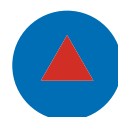




providing pathways to a better future

lgbtq+ young people experiencing or at risk of
homelessness and living in hostile environments



akt

welcome to our 5 year plan from akt's chair & ceo

lgbtq+ homelessness in the uk and akt's work

122,000 young people are experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the UK* and our research has shown that 24 per cent identify as LGBTQ+**. It is unacceptable that in 2022 young LGBTQ+ people are still facing rejection, abuse and homelessness just for being brave enough to come out to their families. This is why we exist today – we are akt, the national charity providing pathways into safe accommodation, alongside training, mentoring, advocacy and support to young LGBTQ+ people experiencing or at risk of homelessness or living in a hostile environment.

akt was born out of the aids pandemic which decimated our community. But it also acted as an incredible catalyst for the formation of so many grass roots community groups and charities who led the call for equity and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people. It took an ally who used her privilege and platform to bring akt to life in 1989. Activist and foster carer Cath Johnson founded akt in Manchester at a time when LGBTQ+ people had few rights and were facing oppression and abuse throughout society.

77 per cent of the young people we support cite rejection or abuse from their families after coming out as the main reason they have become homeless. Once homeless, LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience violence and discrimination, develop substance misuse problems, be exposed to sexual exploitation and engage in higher levels of risky sexual behaviour compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Over nine out of ten (92 per cent) of LGBTQ+ young people said that being homeless had a negative impact on their mental health, with more than one quarter (29 per cent) reporting that they started drinking as a way to cope with being homeless and more than one fifth (22 per cent) stating that they took drugs for the first time when they were homeless ***.

*Centrepnt 2021 **akt (2015) LGBT Youth Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Cause, Prevalence, Response & Outcome ***ibid



Rob Malcomson
Chair



Tim Spoor MBE
Chief Executive



the next five years

The number of young people accessing akt is rapidly increasing nationally; they are facing multiple challenges including poverty, unaffordable housing, transphobia and poor mental health alongside homelessness. In addition they are now more likely to have experienced rough sleeping before they reach us.



122,000
young people are experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the uk



This has driven us to create a strategy focused on prevention / early intervention-based services with the primary purpose of creating pathways into affordable and inclusive accommodation.

All in partnership with others, to help give LGBTQ+ young people the start in life they deserve.

akt has always believed that young people should be at the centre of our work and evolution as a charity. For that reason, from the outset of our consultation this strategy has been developed with young people and in response to their actual needs.

Young people tell us they need services that recognise all aspects of their identity and respect and respond to the different challenges and discriminations they face when experiencing homelessness. We are committed through our strategy to respond to this by providing equitable and inclusive services co-created with young people and through delivering a cycle of consultation and review with key stakeholders*.

At this critical time for the LGBTQ+ community we must ensure that inclusion and unity in all of their forms are at the heart of our work and actions as a charity; from forming alliances with partners to deliver work, through to supporting and campaigning alongside individuals, community groups and other charities seeking to improve the lives of people who are young, LGBTQ+ or experiencing homelessness.

*akt, 2015, 2021 and 2022



Our strategy is informed by a set of principles to ensure the best and most sustainable outcomes for young people. These include:

- Engaging with young people in the creation and evaluation of our work and future direction;
- Taking positive action to reach out, listen to, learn from and support LGBTQ+ young people facing multiple forms of oppression within and outside our community;
- Taking a risk-managed approach to our own growth, where we regularly evaluate the need, capacity, risk and sustainability of all our programmes and projects.

Our investment in this innovative forward plan has been made possible by the generosity of our funders, donors, community fundraisers and corporate supporters. They have given akt's Board and senior team the confidence to invest a significant portion of our free reserves (over £600,000 during years 1 and 2) in piloting new programmes and strengthening existing ones to give more young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness the support they need to achieve pathways into a better future.

