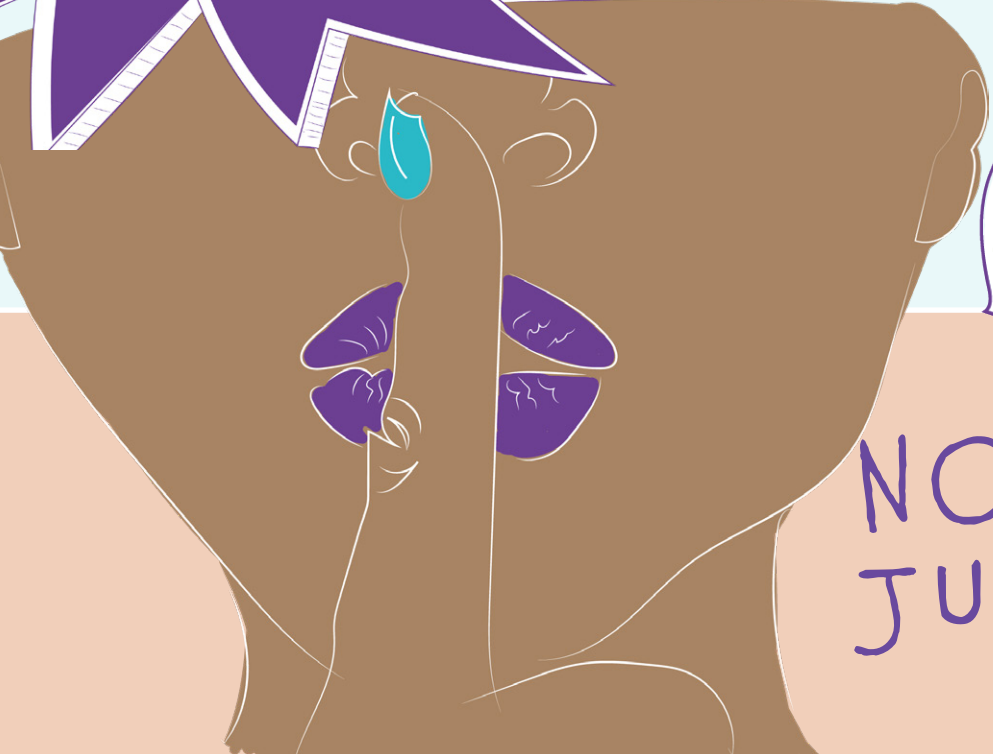
It's hard to recover from health issues when homeless and being homeless causes health issues

Women who are homeless experience stigma, isolation and higher rates of mental health diagnosis

NO MORE SILENCE

42 YEARS OLD

The average lifespan of women experiencing homelessness is 42 compared to average lifespan of 81 years



NO MORE JUDGEMENT

I can't get early access to shower to make sure I'm clean for work

I can't afford sanitary products

I'm ashamed of how I look

35%

of women are experiencing DOMESTIC VIOLENCE or SEX EXPLOITATION as part of daily life

