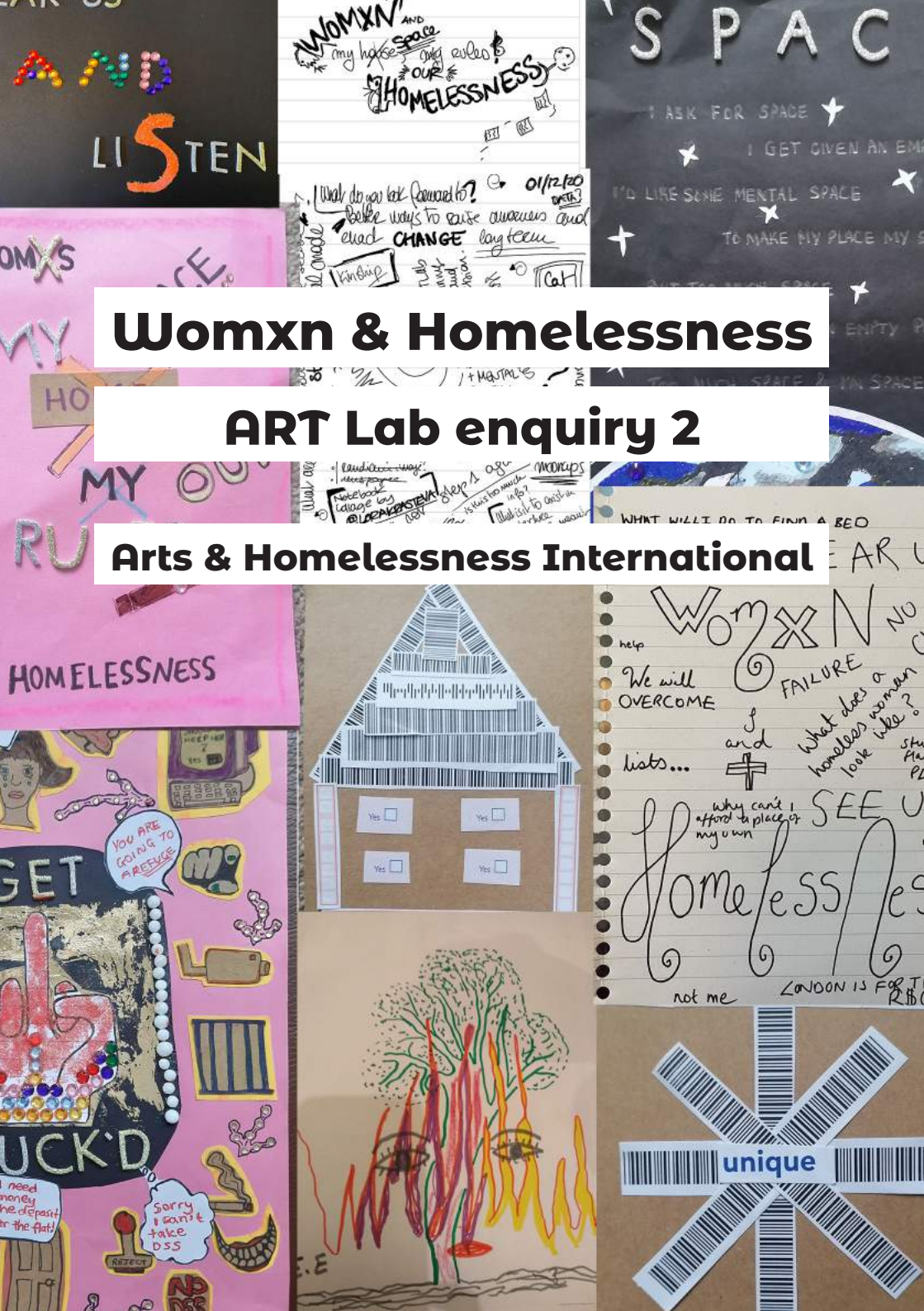
Womxn & Homelessness

ART Lab enquiry 2

Arts & Homelessness International



SPACE

I ASK FOR SPACE

I GET GIVEN AN EMPTY PLACE

I'D LIKE SOME MENTAL SPACE

TO MAKE MY PLACE MY SPACE

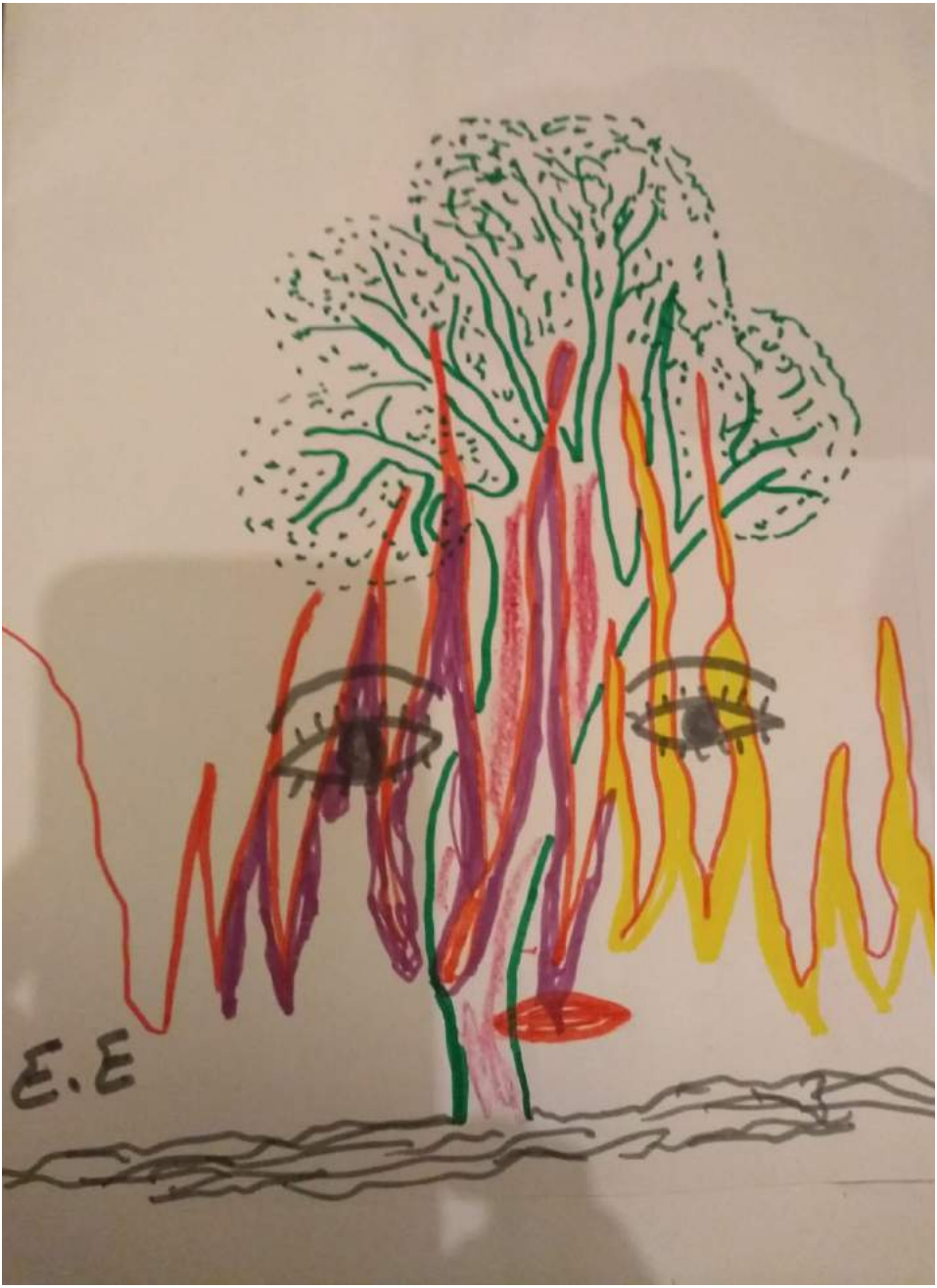
BUT TOO MUCH SPACE

CREATES AN EMPTY PLACE

TOO MUCH SPACE & I'M SPACED


unique


Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes


E.E

7. What do you look forward to?

01/12/20

DATA?

Better ways to raise awareness and enact CHANGE long term

Kinship

