

# HOMELESSNESS RADICAL SAFEGUARDING TOOLKIT

KINGS HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE RESEARCH  
UNIT  
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# THE CASE FOR CHANGE

- 1313 people died whilst homeless in 2022<sup>1</sup>
- The average age at death was 45.4 years old for men, and 43.2 years for women<sup>2</sup>
- There were 7,236 people estimated to be sleeping rough over the month of June 2023 – up 30% since the same period last year<sup>3</sup>
- The same research estimates a further 5060 people were staying in very short-term 'off the street accommodation' during the same period.
- Evidence from Safeguarding Adult Reviews highlights issues with stigma, professional curiosity, legal literacy and effective multi-agency practice<sup>4</sup>



# LEGAL CONTEXT



There are many laws that operate both positively and negatively in the lives of people who are homeless;

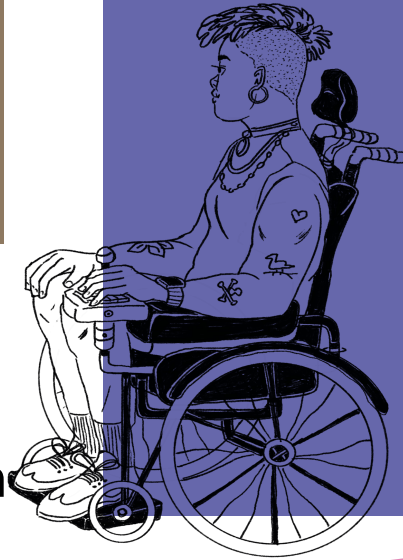
- Care Act (2014)
- Housing Act (1996) and Homelessness Reduction Act (2018)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014)
- Immigration Rules

The law is a foundation, not a ceiling. Expanding & contracting laws definitions and duties and is one way that social justice movements bring about change in society.

Legal literacy is a key skill for anyone trying to navigate the experience of homelessness. ***How legally literate are you?***

# THE TOOLKIT

- Inspired by the pioneering work of youth organisation Maslaha.
- Inspired by Zine culture & political education
- It is not a safeguarding 'how to' guide
- It was created by people with lived experience of homelessness, institutional detention and/or safeguarding interventions - we describe the process for designing our toolkit as having 'conversations with friends'.
- Our hope is that the toolkit offers accessible, interesting and reflective ways to explore radical principles and anti-oppressive practice



# CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

- Social justice movements use political education to imagine different futures.
- Critical race theory highlights the role of storytelling & narrative to bring about change
- Critical pedagogy explores power and hierarchy in traditional teaching.
- Radical learning should be accessible, activate creativity & encourage critical reflection.
- Use the toolkit how it feels best to you – scribble on it; replace words that you don't like; edit the tools to fit your work environment; use what feels useful and let go of what doesn't.



# ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

Anti-oppressive practice has its foundations in social work. It takes account of the impact of power, inequality and oppression on people we support, and encourages social workers to actively combat these.

Anti-oppressive practice includes:

- Recognising the personal, cultural and structural barriers that people face
- Recognising how people's personal characteristics are used to stereotype or limit them
- Working to understand someone's experience of oppression, understand and appreciate their strengths, and empower them to realise their rights
- Recognising our own characteristics and our own place in the culture and structure – and how this might impact on the other person<sup>[10]</sup>



# SOLIDARITY

*noun*

1. The fact or quality, on the part of communities, etc., of being perfectly united or at one in some respect, especially in interests, sympathies, or aspirations;
- Solidarity is about working together, in recognition that something that harms one of us harms all of us.
  - In practice, solidarity is strengths-based; it doesn't view someone as a passive recipient, or in a position of deficit.
  - Solidarity can be a feeling of unity and togetherness, but it is also a principle for taking action.
  - As radical practitioners, solidarity means working from a position of mutual respect, collaboration and the belief that, regardless of our differences, none of us are free until all of us are free.

