

ARTHUR'S STORY



Arthur was born in El Salvador amid political conflict. Their mother moved to the US to work to support the family and Arthur was left to look after their brother and sister. They became subject to intimidation by gangs and had to leave the village and stay with family until they had enough money to rent an apartment themselves.

Arthur studied for two degrees and then started working. When Arthur started to explore their sexuality, wear jewellery and dye their hair, they became subject to abuse and hostility. Arthur was harassed and beaten up in the street by the police and feared for their safety.

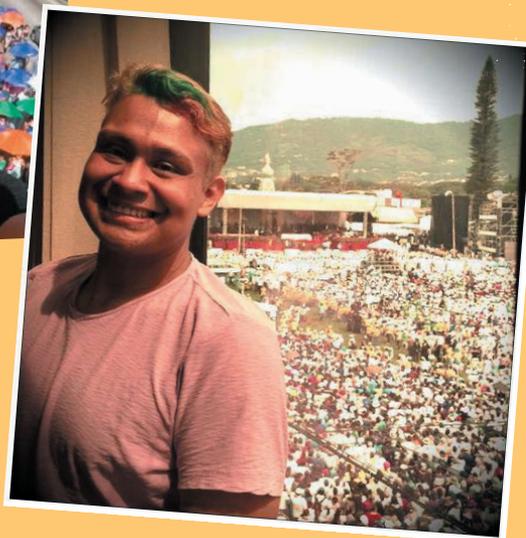
"I realised I couldn't be the person I wanted to be there. That was when I decided to come to the UK to seek the freedom to be the person I wanted to be and look how I want.

"When I got out of the plane, I felt free. I started to wear jewellery. I had some extravagant chokers and some girls on the underground said they like them. It took a while, but I started to transition into a more feminine way of dressing."

Arthur came to London in 2017 and applied for asylum. They were turned down twice. When they were waiting for a decision on immigration status, Arthur found out about Crisis.



CRISIS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MY WELL-BEING



"That's how I met Tony. We started to work together doing music and guitar classes in 2018. I was invited to some events of Crisis to perform which was great. Tony always loved my performances and said that I made everyone happy."

"In November 2018 I had my first appeal. But still the judge didn't get the evidence right. She misunderstood. She reduced it to mild discrimination from persecution and refused me asylum."

Arthur appealed again and again and started to feel depressed. They felt stuck. They couldn't do anything but wait.

Their last hearing was in September 2020. It was completely amazing. The Home Office said they gave up and would do what the judge said. The judge looked at Arthur and started to speak in Spanish that she said she was learning in lockdown. She told Arthur in their own language that she wanted to grant me the right to be in this country, "You have the right to be in this country, and to be addressed how I liked."

Later on, when the case became public Arthur realised they were the first person to be granted status for being non-binary.

"Crisis played an important role in my well-being and taking care of my mental health, when I was in the darkest moments of my depression, the support of Crisis with the music class and opportunities to perform made a tiny light I could hold on and carry on.

"Support with your dreams is amazing. And without Crisis my mental health could have deteriorated more. The asylum process took away my mental health even leaving me on the edge of the suicide. The amazing opportunities Crisis gave supporting my dreams (even if for some people are silly) helped me to cope and slowly get out of the darkness."

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Registered Charity Numbers: E&W1082947, SC040094.
Company Number: 4024938.
BAM: CRI0492