ART lab planning and research

How similar are our experiences

Cat

the irrelevance of journals and peers

still in survival mode

What are recommendations to the sector?

WOMXN + YOUTH + CHILDREN + HOUSING + MENTAL HEALTH + RELATIONSHIPS.

ACTION

- Pot stick / glue ✓
- colouring pens ✓
- pencils / pastels ✓
- card / paper ✓
- ~~random items?~~
- ~~newspaper~~

This group inspires me so much.

Free mockups

Notebook collage by @LORAKRASTEVA

step 1 again

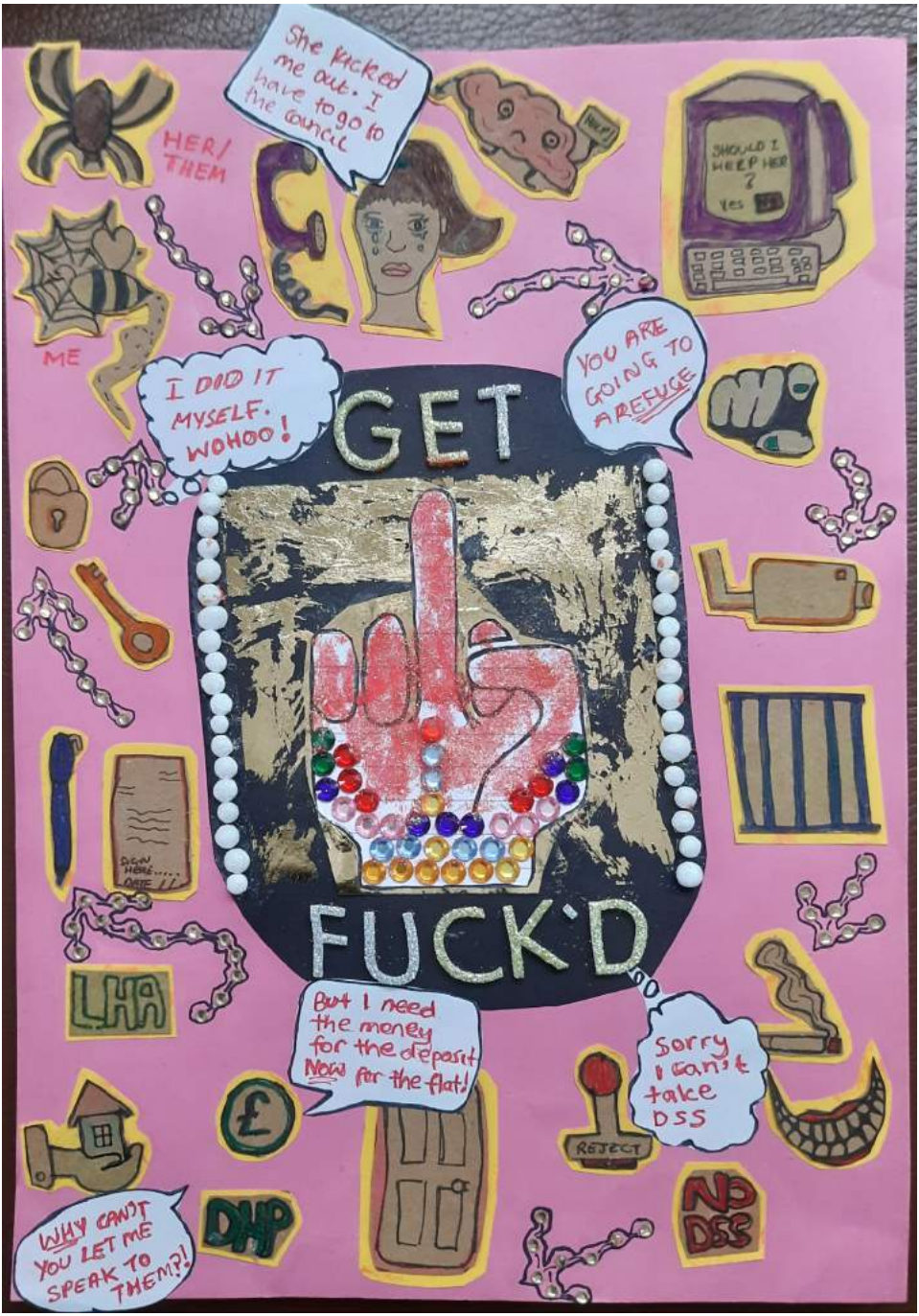
is this too much info?

