

Around the Toilet: a research project report about what makes a safe and accessible toilet space

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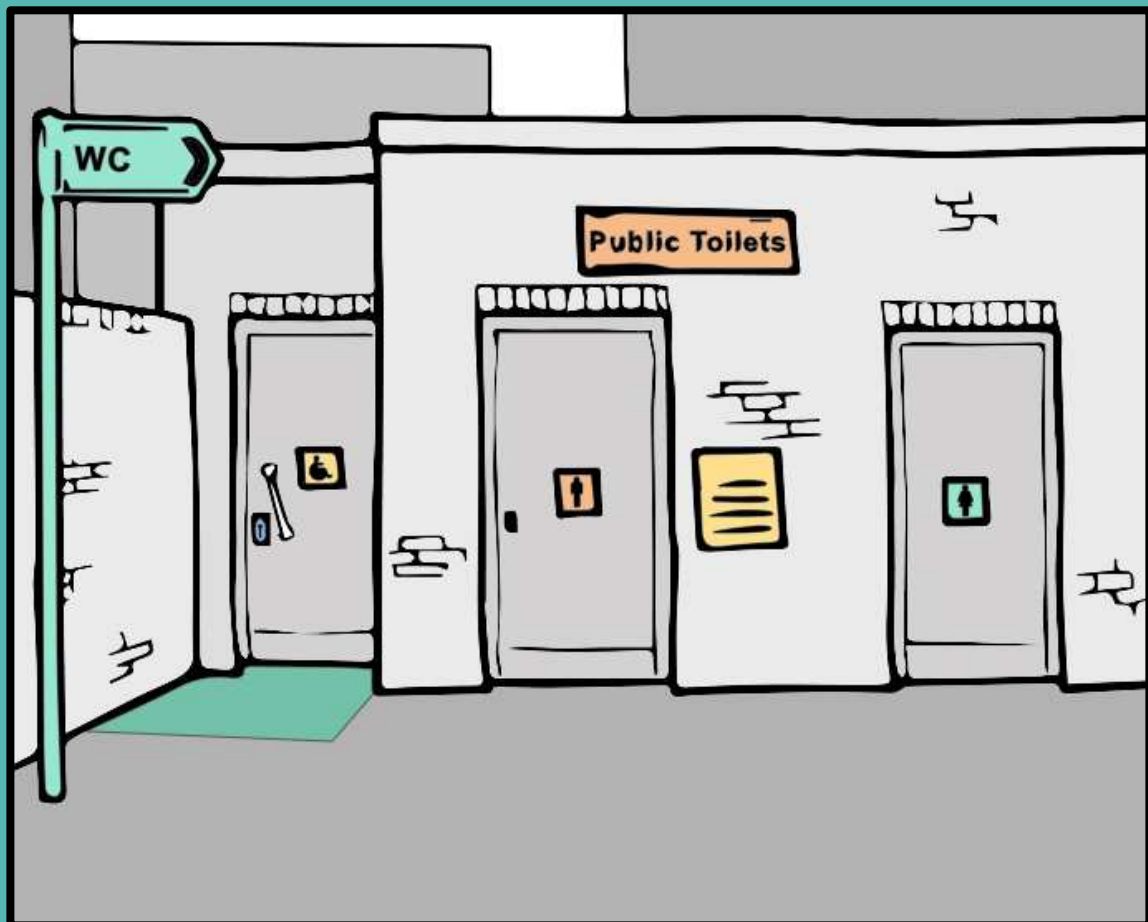
AROUND THE TOILET

A research project report about what makes a safe and accessible toilet space

April 2015 - February 2018

Dr Jen Slater

Dr Charlotte Jones



Published May 2018

Written as part of the AHRC funded Connected Communities project: **Around the Toilet**

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Executive Summary

Introduction to the project

This report summarises the key findings of a series of projects collectively known as Around the Toilet. Between April 2015 and February 2018 Around the Toilet used arts-based methods to ask what makes an accessible toilet space. When the project first began participation was open to trans, queer and disabled people. However, as we all have a toilet story to tell and current toilet provision is inadequate in a range of ways, from January 2016 the project expanded to include other people who wanted to share their toilet experiences (including parents, mobile workers, toilet cleaners and those whose religious beliefs impacted upon toilet use). Around the Toilet has also worked with urban planners and architects to consider the implications of the research and its potential for public impact in relation to built environment design. Around the Toilet adds a unique, holistic and empirically grounded study of UK toilet spaces in recent years. It is a rare example of a trans inclusive approach to UK toilet research.

Main findings

- Toilet provision in the UK is currently inadequate for a wide range of people, due to both *relational* and *functional* flaws. We need more public toilets, more accessible designs, and different attitudes and ways of understanding the space and our fellow occupants.
- Many trans and disabled people experience significant difficulties in accessing a safe, usable and comfortable toilet away from home.
- Toilets labelled as 'accessible' are often in fact *inaccessible* for many disabled users for a range of reasons.
- There is a lack of toilet research, particularly in the UK, which takes seriously trans people's experiences of harassment and violence in binary gendered toilets.
- There is a need for more all-gender toilet provision (sometimes known as 'gender neutral' toilets). This would benefit a range of people including: parents with children of a different gender; those who care for people of a different gender; some disabled people who have a personal assistant of a different gender; and some people whose gender is questioned in the toilet, including some trans and non-binary people (and, to a lesser extent, some cisgender people).
- A 'one size fits all' approach to toilet design doesn't work – there is no one toilet design to suit all users' needs. Nevertheless, consideration of *all* users and moves towards improvement are crucial.

Why toilets matter

Toilets are largely undervalued and trivialised spaces; rarely prioritised in local authority budgets, and often given to the least experienced architects to deal with at the end of the

design process. Yet, a lack of access to adequate toilets away from home can result in the following:

- an inability to leave the house, restricting access to wider environment and community, leaving and losing jobs. In other words, not having access to suitable toilets impacts upon people's fundamental ability to live their lives.
- restrictions upon bodily functions, including reducing food and drink and 'holding on' for long periods of time, all of which can have serious health implications.
- feeling socially unrecognised, unworthy, and unwelcome, if toilets do not meet your requirements and/or recognise your identity.

Austerity, Public/Private Provision and Finding a Toilet

Public Toilet Closures

Although public toilet closures in the UK affect everyone, difficulty in finding suitable toilets disproportionately affects already marginalised people, including people that menstruate, experience pregnancy and menopause, older people, homeless people, trans people, those with mental health problems and disabled people, including Changing Places users and those who need to access a toilet quickly (e.g. people affected by incontinence or bowel issues, such as irritable bowel syndrome).

Private Sector Toilets and Community Toilet Schemes

Increasingly toilets away from home are provided by the private sector, located in pubs, railway stations, shopping centres, cafes, pubs, hotels and so on. These are not always suitable for a range of reasons, such as:

- Using private toilet provision often requires making a purchase. A lack of finance can therefore impede toilet access. Community Toilet Schemes, which let the non-paying public use their toilet in exchange for an annual payment from the local council, were not widely known about. If Community Toilet Schemes are to have any impact, local councils need to advertise and signpost participating venues much more widely than at present.
- The venue may not be appropriate or welcoming for all users. For disabled people, a lack of physical access into the venue itself and/or a lack of an accessible toilet on entry makes the toilet unusable. For trans and, to a lesser extent, some cis people, toilets may be unsafe due to experiences of violence in binary gendered provision, and/or a hostile environment more generally within the venue.
- Some people have religious and cultural reasons for not entering toilets in locations that serve alcohol.

Participants often chose which venues to visit and to spend their money based on toilet suitability. For businesses and other organisations, this highlights the economic, as well as ethical, importance of providing toilets that are suitable for all.

It is important for local councils to consider the ability for toilets to cater for a diverse population across their area when implementing Community Toilet Schemes and otherwise relying on private provision.

Finding Signposting and Mapping Toilets

Participants prioritised knowing the locations of toilets that met their particular requirements, whether they be Changing Places toilets, clean toilets, toilets with doors wide enough to manoeuvre their wheelchairs into, or all-gender toilets. Yet, as local councils rarely provided such information, they relied upon their own personal knowledge of an area, or information crowdsourced from online and offline communities. More specific information about available toilets, including a photograph and dimensions of the toilet cubicle, would aid people in planning their journeys. Although some participants used online maps, many did not, highlighting the importance of information being provided both online and offline.

Toilets as Contested Spaces

A Diversity of Gendered Experiences

Whilst rightly arguing for more toilet provision for women, previous toilet research and campaigns have unfortunately tended to homogenise women's experiences, denying the differences between women. As such, the experiences of disabled women, women with non-Western cultural or religious requirements and trans women have been either overlooked or treated separately to other women. Furthermore, other people's needs for menstrual products and sanitary bins in toilets (such as trans men or non-binary people) have been deliberately or inadvertently ignored.

Around the Toilet research continually highlights the diversity of gendered toilet experiences and shows that a more nuanced, trans-inclusionary and holistic approach is needed to toilet research, provision and design.

Categorisation, Toilet Policing and Social Regulation

Gendered Assumptions

Trans and, to a lesser extent, some cis participants, spoke about others making assumptions about their gender in binary gendered toilets. This led to them experiencing suspicious looks, intimidation and violence. Trans participants were clear that the 'policing' of gender in the toilets was a political and prejudicial issue resulting from a wider climate of transphobia. Trans participants felt that their motives for using the toilet were under suspicion, and wrongly portrayed by others as sexually predatory or violent.

Policing the Accessible Toilet

Disabled people with invisible impairments spoke about the suspicion and harassment that they faced when using the accessible toilet. Many non-disabled people also spoke of needing to use the accessible toilet at times if they required a larger, more private and/or all-gender space. These included parents of young children, Muslim people, trans people,

those who are breast-feeding and some menstruating people, particularly those using re-usable menstrual products. A greater diversity of toilet provision, including more free, all-gender, larger and private toilet spaces would relieve some of the pressure on the accessible toilet.

Toilet Cultures and Assumptions of 'Appropriate' Use

Implicit expectations and ways of understanding how toilets 'should' be used were often focussed on particular behaviour in men's and women's toilets. There were also racialised aspects to assumptions of 'appropriate' use. One Muslim father described the suspicion aroused when washing his son in the communal sink area, in order to perform ablution. Whilst this points to the importance of providing facilities for ablution, it also highlights the need to challenge racist and Islamophobic perceptions beyond the toilet.

Re-Thinking Signs on Toilet Doors

Toilet signage, whilst not the only factor, was reported as a way of legitimising or justifying the social policing and harassment experienced by trans and disabled people (see above). The use of the blue wheelchair user sign to represent a range of disabled people (not all of whom use wheelchairs), was seen to contribute to judgemental attitudes in the accessible toilet. Similarly, the stick figures representing men and women were considered unrepresentative of diverse gender identities. Many participants shared a view that signs on toilet doors should show the facilities contained within the toilet space, rather than who is allowed to enter and use it.

Toilet signs did more than just signal what was in the toilet. Finding a sign that made participants feel that they belonged gave a sense of a welcoming place more generally.

Diversifying and Improving Toilet Provision

Questioning the 'Accessibility' of the 'Accessible' Toilet

Many disabled participants told us that despite their naming, 'accessible' toilets were in fact often inaccessible to them. Most accessible toilets do not provide a hoist system and/or large changing bench, which are mandatory facilities for some users. Accessible toilets were also reported to be repurposed as storage rooms, out of order, or unusable or unsafe in other ways. Although our findings show that investing financially in toilets is important, the inclusion of a shelf alongside other low-cost items (hooks, toilet roll, soap, toilet brushes) points to the ways that businesses, public bodies and other institutions can improve toilet access without high costs.

It is important to note that disabled people are not homogenous, and therefore have different access requirements and different opinions regarding the necessary attributes of an accessible toilet. For example, whilst bright fluorescent lights were an accessibility requirement for some, these made accessing toilets difficult or impossible for others. Clearly, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to toilet design cannot suit everyone's needs.

The Case for All-Gender Toilets

Despite all-gender toilets often being framed as only about trans people's toilet access, all-gender toilets are beneficial for a range of people and situations: parents with children of a different gender; those who care for people of a different gender; some disabled people who have a personal assistant of a different gender; and some people whose gender is questioned in the toilet, including some trans and non-binary people (and, to a lesser extent, some cis people).

The vast majority of cis women that we spoke to said they had no problem with using all-gender toilets themselves – with some positively welcoming it. Several women said that they were frustrated when a venue had two identical self-contained toilet cubicles but had made the decision to label one for men and another for women. Women pointed out that this often meant they were waiting in a queue next to an available toilet cubicle.

It is important that considered and sensitive approaches are taken when re-designating or 'de-gendering' toilets, including explaining to users why toilets had been made for people of all genders (example signage can be found in Appendix 2). Furthermore, re-labelling a toilet shouldn't be considered an 'end point' in creating toilets inclusive to and suitable for people of all genders. Gendered assumptions about what is needed in particular toilet spaces should be avoided, by, for example, providing sanitary bins and menstrual product dispensers in toilets for all genders.