Organisations and services need longer-term funding

Financial stresses can cause and add to the burden of homelessness

WOMEN SHOULDN'T BE MADE TO FEEL DIRTY

MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS

HEADACHE

HAIR LOSS

ADDICTION

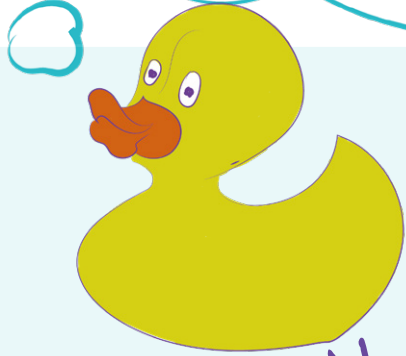
ANXIETY

STRESS

SELF HARM

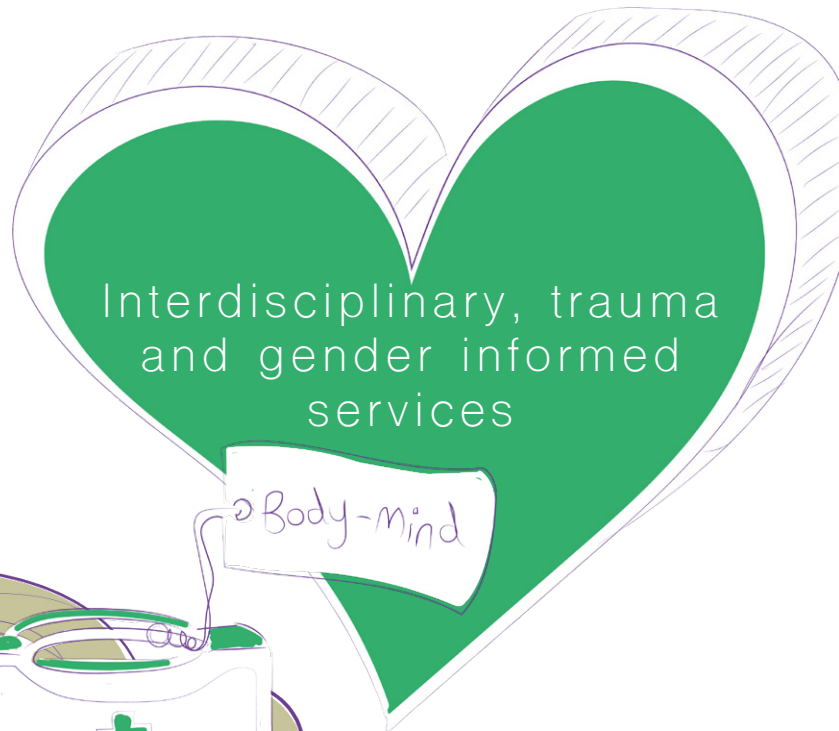
ABUSE

DEPRESSION



WE NEED:

- > MORE SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS
- > MORE HEALTH OUTREACH
- > INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION
- > BETTER TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING RESOURCES



