



YOUR GUIDE TO THE TONIC OFFERING

ABOUT TONIC

Tonic is a community-led not for profit organisation. We are focused on creating vibrant and inclusive urban LGBT+ affirming retirement communities where people can share common experiences, find mutual support and enjoy their later life. Tonic was established in 2014 to address the issues of loneliness and isolation of older LGBT+ people and the need for specific housing and support provision.

Tonic Housing is the UK's first provider of LGBT+ affirming retirement housing.

In 2021, Tonic@Bankhouse was launched, located on Albert Embankment in the iconic area of Vauxhall, Lambeth. Bankhouse comprises 84 affordable apartments over 14 floors, with wonderful community spaces including a bar on the first floor. Tonic owns 19, 1 and 2 bed shared ownership apartments, and Riverside owns and manages the remaining rented apartments. The personal care and support services on-site are provided by Care Outlook. Tonic works closely with both partners to bring our unique LGBT+ affirming support and activities to life. The events and activities that Tonic arranges are available to all Bankhouse residents.



In addition to the issues of ageing faced by the general population, LGBT+ people:

- have faced decades of discrimination, and still do to this day
- have generally worse health outcomes than the rest of the population
- are more likely to live alone, and to be single
- are less likely to have children and a family support network
- are less likely to feel a sense of belonging to their local community
- feel that their specific needs are not taken into account in their care

We built our Tonic services to sensitively respond to these requirements. We've based this on the years of experience of the SAGE LGBT+ elders centres in the US using their holistic wellbeing approach and our own community-led research Building Safe Choices, 2020.



WHAT WE DO

Tonic has created a unique offering of housing with care, that celebrates LGBT+ identities with the community at the very heart of their homes. We co-create events and activities with residents based on their interests, including collaborations with other LGBT+ organisations and support providers. We provide accommodation as well as safe social spaces where older LGBT+ people are supported, gain life affirming social connections and access culturally appropriate services.

We are driven by the demand of older LGBT+ people for better choices in housing, support and care recognising that ‘a one size fits all approach’ does not meet the needs of diverse communities, we co-produce to create truly community led projects.

Rather than just being “LGBT+ friendly” our services are actively affirming of the lives, histories, needs and desires of LGBT+ people. This does not imply exclusion of those who do not identify as LGBT+ but actively values those who respect and celebrate LGBT+ people. Tonic has focused on London for the first project as the capital has the largest older LGBT+ population in the UK, estimated to be 145,000 people.

Call us community builders or facilitators. We’re community-led, so we work closely with residents to listen and understand what they want. We want to enable our residents to live their lives to the fullest, without fear, hesitation or restriction. A big aspect of Tonic community life involves activities and events. We’re talking cocktail evenings, drag nights, regular film and book clubs, and visits to local museums and galleries to name but a few activities.

We offer a specific LGBT+ support package, a core part of the Tonic service to our customers.

This includes Tonic staff providing:

- reassurance and assistance in helping people move and settle in (we are aware that older LGBT+ people are more likely to be single and less likely to have children and a family support network).
- on-going support to residents including linking with other LGBT+ services.
- organising, hosting and facilitating regular LGBT+ community events including Film Club, Gardening Club, arts programmes etc.
- optional care package - provided by Care Outlook, with all the care team trained by Tonic and Opening Doors in LGBT+ inclusion and their duties of the Equality Act 2010.

“Being connected to others is fundamental to a happy later life. We must create places and spaces that enable all generations to feel they belong to their communities and that encourage people entering later life to remain active and connected to others. This will become more important as older generations become more diverse and traditional family structures become less common”

— *Centre for Ageing Better, The State of Ageing, 2019*