Urinals can also present problems for trans and cis people, whether in men's or all-gender provisions. Some participants also commented that in men's toilets, there was often only one cubicle provided, which was not always enough. This may be especially concerning for users who needed to occupy the toilet for a long time.

All-Gender Toilets, Faith and Religion

Religious beliefs are often used as a justification for the unsuitability of all-gender toilets, and their potential to offend or exclude. Through our research, this concern has usually been raised by people who do not discuss their own experiences of faith. Rather, they use their own perceptions about other religious people, often of Islamic faith, to dismiss the idea of all-gender toilet provision. Our review of the literature shows that there has been very little research conducted directly addressing the toilet experiences and views of people of faith. We call for more research in this area. Nevertheless, blanket statements, which assume a connection between religion and binary gender distinctions, erase the experiences of trans and queer people of faith. Furthermore, it is rarely noted that disabled people of faith routinely use all-gender accessible toilet provision. For one Muslim participant becoming disabled and using all-gender, accessible toilet provision made it easier to perform ablution, a cleansing ritual of her Islamic faith.

All-Gender Toilets, Learning Difficulties and Autism

Some scholarship (e.g. Greed and Bichard, 2012) and people commenting on Around the Toilet have argued that all-gender toilets would confuse autistic people and/or people with learning difficulties. However, several Around the Toilet participants were trans and autistic and called for more all-gender provision and signs which showed the facilities within the toilet space. Our findings therefore strongly oppose an argument based upon ableist and paternalistic attitudes towards autistic people and those with learning difficulties, whose views are diverse and nuanced.

Creating More Private Spaces within the Public Realm

Toilets are not only used to urinate and defecate but provide a host of other services, including changing clothes, nappies, ostomy bags and menstrual products; administering medication; a place to cry whilst at work; take time away from people at busy events; find privacy or silence during a panic attack; or to breastfeed. Whilst, the toilet may be a suitable space for some of the above activities, many people spoke to us about the toilet being one of the only private places whilst away from home. There is a need to create more private spaces, that aren't toilets, away from home. The creation of more private spaces would relieve pressure from accessible toilets which are often used beyond their purpose as they allow additional privacy. This is particularly important because toilets can be hostile places for some people, and therefore cannot provide the safe, private space that is sometimes needed.

Implications of Inaccessible and Inadequate Toilet Provision

Access to Wider Environment and Community

Not having access to toilets that were functional, easily locatable and safe, restricted the journeys that participants were able to make. Indeed, not having access to suitable toilets restricted their access to the wider environment and community. Several Changing Places users and their families discussed only visiting venues with Changing Places toilets, or rarely leaving the house because of a lack of toilets.

Travelling and using public transport were particularly difficult. Many disabled participants, particularly wheelchair users, said that they were worried about using aeroplanes. Buses were a problem for people that needed to use a toilet urgently. Train toilets were problematic for lots of people. Whilst for some disabled people, they were physically inaccessible, for others, including trans participants, the conspicuous positioning of toilets and the unpredictable door mechanism rendered the toilets unusable.

'Coping', Leaving and Losing Jobs

Limited access to toilets impacted upon participants' ability to work. Indeed, the demographic make-up of a particular workforce may be impacted upon by the available toilet facilities. For example:

- A number of participants brought up the lack of toilet provision for mobile workers, particularly those driving at night. A woman lorry driver felt that toilet access was often a greater problem for women drivers because there was increased stigma and sometimes more bodily exposure attached to going to the toilet in a layby for women than men.
- Two trans women shared stories of losing jobs due to not having all-gender provision available and not being allowed or feeling comfortable to use the women's toilets at work.
- A Changing Places user explained that she had to terminate her career as a junior solicitor as she couldn't access toilets for 18 hours at a time.
- People with bowel and bladder conditions meaning that they needed to access a toilet quickly talked about checking where toilets were before taking a new job.

For organisations that are serious about equality and diversity in employment rights, the impact of toilet provision must be considered and revised continuously, in order to reflect the needs of workers.

Health Implications

Where using the toilet was not an option, participants often put strategies in place to limit their toilet use; these strategies had both mental and physical health implications.

Participants told us that they felt so anxious about not finding a suitable toilet, especially in unfamiliar areas, that they turned down trips with friends and avoided exercising.

Participants spoke about not drinking or eating all day and 'holding on' in order to avoid needing the toilet, sometimes for up to 18 hours a day. For people that required a hoist and changing bench, sometimes their only option was to rely on others to lift them onto the toilet. This was a danger to their own health, as well as those lifting them.

Recommendations

We make a number of recommendations based on the above findings on Section 6. These come under the headings of: 'Investing in Toilets'; 'Planning Toilets Over an Area (Building, Institution, Town, City); 'Diversifying Toilet Provision' and 'Making Low-Cost Changes to Existing Toilets'.

1. Introduction

This report summarises the key findings of a series of projects collectively known as Around the Toilet, which took place between April 2015 and February 2018. The research began by asking trans, queer and disabled people what makes a safe and accessible toilet space. Queer, trans and disabled people shared their experiences of using toilets, particularly when away from home. However, we all use the toilet, and therefore all have a toilet story to tell. The project therefore developed to include a diverse and expanding group of people, not all of whom were queer, trans and/or disabled. Previous empirical research around toilets in the UK (Hanson, Bichard, & Greed, 2007; Humphreys, 1970) and elsewhere (Blumenthal, 2014; Cavanagh, 2010; Patel, 2017) has often concentrated on specific user-groups or a particular toilet space. Where a more holistic view has been taken, trans people's experiences have not been taken into account (Anthony & Dufresne, 2009; Greed, 2003). Without denying the importance of these works, nor the recent edited collections, theoretical and historical explorations of the bathroom which have undoubtedly informed our work (Gershenson & Penner, 2009; Molotoch & Norén, 2010; Penner, 2013), Around the Toilet adds a unique, holistic and empirically grounded study of UK toilet spaces in recent years. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary team of academic, community and practitioner researchers bring with them theoretical backgrounds in Disability, Queer and Gender Studies, Sociology, Architecture, Education and English Literature, alongside work in the arts, feminist, queer, trans and disability activism, auditing and training, and experiential knowledge emerging from lived-experiences of exclusion and marginalisation from toilet spaces. As such, perspectives brought to the research have been rich and diverse.

The original aims of Around the Toilet were to:

1. Use toilets as a 'grounding space' to create cross-community dialogue about access and accessibility;
2. Explore how toilets function as socio-cultural spaces in terms of gender, embodiment, exclusion and belonging;
3. Consider how the provision of safe, accessible toilets enables or restricts wider access to space and community;
4. Broaden and deepen understandings of 'access' and 'accessibility' to include gendered, queer and disability perspectives on public facilities such as toilets;
5. Work with community partners, architects and design practitioners to develop installations/provocations to be used publicly to further promote critical reflections on issues of toilets and access;
6. Work with urban planners and architects to consider the implications of the research and its potential for public impact in relation to built environment design.

This document is not designed to give a full account of the research or research process (which will be disseminated via academic publication). Rather, it provides a user-friendly summary of the perspectives of toilet users that took part in the study, alongside the literature already available in the field. It acts as a form of guidance for what businesses, public and private-sector bodies and those managing (quasi)public spaces could - and should - be thinking about in relation to toilets. As such this report may be of interest to governments, local councils, businesses, public and private sector institutions, academics and other organisations that provide toilets away from home. We actively welcome its use

by those campaigning for more and better access to toilets. Architects, town planners and designers may too be interested in this report, particularly if wanting to make a case for valuing the toilet space. We also direct those interested in toilet design processes to more targeted resources including the two interlinked Toilet Design Toolkits (see Appendix 1). Indeed, we encourage all readers to look at and use the numerous resources created through the project available in Appendix 1.

1.1 Project Process

Around the Toilet is the collective name for four interlinked research projects taking place between April 2015 and February 2018 (see Figure 1). All project stages have been designed alongside a growing group of project partners including stakeholder, activist and campaigning groups and individuals who have advised, and often participated in the research. Below we have outlined our creative and collaborative approach to research, before briefly outlining the project stages.

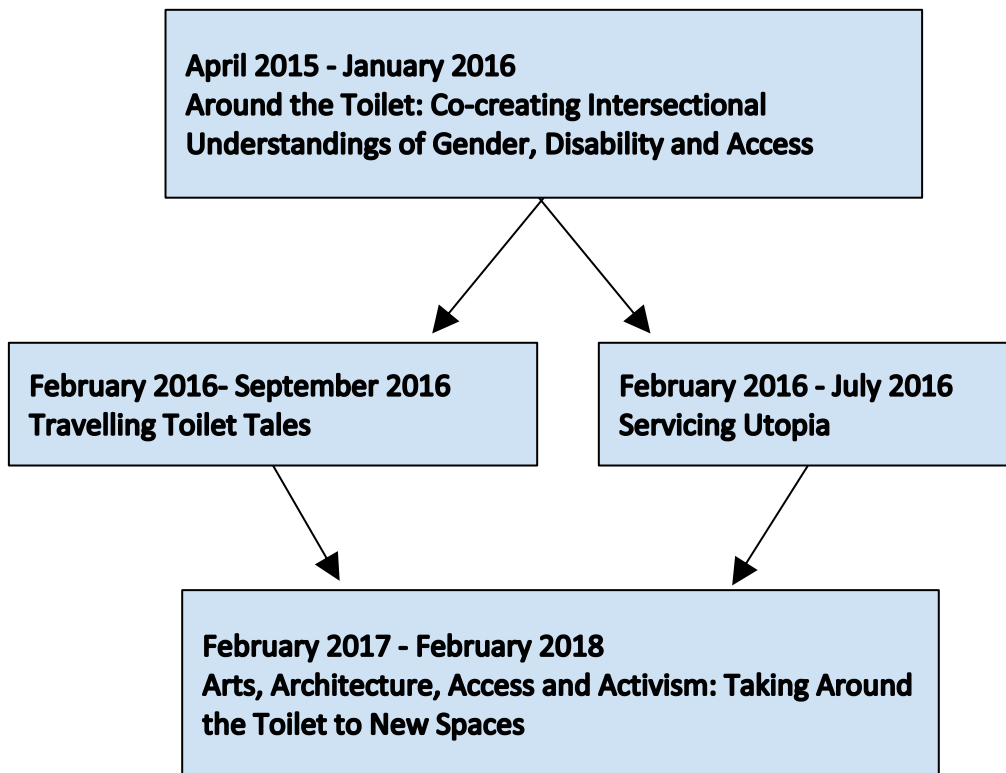


Figure 1: Project Timeline

Creative and Inclusive Methods

Throughout the project we used creative and inclusive methods with a range of participants, organisations and stakeholder groups, whilst continually reviewing the literature in the area. As Around the Toilet has been consistently outward-facing through its use of social media, hosting and taking part in public events, it is difficult to calculate participating people in the project. Around 30 people have engaged in more formal research interviews and workshops (see project stages below); the majority of which had some form of sustained participation (in some cases joining the advisory board or becoming a co-investigator). Many more people, however, have additionally spoken to us through less formal channels. Indeed, working differently and flexibly with a wide range of people led to Around the Toilet

receiving the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement's (NCCPE) Engage 2016 Award for the Arts, Humanities and Society Sciences Category.

For example, the use of a lively Twitter account (@cctoilettalk) and hashtag (#cctoilettalk) throughout the project has led to international engagement as people and organisations have shared with us their stories, photos and musings on toilets and accessibility, as well as responding to our findings, outputs and the project more broadly. We have held numerous public events which have invited both targeted and general audiences to share their thoughts. Public engagement events have included hosting invited speakers, running workshops as part of queer, disability and feminist events and festivals, and holding interactive stalls in public locations in order to share and encourage feedback on our project outputs. We have been invited by activist and campaigning organisations, universities and creative venues, such as art galleries, to speak about our work, which has often led to people sharing their toilet stories. There have been many occasions where we have been invited to create installations or decorate toilets with political provocations, asking toilet users questions such as 'what do you think of this toilet?', 'do you have a toilet story to share?', 'why do we have gender divisions for toilets?', or 'what would make this toilet more accessible for you?' We have also held workshops in youth group and school settings and events in cafes aimed at a family audience to specifically capture the views of children, young people and those that work with and care for them. Other people have been involved in the project through either invitations or answering an open call to write guest posts for our project blog (<http://aroundthetoilet.com>), or writing for our zine, Lift the Lid (Jones & Slater, 2018; see Appendix 1). Serendipitous engagement with the project, including with those who have been involved as a film maker or artist, has often led to the research team receiving unexpected toilet stories and experiences.

Practicing and trainee architects, along with other design professionals, have also engaged in the project, sometimes at public events, but often through specifically designed projects and facilitated workshop sessions.