What is it to exist in a structure that wasn't meant for you?

26/01/21 + 08/03

step 1 is NOW

index + glossary + signposting


She kicked me out. I have to go to the council
HER/ THEM
SHOULD I KEEP HER ?
Yes
ME
I DID IT MYSELF. WOHOO!
YOU ARE GOING TO A REFUGE
GET
FUCK'D
SIGN HERE..... DATE //
LHA
But I need the money for the deposit Now for the flat!
Sorry I can't take DSS
REJECT
£
DHP
WHY CAN'T YOU LET ME SPEAK TO THEM?!
NO DSS

WHAT WILL I DO TO FIND A BED

"lived in the borough for 5 years"

HEAR US

WOMXN

NO CHANCE

help

We will OVERCOME

FAILURE

what does a homeless woman look like?

and

lists...

studio flat? PLS

why can't I afford a place of my own

SEE US

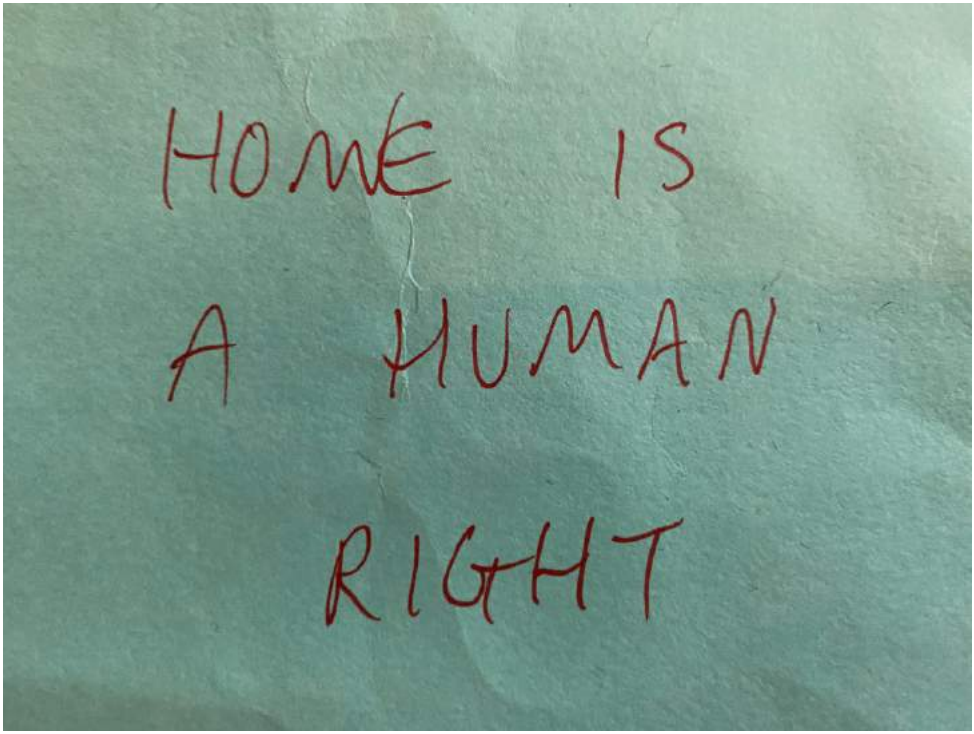
homelessness

LONDON IS FOR THE RICH

not me


HOME
BY
CAR


WOMXS
SPACE
MY
HOUSE
MY
OUR
RULES
HOMELESSNESS


HOME IS
A HUMAN
RIGHT

this small piece is based on something I have ranted about for years.

it's based on the oldskool patriarchal norm "while you live in my house, you'll abide by my rules".

except now it's not simply the traditional dominant father managing 'his' house.

rich, old, white, cis, straight, abled, neurotypical, christian men in suits all over the world have given themselves the right to decide what they get to do with women's bodies, worker's lives, the planet's limited resources, and anything we are allowed to consider our moral and legal Human Rights in the 21st century... so, basically, EVERYTHING.

i, for one, do not believe that the planet and all of our lives are their house, and i do NOT comply with their rules.

/

not your house, not your rules
not your whores, not your fools
not your property, not your slave
time to stand, resist, be brave
embrace your true ancestral rage
it's OUR time now to take the stage.


not your
house
not your
rules

Fabric count: 10

Size: 13 x 13 cm

Stitches: 50 x 50

Total stitches: 1,475

Total skeins: 6

Not your house

_by @ragestitch

Recommendations

Have free child-care / creches at events so single mums/parents don't miss out

Listen without judgement

Bulk buy **mooncups** and hand them out to homeless women to help ease their worries around menstruation. What else could you donate?

coproduce all your programs for a year with 50% womxn [ciswomen and transwomen] making the decisions on what will happen, who will be involved, how much they'll be paid, where and how they'll be marketed... everything <3