Our capacity to deliver this work relies upon the incredible teams of staff, trustees and volunteers within akt as well as developing and strengthening our partnerships across the voluntary, public and private sectors. Together we will ensure that akt has the extra capacity, skills and expertise to deliver this five year plan.

Young people tell us they need services that recognise all aspects of their identity that respects and responds to the different challenges and discriminations they face when experiencing homelessness.



a word from lennox

who previously accessed
akt's services

why do you think akt is needed right now by lgbtq+ young people experiencing homelessness?

Lennox: akt are addressing an issue often missed by many other homeless charities, local authority provisions and housing providers; that of the safety of LGBTQ+ youth in their own homes.

We so often discuss being safe in the community, but we sometimes forget to acknowledge that safety begins at home, and not all people have access to a safe home environment with respect to their LGBTQ+ identity.

Young people who are often without financial or emotional independence must often choose between being themselves around those in their household and various religious, cultural and societal 'differences'. Should a young person not have the support required in exploring, discussing and expressing their identity, their doing so may and has resulted in their total rejection from a family / guardian household, often risking their main source of accommodation and therefore wellbeing. Much like my own experience with akt, this extraordinary charity provides a safety net and solutions to a complex issue putting many young people in the UK at risk every day.





why do you think our new strategy is the right way forward for akt?

Lennox: By offering a holistic and wrap-around support service, akt will be far more effective in the positive development of their service users, considering individual circumstances such as intersectionality of culture and faith. As well as using the power of communication tools such as social media to build relationships with key stakeholders in local government, influencing policy, awareness and social justice throughout the country.

Moreover, by offering outreach services, interventions and housing pathways, akt will also be able to use its communication tools and practical support, ensuring continuity for service users, as well as engaging with those who may not have always been able to reach out to akt directly.

As akt continue to expand beyond their current reach, they will further collaborate with established housing associations and local authorities, creating a stronger platform to reach more young people in need.

what is your hope for the next generation of lgbtq+ young people?

Lennox: My hope for the next generation of LGBTQ+ young people is that there will be better representation in our media, our healthcare systems and day to day life. I believe this will normalise an often alienating feeling that young people experience when exploring their identity in a heteronormative society.

I also hope that there continues to be more awareness of LGBTQ+ people and issues in all our public sector services; schools, housing associations, healthcare providers, social services etc.

Charities like akt are creating greater awareness, ensuring vulnerable young people have stronger avenues and options when it comes to services necessary to their support, enabling them to prosper and succeed.





our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion

“I need to see my identity and background reflected in the staff and trustees of a charity I am accessing.”

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are key organisational priorities for akt. Our aim is for EDI to feed through all strands of our work, impacting on everyone we engage with. Our ambition is to become a positive EDI role model within our sector. We wish to become recognisable as an organisation that embodies thinking, processes and behaviours that reflect EDI best practice in all that we do.

To achieve this, we will set out a 5-year EDI strategy and action plan. We have already completed some groundwork and initial scoping. Moving on from this first phase, we are preparing for further learning, consultation and reflection across the organisation before formalising our EDI strategy later this year.

We know that this is a complex area of work and are committed to getting it right. For EDI to be genuinely integral to all that we do, we understand that there is a need to create space and time, to collaborate effectively and to plan well. This is critical to embedding an authentic culture of inclusion and ensure that this work has a long-lasting, far-reaching impact.

“My experiences are not the same as a cis gendered lgb person. As a trans woman my journey through homelessness has been made more difficult by people refusing to treat me as a women, not respecting my identity and denying my rights.”