Body-mind



SHOW
compassion

STOP
asking me to repeat
tales of trauma

BELIEVE
WOMEN

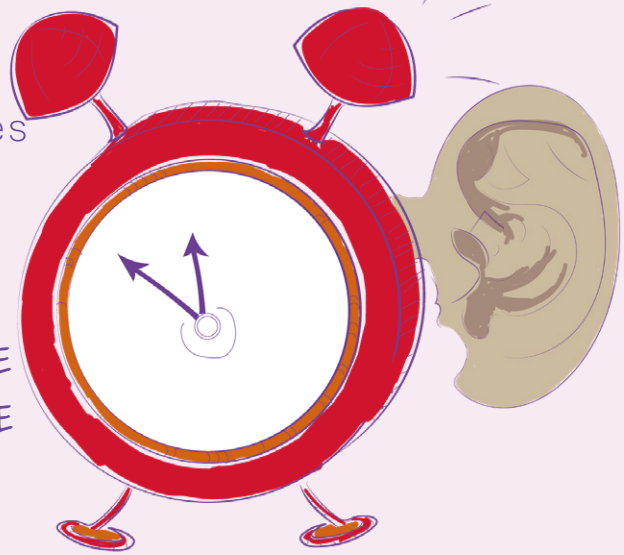


PEER SUPPORT
IS IMPORTANT

WOMEN ONLY
SPACES + SERVICES
ARE NEEDED

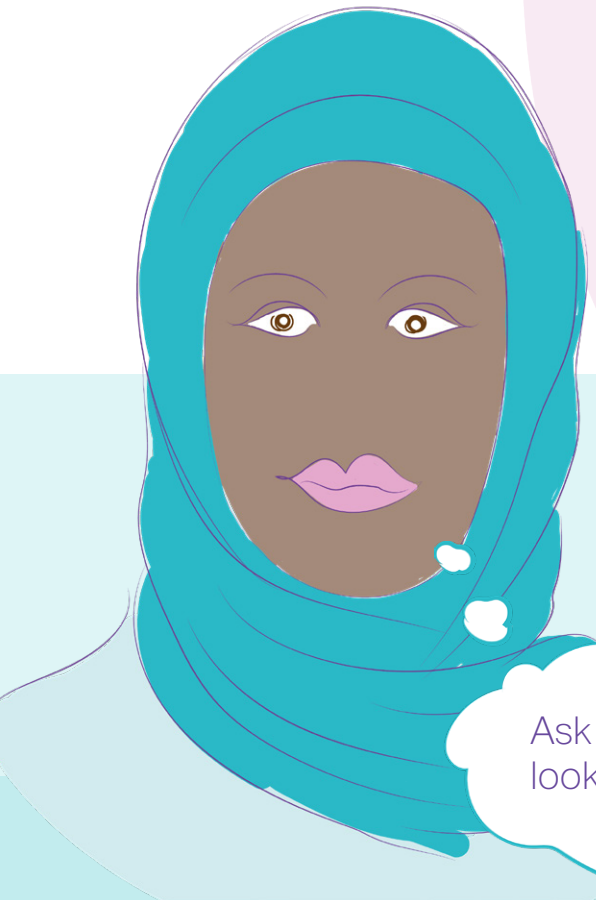
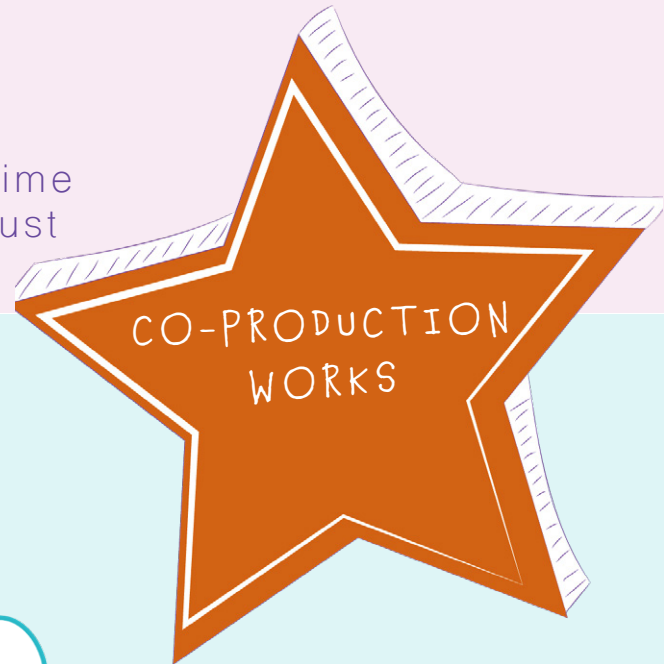
↓
hope

We need more
flexible services
NOT 9 to 5



TAKE THE TIME
TO ASK FEMALE
SERVICE USERS
FOR FEEDBACK
AND LISTEN
TO IT

Take the time
to build trust



Ask me what success
looks like to me

choices shouldn't be led by
other people's expectations

WOMEN AND

Motherhood




HOUSING ISSUES ARE
MIS-RECOGNISED AS NEGLECT

Women need safe and
affordable housing

"I couldn't get them
back as nowhere to live"

"Apparently I were letting
them see me getting beat
up all the time"

Women at risk themselves
are classed as being at
risk to their children



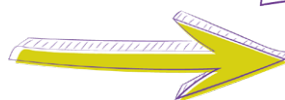
caught in catch 22
need to be living somewhere
with room for kids, but can't
get it without the kids



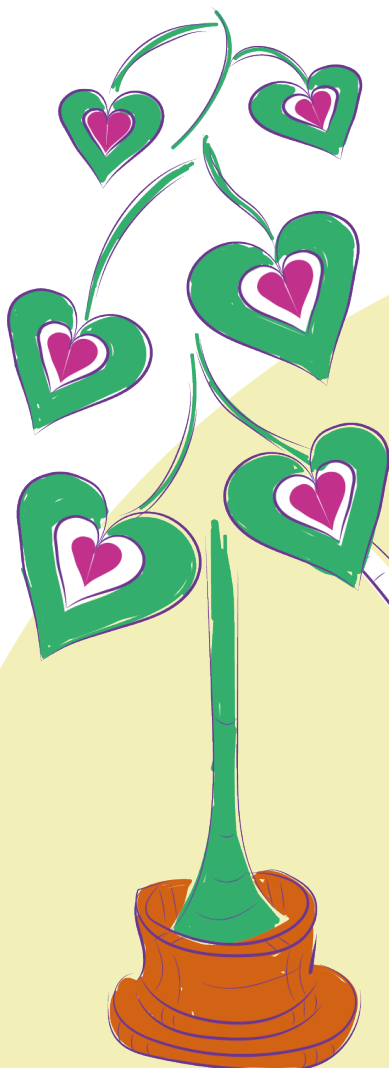
flexibility and choice
in accommodation



We need to
align policy and
have greater
clarity and
accountability



EVALUATE
CURRENT
LEGISLATION



“Transwomen are
mothers too”