BELIEVE what womxn are saying - we aren't being SENSITIVE

plus believe us when we say we're abused, and don't judge our tone but hear what's being said underneath that

less time for the council decision and maybe more housing available

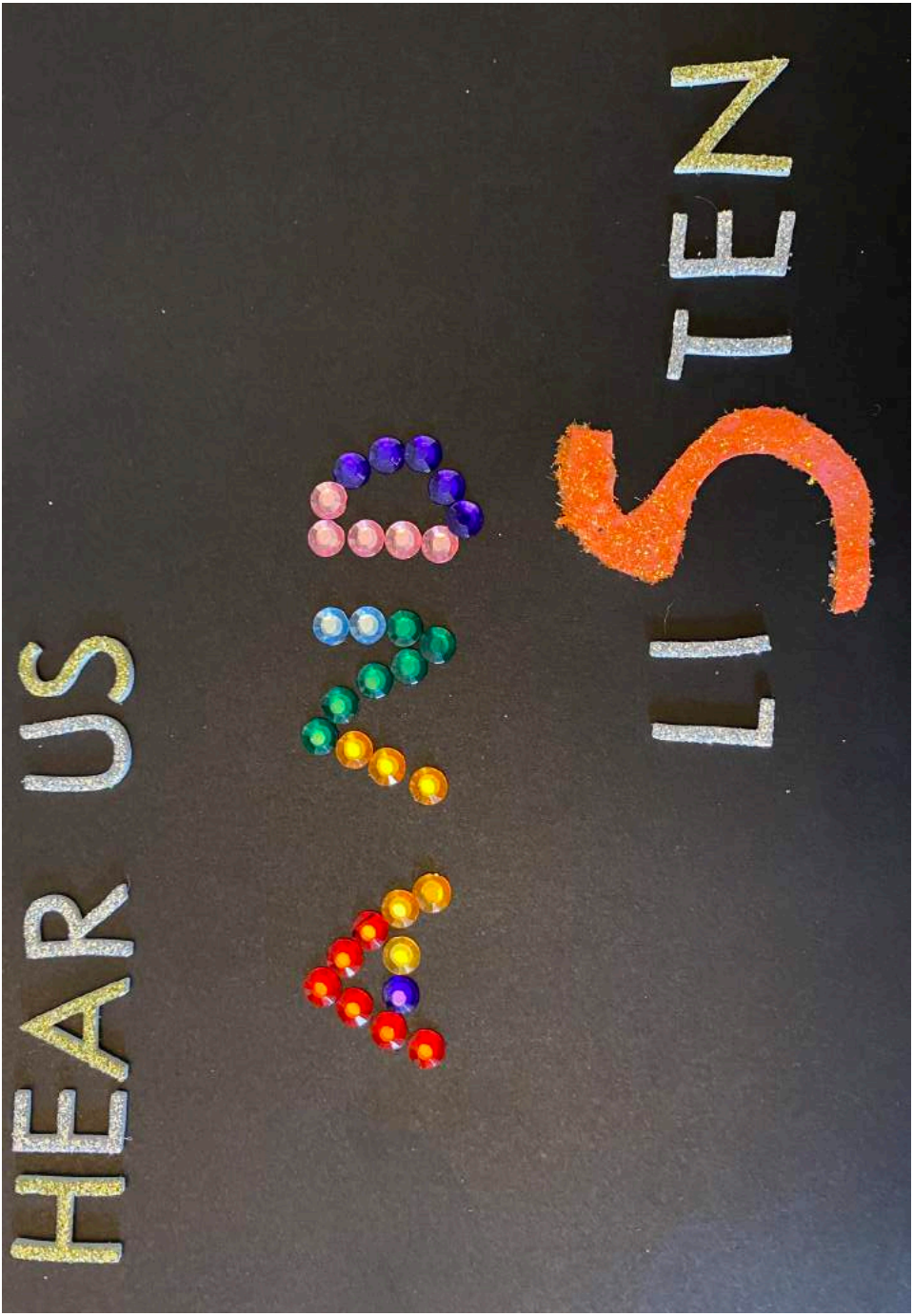
Safe space for Black and Brown women to have their experiences heard and explored in safe spaces as we experience racism, sexism and for some xenophobia in the systems that was not designed for us to exist in

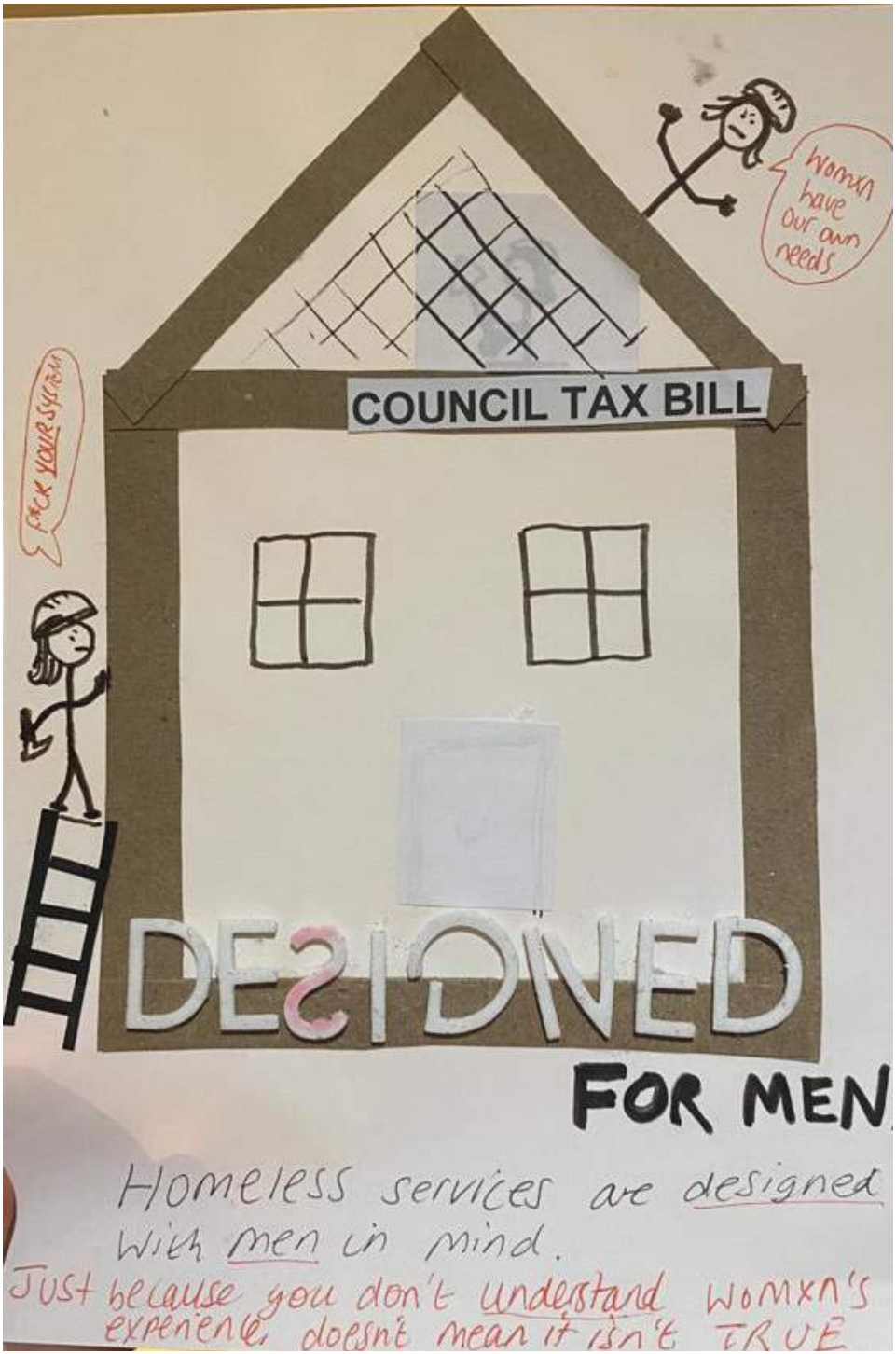
to **treat every woman as an equal** regardless of age or circumstance (children/no children). Someone homeless is vulnerable so the not-vulnerable decision is bollocks :)