“I did not think akt would necessarily be understanding of experiences of race - I am used to people not understanding - that's the default.”



our impAKT

April 2021–April 2022



- We supported young people from Cumbria to Portsmouth experiencing or at risk of homelessness and living in hostile environments.
- Besides supporting young people with issues around homelessness, we also gave support and signposted them to other services around related issues. This included poor mental health, financial problems, housing management, sexual and physical health, sexuality and gender, education / employment / training, substance use and immigration.
- We helped young people achieve positive outcomes, including securing emergency or long term housing, avoiding eviction, developing life skills, improving self-worth, accessing to employment and education, financial stability and improving personal relationships.
- We ensured that the most vulnerable young people, those aged under 18 (14 per cent of young people we helped this year), had access to safe and appropriate support.



13%

of the young people we supported were 16-17 years old.

39%

of the young people we helped identified as living with a disability.

24%

of the people helped by our Manchester team between April 2021 and 2022, reported that they were experiencing rough sleeping when they reached out to us.

48%

of the young people we helped identified as trans, non-binary or were questioning their gender identity, rising to 63 per cent in Bristol.

20%

of young people who accessed our digital service were aged 18 or under.



our impAKT

2021-2022



21%

of young people we helped identified as bisexual.



70%

of the young people we supported in London identified as Black, Brown or People of Colour. In Newcastle 74 per cent identified as white British.



43%

of our caseload was supported by our London team at year end.



over 15%

of the young people we helped through our digital service were from the Midlands.



757

young people supported

Besides helping young people with homelessness and housing issues, we supported them around their mental and sexual health, as well as their finances.

“The needs of young people come first in all decision making at akt, this is modelled by the way the team behave as well as the Board in their feedback around organisational development.”

“The ability of akt to plug into local services in each of its regions is key to driving up social value.”

“akt offers a flexible range of support packages to meet specific needs, developed and delivered by a very capable and committed team.”

“akt recognises and values individual intersectionality.”

“akt has demonstrably generated significant social value through the provision of its support services – the most effective areas of support are access to safe housing and access to local advice and guidance.”



our strategy 2022-2027

In autumn 2022 we will release our equity, diversity and inclusion strategy which will be integrated into all areas of our forward plan for 2022-2027



our mission

to provide a pathway to a better future for lgbtq+ young people living in hostile environments, experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.



our vision

to build a more inclusive society where lgbtq+ young people do not have to choose between a safe home or being who they are.

1

provide pathways into safe, affordable & inclusive housing

floating support

By providing interventions which include life skills training, advocacy and support to young people living in their first homes, we will increase the chance of them sustaining their tenancies and avoid further homelessness. This programme will be delivered in partnership with our outstanding casework and youth engagement team.

housing pathways

Following our recent housing options review, we will partner with housing associations, private property owners and charities to increase pathways into the scarce supply of suitably safe and affordable housing for LGBTQ+ young people at risk. The focus here will be on co-creating models of accommodation which are; affordable to young people, offer a more positive impact on their lives than some traditional options and comprise a more scalable way to meet growing need amongst LGBTQ+ young people.



our strategy

2

reach young people where and when they need us most

digital services (expansion)

In lockdown our digital service provided national support to some of the most geographically and socially isolated young people experiencing rejection, homelessness, and abuse. As a low cost / high impact prevention-focused intervention, we will be developing this service through co-creation with young people to build more interactive platforms and resources to reach more young people nationally. This work will be mindful of the digital poverty many young people face.

national expansion

Our digital service and our research shows a strong need for our services in the Midlands, with over 15 per cent of the young people receiving support digitally from akt located in the area. We will launch a pilot project in the Midlands in 2022, working in partnership with local services to provide the support LGBTQ+ young people need. We will be utilising our data from our service delivery and our research to evidence and inform exploration of other geographical areas showing high need; we have already identified a requirement to provide a greater level of support across the North West.