Figure 2 Utopian toilets amongst a utopian city – created by visitors to one of many public engagement events

Around the Toilet: Co-creating Intersectional Understandings of Gender, Disability and Access

The first nine months of *Around the Toilet* (April 2015-January 2016) consisted of four arts practice-based workshops which brought together queer, trans and disabled people to ask what made a safe and accessible toilet space. A total of 16 people external to the academic team took part in the workshops, with several attending multiple workshops. However, blurring the boundaries between researcher and participant, academic and community investigators often joined in workshops as participants, and sometimes workshops were run by community partners. Academics, representatives from partner organisations and participants who wished to remain involved then wrote a brief for Masters (MA) Architecture students based on workshop discussions. Eleven MA students worked together to create an installation based on the brief which was taken to public events around the UK to begin conversations about toilet accessibility with a general public audience.



Figure 3: Working with architecture students as part of the initial Around the Toilet project

Travelling Toilet Tales and Servicing Utopia

By January 2016, when our first instalment of funding came to an end, it was clear that there was momentum in the project - lots of people wanted to talk about toilets! Furthermore, the project's audience started to broaden. Our social media, and particularly Twitter presence (@cctoilettalk), alongside a range of public events, meant that many people had been in touch to share their own toilet experiences - some of whom weren't queer, trans or disabled. Furthermore, although our initial engagement with architects felt productive, we felt that much more needed to be done. We therefore expanded our remit and developed two further projects.

Travelling Toilet Tales continued a theme emerging from our original data – journeys are made, or not made, due to the accessibility of toilets (see Section 5). We invited participants including parents and carers, lorry drivers, toilet cleaners, and those whose religious

experiences impact upon toilet use to speak to us about toilets and travelling. In total, 11 people shared their experiences. Six of these were recorded through semi-structured, in-person interviews with a project researcher. Others, however, opted to record their own musings independent from the academic team. One participant recorded a conversation between herself and her child, one wrote and then recorded a poem and another an essay. One participant carried a Dictaphone and recorded several short extracts when she was travelling with her toddler-aged son. We invited Gemma Nash (<http://gemmanashartist.com>), a sound artist who was first involved as a participant earlier in the project, to create an animated soundscape using the recordings, Travelling Toilet Tales, which was then put on our project website and used to spark further conversations at events and workshops (see Appendix 1).

Running in parallel to Travelling Toilet Tales was another project, Servicing Utopia. Servicing Utopia continued our work with architects and design professionals. We ran Continuing Professional Development (CPD) lunchtime sessions with two architecture practices in which we shared and discussed the data collected so far, whilst also considering the constraints of their own practice and acquiring their experiences and views. Two public events, specifically focusing on toilet design, and consultation with a local disability advisory group, also fed into this project. The culmination of the above led to the creation of our first Toilet Toolkit (www.toilettoolkit.co.uk), a resource specifically designed to get architects and design professionals thinking about toilet design processes, and a promotional film about the need to re-consider the design and build of toilets (see Appendix 1).

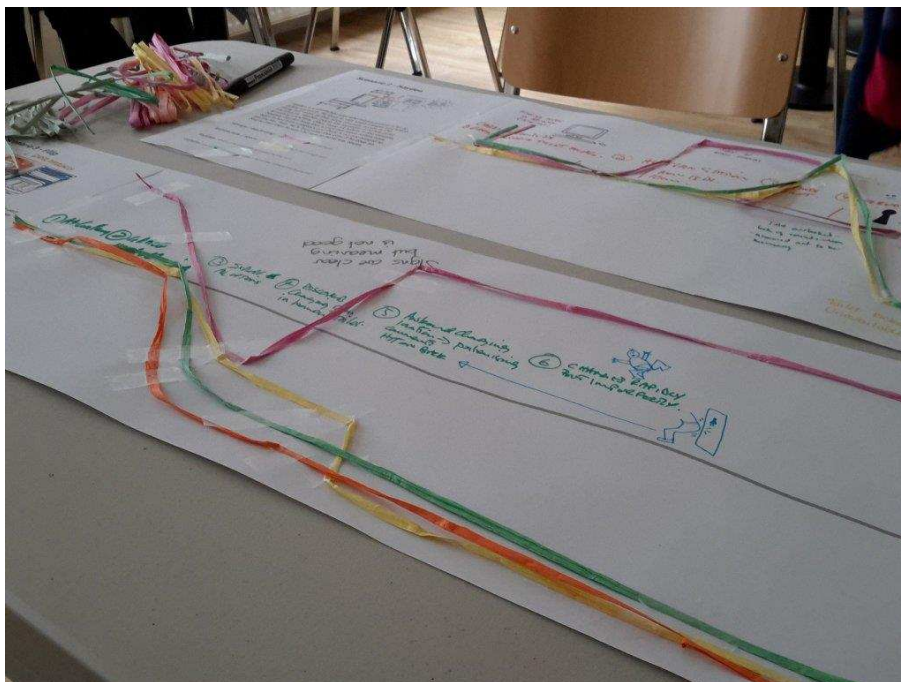


Figure 4: A 'toilet mapping' activity which took place at the public launch event for the Servicing Utopia project

Arts, Architecture, Access and Activism: Taking Around the Toilet to New Spaces

Our most recent project took part between February 2017 and February 2018: *Arts, Architecture, Activism and Access: Taking Around the Toilet to New Spaces (or, New Spaces)*. Once again, this project involved an expansion of our research team, with different people getting involved as academic and community investigators and as participants. The

overarching aim of *New Spaces* was to continue and diversify our public engagement and impact work. In particular, we had three aims. Firstly, to internationalise relationships with queer and disability arts and activism through the creation of a short film. Interviews with three new and one existing participant took place and made up the script of *The Toilet.*; an animation sharing the toilet experiences of trans, disabled and Muslim people. *The Toilet.* was selected to be screened at various film festivals as well as specific events, before being launched online and made available for wider use (see Appendix 1). Several individuals and organisations, including Trans Pride Scotland and an NHS Sexual Health Trainer, have used *The Toilet.* to spark discussion at their own events. The second aim was to continue to work with architects – this time by developing training tools which can be used and embedded into architecture training. Teaching tools with a focus on toilets and accessibility were designed and prototyped with a group of 20 MA architecture students over a six-month period. This process resulted in the creation of a second online Toilet Design Toolkit (see Appendix 1), aimed particularly at trainee architects and architectural educators. Once completed, this was also tested at a workshop with 10 students at Canterbury Architecture School.

The final aim was to work with children and young people in school and youth work settings (Slater, Jones, & Procter, 2016, 2017). Our work with children, young people and practitioners has not been included in this document. However, we have identified a need for more research in this area. Some of the work that we have done so far in schools can be viewed at <https://aroundthetoilet.com/storying-school-toilets/>.



Figure 5 A still from the short animation, *The Toilet.*

1.2 Report Outline

In this report we highlight the key results from our research. As well as presenting an analysis of the data we also offer recommendations based on our findings. We have tried to make our arguments easily identifiable by structuring the report around a set of themes which are highlighted as sub-headings. In addition, we offer a number of appendices, including a list of resources produced through the project (Appendix 1), examples of signs

which can be used by organisations to explain the purpose and need of all-gender toilets (Appendix 2) and a glossary of key terms (Appendix 3).

As language choice is a debatable and contested area, we have made some decisions around language which are often (if not always) grounded in ethics and politics. As well as outlining key terms, an explanation of our choice of language is available in the glossary (Appendix 3), and there is an additional note on trans inclusive language in Section 1.4. Where language deviates, we are following the language choices of participants and/or it is representative of what is used in other literature.

Unless otherwise requested by participants, participants' names given in this report are pseudonyms. Like Cavanagh (2010) and Patel (2017), we asked participants to self-identify and did not question these identities. We have included some demographic data when given by the participant, and where it gives relevant additional context to quotes.

1.3 Limitations of the Study and Need for Further Research

Although we have spoken to a wide range of participants throughout the research, that is not to say that it is without its limits. Most, although not all, of our participants were white. As toilet 'policing' and gender-based harms are often racialised and more prevalent and violent for people of colour (Cavanagh, 2010; Patel, 2017), our discussion in Section 3 may have been more attentive to race if more of our participants were people of colour. Despite the research being open to men, most of the people that shared their stories with us were women or non-binary people. Although some people spoke about urinals, there is a need for further research around people's experiences of using urinals. We recognise that more work needs to be done around labour and the toilet – in particular, talking to toilet cleaners, many of whom are women of colour and/or women migrants (The British Cleaning Council, 2017). Other avenues of research could include homelessness and toilets, sex work and toilets and drug use and toilets, all of which have only been touched upon in Around the Toilet research, but disproportionately affect marginalised groups including disabled, queer and trans people (Doward, 2017; The Albert Kennedy Trust, 2015).

1.4 A Note on Trans-Inclusive Perspectives and Language

Much academic research regarding toilets away from home in the UK has not seriously engaged with trans people's experiences or requirements (Greed, 2003, 2009, 2010; Greed & Bichard, 2012; Vora, 2016), and in some cases rests upon trans-exclusionary and cisnormative understandings of gender (although we hope that this may be starting to change, e.g. Ramster, Greed, & Bichard, 2018). In some instances, this scholarship also explicitly argues against incorporating the needs of trans people in the toilet (e.g. Jeffreys, 2014). Consequently, women are cited as the only people that menstruate or experience menopause, and non-binary and trans men's experiences are erased. Without denying that menstruation is a heavily gendered issue which mostly affects women, it is important to point out that: a) not all women menstruate and/experience menopause; and b) some people of other genders also menstruate – including trans men and non-binary people. Trans exclusionary (and trans-hostile) assumptions can also lead to the expectation that all men can urinate whilst standing, which is problematic for a range of men including some trans, intersex and disabled men, whose anatomy or physicality may mean that they are unable or uncomfortable urinating whilst standing, as well as a range of people using urinals

who find it difficult to urinate in front of others. As our research shows, trans-exclusionary assumptions – whether deliberate, lazy or naïve – have material and symbolic exclusionary consequences for toilet design for more than just trans people.

Where we have drawn on trans-exclusionary literature we have at times changed the language to reflect the nuances which toilet guidance requires, or directly highlighted where our research contradicts research previously carried out.

We particularly outline the importance of trans inclusivity in toilet research in Section 3.

2. Austerity, Public/Private Provision and Finding a Toilet

Around the Toilet has taken place within a context of austerity and public funding cuts. In this section we outline the impact that austerity has had on toilet provision away from home, including an increasing reliance on toilets provided by the private sector.

2.1 Public Toilet Closures

Before Around the Toilet began, we knew that austerity and cuts to public funding in the UK were leading to the closure of public toilets (Penner, 2013) – closures which continue today. We also knew that other public services and amenities, such as libraries, were being closed, and often these buildings provided the only remaining toilets in an area. As such, our research highlights that inadequate toilets are anything but a ‘minority issue’. In fact, current toilet provision is unsuitable for a range of different people, for a range of different reasons. Many participants with a diverse range of identities and experiences mentioned the closure of public toilets. Given the extent of public toilet closures, we would argue that current toilet provision isn’t suitable for *anyone*. As one of our participants put it, *‘we all poo, and so we all need a place to poo!’*

However, whilst we contend that public toilet provision is unsuitable for everybody, finding suitable toilets is much more difficult for some than it is for others. Like most public funding cuts, the closure of public toilets disproportionately affects already marginalised people. Women are more likely to have caring responsibilities and are more often dealing with menstruation and menopause than people of other genders. This can mean that women need longer and more frequent access to public toilets (Anthony & Dufresne, 2009; Greed, 2009, 2010). Older people are prevented from leaving the house due to insufficient toilet access (Help the Aged UK, 2007; Knight & Bichard, 2011). Fewer public toilets can be especially detrimental for homeless people; creating further stigmatisation and divisions within communities as homeless people are positioned as ‘problems’ for urinating and defecating on the streets (National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Committee, 2012), as well as having particular implications for homeless people that menstruate (Vora, 2016). Disabled people are impacted upon due to the increasing scarcity of accessible toilets (Bichard & Knight, 2012). Around the Toilet participants that needed to access toilets urgently, such as Gill who has Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), told us how a scarcity of toilets impacted upon their lives. For Gill, this meant being careful about what she ate, as well as planning journeys around suitable toilets (discussed further in Section 5). Reflecting on a holiday to Sydney, Australia, she said:

‘Sydney [...] had plenty of facilities, all clean and all free. I did eat things that didn’t do me any favours, but I was able to cope. The Aussies understand we need to loos and the Government there funds a location map. Can’t our Government understand we need toilets too?!’

Another participant, Steph, who is a Changing Places user, suggested that governments should go further than just providing basic toilet provision and also provide a national fund so those requiring a hoist and a changing bench (often known as Changing Places toilets) could use the toilet when away from home:

'In terms of equipment for people like me, hundreds of thousands of people like me, who can't stand or walk, there needs to be a fund, a national fund, because at the moment I am at the behest of a business deciding that my dignity and comfort is worth them spending thirty grand on me. And they're not going to do that unless they're maybe a public body or they've got some ethos. And they've got the cash. So if there was a public fund that people could apply to and say 'right I'm in a hotspot', like a train station or a shopping centre, this is where people need facilities, [...] I think that would help. But at the moment, [...] even just Changing Places is just a recommendation in Building Regulations. It's just a 'please put one in, please spend £25,000'! It's just not going to work. It's just not enough. It's not adequate.'