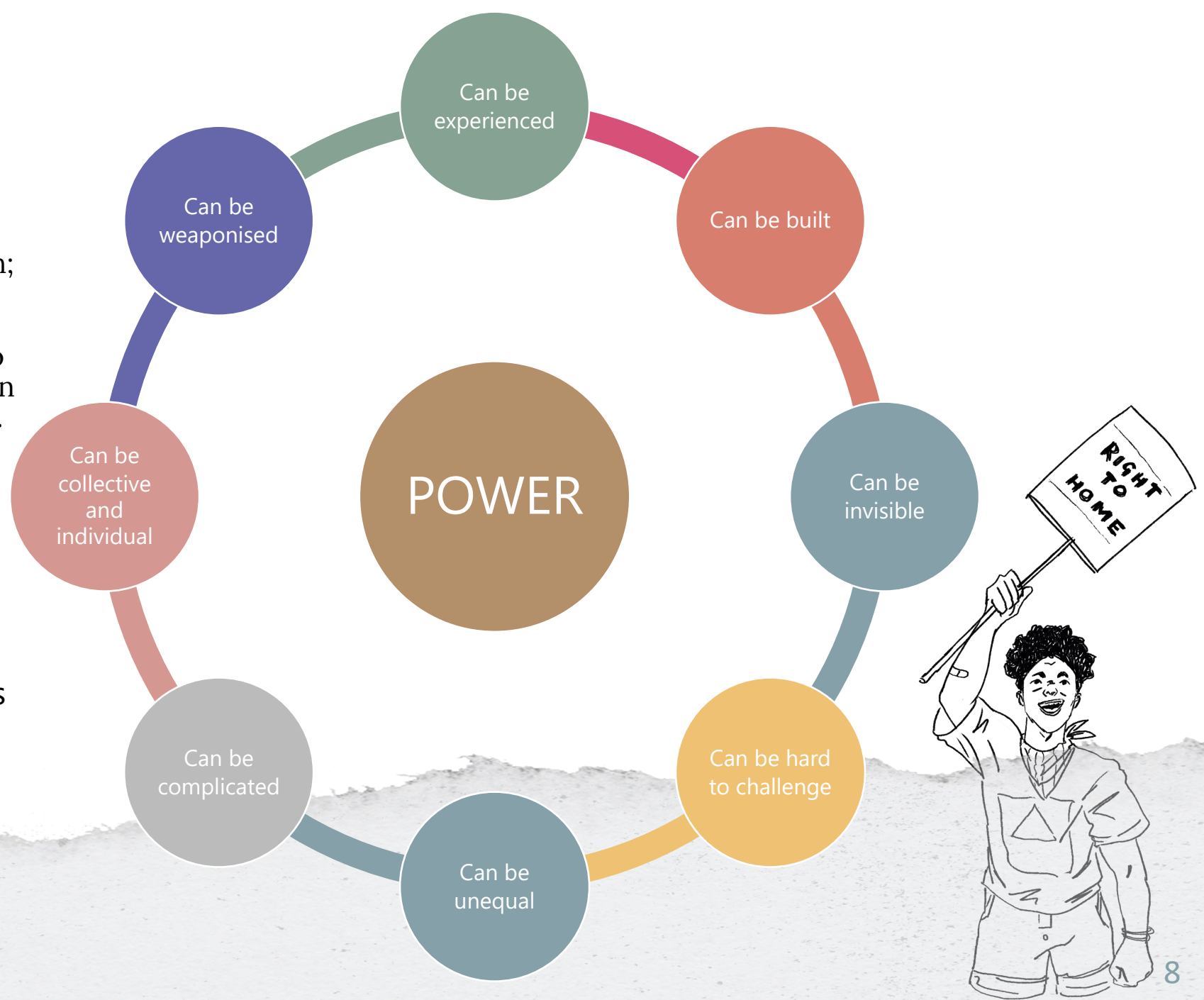


# POWER

**noun**

1. Ability to act or affect something strongly; physical or mental strength; might; vigour, energy; effectiveness.
2. Legal ability, capacity or authority to act; legal authority vested in a person or persons in a particular capacity<sup>[9]</sup>.

As radical practitioners we should reflect on the power we have individually and as employees of statutory and voluntary agencies. We can try to understand how that differs from the power experienced by people we support. Crucially, we can come together and use our collective power to influence positive change.





# ACCOUNTABILITY



*adjective*

1. required or expected to justify actions or decisions; responsible.
2. able to be explained or understood.

- Social justice movements frequently seek accountability from statutory bodies, for harm caused accidentally or intentionally, against people who are vulnerable and receiving care from support services.
- These movements highlight that complaints and review processes often don't bring about real accountability, justice and change.
- As radical practitioners, we can embrace accountability by meaningfully listening to people's experiences, being honest about what we can offer and apologising when we don't deliver what we promise.



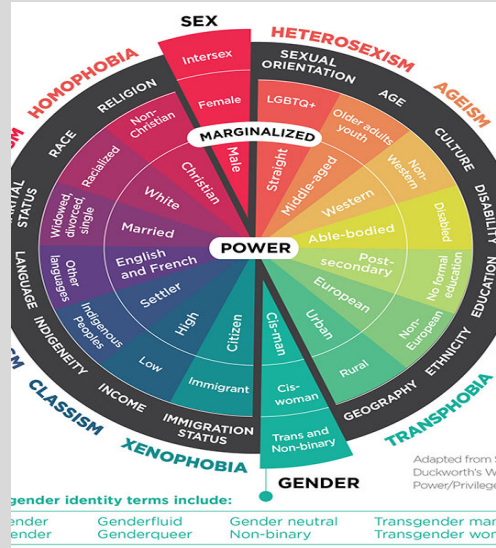
# AUTONOMY

*noun*

**1.** Autonomy means making your own decisions – big and small – about your own life. By extension, it means being supported (if you need and want support) and informed (if you need and want information); but not influenced, manipulated, ignored or bullied<sup>[7]</sup>