“Stop ticking boxes
and hear me”



FAMILY

HAVE A MORE FLUID IDEA OF WHAT
A FAMILY IS AND HOW IT WORKS



STOP
SYSTEMIC RACISM
AND JUDGEMENTS
ABOUT WOMEN

Maternal death in birth is

5x

more likely for women
from minority ethnic
backgrounds in UK

Can't afford bus fare
to access services

It should be about the person...
design services with and for women

"I just need support
and resources"

"Are you ok?
What do you need?"

Creche and childcare
as a given



Having a Peer
Support trusting
role can be a
stepping stone
to accessing
services

WE NEED wrap around support with gender and trauma informed approaches

Living with fear of having children taken away

More notice should be given if need to move 24HR is not enough!

Have a pro-choice approach for all women



SPECIALIST MIDWIVES + HEALTH VISITORS

HAVE SAFE SPACES IN COMMUNITIES + SERVICES

make changes so women are legally seen as mothers whether living with children or not

1%

of women have no birth partner...

The women who most need support don't get it

WE NEED TO ADDRESS THE GAP IN SUPPORT PROVISION

WOMEN AND Housing

Failed by
the systems
and
structures
around women

71%

of stakeholders said,
we don't know enough
about women's needs

Need long-term
flexible funding
system

"I was put in a really
rough hostel where I
was massively at risk"

Sleeping rough can
sometimes be better than
the alternatives offered

I need a place to feel
safe and connect with
others at all stages of
my life

There's a fixation on
visible homelessness



Services should ask women what they need... might need food, or a solicitor at that time, or not to talk about it

Need safe places to sleep
Council to provide a home where immigration status is nothing to do with the support given

I had to go into unpleasant relationships to put a roof over my child's head

Let women make the choice about the support they need and when they need it

"I have finished crying my last tears"

When asylum is refused you can't go to the council, no support is available... including no access to services like GP if pregnant

It took a lot of persistence and pleading to get a homeless shelter to help a migrant woman who was pregnant and sleeping rough



women are experts in their lives

WE NEED:



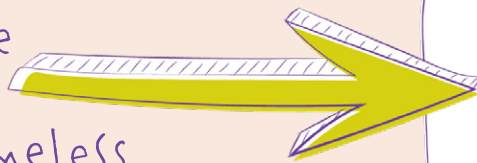
- > MORE SOCIAL HOUSING
- > BETTER COLLABORATION
- > MORE DUAL DIAGNOSIS SUPPORT
- > DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A CRITERIA FOR PRIORITY HOUSING
- > TO STOP FOCUS ON STATS



children's educational achievement is so tied to housing stability

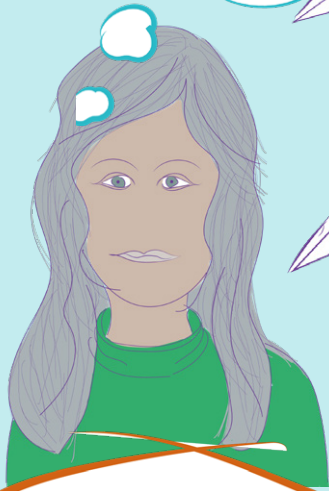


We can't forget the health inequalities linked to being homeless



It's my name on the lease, so if my relationship breaks down I get to stay where I am

Focussing on specific actions in the short term is more effective than just having a 10 year plan to end homelessness



If there are no time limits on 'using' women pace themselves = less overdoses and more time building connections