Both Gill and Steph, like many of our participants, saw government funding as vital for the provision of accessible toilets away from home.

2.2 Private Sector Toilets and Community Toilet Schemes

Increasingly toilets 'away from home' are provided by the private sector, located in pubs, railway stations, shopping centres, cafes, pubs, hotels and so on. Whilst much private provision requires users to make a purchase – sometimes with signs or locks indicating 'customers only' – other businesses have opted to be part of Community Toilet Schemes. Community Toilet Schemes let the non-paying public use their toilet in exchange for an annual payment from the local council. Despite the sum varying between local authorities, this reduces council costs. Knight (2010) estimates that whereas £600 may go annually to a local business, it would cost £18,000 for an 'Automated Public Convenience' (see Figure 6).



Figure 6: A toilet sometimes found in public places, known as an 'automated public convenience'.

The shift from public to private toilet provision (including Community Toilet Schemes) is not without critique. Campaigning organisations and researchers such as Public Toilets UK (n.d.), Greed (2009) and Knight (2010) highlight that it means that toilets are often only available during business opening hours. They also point out that some businesses, including chain retail stores and food outlets deliberately place toilets in areas of the store which require complex navigation through large and crowded shops. Some shops go further, implementing 'no signage' policies in the hope that toilet users won't take the most direct route to the toilet, and buy something whilst in the store (Public Toilets UK, n.d.). This makes toilets

difficult to access or inadequate for people who cannot walk/wheel long distances, find crowded areas stressful, and/or need a toilet urgently. Another concern is that Community Toilet Schemes fail to work if they are not adequately advertised by the local council. When registering to participate a business agrees to display a sticker on their premises advertising their participation. Yet, these stickers can be easily missed, and Bichard and Knight (2012) note that there is little evidence that potential users know about the existence of Community Toilet Schemes. Indeed, despite talking readily about a range of public and private toilet provision, very few Around the Toilet participants mentioned Community Toilet Schemes; highlighting the importance of advertising, signposting and mapping if Community Toilet Schemes are to have any impact. One participant, Gill, who did discuss Community Toilet Schemes is also heavily involved in toilet campaigning. She said:

'Community toilet schemes where businesses allow you to use their facilities without making a purchase are all very well, but they don't suit everyone and if they're not sign-posted, they might as well not exist.'



Figure 7 An example of a Community Toilet Scheme sticker from Farnham Town Council. These should be displayed on businesses participating in the scheme.

Furthermore, Greed (2011) highlights that as many cafes, pubs and bars are not accessible and/or do not offer accessible toilets, the toilets are not always suitable for all disabled people. Indeed, many disabled participants spoke about choosing places to visit based upon the accessibility of their toilets, and in doing so highlighting the inaccessibility of the majority of venues.

'If I'm meeting anyone for work in London I'll suggest the Tate and we can have lunch there, I can spend money there and then I'll use their toilet.' (Changing Places User)

'We both [my partner and I] do like a lot of work from cafes, so if we're going out to do that then we need to make sure that it's somewhere that it's easy to get to the loo and that we can get into the building. So, there might be places that we would prefer to go if we were

just popping in but if we're going to like spend the day out working then we'll go somewhere different because it's more accessible.' (Workshop attendee)

For businesses and other organisations, this highlights the economic, as well as ethical, importance of making toilets that are suitable for all.

Greed (2011) also argues that toilets located in pubs and bars may exclude under-18s and those caring for them, some people of faith, and some women who may be wary of entering spaces which may seem threatening. One Muslim participant in *Around the Toilet* agreed, explaining that she didn't go to pub toilets because she worried about the perceptions that other customers and staff would have about a Muslim woman in a pub. It is therefore important for local councils to consider the suitability for toilets across an area to cater for a diverse population of people when implementing Community Toilet Schemes and otherwise relying on private provision. Campaigning organisation, Public Toilets UK (n.d.), note that although there could be scope in Community Toilet Schemes and other quasi-public provision, they should not be used as a replacement to council owned and run public toilets.

2.3 Finding, Signposting and Mapping Toilets

A lack of toilets generally, alongside a varied ambivalence and uncertainty about their right to use private provision, meant that many people we spoke to had stories of trying (and failing) to find toilets. For some, however, the difficulties were more prominent than for others – either because their need for a toilet was often urgent, or because there were few toilets which were suitable for them to use. Nicky, who has bowel problems meaning that she needs to access toilets quickly, stressed the importance of knowing where toilets are:

'I think the most important thing with toilets is knowing where the signage is [...] As soon as you're walking into a building or even just being sort of out and about in the city centre. When you're walking around [city], for example, there's no signs for toilets anywhere and I guess that's probably because there's no public toilets now anyway. But yeah, just knowing where they are is a good start.'

White (2016a, 2016b) found that many women with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) knew the exact position of toilets around their locality. A lack of signage when travelling to a new area, therefore, could cause considerable anxiety. Other participants stressed that they prioritised knowing the locations of toilets that met their particular requirements, whether they be Changing Places toilets, clean toilets, toilets with doors wide enough to manoeuvre their wheelchairs into, or all-gender toilets. Yet, as local councils rarely provided such information (or indeed, provided many of the toilets that they were able to use), they relied upon their own personal knowledge of an area, or information crowdsourced from online and offline communities. A parent of a disabled child spoke about her use of the Changing Places map which details the locations of Changing Places toilets:

'there's an app that will enable you to locate the Changing Places on your journey from A to B, so that instead of worrying about will there be somewhere that we change the person, you can actually see that in advance and plan your route accordingly, which is absolutely fantastic.'

The Changing Places map (<http://changingplaces.uktoiletmap.org>) wasn't the only toilet mapping scheme mentioned by participants. In one workshop, trans participants mentioned apps, such as REFUGE restrooms (<https://www.refugerestrooms.org/>), which provides information on toilets deemed safe to use by trans, intersex and other gender non-conforming people. Others, particularly those involved in campaigns to save public toilets, had come across the Great British Toilet Map (<https://greatbritishpublictoiletmap.rca.ac.uk/>). Unlike the aforementioned maps, the Great British Toilet Map is aimed at a more general audience, allowing users to search for toilets within a specific location, as well as search for and view some features, including men's or women's toilets, baby changing facilities, whether there is a fee, whether the toilet is attended, opening hours and whether it is an accessible toilet. As yet, however, searching for an all-gender or Changing Places toilet is not possible.

However, despite some knowledge of the various maps and apps, they weren't widely used by participants. Indeed, not everyone has access to such technology. According to digital inclusion charity, Good Things Foundation (2017), 6 million people in Britain have never used the internet, whilst 12.6 million don't have the basic digital literacy to fully participate online. As disabled people and older people are disproportionately impacted upon by both a lack of public toilets (Hanson et al., 2007) and digital exclusion (Good Things Foundation, 2017), disabled and older people may well be unable to participate in the creation, maintenance and use of these schemes. It is important, therefore, that toilet maps are provided both online and offline, alongside local signposting.

We must also critically consider what information is included on maps and signs guiding people to toilets. Many Around the Toilet participants reported spending considerable time planning visits based on the accessibility and suitability of toilets. Yet, for disabled participants in particular, a toilet being labelled as 'accessible' didn't guarantee its suitability. As we discuss further in Section 4.1, 'accessible' toilets were reported to have been found with no level access, heavy, narrow or not automated doors, unsuitable handles and locks, with transfer space blocked by bins or cleaning materials, lacking a hoist, or in an unmaintained or unsanitary condition. Like participants in Hanson et al (2007), Around the Toilet participants said that more specific information, including a photograph and dimensions of the toilet cubicle, would aid them in planning their journeys. Updating information should be sustained beyond implementation to ensure appropriate upkeep and review. We return to the implications of not having access to suitable toilets in Section 5. For now, however, we turn to discuss the toilet as a contested space, and the importance of diversifying toilet provision to cater for a range of needs.

3. Toilets as Contested Spaces

Around the Toilet brings together various, often fragmented and disparate, toilet research and campaigns. Here we explore the different ways that toilet inequality has been discussed in research and activism, and what our findings add to this context. We make the case for diversifying toilet provision in order to create toilets that are suitable for a range of people, experiences and requirements.

3.1 A Diversity of Gendered Experiences

Over the duration of this project, toilet conflict has been the subject of international debate and media coverage, in part due to the recent 'bathroom bills' in the USA, which attempt to control trans people's access to toilet facilities, but also due to the UK's own engagement with trans people's freedom to use public toilets, and a wider culture of suspicion and hostility towards trans people, especially trans women. The re-labelling of two toilets as gender neutral at the Barbican Centre in London in 2016, for example, received a visible backlash, first on social media and then in the national press (e.g. Sinmaz & Strick, 2017), which led to the Barbican releasing a statement about their ambitions towards inclusivity.

Extensive quantitative data has shown the prevalence of trans people's negative toilet experiences. A recent Stonewall school report (2017) revealed that one in five trans pupils are bullied in school toilets, and three in five say that they are not allowed to use the toilets they feel comfortable in at school. This discomfort can continue throughout the life course; in a survey with non-binary people (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2015), public toilets were identified as the place which caused most difficulty for respondents. Over half of those surveyed (55.2%) said that they had avoided using public toilet facilities because of a fear of being harassed, being read as non-binary or being 'outed'. Congruent with these findings, our research explores how toilets can be a source of anxiety, and uncomfortable, often dangerous, places for many trans and non-binary people in the UK.

Much of the existing research on toilet inequalities in the UK has focused upon cis women's reduced access to toilets in comparison to that of cis men (Greed, 2003, 2010; Penner, 2001). For many campaigners in this area, "the lack of toilet provision for women [...] was no oversight but part of systematic restriction of women's access to the city of man" (Greed, 2011, p. 121). Although the provision of women's toilets alongside men's is now commonplace, women can still struggle to access toilets outside of the home. In 2017 in Amsterdam, for example, people protested over the lack of women's toilets after a woman was fined for urinating in a public area where only urinals were available (Boffey, 2017). Greed (2010) highlights that a lack of women's toilets continues to be an issue in the UK, as illustrated by their long queues. Greed advocates for a 2:1 ratio of women's to men's toilets, in order to take into account women needing to use toilets more often and for longer periods than men (for issues such as caring responsibilities, menstruation, menopause and pregnancy). Other research, however, has shown that queuing time is reduced and more equitable if more all-gender provision is available (Anthony & Dufresne, 2009; Bovens & Marcoci, 2017). Without denying the need for more toilets available for women, nor the gendering of toilet experiences, it is important to note that those campaigning for women's toilet access often homogenise women's experiences. This both denies the differences between women and functions to exclude some people of other genders who may share

similar experiences to some women (see Section 1.4 for more on trans inclusive perspectives).

Several women participants in *Around the Toilet* discussed parenting, menopause, menstruation and pregnancy. However, these issues were not only highlighted by women, and neither were they the main concern of all women that took part. Indeed, the diversity of women's toilet access needs was continually highlighted when looking between conversations with different participants, and by individual participants. Steph, a disabled woman who uses Changing Places toilets, discussed how women's experiences can differ (please note that Steph's examples are not experienced by all women, and are sometimes experienced by people of other genders):

'I'm just talking about going for a wee but we've also, as women, particularly disabled women, we've got - we add into the mix menstruation, pregnancy, needing to wee extra because of pressure on the bladder, because of your faith, you might be wearing more tightly bound clothes, how do you get out of them? And there's so many reasons as well that's wrapped up in gender that's not just about wheelchair users and not just about having a wee but all the whole range of reasons we need to use a bathroom.'

Furthermore, Alex, a non-binary person spoke about the need for menstruation provision in toilets for all genders, and the struggle to achieve recognition and support for these facilities:

'I was speaking to a trans guy a while ago who'd been trying to get, I don't know if it's sanitary bins or like a tampon machine, in like the men's toilets at his uni or something, but like the thing was the people who like owned the machines didn't want to because they didn't think that they'd make enough money off it.'

Around the Toilet research shows that an approach which is more nuanced, trans-inclusionary and holistic is needed, rather than the current model, which dominates (particularly UK) toilet research, provision and design. Furthermore, the diversity of toilet requirements and experiences cannot be solely categorised in terms of sex and gender.

3.2 Categorisation, Toilet Policing and Social Regulation

3.2.1 Gendered Assumptions

Some trans and queer people campaign for greater access to all-gender toilets, highlighting the dangers that they face in public toilets (e.g. NUS LGBT, 2015). Often a parallel argument is made that trans people should also be able to choose to use men's and women's toilets without fear of violence or intimidation. Scholars and activists alike refer to the spectrum of violence and surveillance that gender nonconforming people (and those not viewed as 'passing' as men or women) face in toilets as 'gender policing' (Bender-Baird, 2016; Browne, 2004). Although gender policing can be performed or upheld by security staff or other official personnel on the premises, it is not related to the law. Indeed, it is important to state that in the UK there is no law which prohibits anyone from using any toilet. Rather, gender policing is based on social convention. Gender policing can range from being given a suspicious or judgmental look by another user, being asked to leave by security, or being physically assaulted due to your perceived gender and/or trans status. In other words,

gender policing is experienced in a toilet when other users and/or staff decide, usually based on visual cues, who does or doesn't belong in that space. One participant who attended a workshop described toilet policing as such:

'It's basically when people like see someone who they don't think should be in the loo and then they'll like confront them and be like "oh, you're not supposed to be in here". Like if you're in the women's toilets and they don't think you should be there and they're like "oh, you're not a woman, what are you doing in the ladies?'"