3

engage with more young lgbtq+ people who face intersectional discrimination

community outreach

LGBTQ+ young people from intersectional identities, face multiple forms of discrimination and their journeys through homelessness are often more complex and challenging. Our outreach programme, a partnership between Services, Marketing, and Communications at akt, launching in 2023/24 will be prevention-focused, working with communities to reach and support young people facing multiple discrimination.

trans pathway (manchester)

This nationally significant pilot will develop better access to pathways of support for young trans people experiencing homelessness. In April 2021-April 2022 34 % of the young people we supported identified as trans and we will work with partners and others to ensure their services are informed by best practice.



our strategy

4

inform and influence to create change

mainstreaming best practice

This pilot project will develop toolkits to support providers of housing and homelessness services to better understand and meet the needs of young LGBTQ+ service users. This will improve LGBTQ+ young people's pathways into accommodation.

real world research

A programme of research in partnership with others, which informs better outcomes for LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homelessness – with a focus on those who face intersectional discrimination.

community campaigners

Young people should be at the forefront of improving both their own and the next generation's future. Working with those organisations experienced in campaigning, Young Campaigners will provide LGBTQ+ young people who have experienced homelessness with the opportunity to develop skills and receive a platform to secure their right to a better future.

youth panel

Young people should always have access to a platform to have their say on the strategy and governance of a charity which supports them. Youth Panel will be co-created with young people, the Board and the akt team to provide development opportunities and a voice for those accessing our services.



5

be a great place to work and volunteer

team experience

We will build a strong people and operations function and infrastructure at akt to support us in becoming a more inclusive and equitable organisation, that people aspire to work for, are proud to be part of and is a space where everyone feels supported to develop and learn skills.

volunteering

We will focus on growing and diversifying volunteering opportunities at akt, improving the volunteer experience with input from our volunteers, and seek to diversify the volunteer team to better reflect and represent the young people akt supports.



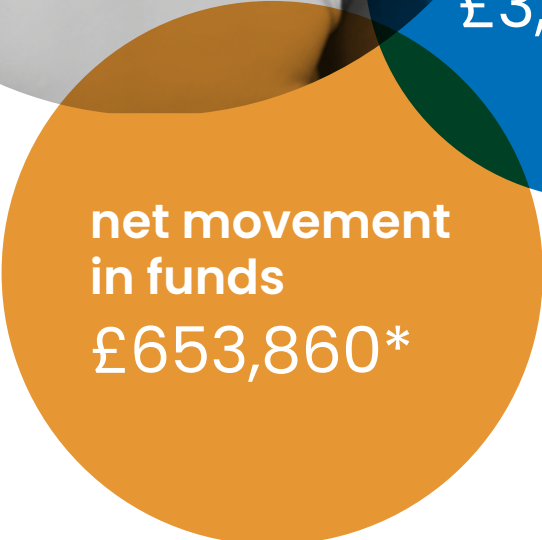
resourcing our strategy year one budget 2022-2023