Harm reduction focus including having nice spaces

Staff are representative of the diversity of the women we serve

Help people at risk of homelessness - increase employment and income

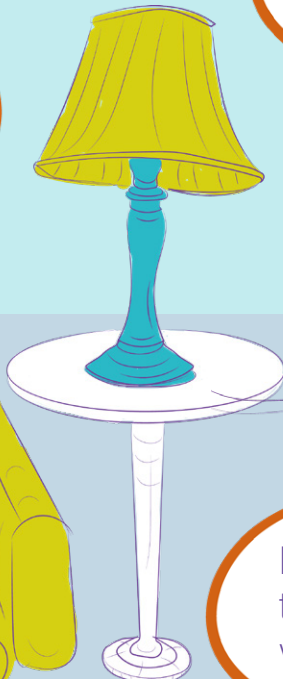
Target solutions to people with the most barriers first

Assist moving quickly into permanent housing with support

Housing first model with long-term support

home
sweet
home

Long-term access to healthcare for women and children



RESOURCES

Learn more about
women's experiences

Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid REPORT

Places of Safety. Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid Home Options Hub Pilot: Independent Research and Evaluation Project <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/HCRN/BSWAID-places-of-safety-report.pdf>

Minnesota Housing REPORT

Heading Home Together: Minnesota's 2018 > 2020 action plan to prevent and end homelessness <https://www.mnhousing.gov/sites/multifamily/headinghome>

Institute of Health Equity REPORT

Health equity in England: The Marmot review 10 years on (2020) <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on>

UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence REPORT

Dr Emma Bimpson and Dr Kesia Reeve, with Dr Sadie Parr. Homelessness mothers: key research findings (2020) <https://housingevidence.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/200211-homeless-mothers-findings-report.pdf>

Sisters Not Strangers coalition REPORT

Hear us: The experiences of refugee and asylum-seeking women during the pandemic Refugee Women Connect <https://www.refugeewomenconnect.org.uk/reports-briefings>

Atira REPORTS

Recommended resources include:
> SisterSpace (2017) Shared using rooms: Women-only overdose prevention site
Go to the 'SisterSpace shared using room' category
> Impact report (2020)
Go to the 'Atira women's resource society' category
<https://atira.bc.ca/what-we-do/reports/>

Groundswell REPORT AND PODCAST

Women, Homelessness and Health (2020) <https://groundswell.org.uk/2020/women-homelessness-and-health/>

Solace Peer Support WEBSITE

Support for socially marginalised pregnant women <https://solacepeersupport.org/>

Agenda REPORTS

Recommended resources include:
> Voices from lockdown: A chance for change interim findings report (2020)
> Making places work for women: Gender and systems change (2018)
<https://weareagenda.org/policy-research/agenda-research-reports/>

St Mungo's REPORTS

> Homeless couples and relationships toolkit <https://www.mungos.org/publication/homeless-couples-and-relationships-toolkit/>
> Rebuilding shattered lives: the final report <https://www.mungos.org/publication/rebuilding-shattered-lives-final-report/>

Arts & Homelessness International ZINE

Womxn and Homelessness ART Lab zine (2021) <https://issuu.com/artshomelessint/docs/zine>

Policy Research Unit in Maternal health and Care REPORT

Peer Support for Women: Evaluation of models of peer support for women through pregnancy and the transition to parenthood (2010-2018) <https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/prumhc/peer-support-for-women-during-pregnancy-and-transition-to-parenthood-246>

The Magpie Project WEBSITE AND FILM

> Providing a safe and fun place for mums and under-fives suffering in temporary or insecure accommodation <https://themagpieproject.org/>
> All our children film (2020)
London-based designer Bethany Williams' SS21 collection celebrates the ethos of the Magpie Project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTeqYFvTxrs>

SEE WHAT CHANGES OUR CONFERENCE AUDIENCE WANT TO MAKE >>>

Women and health: http://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244786/210312_women-and-health-miro-board.pdf

Women and motherhood: http://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244787/210317_women-and-motherhood-miro-board.pdf

Women and housing: http://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244788/210319_women-and-housing-miro-board.pdf



Lots of different voices came together
for the conference and zine

WITH
THANKS

Thank you to the individuals with lived experience from Arts & Homelessness International and Groundswell involved in the naming of the zine and sharing of key messages on pages 5 to 8

Thank you to our speakers and panel:

HEALTH SPEAKERS AND PANEL

Rachel Brennan, #HealthNow Network Coordinator, Groundswell and Winston Churchill Fellow (chair)