Concurring with North American research (Blumenthal, 2014; Cavanagh, 2010), trans people in particular spoke about how toilets are policed in relation to gender. A non-binary participant, Alex, said that they were harassed by other users and security whether they used both the men's and the women's toilets:

'I find the way people read my gender is quite unpredictable, so I get harassed and kicked out and security called on me whichever gender toilet I'm using, so I can't really find a way round it.'

A trans woman, Erin, told us about the anxiety she felt if she needed to use a public toilet, and how she lost her job due to the negative response from other members of staff when she started using the women's toilets at work. Both of these participants were clear that the policing of gender in the toilets was a political issue resulting from a wider climate of transphobia:

'People just want to go about their business and people need to use the toilet. [Using the toilet is] a thing that everybody needs to do every day and because of a lot of ingrained transphobia, people take issue with that. People take issue with the fact that people need to pee and take action to stop them, whether it be harassing people in toilets or, you know, sacking them or getting them in trouble with the police. It happens so it's a political issue.'

'There's been times where I've been in a train station toilet just washing my hands and then like a bunch of like security come through the door and say, just like, say things like "oh this is the women's toilets" and like "yes, I'm washing my hands!", like, "we've had complaints about there being a man in the women's toilets" and I said like "well tell them to stop being transphobic", what am I supposed to say to that?'

Gender policing, however, does not only happen to trans people. Throughout the project, several cis women have told us of receiving suspicious looks in women's toilets due to other people's perceptions of their gender. Munt (1998) described how she used the accessible toilet, due to its 'gender-free' status, to avoid other people commenting on her gender. She argues that when strangers confront her with 'are you a man or a woman?' they were really asking 'are you a lesbian?' Cavanagh (2010) describes an instance where a straight cis man, carrying his girlfriend's handbag, and assisting his blind male friend into the toilet was murdered due to perceptions about his (homo)sexuality. In both these instances gender policing cannot be separated from the policing of (presumed) sexuality, and in particular, the enforcement of heterosexuality (see also Browne, 2004). Trans participants in our research also felt that their motives for using the toilet were under suspicion, and wrongly

portrayed by others as sexually predatory or violent. Cavanagh (2010) and Patel (2017) highlight that gender policing is also classed and racialized. Half of the trans participants of colour in Patel's study attributed the violence that they'd experienced in the bathroom to be not only based on their gender, but also their race.

3.3.2 Policing the Accessible Toilet

The categorisation of toilets also incites other kinds of social surveillance. Relating toilet policing to the accessible toilet, Honora, a queer disabled participant said:

'if you've not got a wheelchair and they [other people] see you coming out of the disabled loo and they'll be like 'oh, you shouldn't be using the disabled loo and you're not disabled', but they might be disabled, they might just not have a wheelchair, but they might still need the extra space for a colostomy bag or like a bunch of other reasons.'

Those with invisible impairments spoke about the suspicion and harassment that they had faced when using the accessible toilet. One participant, Nicky, who has a bowel condition meaning that she needs to access the toilet quickly, said:

'Most of the time I would use a women's toilet and I wouldn't use a disabled toilet. If I do [use a disabled toilet] I often feel a little bit guilty about it and I feel like I'm being a bit cheeky, like oh I'll just sneak in here. But often I will be desperate. They're a lot more comfortable as well, disabled toilets, 'cause there's just a lot more space and you don't always have the presume of someone being outside. But then there's kind of that judgement there as well like do you look physically able or not.'

Another participant, Mikhail, agreed, remarking on *'the abuse you get sometimes because you don't look disabled, even though you've got a RADAR key'*. Such comments correlate with a recent study by Crohn's and Colitis UK in which 49% of their members (with invisible impairments) said that they have received negative comments from a stranger when using the accessible toilet.

In addition to disabled people, many others who required a larger, more private and/or all-gender space, all spoke of needing to use the accessible toilet at times. These included non-disabled parents of young children, Muslim people, trans people, those who are breast-feeding and some menstruating people, particularly those using re-usable menstrual products that they want to rinse out. This isn't to say that non-disabled people felt comfortable with their decision to use an accessible toilet. Rather, they felt forced into a position where it was their only or best option. One non-disabled mother, Ava, reflected on her experience of trying to use an accessible toilet when her son was a baby:

'you can't get into the disabled toilet because it's locked, which is fair enough, you know, you're not actually disabled so you don't have one of the special [RADAR] keys, but equally changing your child on the floor when there's wee and water, you know, there's nothing to put them on and he might have done a poo and it's gone on their body and then you need to wipe it off, but then they're laying on the floor.'

Ava explained that baby changing units were rarely in men's toilets. Therefore, changing the baby in the all-gender accessible toilet was often the only option for her husband.

When asked if they ever used the accessible toilet, Alex, a non-binary trans participant said:

'Um... sometimes but I don't really want to, like, use it if, I don't know, I'm not, like, disabled and I don't want to be using it and then someone might come and need to actually use it because they're actually, like, physically disabled.'

Whilst another trans participant commented:

'I've got a RADAR Key and that is like possibly the most useful thing as a trans person. Like being able to like go into a gender neutral toilet and also not pay 30p to wee at train stations.'

A greater diversity of toilet provision including more free, all-gender, larger and private toilet spaces would relieve some of the pressure on the accessible toilet.

3.2.3 Toilet Cultures and Assumptions of 'Appropriate' Use

Whilst the instances above all relate to *who* should be allowed to use certain toilet spaces, there was also policing about *how* those toilets should be used. The understanding and expectations of how toilets were used were often gendered and focussed on particular behaviour in men's and women's toilets. People using the urinals spoke of the importance of not making eye contact or looking at each other's genitals whilst using the urinals (Slater et al., 2016). For some women, being quiet, not leaving a smell or mark, and obscuring whether you were defecating or menstruating was particularly important. Nicky, said:

'if you go to the toilet and you leave a mark on the toilet and there isn't anything to kind of get rid of it then someone going in after you will know that you've been for a number two and lift it and they're kind of like "oh, that's disgusting" you know "you should've cleaned that up" but often there's not toilet brushes in there.'

The extract above was part of a broader discussion of the embarrassment felt about people knowing 'what you've been doing' in the toilet; feelings which Nicky felt were more ingrained for women. She contrasted her own experiences of trying to use the toilet quickly and quietly with her boyfriend's public assertion that he was '*going for a poo*', before taking his time with his laptop or reading on his phone.

In another example of gendered, but also racialised, social policing, Mikhail, a Muslim father explained:

'Once when he [my son] was younger, he'd been to the toilet and I were washing his private parts [in the sink] and the kids are looking 'what are you doing' and people might think you're molesting the child or something, you know, but for [Muslim people] we have to be clean, we might not be able to clean rest of, you know, rest of us body, us hands and us mouth and make proper ablution but, you know, us private parts we want to be clean and the facilities aren't there.'

The legitimacy of a Muslim man caring for a child was questioned, at least in part, because of the way that he was using the toilet space. We are led to question how assumptions around faith, culture, race and gender played into the actions of the other toilet users who were seen to respond with suspicion or disapproval. For Mikhail, the incident would have not happened if suitable facilities for ablution were in place. However, there is also a wider need to challenge racist and Islamophobic perceptions and ideologies beyond the toilet, which undoubtedly play into Mikhail's experience.

3.3 Re-Thinking Signs on Toilet Doors

Although signage is not the only factor, it was often reported as a way of legitimising or justifying some of the social policing discussed above. For Titchkosky (2011), the use of the blue wheelchair user sign to represent a range of disabled people (not all of whom use wheelchairs), contributes to judgemental attitudes towards those not using wheelchairs using the accessible toilet. Erin, a trans woman, made a similar point in relation to the gendered toilet symbols:

'I have issues with the designs of people on toilets because ultimately what you're looking at is a few geometric shapes which are meant to encompass two halves of the population and the only real difference is a triangle and a few lines in a different place and this is a social standard which means that people can be vilified and punished and potentially get in an awful lot of trouble for doing perfectly innocent things like going to the toilet.'

In order to prevent such vilification, and to allow identification outside the gender binary, some campaigners and activists have argued that toilet signs should show the facilities contained within the toilet space, rather than who is allowed to enter and use it (Killermann, 2014; Law, 2018). Many of our participants shared this view. Asked what would improve toilet signage, Erin continued:

'Just a picture of what's in, you know, we know what it's for, we know what this round shape with a bowl and a handle is for. If you want to expand the practicalities further you could have a picture of a sort of a long, narrow toilet that's intended for standing up next to and maybe a picture of a closed door, you know, if you wanted to designate the exact positions those toilets were in. But in general, indicating that the room has a toilet in would be a really good start.'

Although she hoped that one day a picture of a toilet would suffice, Erin spoke of her relief when she came across an all-gender (or gender neutral) toilet sign:

'There are a few places that have signs saying "gender neutral toilet". While ultimately, I'd like us to sort of progress to where that isn't necessary, the way things are now it's a massive relief to see that sort of acknowledgement.'

For Erin this sign was not only a way of identifying the permitted occupants, but also an 'acknowledgement', a recognition of the potential risks which can arise for some trans people when binary gender toilets are the only facilities available, and an effort to circumvent this. This is a convenience which is received as an ethical and political service.

Participants with invisible health conditions similarly told us about the relief they felt when coming across particular toilet signs. Many people told us about a new toilet sign, reading 'not every disability is visible', which is currently being promoted by charity Crohn's and Colitis UK (<https://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk>) and provides a clarification on the use/users of the accessible toilet. Nicky said:

'I went into Morrison's [supermarket] the other week and I needed the toilet. They've got a new sign with "not every disability is visible", so I kind of had a little sort of exciting little thing where I was like "oh yeah", you know, things are happening about this now.'

Similarly, Dahlia said that she felt 'touched' to see the sign used in a supermarket as 'it was the first time I found a note explaining invisible disability'. Although Nicky acknowledged the potential for major supermarket chains to use the new signs as an easy way to gain publicity, toilet signs nevertheless gave a sense of a welcoming place more generally, thus highlighting the importance of toilets – and their associated signs - in creating a welcoming (quasi)public spaces. This was equally the case for trans participants, such as Erin:

'Generally, if I can see a gender-neutral sign then I'm somewhere that's generally got pretty sound people in. It's so rare. I wish, you know, it shouldn't be surprising to see a sign saying, 'gender neutral toilet'. In most places there isn't even a sign just saying "toilet" or even with a picture of a toilet, which would be more easy to understand. Please acknowledge that there aren't two kinds of people, the people on Door A and the people on Door B.'

These signs – irrespective of their intention – were received as a confirmation of identities and bodies, which were in other circumstances made to feel unnoticed or shunned. Premises with signage of these kinds were thus seen as hospitable and considerate.

4. Diversifying and Improving Toilet Provision

In this section we outline the need to create toilet provision which caters for a diverse society. This includes re-thinking the 'one size fits all' approach to accessible toilets, increasing the amount of all-gender provision, and creating more larger, private spaces in the public realm (with and without a toilet).

4.1 Questioning the 'Accessibility' of the 'Accessible' Toilet

Kitchin and Law (2001, p. 290) state that "the paucity of accessible public toilets reflects the long-standing exclusion of disabled people from public space and the public sphere". When accessible toilets can be found, there is perhaps some irony in their naming - as toilets labelled 'accessible' are often in fact inaccessible to many people. Over a three-year study, in which they audited toilets across the UK, Hanson, Bichard and Greed (2007) found no accessible toilets that conformed to best practice guidelines. As Steph, a disabled woman and Changing Places user, explained:

'I think that most non-disabled people aren't aware of the barriers. They just see an accessible toilet and think, there you go, that's everything, you've got it. And when you explain, like "OK an accessible toilet might be in the corner of the room, the left-hand corner, well what about if you're transferring and you've had a stroke and you can't use one side of your body?", and they go "oh I never thought of that". Or "what if you can't actually stand to get out of your chair?", "I never thought of that".'

One of the most prevalent examples of the 'conventional' accessible toilet's unsuitability, is the absence of a hoist system and/or large changing bench, which are mandatory facilities for some users – often known as Changing Places Toilets. Steph continued to explain why the standard accessible toilet is inaccessible for her:

'I can't stand or walk, so having a space with a toilet that's just bigger is no good. It could be palatial, I still can't get from my chair onto the loo. Changing Places is a particular brand of toilet which has a changing bench and a hoist, so I can hoist from my chair onto the bench, get my jeans off, hoist then from the bench onto the loo. Those ones are great but they're few and far between, namely because they're expensive to install and the building owner has to pay for them.'