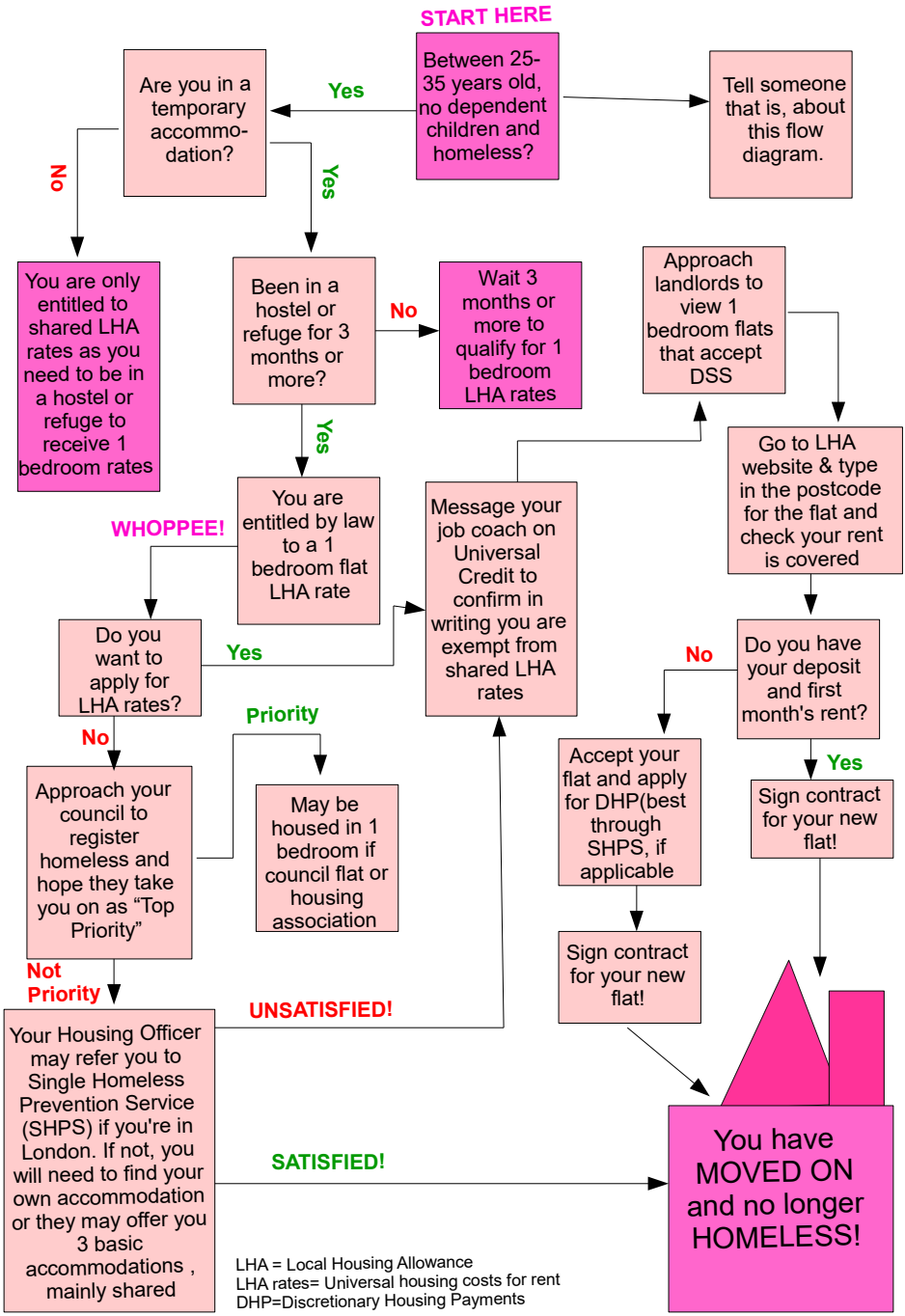
Don't make assumptions around womxn & homelessness - but where is the data?