income

fundraising £2,248,100

 other income £50,040

 housing income £48,762



expenditure

service delivery £2,024,511

 fundraising £502,325

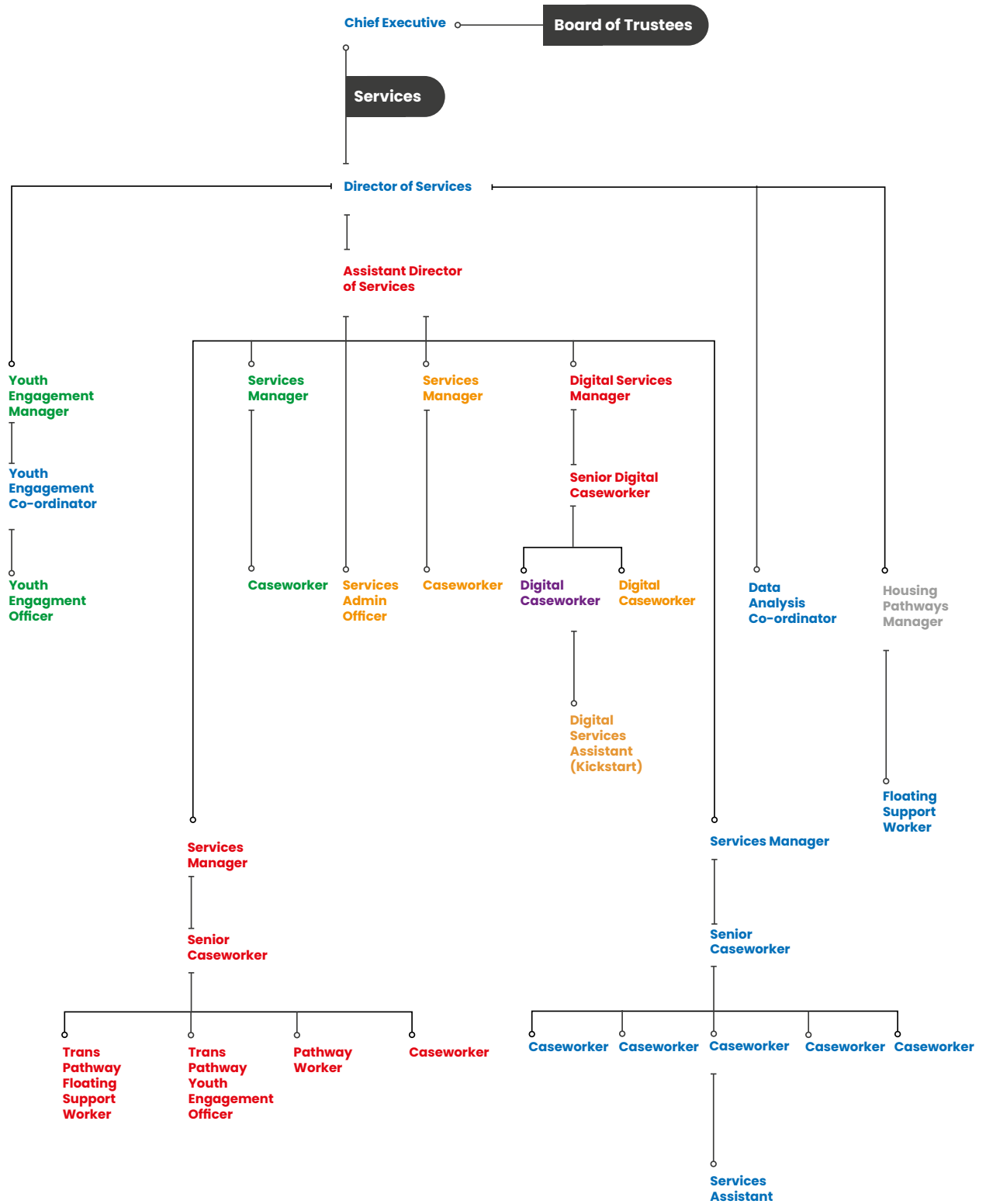
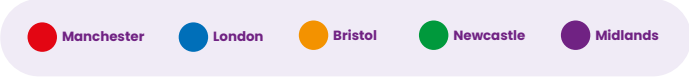
 national promotion
of akt's services £455,526