Even when a standard accessible toilet is suitable for somebody on paper, numerous people have told us stories or sent us photos of the accessible toilet repurposed as a storage room, requiring the navigation of steps or simply unclean and uncared for on arrival.

'Often the disabled toilet can be horrendous. I mean I've been in ones before where there's chairs piled up. I remember going once in Manchester train station. In there you normally have to pay to go to the toilet but you can actually get a member of staff to open the disabled toilet for you to use the baby change. But when we went in there it was so wet on the floor.'

'In a pub I went to recently they had a kind of stair lift [to get to the accessible toilet], but they used it as storage. A lot of disabled toilets are used as storage - they just assume that no-one will ever come there that's disabled and that they don't need to have it.'

For the latter participant, the accessible toilet often felt like a tokenistic effort: the box was ticked, but in reality, the venue did not expect disabled users. The 'accessible' toilet was entirely *unavailable*.

Wheelchair users have spoken to us about very narrow doors or small interiors that make the toilets inaccessible. Hanson et al. (2007) highlight that whilst wheelchair technology has developed, meaning that wheelchair designs are often bigger, the accessible toilet has changed very little since the 1970s, meaning that accessible toilets are often too small for many wheelchair users, particularly those that also use personal assistance. One wheelchair user said that despite the provision of numerous 'accessible' toilets at her university, there was only one that was big enough for her to use. This meant that using the toilet adds considerable time to her day, as she travels between buildings.

Many Around the Toilet participants, particularly those using ostomy bags, told us of the importance of having a shelf in the accessible toilet. Hanson et al (2007) found that a shelf was absent from 97% of toilets surveyed. They pose that this may be due to providers not wanting to place a flat surface in the toilet which could be adopted for drug use. This seems especially ill-conceived when some disabled people may use the accessible toilet as the only private space to administer medication (Bradley & Williams-Schulz, 2016; Jones et al., f.c.). Although our findings show that investing financially in toilets is important, the inclusion of a shelf points to the ways that businesses, public bodies and other institutions can improve toilet access without high costs. Similarly, one participant explained to us that as a person prone to infection, an accessible toilet should be a clean space with soap. Another listed a number of low-cost items that were important in making toilets accessible to her:

'...having enough toilet roll. I had a really bad experience in Tesco the other day where I rushed in and there was no toilet roll and I had no tissues in my bag either. Bins as well. Coat hooks and things for your bags. I know other people have said around like having a shelf for managing your bits and pieces in a toilet. Air fresheners.'

Yet, disabled people are not homogenous, and therefore have different access requirements and different opinions regarding the necessary attributes of an accessible toilet. Serlin (2010) points out that what may be accessible for one disabled person may make that space fundamentally inaccessible for another. Air freshener is a good example here – whilst for some, air fresheners may lessen anxiety about leaving a smell in the toilet (especially those who may perceive their faecal habits to be 'unusual'), for others air fresheners led to sensory overload or triggered allergies. In one workshop, Around the Toilet participants discussed how bright fluorescent lights were an accessibility requirement for some of them, but made accessing toilets difficult or impossible for others, including some autistic people. A disabled mother also explained that some disabled people complain about having a baby changing facility in the accessible toilet because changing a baby can take time and add pressure to a space already in demand. Although she saw the logic in this, for her having a baby changing facility in an accessible toilet was *'life-saving'* as it meant that she had somewhere to change her daughter whilst also using the toilet herself. Accessibility requirements are often in conflict. Clearly, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to toilet design cannot suit everyone's needs.

4.2 The Case for All-Gender Toilets

Discussions of all-gender toilets occurred throughout the project. When asked would make a toilet accessible for her, a trans woman responded that she would find it easier to leave the house if there was provision of “*ungendered, private cubicles with a shared [...] handwashing space.*” Yet despite all-gender toilets often being framed as only about trans people’s toilet access, many of our participants – trans and cis – highlighted that all-gender toilets are of benefit for a range of people and situations: parents with children of a different gender; those who care for people of a different gender; some disabled people who have a personal assistant of a different gender; and some people whose gender is questioned in the toilet including some trans and non-binary people (and, to a lesser extent, some cis people). In many cases, it is the need for an all-gender toilet that leads non-disabled people to use the accessible toilet.

Participants also pointed out that despite sometimes being viewed as controversial, all-gender toilets are already all around us – in our homes, some offices and workplaces, garages/petrol stations, many coffee shops, restaurants and bars. Several women said that they were frustrated when a venue had two identical self-contained toilet cubicles but had made the decision to label one for men and another for women. Women pointed out that this often meant they were waiting in a queue next to a free toilet cubicle. Research by Anthony and Dufresne (2009) supports these frustrations, finding that waiting times were longer for women when toilets were set out in this way. One cis woman commented that growing up in Poland, all public toilets were for people of any gender, so she didn’t understand why they were a point of contention. Indeed, contrary to the current ‘moral panic’ of the mainstream press, the vast majority of cis women that we spoke to said they had no problem with using all-gender toilets themselves – with some positively welcoming it for the reasons listed above.

However, not all all-gender toilets are built equal! Sometimes all-gender toilets are purpose built - often a single cubicle with private handwashing (i.e. an entirely self-contained toilet); a situation preferred by most people we spoke to. On other occasions, men’s and women’s toilets are re-labelled to make them available for people of all genders. We, like our participants, have experienced this being implemented with varied success, thus pointing to the importance of taking considered and sensitive approaches to re-designating toilets. Alex, a non-binary participant commented that, although the intentions may be good, re-labelling could be clumsy, especially if the facilities inside the toilets weren’t also considered:

‘Just like they stick a gender-neutral [or all-gender] sign on it but then they don’t, like, deal with the fact that the facilities inside them are very binarised. For instance, there’ll still only be sanitary bins in one of them and there’ll be urinals in another and sometimes it’s like they label it as, “these are the toilets” and “these are the toilets that have urinals”. That still feels kind of gendering. Also if you like go in one and then it just doesn’t have sanitary bins that’s not very useful for a lot of people.’

This example highlights that although re-labelling can provide some benefits, it shouldn’t be considered an ‘end point’ in creating toilets inclusive to and suitable for people of all

genders. Gendered assumptions around what is available within toilet spaces and cubicles also need to be considered. This should include providing sanitary bins and menstrual product dispensers in toilets for all genders. Urinals can also present problems for trans and cis people. Reasons include anxieties about showing your body and/or urinating in front of other people, being unable to use the urinals due to anatomy and/or physical impairment, cultural or religious reasons for not showing your body and/or urinating in front of other people, a reduction in cubicle space due to the assumption that men will be able and willing to use the urinals, feeling self-conscious about using the cubicle as others will assume that you're defecating, and cubicles not being kept in good condition, such as not locking, as it is assumed that people will use the urinals. Some participants also commented that in men's toilets, there was often only one cubicle provided, which was not always enough. This may be especially concerning for users who needed to occupy the toilet for a long time. Alex went on to discuss how urinals in all-gender toilets had on one occasion led to other users making assumptions about their physiology:

'I just remember another kind of consequence of toilets being separated by, like, toilet toilets and urinals, is I've had instances where there's been a woman saying like 'oh the urinal's free, go in the urinal' and just like stand there, OK, I'm just in a situation where people, someone's making assumptions about my genitals!'

Instances were also discussed where attempts to 'de-gender' the toilets had resulted in the new 'all-gender' signs being vandalised and/or taken away. Sometimes, this was at specific events where organisers were using an external venue but re-labelled the toilets as they wanted to make all delegates feel welcome. One participant, for example, told us about a National Union of Students (NUS) LGBT event held at a hotel, where the hotel staff had removed the 'gender neutral' toilet sign part-way through the day. In another example a potentially more permanent change was quickly reversed due to a lack of understanding, research and communication:

'At my work we have men's, women's and an accessible toilet on every floor. Apart from being binary gendered, they're generally pretty good. In the women's you go through an external door and then there are two large cubicles, each with a toilet, sink and hand-drier – there's plenty of space and it feels quite private. I've been told it's the same in the men's toilets – there's no urinals or anything. A few years ago, much to my surprise, they re-labelled the men's and women's toilets on each floor so that they were gender neutral. It literally just happened while I was in a meeting. I think the new signs just said 'toilet' on them. But there wasn't any explanation of why they'd done it, or any communication at all about it to staff, so people started to graffiti on the signs. Someone took their lipstick and wrote 'women's' on what used to be the women's toilet. This was on a Friday and by the Monday the signs had gone and we were back to the binary toilets.'

Whilst it is heartening to hear of organisations wanting to make changes to their existing toilets, here we see the importance explaining to users why the toilets have been re-designated. Furthermore, in a building such as the one described above where there is more than one set of toilets available, some binary gendered toilets could have stayed in place, particularly whilst the all-gender toilets were first being introduced. In this case, users could have been signposted to where binary gendered toilet were available from the all-gender

toilets, and visa-versa. Signage and text that can be used to explain the importance of all-gender toilets is available in Appendix 2. Using such a sign does not guarantee, however, that there will be no backlash about the provision of all-gender toilets. Alex told us about visiting the all-gender toilets at their student's union, to find the signs had been vandalised:

'Me and my friend went to use the gender neutral toilets a while ago and someone had scribbled out "gender neutral" and written like "women" on it, like the sign on the door that was explaining why there was gender neutral toilets, someone had gone on it with biro and just like scribbled out the gender neutral stuff and written "women", it's like there's women-only toilets like round the corner if you want to go to women-only toilets, it just doesn't make sense.'

We interpret Alex's observation above as an example of transphobic abuse, which should be strongly opposed by any organisation experiencing similar events. Two other prominent arguments opposing all-gender toilets have occurred both in the literature and in our own research. Firstly, that all-gender toilets would upset people of faith; and secondly, that all-gender toilets would confuse autistic people and those with learning difficulties. We address these in turn in the two sections which follow.

4.2.1 All-Gender Toilets, Faith and Religion

Faith and religion has been brought up on numerous occasions when we have discussed the possibility of all-gender toilets. In particular, religious beliefs are often used as a justification for the unsuitability of all-gender toilets, and their potential to offend or exclude. Usually, the subject is raised by people who do not discuss their own experiences of faith. Rather, they use their own perceptions about other religious people, often of Islamic faith, to dismiss the idea of all-gender toilet provision. These views are also expressed within other toilet research and literature (see, for example, Greed & Bichard, 2012). Yet, our review of the literature shows that there has been very little research conducted directly addressing the toilet experiences and views of people of faith. Although Greed (2003) mentions faith and the toilet, the origins of her data are unclear. Given the breadth of people that associate with religion or faith in some way, it can be assumed that the views within and between different faiths are as varied as those that do not have a particular faith or religion. Furthermore, such blanket statements, which assume a connection between religion and binary gender distinctions, erase the experiences of trans and queer people of faith. We therefore call for more research around toilets in relation to gender, queerness and faith which take into account the nuanced fields of scholarship already exploring queerness in relation to faith (e.g. Boyarin, Itzkovitz, & Pellegrini, 2003; Cornwall, 2011; Habib, 2010).

One Around the Toilet participant, Dahlia, did talk a lot about toilets in relation to faith, specifically Islam. Her faith and cultural background were two of many factors which shaped her understanding and experience of toilet provision and behaviours. At times Dahlia was joined by her husband and son, who are also Muslim, and became part of interviews or less formal conversations. Whilst the views of Dahlia and her family are not generalisable, it is interesting and important to note that rather than discussing gender neutral provision, Dahlia and her family focused upon the availability of washing facilities within the toilet. She spoke of the shock she had when moving to England from Egypt and noting the differences in toilets:

'First time I came to England was a little bit of a shock for me because the toilet here was not like what we use in our country. It's completely different. [...] Our way of [using the] toilet in Egypt is different because we have like a small water tap or water pipe inside the toilet that we can use to clean ourselves to make sure that we are completely clean. Like this we can do ablution and pray because we are Muslim.'

Later in life Dahlia became disabled, and as a result, having a clean, hygienic space with the availability of running water and soap was not just a religious and cultural issue, but also a matter of health as she was vulnerable to infection through dirty toilets. Interestingly, she spoke of how ablution was easier (although not ideal) once she started using gender neutral accessible (or 'disabled') toilets. She said:

'When I became disabled [...] I started to use the disabled toilet. It's a little better because you can have the toilet and sink and everything and I can use some tissue to wash myself, but it's not like our traditional way of cleaning. But it's ok.'

Dahlia was asked directly in interviews about gender in relation to her experiences, but had nothing to add: to her, the issues which were most important in the toilet related to her Islamic faith and impairment. Both of these involved cleanliness, and particularly having fresh water to wash with after using the toilet. It is important to note that the availability of a tap inside the toilet to wash with is not only a religious but also a cultural issue, used by many people around the world, regardless of religion. Nevertheless, for Dahlia, it was an important part of her faith. Dahlia is therefore an example of a Muslim disabled woman who, like other disabled women, regularly use all-gender facilities. The experiences of disabled women of faith, and/or trans and queer women of faith, are rarely evoked when discussing faith, gender and toilets.