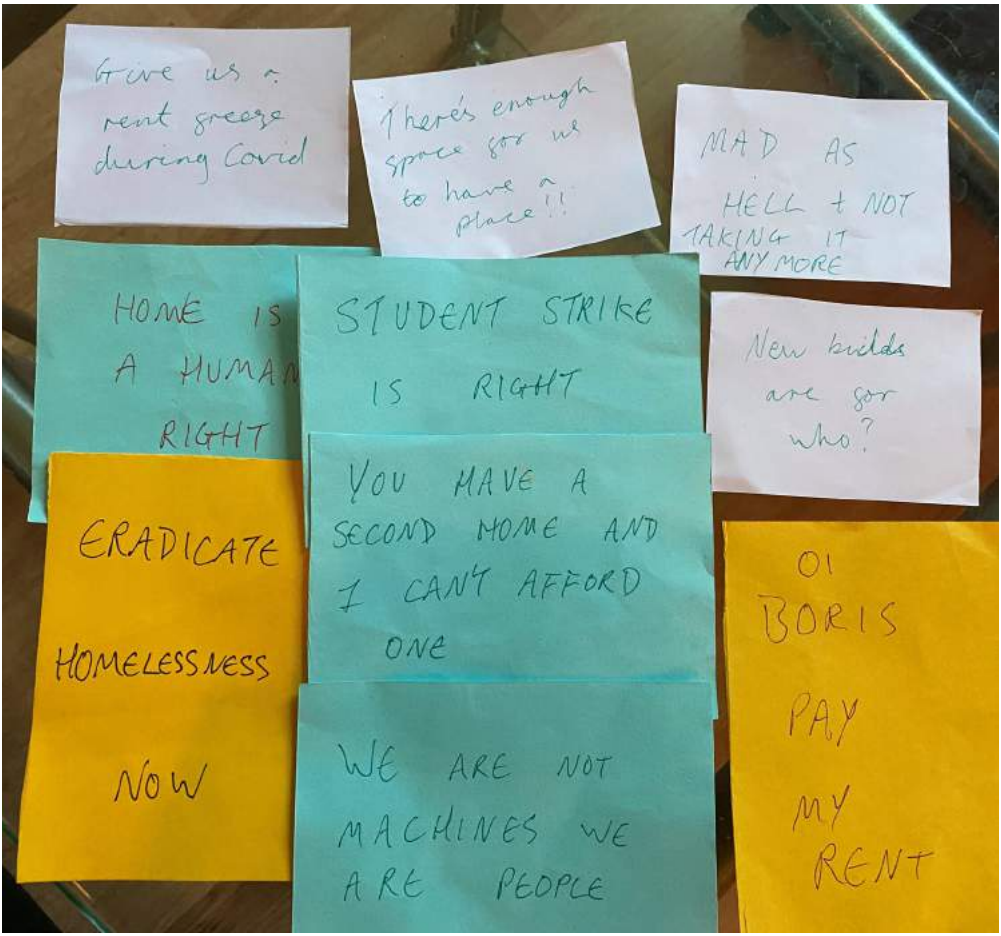
Signposting services – where could people go?

single women under 35 to have information as most of the time we are not supported in the help we are entitled to and not prioritised because we are young and childless.


HEAR US
LISTEN


Womxn have our own needs
COUNCIL TAX BILL
FOCK YOUR SYSTEM
DESIGNED
FOR MEN
Homeless services are designed with men in mind.
Just because you don't understand womxn's experience, doesn't mean it isn't TRUE


START HERE
Between 25-35 years old, no dependent children and homeless?
Yes
Tell someone that is, about this flow diagram.
Are you in a temporary accommo-dation?
No
Yes
You are only entitled to shared LHA rates as you need to be in a hostel or refuge to receive 1 bedroom rates
Been in a hostel or refuge for 3 months or more?
No
Wait 3 months or more to qualify for 1 bedroom LHA rates
Yes
WHOPPEE!
You are entitled by law to a 1 bedroom flat LHA rate
Do you want to apply for LHA rates?
Yes
No
Approach your council to register homeless and hope they take you on as "Top Priority"
Priority
May be housed in 1 bedroom if council flat or housing association
Not Priority
Your Housing Officer may refer you to Single Homeless Prevention Service (SHPS) if you're in London. If not, you will need to find your own accommodation or they may offer you 3 basic accommodations , mainly shared
UNSATISFIED!
SATISFIED!
Message your job coach on Universal Credit to confirm in writing you are exempt from shared LHA rates
Approach landlords to view 1 bedroom flats that accept DSS
Go to LHA website & type in the postcode for the flat and check your rent is covered
Do you have your deposit and first month's rent?
No
Yes
Accept your flat and apply for DHP(best through SHPS, if applicable
Sign contract for your new flat!
Sign contract for your new flat!
You have MOVED ON and no longer HOMELESS!
LHA = Local Housing Allowance
LHA rates= Universal housing costs for rent
DHP=Discretionary Housing Payments


Give us a rent freeze during Covid
There's enough space for us to have a place!!
MAD AS HELL & NOT TAKING IT ANY MORE
HOME IS A HUMAN RIGHT
STUDENT STRIKE IS RIGHT
New builds are for who?
ERADICATE HOMELESSNESS NOW
YOU HAVE A SECOND HOME AND I CAN'T AFFORD ONE
WE ARE NOT MACHINES WE ARE PEOPLE
OI BORIS PAY MY RENT

legislation.gov.uk

Home

Housing Act 1996

175 Homelessness and threatened homelessn

elsewhere,
a court,
giving ~~him~~ HER the
right to
remain
there is no
place for ~~him~~ HER
only
occupation

Hidden from
view
Hidden from
history
by legislation
and imagination
- Here we are
forging spaces
elsewhere: our
places

What I've Learnt from Counselling Womxn who have Experienced Homelessness

It was the Christmas lights switch on in my home city. It was pre-Covid and the streets were packed with people, a sea of bobble hats, takeaway hot drinks, huge coats like shiny eiderdowns. My son and I shuffled with the crowd as we passed a young womxn in a doorway, her takeaway cup filled not with a gingerbread latte, but with coins. An elderly woman shuffled in front of us and stopped to regard the homeless girl with blatant disgust. Her face pinched tight, she snapped at her "what are you doing that for?" The girl cast her eyes downwards and ignored her, no doubt used to being judged, shamed and questioned. "Because she has no choice, you ignorant hag" I hissed angrily under my breath.

There were several reasons why I didn't challenge that elderly woman openly. My son's small hand clutching mine in the crowd. The large family surrounding her. The fact that I didn't trust myself not to swear and shout. The fact that the moment passed far too quickly. But in my mind, I roared out for all to hear that what that girl was doing in a doorway, as people trod on her sleeping bag in their hurry to get to the next shop to fill their bags with Christmas shopping, was not a choice. Or a want. Or a statement. It was a basic human need to survive. And I have never forgotten that passer-by's reaction to her.