 governance costs £18,400

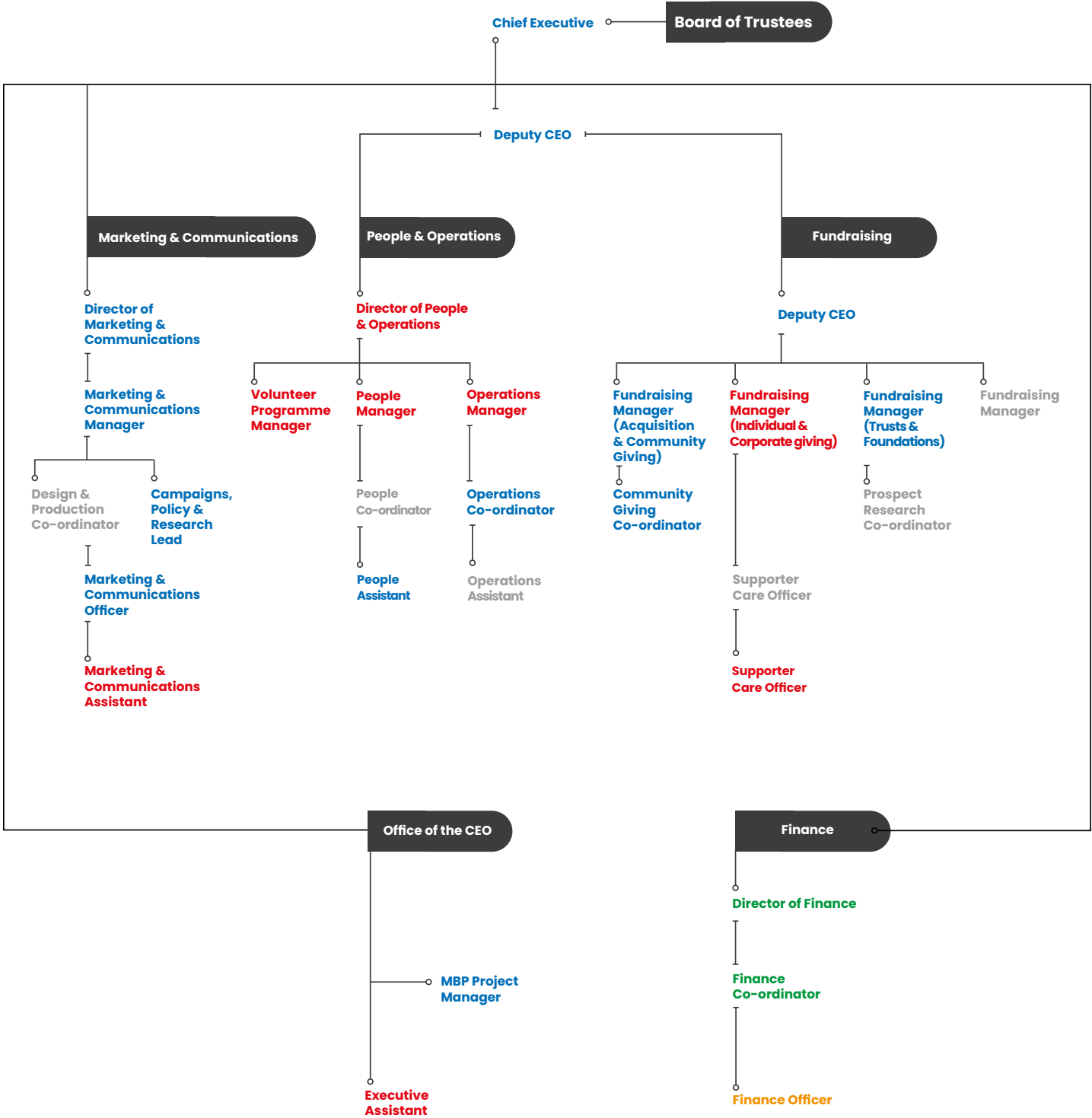
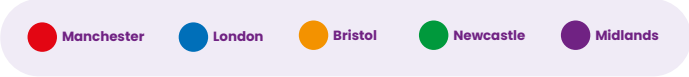
*This is a planned deficit to seed fund innovative new programmes of work in year 1-2 of our strategy and will be resourced from our free reserves.



the team



the team



resourcing our strategy:

fundraising, marketing and communications

strategic priority 2022 -2027

increase investment in income generation, ensuring the sustainability and growth of akt

fundraising and finance

akt has a strong track record of securing diverse income streams which have enabled us to be creative in our delivery of an outstanding evidence-based service offer to support young people in crisis.

to take this further we will:

