



**Making Space** is a sector-wide collaboration to build capacity within homelessness and housing services in Tāmaki Makaurau to provide safe, non-discriminatory and accessible services for takatāpui and rainbow/LGBTI+ clients.

**RainbowYOUTH** and **Te Ngākau Kahukura** are working alongside research partners, sector leaders, key housing providers in Auckland and rainbow people with their own lived experience of homelessness.

We aim to **disrupt the cycle of homelessness** for rainbow<sup>1</sup> people of all ages, reducing the frequency, duration and likelihood of recurring homelessness in our communities. By **improving the experiences** of takatāpui and rainbow people accessing housing services, we hope to see an increase in rainbow people reaching out and accessing housing support when they need it.

The pilot phase of this work has been funded by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's Local Innovation and Partnership Fund, Auckland Council and Foundation North.

## Rainbow people are more likely to experience homelessness

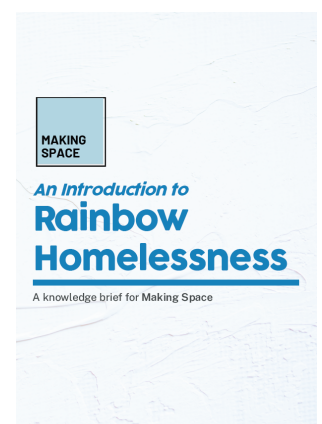
In Aotearoa, takatāpui and rainbow people are **more likely than their peers** to experience homelessness, unsafe housing or unstable living situations.

Homelessness and housing instability can be **driven by a range of factors** including family rejection or being kicked out of home, violence, discrimination in accessing housing (for example, being denied a rental property), employment discrimination, inadequate income and poverty.

It can be hard for rainbow people to find **housing support services that are accessible and safe** for them. Many professionals haven't learned about how to manaaki and support rainbow clients. Provider organisations may not have inclusive environments and policies that ensure the services being provided are safe, effective, gender inclusive and culturally appropriate.

Our knowledge brief, *An Introduction to Rainbow Homelessness*, summarises what we know about rainbow homelessness and the role of housing and homelessness service organisations. It's online at:

[www.making-space.nz/our-publications-about-rainbow-homelessness-in-aotearoa](http://www.making-space.nz/our-publications-about-rainbow-homelessness-in-aotearoa)



<sup>1</sup> We use *rainbow* as an umbrella term to describe people whose sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics differ from majority, binary norms. This include people who identify with terms like takatāpui, lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, transgender, queer, non-binary or fa'afafine, as well as people who don't use specific words for their identity, people whose identity changes over time, and people who are in the process of understanding their own identity and may not have 'come out' to themselves or others.

## Making Space upskills housing services to welcome rainbow clients

Over the last year, Making Space has undertaken a **sector-wide engagement and design process**, working with a wide range of homelessness stakeholders, sector leaders and rainbow lived experience voices. We have designed a rainbow responsiveness programme for housing providers, and will pilot this with key provider partners in early 2022.

Our pilot programme is framed around three levels of participation and commitment from providers, depending on their capacity, interest and readiness to engage with this work.



**Free resources and tools** will be available to all housing providers through our website. Services can use these to learn about rainbow responsiveness and start to change their practice.

For providers who are ready to get more involved, their rainbow lead can join a **Community of Practice** where they can get and share advice and build relationships with rainbow organisations.

Providers who have committed to making change can access **consultative advice** from the Making Space team on challenging and complex parts of their work where extra support is needed.

We're working with a research partner to **evaluate** our pilot. We are also seeking **funding support** to continue offering education and advice for housing providers across Auckland beyond July 2023, and to consider expanding to work **nationally**.

Throughout our design process, we have **published insights** about rainbow homelessness and built sector understanding of this issue. Through our design process, we heard that service providers **really care** about rainbow clients, but are **under-equipped** to support them. Rainbow people often see housing providers as a **last resort**, and are **fearful of violence and discrimination** they may face in services. Read more, or watch our webinar, at: [www.making-space.nz/our-publications-about-rainbow-homelessness-in-aotearoa](http://www.making-space.nz/our-publications-about-rainbow-homelessness-in-aotearoa)

*"Yeah I mean like why did I have to make that choice between...being unsafe and comfortable versus safe and uncomfortable. So I could have been housed with females where I would have felt safer but my dysphoria would have been a whole lot worse." – Rainbow service user*

*"You either sacrifice your rainbow identity for a house or sacrifice a house for your rainbow identity" – Rainbow service user*



## We can't address rainbow homelessness alone

Making Space is working collaboratively with the sector, and with rainbow people with lived experience. We want to **end rainbow homelessness** in Aotearoa, but this project is tackling just one part of the issue: improving access to housing services. In doing this work, we are very aware of the **system changes** that are needed to address rainbow homelessness. Some key issues are:

- The **ongoing impacts of colonisation**, and particularly the harms to takatāpui and whānau relationships as rainbow identities were suppressed, criminalised and pathologised.
- The **lack of secure and affordable housing** and wider cost of living challenges.
- The need for more **specialist rainbow support workers** who can help people navigate housing services and address the wider challenges they may be facing as a rainbow person. RainbowYOUTH's Auckland-based Homelessness Support Worker is an example of this.
- The **lack of mandate or requirement for housing providers** to prioritise rainbow skills, due to rainbow communities not being named in strategies, policies or contract requirements.
- **Social and systemic exclusion** of rainbow people (e.g. in housing, employment, education, and health), and limited infrastructure or expertise within government to address this.
- **Limited data and information** on rainbow homelessness because rainbow demographic questions are not included in provider-level data, national surveys and official statistics.
- Lack of a cohesive, resourced **national plan** for addressing rainbow homelessness.

Alongside Making Space, we are committed to advocating and working to address these issues.

## Who we are

Making Space is a partnership between RainbowYOUTH & Te Ngākau Kahukura.

**RainbowYOUTH** provides support, information, resources & advocacy for Aotearoa's queer, gender diverse, takatāpui and intersex youth. We work with young people, their whānau and their wider communities to provide safe and respectful support. We strive to work in a framework that considers hauora, resilience, cultural identities and individual journeys. We have a homelessness support service in Auckland that provides direct support for rainbow young people who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. [www.ry.org.nz](http://www.ry.org.nz)

**Te Ngākau Kahukura** works to change services and systems so they are affirming, welcoming and non-discriminatory for takatāpui and rainbow people. We work with people and organisations who influence the systems and environments around rainbow people: funders, politicians, researchers, training providers, sector bodies, government agencies and service providers across a range of sectors. Making Space sits alongside our work with systems addressing mental health, youth development, social wellbeing and other complex challenges. [www.tengakaukahukura.nz](http://www.tengakaukahukura.nz)

Learn more or contact us

[www.making-space.nz](http://www.making-space.nz)