By that point in my career as a counsellor, I had been working for six months in the homeless charity where I still, two years later, see up to eight hostel residents a week for counselling sessions. I had listened to hours of shame and blame and fear and regret. Tales of abuse and betrayal and despair and loneliness. But I didn't see a victim in that doorway. I saw a warrior. Because what strikes me more about all those womxn who have shared their stories of homelessness with me is their resourceful, relentless resilience. Their strength, bravery and courage. Everything that passer by hadn't seen.

But I think what really stopped me from confronting that "ignorant hag" was that I had as much right to judge her as she had to judge a homeless womxn. Writing this article, I reminded a friend of the encounter and she said "when you first told me that story, I thought to myself 'maybe the old woman just couldn't comprehend that a young woman would be homeless'?" And therein lies the rub, the crux of the issue - how can it be that young womxn are homeless? "What are you doing that for?" was a rhetorical question.

How is it comprehensible that sleeping in a doorway collecting coins is a young womxn's only option?

Vulnerable is a word usually used to describe womxn and children (I rarely see it used to describe men). Yet a homeless womxn's only vulnerability is in the fact that she is in desperate need of whatever tools are required to keep her safe. The tools at anyone's disposal. I don't mean money. I mean the resolve to hear - really hear - her without judgement. Without the need to share your, quite frankly, irrelevant opinion on a situation you are not in. How can you judge another's experience? What or who gave you the right?

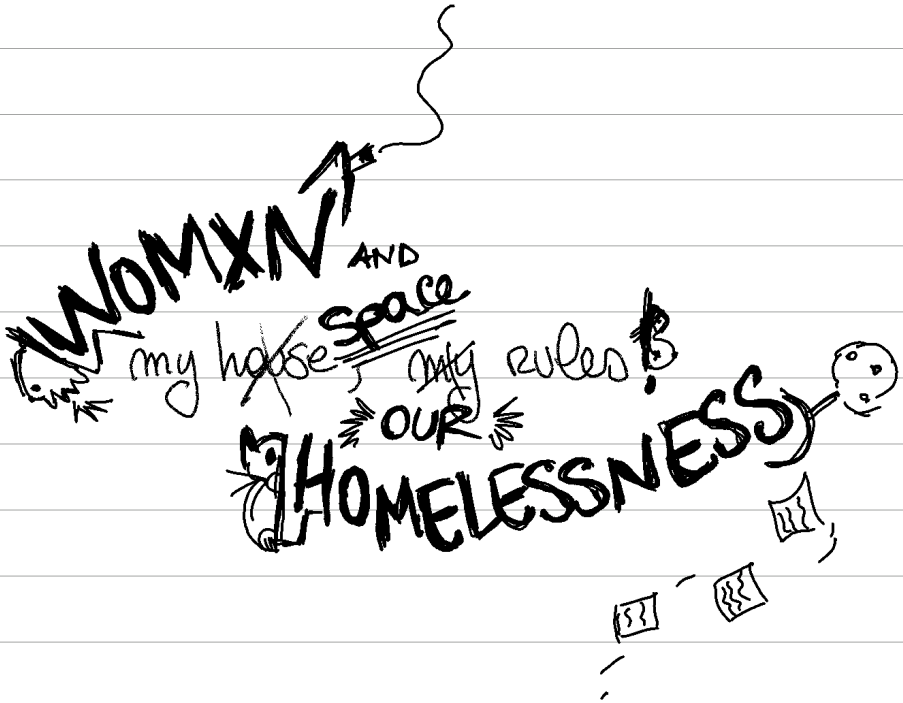
Of course, every homeless womxn has the right to expect compassion, empathy and help from fellow human beings. But it is only from counselling them on the other side that I marvel, in awe, at their bravery, ingenuity and resilience. More often than not, their courage is nothing short of humbling. Frequently I find myself reminding them, when they say "I couldn't / didn't / can't cope", that they can and have. And are still turning up to counselling sessions every week to make sense of and grow from their experiences. If that's not bravery, I don't know what is.

No-one chooses to be homeless – true bravery is in facing and coping with homelessness because, right then, it's the only option. The womxn's refuge, the shop doorway, the friend's sofa or the youth hostel...if any of these are a choice it's because a womxn has been forced to choose between a rock and a hard place. These makeshift "homes" are a port in a storm. And none of us control the weather. We can only control how we shelter from it.

I can't change the way homeless womxn are treated by our government, our local authorities, our social workers, our lawyers or even outraged passers-by in city crowds. But I can remind every womxn I sit opposite that they are not broken. They are not a nuisance. Society may label them vulnerable but they are some of the bravest warriors I have ever met. They don't only deserve our compassion. They have earned our respect.

By Natalie, Safeguarding Lead on the ARTS Lab Project

This article is dedicated to my clients.
And a young womxn in a doorway in December 2019.


WOMXN AND
my house, space, my rules!
OUR
HOMELESSNESS

your space, your rules

WOMXN & HOMELESSNESS ART Lab

Claire is an Essex based independent theatre Producer who has worked for Complicite, Good Chance Theatre and Cardboard Citizens. She is the Producer for Womxn's Project alongside co-running British Romanian BEZNA Theatre & Out of The Forest Theatre. (pp. 2-3)

Dionne, Black, proud and all about female empowerment. I am a well-being practitioner and life purpose coach. Homeless and Sexual abuse survivor and warrior healer. Www.dionne-williams.com (pp. 6 & 17)

fee (she/her) is a neurodivergent, queer, ciswoman exploring equity and diversity (against a backdrop dominated by greed and homogeneity) through a creative digital culture and social justice lens. http://feesable.org @feesable @ragestitch (pp. 11-13)

Freya Marshall Payne (she/her): writer and historian with lived experience of hidden homelessness currently researching her PhD on women's homelessness. https://freyamarshallpayne.wordpress.com/ (p.19)

Hannah Kumari is a working-class actor-writer and theatremaker based in Somerset. She is passionate about theatre as a starting point for difficult conversations, and taking visual and interdisciplinary theatre into communities. She works at AHI as a freelance Project Coordinator. (pp. 7 & 15)

Jazzle - Spoken word performer and published poet. (pp. 10 & 18)

Lora is a political scientist, theatre maker and activist. She works at AHI as Executive Producer and is passionate about social justice, arts & creativity and working internationally - especially with kick-ass womxn. @lorakrasteva (pp. 5 & 22)

MERVELEE MYERS survivor of Childhood Traumas who refuse to be defined by the Deficits that stop me from achieving my potentials. Because my mother was not emotionally capable of dealing with her Traumas. So she found outlets by singing and her melodious laughter which identified her. My Personal Challenges empowering me to take up advocating on behalf

of those who need their voice to be heard. I am an expert authority on subjects cradle to grave.