- Make the best use of our reserves to ensure the development and sustainability of our work;
- Always ensure we deliver best value for the money we are given to support LGBTQ+ youth;
- Continue the development of our donor acquisition programme;
- Develop our integrated marketing function in partnership with our Marketing and Communications team;
- Consider other forms of income generation;
- Invest in growing and developing the fundraising team.



resourcing our strategy:

fundraising, marketing and communications



strategic priority 2022 -2027

strengthen the profile and position of the akt brand to become a more inclusive national organisation for young people, supporters and the lgbtq+ community

marketing and communications

Our digital infrastructure review, 2021 brand awareness survey and independent brand audit all identified that in order to better reach our key audiences of young people and supporters we need to strengthen the profile and position of akt and develop a more strategic approach to the marketing of our organisation.

to achieve this, we will:

- Complete a repositioning of our brand to clarify our purpose and mission;
- Develop through co-creation with young people and our team an accessible and interactive website which hosts our digital offer to young people, and is thoughtful in its inclusivity of all our LGBTQ+ community;
- Invest in regional and national marketing of our offer to reach those young people most in need of akt, including those who are socially or geographically isolated;
- Produce creative content with or informed by young people experiencing homelessness, which reflects and speaks to the diverse identities and backgrounds of the young people we support;
- Work with our services team to produce digital and physical marketing content which reaches the most vulnerable and excluded young LGBTQ+ people in our community.



case study

services

Chase came to akt as they wanted some advice on how to leave a controlling family environment. They were living in an overcrowded house, sharing a room with their siblings. Their parents were also disapproving of Chase pursuing a creative career and Chase felt there was no way they could be open about their sexuality and gender. Chase felt they could not keep going in the family home and had to take steps to move.



Chase was also contributing financially to the family household, which made it hard for them to save so a Rainbow Starter Pack (RSP) was a great option for them. Chase looked for a room in a shared house but found it so competitive with the renting market in London. Chase moved into Purple Door, akt's supported accommodation project, where they were able to get some space and have some time to think about their next steps. Quite quickly, Chase found a house share with QTPOC which was an ideal situation for them. We made an RSP application but unfortunately last minute, the guarantor fell through, so they had to return to house searching again.

It was quite hard to find the time to look for a place as well as working but eventually, Chase teamed up with the same group of people from the previous house share that fell through, and they all found a house together.

The landlady is a part of the LGBTQ+ community and wanted to help others so they didn't require a guarantor or full credit checks through an agency. They just did their own affordability checks and Chase was able to demonstrate that the accommodation was suitable for them.

After 10 weeks at Purple Door, Chase moved out into permanent accommodation with the support of an RSP from akt. They are slowly unpacking and adjusting to a freer and more autonomous lifestyle.



thank you



akt was founded by a group of six lgbtq+ people led by an ally just 33 years ago.

It is only because of our passionate community, allies and supporters that we have become the vital national charity for so many LGBTQ+ young people.

Thank you to all our donors, supporters, funders, volunteers and our wonderful community of LGBTQ+ people and allies.

You are all amazing, and your generosity is helping our team ensure young people have pathways to safe accommodation and better futures every single day.



Please support akt so that no LGBTQ+ young person needs to choose between a safe home and being who they are.



akt London

19-20 Parr Street,
London N1 7GW
t. 020 7831 6562

akt Manchester

50 Oak Street,
Northern Quarter,
Manchester M4 5JA
t. 0161 228 3308

akt Newcastle

MEA House,
Ellison Place,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8XS
t. 0191 281 0099

akt Bristol

1st Floor,
St Pauls Learning & Family Centre,
94 Grosvenor Rd, St Paul's,
Bristol BS2 8XJ
t. 07761 246 386

“I would just like to say akt has had the most impact in my life. They don't ignore the little things that are not associated with housing. They go the extra step.”

akt young person

akt

to get involved with our work
email info@akt.org.uk
call 020 7831 6562

  [aktcharity](#)

akt.org.uk



Company Registration No 04494989
Charity Registration No 1093815