4.2.2 All-Gender Toilets, Learning Difficulties and Autism

Some scholarship and people commenting on Around the Toilet research have argued that all-gender toilets would confuse autistic people and/or people with learning difficulties. Greed and Bichard (2012, p. 546), for example, argue that "many people who have learning disabilities require strict norms of gender association to define their world". However, several Around the Toilet participants were trans and autistic and called for more all-gender provision and signs which simply showed the facilities within the toilet space. Arguments such as Greed and Bichard's, erase the experiences, and indeed the existence, of trans autistic people and trans people with learning difficulties for whom the gender binary presented on toilet doors may well be a problem. Furthermore, Greed and Bichard's statement appears to be based in very little evidence, instead reifying an ableist and paternalistic narrative which continues to marginalise people with learning difficulties (Gill, 2015). The limited research around the experiences of LGBT people with learning difficulties has shown that they are often taught explicitly heteronormative messages and not supported in their lives as LGBT people (Abbott, 2015). Statements and assumptions such as the above only add to this context (for more on the intersections of trans and disability studies see Slater & Liddiard, 2018, f.c.).

4.3 Creating More Private Spaces within the Public Realm

Throughout our research it became clear that toilets are not only used to urinate and defecate but provide a host of other services such as changing nappies, ostomy bags and menstrual products, or administering medication. Many people spoke to us about the toilet being one of the only private places to shut yourself away whilst away from home.

Participants spoke of using the toilets to cry whilst at work, to get some time away from people at busy events, to find privacy or silence during a panic attack, or to take a break and check social media. Others talked about using the accessible toilet to change their clothes (particularly some trans participants who required different clothing for particular contexts), and often feeling guilty about this, though they required the extra space for such a task and had no other private space. Some people spoke about using the toilets to breastfeed in, as they didn't feel comfortable or welcome breastfeeding in public spaces.

The toilet may be a suitable space for some of the above activities. Reflecting on her experiences of travelling with a small child, for example, Ava praised a private room on a train in France which was designed specifically for baby changing. The only downside, she said, was that there wasn't a toilet for her to use *'as the two things need to go together'*. Yet, for other activities listed above, such as taking 'time out', breastfeeding and drug administration, having access to a private space without toilets may be more suitable (and in some cases, more hygienic/safer). In cases such as breastfeeding and the administering of drugs, the creation of such private spaces should occur alongside an active effort to destigmatise breastfeeding/drug administration in public, whilst appreciating that some people may always require a private space for these activities (choice is key here). The creation of more private spaces that aren't toilets, would relieve pressure accessible toilets which are often used as they allow additional privacy.

The creation of private spaces that aren't toilets is particularly important because, as one participant pointed out, for some people public toilets don't provide the kind of quiet, safe space that many people require from time to time when away from home. As a non-binary participant put it:

'at some venues and events you have quiet spaces but most of the time you don't have that and toilets, especially if you're at work or something, are the only private place you can go and get some space if you're anxious and stuff. But then if the toilets themselves are full of people who are going to harass you then it doesn't help.'

For some people, toilets can provide a sanctuary to care for their mental health due to the absence of other facilities designed, or otherwise more suitable, for this purpose. For others, the toilet contributes to feelings of anxiety due to the risk of harm in that space.

5. Implications of Inaccessible and Inadequate Toilet Provision

Whilst the earlier sections of this report highlight the ways in which toilets are often inaccessible, unsuitable or difficult to find, this section explores the implications of not having toilet access and therefore makes the case for improving toilet provision.

5.1 Access to Wider Environment and Community

As we have illustrated throughout the report, participants shared with us their difficulties in finding toilets that were functional, easily locatable and safe. This restricted the journeys that they were able to make. One participant who needs to access toilets urgently said that she was *'scared about leaving the house in case I got somewhere and there wasn't a toilet or I wouldn't see where one was'*. She particularly mentioned how travelling was difficult:

'I used to avoid going on buses and stuff because there aren't any toilets on a bus. So yeah, the very fact that you're on something that doesn't have a toilet can be quite stressful. Same with trams. Trains do have toilets but they're not very good.'

Toilets on transport were persistently advanced as a concern during the project. Two trans participants at a workshop discussed how even though toilets on trains are for people of all-genders, having to walk the distance of the train to get to the toilet under the observation of other passengers, along with the public and conspicuous positioning of the toilet on the carriage, meant that they didn't use toilets on trains. For some, anxiety about the toilet and concerns about surveillance began long before arriving at cubicle door. Here a trans woman reflects on the impact of taking a train journey before delivering training workshops, which they note is particularly difficult if they are wearing a dress:

'I will like not be able to pee the entire way there, even if I'm on a train with a gender-neutral toilet [because] standing up and going and walking to the end of the row and coming back is like a thing that I can't really do. So what I'll end up doing is even like before I do the speeches or like the workshop or something is like go and hurriedly wee. But like there's been a few situations where I've not been able to do that and [...] I must have looked like I'm really manic [throughout the] presentation or lecture or whatever because I actually just needed a wee the entire time.'

Another participant agreed:

'that's really interesting what you said about the toilets on the train, especially the Virgin trains, they've got those toilets that swings open, like a half circle. They're normally at the end of the train, so no matter where you are you've got to walk the longest possible distance to get to it and you felt nervous going into those toilets because they're quite exposed – and you know like hearing people laugh outside and being like 'are they laughing at me?'

Trains with electric doors that slowly glide open were a particular talking point, with a number of participants saying that the doors had either accidentally opened whilst they were using the toilet, or that the worry about this happening made them too anxious to use the toilets at all. For most participants with physical impairments, however, using toilets on trains was rarely an option. Steph, a wheelchair user and Changing Places user also said that

she never travelled on aeroplanes due to their inaccessibility, and reflected on the experiences of a friend:

'Well aeroplanes are interesting. I don't personally even attempt it. It's hard enough trying to get into a seat let alone go and use the loo. But my friend, she's a wheelchair user, but she can get out of her chair herself. She was flying to America and there was just no chance of her getting anywhere near the toilet, so a very compassionate member of the cabin crew gave her a bowl and a blanket. This was last year. She had to wee into a bowl under a blanket and they had to move a few people out of the way. And then the lady kindly took it away. But that level of indignity is just - she's not got crazy needs, you know, I can't stand or walk, you might consider that crazy needs, but she just literally struggles to stand, and she had to wee in a bowl on a plane.'

Two mothers of teenage and adult disabled children who use Changing Places toilets told numerous stories of days out, family meals and holidays that were either abandoned, terminated early, stressful or undignified for their children. One mother described laying her daughter on the floor of an airport and creating walls of suitcases in order to provide her with some privacy in changing. Another explained how they needed to take so much equipment to make their holiday accommodation accessible (including a hoist to get onto the toilet) that even when Changing Places toilets were available on route, it was a near impossibility to get their son out of the car. She described taking a holiday as *'something that actually fills you with dread'*.

Another Changing Places user said that she rarely leaves the house because of the lack of suitable toilet provision. When she does she often ends the day in tears, feeling that she has lost all dignity. Gill, a participant with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), spoke of the laborious strategies she has developed in order to leave the house, including carrying a portable toilet and toilet tent in the back of her car in case of emergencies. For many of our participants, not having access to suitable toilets restricted their access to the wider environment and community.

5.2 'Coping', Leaving and Losing Jobs

Limited access to toilets did not only impact upon social activities for participants, but also their ability to work. Steph said:

'Politically, we're in a time when the rhetoric is all about everyone should work, everybody should live independently, no-one should be a burden on the state or anyone else, we should all do our bit to look after ourselves. And yet I'm not even given the opportunity to go to the toilet while I'm out working, trying to pay my taxes, not get into trouble. It just doesn't seem fair.'

Several participants echoed Steph's frustrations. A woman lorry driver spoke to us about the lack of toilet provision for mobile workers, particularly those driving at night. The problem is exacerbated as often drivers are accountable to strict timescales:

'you don't want to stop because it wastes so much time having to go into the services, drive all the way in, then you have to walk 10 miles across to the lorry park and oh it's just a ball ache.'

She told us that in this profession, dominated by cis men, many drivers choose to urinate in a bottle or at a layby to save time or because toilets simply aren't available with adequate space for a lorry to park. This option was often worse for women drivers because there was increased stigma and sometimes more bodily exposure attached to going to the toilet in a layby for women than men. Her coping mechanisms included holding on and becoming *'immune'* to the lack of cleanliness of many toilets. Like Norén (2010), we ask what implications toilets (or a lack of them) may have on the gendered make-up of particular workforces. Furthermore, gender intersects with other identities and categorisations such as race, disability, class, sexuality, trans/cis status and so on, all of which can impact upon toilet use and experience.

Two trans women shared stories of losing jobs due to unsuitable toilet provision. Erin was fired for using the women's toilets after she came out as trans at work. Thankfully she did eventually get the job back with the help of her union, though not without considerable stress. Another trans woman described how her ability to work was limited by not having access to all-gender toilets. She explained that when she felt unsafe to use public toilets, she was unable to leave the security of her house and described how she was often late because she spent too long putting on clothes and make-up in order to feel that she adequately *'passed'* as a cis woman. The toilet *'extends to everywhere'*, she said, and accessible and comfortable toilets allowed her to take necessary, everyday journeys away from home:

'It's not like the bathroom ends at the door to the bathroom, it actually extends to everywhere and if the bathroom was just a row of cubicles with sinks outside with no gender written on them then maybe I would be more able to just roll out of bed and engage with society without being late for work because I'm redoing my make-up for the third time. So what makes a toilet accessible for me in actual practicality, being able to leave my house.'

When asked whether limited access to suitable toilets affected her day, Steph initially answered that she let it stop her doing anything. Later, however, she explained how a lack of Changing Places toilets meant that she couldn't pursue her career as a solicitor:

'Well I did change career because of it ultimately. My first job was [as] a solicitor and I was given equality of opportunity in the sense that I was given the same amount of files as my non-disabled counterparts. We would all go off to different courts around the country as trainees and junior solicitors shadowing barristers and whatever you do. But of course I would go to, say, Manchester from Birmingham, get up at 5.30, use the loo and then not get home 'til eleven o'clock at night and I was in pain and it was affecting my work, my concentration. And it was just making me feel ill, you know, it's something you can do as a one-off, but you do not want to be doing this three times a week, and I could see my non-disabled, particularly male colleagues, they could drink all day, just whack it out, have a quick wee, carry on! But it's not something I talked about. I didn't talk about it with managers. Looking back now, I wonder whether I should have and whether things might have been different. But I can't regret the fact that at that stage in my career I was junior, I

felt replaceable, which is a cultural thing of the industry. And I don't know, they can't make toilets appear, so I don't know what they would have done, other than make me part time, I don't know, but I wanted the equality of the work so I had to go, I had to do these things to keep up and it just made me ill. So actually, yeah, I changed career because of it.'

Steph reflected on how, through her current work, she has discovered the multiple ways in which toilet access has an impact on disabled people's ability to work comfortably (and sometimes at all):

'I deliver a disability equality training and I can't help myself when I have to talk about toilets all the time. But it's often a way to get people to just open up because it is something quite personal and so many people come up to me in breaks or just put their hand up and start talking about that they have IBS [Irritable Bowel Syndrome] and they talk about how it's affected them in terms of the jobs they go for, the office spaces, they look at the office before they apply for a job to see where the toilet is.'

Resonating with Steph's experiences, participants with bowel and bladder conditions spoke to us directly about checking where the toilets were located before taking a new job. Nicky said that she didn't move into halls of residence as a student because of her anxiety around sharing a toilet, and she turned down a retail job that she was offered as it was too far a distance to walk to the toilets. She explained that she knows the layout of her current workplace well, and she continues to take time to 'suss out' the location of toilets if she ever has to visit other offices. Erin, Steph, Nicky and other participants' stories show that for organisations that are serious about equality and diversity in employment rights, the impact of toilet provision must be considered and revised continuously, in order to reflect the needs of new workers.

5.3 Health Implications

Where using the toilet was not an option, participants often put strategies in place to limit their toilet use; these strategies had both mental and physical health implications. Many participants spoke of the stress and anxiety that was caused by not having access to suitable toilets. Gill, a woman with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), described crying after having to turn down a trip to the seaside with a friend because the toilets were closed out of season, due to council budget cuts. She also said:

'The Government bangs on about exercise; going to the park for people like me is a no-go, however beautiful it is and however good it is to exercise. If there are no toilets, forget it.'

For Gill, government strategies and initiatives to encourage people out of the house felt useless without suitable toilet access. Other participants spoke about not drinking or eating all day and 'holding on' in order to avoid needing the toilet. This meant that some participants didn't use the toilet for up to 18 hours a day. Not using the toilet when needed can have considerable health impacts including dehydration and urinary tract infections (Anthony & Dufresne, 2009), which can be worse for those with additional health problems, including some disabled people. Participants were aware of this, as were their friends and family:

'I got a bollocking [telling off] off [from] my mum once because she said you shouldn't hold it like that because it'll make you have bladder issues in later life.'