Dalma Fabian, Policy Officer, Erasmus+ FEANTSA

Ciara O'Sullivan, Community Outreach Worker, Women and Families Service, Simon Community Galway

Dr Suzy Solley, Research Manager, Groundswell

Sarah Hough, Research Officer, Groundswell

Dr Lucy Potter, GP, One25, NIHR in Practice Fellow

Susan, Volunteer, Peony/One25

Dionne Williams, Freelancer, Arts & Homelessness International

Fee Plumley, Freelancer, Arts & Homelessness International

Gerry Rolfe, Volunteer and Trustee, Groundswell

MOTHERHOOD SPEAKERS

Emma Arran, Director, Solace Peer Support and Winston Churchill Fellow (chair)

Dr Kesia Reeve, Principal Research Fellow at the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)

Dr Emma Bimpson, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR)

Jane Williams, Founder, The Magpie Project

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SPEAKERS

Sarah Walters, Best Practice Manager, Crisis and Winston Churchill Fellow (Chair)

Thea Raisbeck, Honorary Research Associate, University of Birmingham and Head of Research and Best Practice, Spring Housing

Comfort Etim, Advocacy and Policy Officer, Refugee Women Connect

Cathy ten Broeke, Assistant Commissioner and Executive Director to Prevent and End Homelessness in the State of Minnesota

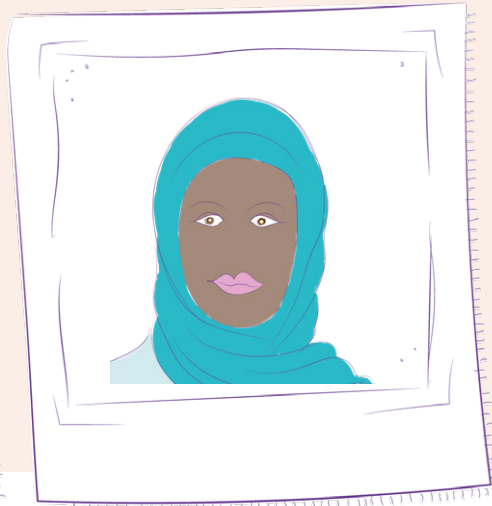
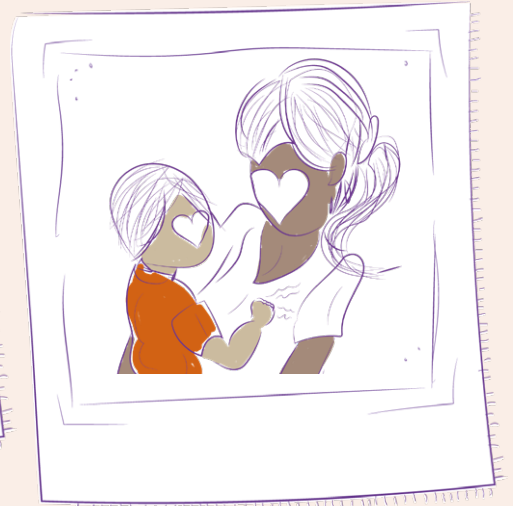
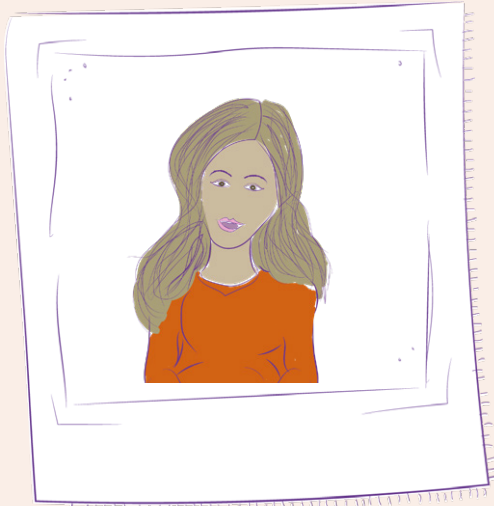
Janice Abbott, CEO, Atira Women's Resource Society, Vancouver

ZINE ARTIST

Dr Carmen Byrne, Pollenstoryart

We couldn't
have done it
without you!

WOMEN'S HOMELESSNESS CAN BE ENDED



Together
we will end
homelessness



S♡lace
Peer Support

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