- Social justice movements remind us that people are not afforded equal autonomy over their bodies or equitable access to legal rights.
- People who have experienced trauma, abuse and neglect are likely to experience restrictions of their autonomy more sharply.
- Commitments to choice and control are not new in social work and homelessness services. But the choices available are often limited, unimaginative and tightly controlled.
- As practitioners, we also experience restrictions on our autonomy and ability to use our own judgement.
- As radical practitioners, we can visibly prioritise and maximise opportunities for people to make choices and determine their own paths in life, even if we don't agree with the choices they make. We can ask questions that challenge existing narratives.
- We can also advocate for practitioners to have greater autonomy and flexibility in how they work with people and partners.

# THE TOOLS



Less Radical

- Sharing information with Police, Home Office & other statutory agencies without consent or prior discussion
- Questioning capacity instead of first considering why someone might be making certain choices
- Blanket policies about involving statutory organisations when someone is affected by harm
- Victim blaming
- Policies that use punishment to change behaviour
- Confidentiality, open office conversations, network left on desks
- Naloxone training & availability
- Incident debriefs & dedicated fatality reviews
- People in the team feel confident to challenge oppressive and discriminatory language, policies or outcomes
- Training for staff about language and perception
- 'Peer panels' and 'talking circles' to support people exposed to risk to explore what they need
- Meetings about people always include
- Reflective and open conversations about professional intervention can cause/exacerbate those who have been incarcerated, detained

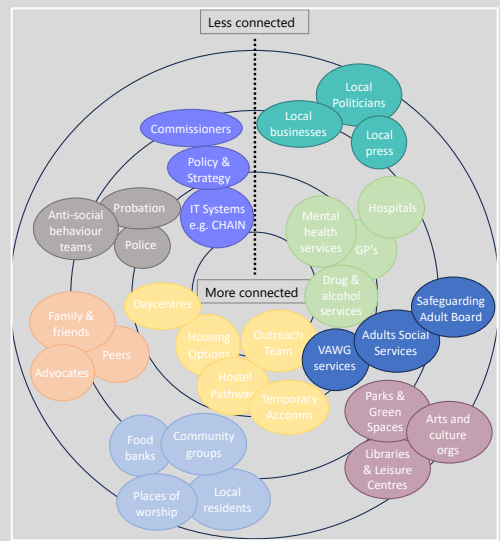
### Forcefield Analysis Factors That Influence Change

Can be completed alone, but works best as a group discussion  
 - If the change is complex, break it down and complete an analysis for each element so you can reach genuinely practical steps to be taken towards your change  
 - Be honest, what is it that's *really* pushing against the change?

Describe the change you are hoping to make:

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I feel happiest when I.....  
 When I feel frustrated I.....  
 When people let me down I.....  
 In times of crisis I.....  
 When I feel nervous or worried I.....  
 When I need space for myself I go to.....  
 Although I know that .....is not good for me,  
 The people I trust the most are.....  
 Things that help me to feel calm include.....  
 If I need help I will usually.....  
 If I am ..... that's a sign I'm not doing  
 If you notice I ....., then I would like you  
 If I don't turn up for an appointment, I would like you to.....  
 When I am ....., I would prefer it if you did not.....  
 Because of past experiences, I find .....ve  
 I don't like to talk about .....beca



### es of Practice<sup>[73]</sup>

er radical practitioners a space to explore issues, ideas and ways  
 iful safeguarding practices and value anti-racist, feminist, disabl  
 for discussing individuals; use them to step back from your ro  
 ng from others and together about radical anti-oppressive pract

actice you need:

better if different group  
 a turn as facilitator, it's  
 ilding confidence and for  
 noticing group dynamics

There is an example of a group Agreement on the next page, but you can also find them online, sometimes called a Terms of Reference

## THE TOOLKIT INVITES US TO:

- Embed **Professional Curiosity** in every conversation
- Improve our **Legal Literacy**
- Confidently challenge **Stigma and Prejudice** (our own and in others)
- Examine the **safeguarding culture** in our team or workplace
- Build **Communities of Practice** and other reflective spaces for peer learning
- Examine the role of **power** in our work
- Strengthen **trauma-informed practice** through relationships of solidarity
- Develop **Cultural competency** alongside **anti-racist practice**
- Champion **LGBTQIA+ inclusion** and **gender-informed practice**

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NO AUSTERITY!  
NO EVICTIONS!  
NO HOMELESSNESS!  
NO MORE DEATHS!

**THANK YOU**

If you'd like to stay in touch e-mail me: [gillktaylor@gmail.com](mailto:gillktaylor@gmail.com)