Natalie is a psychotherapist and Director of a company specialising in arts-based wellbeing provision. She has worked within the NHS, HM Prison Service, YMCA, Rape Crisis and various schools, occupational health departments and counselling centres. (pp. 20-21)

Sameera - Daughter. Sister. A Woman of indestructible energy. A goddess paying homage to women before me. A revolutionary who refuses to be defined by the four walls built by men to contain such unapologetic femininity. Mother Nature is not defined by words so these words hide the true beauty that is me. You are you and I am me. That is my ultimate victory. (p.1)

Sarah - No borders no one is illegal activist, gender & trauma informed housing health money and legal advocate with refugee and migrant women. (p. 8)

Paula is a former LSE scholar and University of Savoy valedictorian with experience in communications management, content strategy and creation. She currently works as a communications officer at AHI.

Vicky Moran is a writer, director and community arts facilitator based in London. With a love for stories and a fire for social change, her work combines art and activism to shout about the injustices in the world. Lead Artists on Womxns Project. @vickymoran94 (pp. 9 & 16)

The Womxn & Homelessness ART Lab is produced by Arts & Homelessness International in partnership with Vicky and Claire and is part of their Womxn Project which is supported by the Arts Council England.

The zine was edited by Lora with final design by Paula. It was created alongside a soundscape, edited by Daisy Grant and shared online for the first time on the 8th March 2021 to celebrate womxn everywhere.

A limited print run of the zine was made available as part of the event. All proceeds go to the artists who made it happen.

To check out the rest of AHI's work visit **www.artshomelessint.com** and follow us **@artshomelessint**


not your
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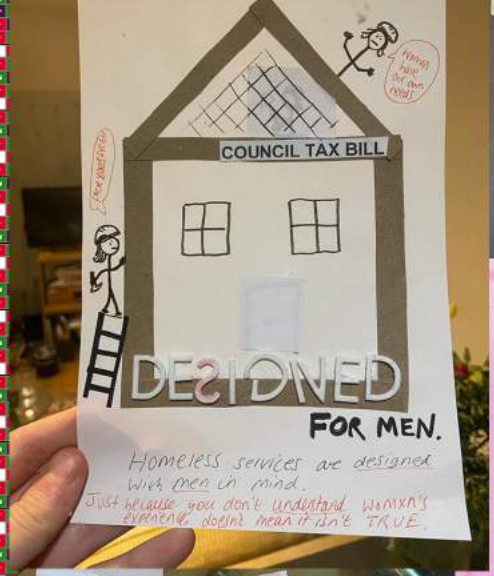
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HOME
B
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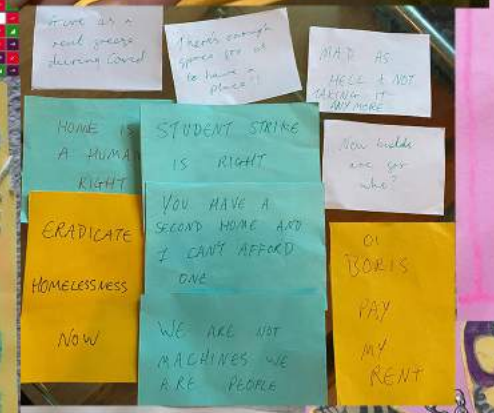
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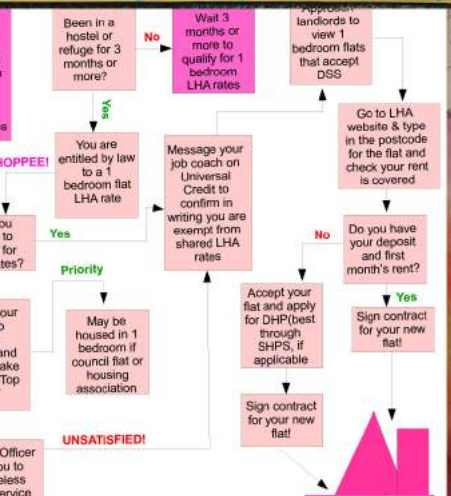
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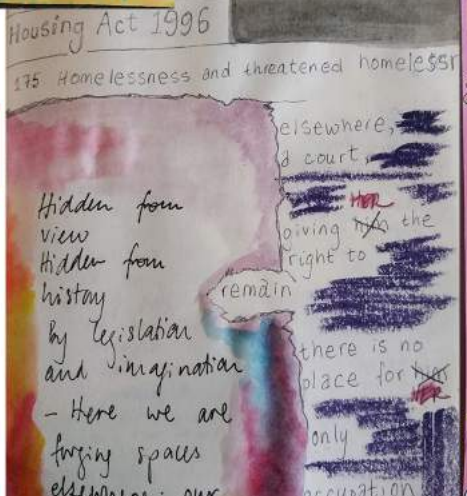
You are entitled by law to a 1 bedroom flat LHA rate
Message your job coach on Universal Credit to confirm in writing you are exempt from shared LHA rates
Go to LHA website & type in the postcode for the flat and check your rent is covered
Yes
Priority
May be housed in 1 bedroom if council flat or housing association
Do you have your deposit and first month's rent?
No
Yes
Accept your flat and apply for DHP(best through SHPS, if applicable
Sign contract for your new flat!
Sign contract for your new flat!
UNSATISFIED!


Housing Act 1996
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- Here we are
remain
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LHA
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