'Ask my sister, she drives [a lorry] now, she started driving about three years ago and she like holds, she won't go for a poo when she's not at home and she's away all week, she'll like hold it all week 'til she gets home, I'm sure that can't be healthy, but she doesn't like it when she's not at home.'

For people that required a hoist and changing bench, sometimes their only option was to rely on others to lift them onto the toilet. This could be dangerous for both the person being lifted, and the person doing the lifting. Steph described how she'd injured her ankle as friends tried to lift and manoeuvre her into narrow doorways. She also worried about the health of her friends:

'...the other thing is of course my friends lift me. And a couple of my PAs can, but really it needs more than one person because if one picks me up, the other friend needs to pull my trousers down while I'm in mid-air, because there's nowhere to sort of put me. The only alternative is to lie me on the floor but then lifting an adult off the floor is really hard and dangerous. So that needs two people. But if we're out and we've had a few drinks, it is funny, but it's not particularly safe or dignified to have your arse in the air when you try and have a good night, nobody wants that!'

Another participant, the mother and carer for her 20-year-old disabled son, explained that because suitable facilities for hoisting and changing her son are often not in place her back has taken a 'hammering' from lifting him. Although she could no longer lift her son, she had continued to do so as long as she could as it was often the only way that her family could enjoy a trip out together.

6. Recommendations

Our findings highlight the vital importance of investment in toilets for everyday life and wellbeing. They show that toilets as they are currently built, labelled and used are inadequate for a range of people and circumstances. As such, it would be fair to say that the approved *Building Regulations Part M: Access to and Use of Buildings*, which provide minimum standards for building accessibility, are not adequately addressing toilet design for many different people. There is a necessity to broaden thinking around accessible design in a way which considers a greater variety of needs. Although we particularly focus on the toilet in our research, we'd argue that these recommendations could and should be applied to other areas of building design.

Yet, although we encourage designers and decision makers to go beyond minimum standards, our recommendations should not be seen as detailed design guidance. Hanson et al.'s (2007) *'The Accessible Toilet Resource'* offers this in relation to accessible toilets, particularly when used by disabled people. Our research compliments such research, bringing together the perspectives of disabled people with other user groups. Furthermore, in Appendix 1 we signpost to more specific tools available for design students, educators and professionals.

6.1 Investment in Toilets

1. Toilets require both public and private investment. Although private businesses and quasi-public spaces such as cafes, pubs, shops, colleges and universities provide some away-from-home toilets, these should not be relied upon as the only toilet provision as they are often unsuitable or inaccessible to many people, reliant on the good will of staff, and/or only available during business opening hours.
2. Toilet provision should be considered alongside, and equally as important as, other government initiatives such as '24-hour cities', 'getting active', 'staying healthy' or 'getting into work'¹ which are undermined by a lack of suitable toilet provision.
3. The government and local councils have a responsibility to ensure access to public space for all people, including those that use Changing Places toilets. We recommend a government fund to provide Changing Places provision.
4. If Community Toilet Schemes are to be used to compliment (not replace) public toilets funded by local councils then the following considerations should be made:
 - a. be attentive to the fact that people need toilets outside of standard business opening hours;
 - b. be responsive to the toilet access requirements of a range of user groups including: disabled people, including those with invisible impairments and those that use Changing Places toilets; people of different genders, particularly women and non-binary people; people with religious convictions which may mean they will not use toilets in a venue serving alcohol; people caring for under-18s which again may mean that places serving alcohol are out of bounds.

¹ Beyond toilet access, it is also worth noting that some of these initiatives sustain ableist narratives pertaining to the social value of health, productivity and activity, and should therefore be approached critically.

- c. be adequately signposted and advertised so the public is aware of the toilet provision that is available.
- d. be open to toilet users who are not purchasing goods from your premises and ensure hospitality to homeless people and others who may not feel sure that they will be welcome in your venue. Where possible, this 'open' policy should be made explicit (e.g. in signage and behaviour).

6.2 Planning Toilets over an Area (building, institution, town, city)

- 5. Toilets should become an integral part of the design of any building, area, town or city, rather than considered last. This should include providing for a range of diverse needs.
- 6. Disabled people need to use the toilet everywhere that non-disabled people need to use the toilet. Therefore, disabled people, including Changing Places users, should be considered at all times.
- 7. Plan so that some accessible toilets are right-hand transfer, and others are left-hand transfer. Make it clear to users where they can find left-hand and right-hand transfer toilets.
- 8. Changing Places toilets are currently often placed in 'family venues' such as theme parks and sports centres. Local councils and planners should consider the placement of Changing Places toilets throughout an area (e.g. a city) and investing in providing Changing Places toilets in places frequented by a range of people of different ages. It is unacceptable for a Changing Places user to have to travel a number of miles to find a suitable toilet.
- 9. A holistic approach needs to be taken to toilet signage. This should include where toilet provision is available, including quasi-public areas, such as shopping centres and Community Toilet Schemes. Signage should also include which facilities are available (e.g. men's, women's and all-gender toilets, accessible toilets, Changing Places toilets, baby changing facilities, etc.).
- 10. Toilet maps can be useful, but the information that is included should be carefully considered (we recommend as much detail as possible, including photographs), and online and offline versions need to be available.

6.3 Diversifying Toilet Provision

- 11. Every large business or organisation should have a Changing Places toilet because, without it, some disabled users are excluded from visiting or using that venue.
- 12. Toilet cubicles which provide larger, private, all-gender spaces are useful for a range of people and should be provided alongside the accessible toilet. This will reduce strain and waiting times for the accessible toilet.
- 13. All-gender toilets should be provided as standard, alongside gendered facilities. This should not just be the repurposing/re-labelling of the accessible toilet, which is often already under considerable strain. Where all-gender toilets are communal, urinals should not be provided.
- 14. If the space dictates that all-gender toilets cannot be provided alongside gendered toilets, then a self-contained all-gender facility should be prioritised. This is already the case in many coffee shops, where there is only space for one toilet cubicle.

15. Squat toilets and throne toilets with in-built taps to wash with should be provided alongside standard Western-style throne toilets in order to cater for a culturally and religiously diverse society.

6.4 Making Low-Cost Changes to Existing Toilets

Although toilets should be invested in (see Section 6.1), it is appreciated that sometimes small organisations may not have funds to invest. We have therefore included small, low-cost changes which can potentially make a big difference for some people to toilet accessibility. Where funds are available (and we think they should be prioritised!) these should be considered alongside the other recommendations.

16. Signage should be considered carefully. On the doors of all-gender and accessible toilets, consider providing signs which show what facilities are inside the toilet, rather than who is able to use it.
 - a. Signs reading 'not every disability is visible' to use on the accessible toilet are available from Crohns and Colitis UK:
<https://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/accessible-toilet-signs>
 - b. Signs explaining the importance of all-gender toilets can be found in Appendix 2.
17. Accessibility information on an organisation's website should include information about the toilets and preferably a picture of the toilet space. Staff should be trained in delivering accessibility information if asked, including about the toilet.
18. Shelves should not be removed from accessible toilets as they are vital for many users, particularly those changing ostomy bags.
19. Low cost items such as soap, toilet roll, toilet brushes and coat hooks are sometimes forgotten or not replaced but are vitally important for many people.
20. Accessible toilets should never be used as storage rooms as this makes them unusable.
21. Ensure that bins and other items do not obstruct the transfer space in an accessible toilet.
22. Red cords should not be tied up or cut off but should extend fully to the floor so a disabled person can sound the alarm if they fall. Those maintaining the toilets such as cleaners and caretakers, as well as other users, should be made aware of this. Signs explaining this which can be attached to red cords can be downloaded from Ewan's Guide: <https://www.euansguide.com/news/red-cord-card/>
23. It is useful to let potential users know whether the accessible toilet is left-hand transfer or right-hand transfer. Include this information in toilet signage.
24. Accessible toilets can appear clinical and are often not given the design attention of the other facilities. This makes disabled users feel unwelcome or undervalued. Consider adding decoration and aesthetic features to the accessible toilet.
25. Toilet equipment which is currently separated by gender should be re-considered and re-allocated. Some people, including (but not exclusively) trans men and non-binary people using men's toilets need access to sanitary bins and dispensers. Men's toilets also need to provide adequate alternatives to urinals (i.e. a number of cubicles with throne/squat toilets in working order).

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Appendix 1: Around the Toilet Resources

Over the course of the Around the Toilet project, we have produced a range of different materials which explore themes relating to the toilet. In the interests of peer support, sharing our findings and raising awareness, we would like to encourage other people to use these materials (although we do ask that you credit/cite the project when you use them). There are a range of ways we think these resources might be useful to others, such as: university teaching/lecturing, teaching in schools, activist/political campaigning, research, design and workshops. We hope you may have other ideas too! The following resources may also be of use in exploring issues beyond the toilet. Some of the themes of our work include (in)accessibility, discrimination against queer and trans people, disability, ableism, religion, gender, sexuality, bodies, parenting, workers' rights, architecture and design, schools, and toilet 'training'.

If you do make use of our materials, we would really appreciate your feedback and a bit of information about how the materials are used (aroundthetoilet@shu.ac.uk).

If you are reading in hard copy, all of the resources can be accessed via the 'materials' tab on the project website: www.aroundthetoilet.com

10 Reasons Why Accessibility is Important

We created a short hand-out which lists some of the key reasons we believe toilet accessibility is crucial. This provides a useful introduction to the topic for those who might not have thought about it before.

View the document at: <https://aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com/useful-materials/10-reasons-why-toilet-access-is-important/>

Journal Articles

We are in the process of publishing some of the ideas and findings produced by the Around the Toilet projects in academic journals.

'School Toilets: Queer, disabled bodies and gendered lessons of embodiment' considers the messages that we learn through school toilets in relation to gender and disability. It was published in 2016 in the journal, *Gender and Education*, and is available to read here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09540253.2016.1270421>

'Troubling school toilets: resisting discourses of 'development' through a critical disability studies and critical psychology lens' considers the ways in which toilet training expects children to develop in particular ways, and how this can be harmful to some children and their families. We make recommendations for future school toilet research. It was published in 2017 in the journal, *Discourse: Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*, and is available to read here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01596306.2017.1316237>

Lift the Lid Zine

Illustrator and editor: Stacy Bias <http://stacybias.net>

Additional sponsorship: National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)

In 2017 we invited contributions to a zine about toilets. Thanks to the wonderful contributions that we received from all over the UK and Europe, in the zine we have collected toilet stories, alongside musings, ideas and opinions about the varied – sometimes mundane, but often crucial – role that toilets play in our lives. This zine opens up many conversations from lots of different people with different and sometimes contrasting perspectives. It is free to view online. We also have a limited number of hard-copy zines available for organisations and collectives.

To view the zine online: <https://issuu.com/aroundthetoilet>

To order a hard copy: <https://goo.gl/forms/YmWYkHCmP2vMkD7m1>

Postcards

Illustrator: Sarah Smizz www.sarahsmizz.com

We have produced a series of postcards to highlight different issues relating to toilet accessibility using illustrations live drawn at our research workshops.

Pick them up free at our events or contact aroundthetoilet@shu.ac.uk if you'd like some posting to you or your organisation.

Servicing Utopia Film

Collaborator: Content OD <http://www.contentod.co.uk>

We produced a short animated film about toilet accessibility to encourage architects and planners to re-think notions of access during the toilet design process. The film was made to watch alongside the Toilet Toolkit.

To view it as part of the Toilet Toolkit at: www.toilettoolkit.co.uk

To view it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x13R-vFcX0>

Storying School Toilets

Collaborator: Nicky Ward, The Bower Wirks <https://www.thebowerwirks.co.uk>

Additional Sponsorship: ESRC Festival of Social Science

Storying School Toilets is a sister project of the Around the Toilet. Our focus has been on children, young people and staff members' experiences of toilets in schools, youth groups and early year settings. In creative workshops we led with children, we invited them to create comics to tell toilet stories in comic form. You can read reflections on our work in schools so far, and download the comics made by children.

To read more: www.aroundthetoilet.com then click on the 'School Toilets' tab

The Toilet. Film

Collaborators: Content OD <http://www.contentod.co.uk>; Gemma Nash

<http://gemmanashartist.com>

The Toilet. is a quirky short animated film that explores the importance of the toilet in feeling comfortable and welcome in everyday life. It illustrates how inaccessible or unsafe toilets affect people in a range of ways, stopping some from leaving the house, and leading others to lose their jobs, or avoid food and drink, and taking day trips and holidays. Through the stories of trans, Muslim and disabled people, we show how current toilet provisions prioritise some people's needs at the expense of others. Toilet access is an important social and political issue and we need to fight for change.

View *The Toilet.* via our blog: www.aroundthetoilet.com then click 'The Toilet. film' tab

View *The Toilet.* via Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/231888061>

Toilet Design Toolkits

Collaborators: Niki Sole, Jess Haigh and Leo Care, Live Works, The University of Sheffield School of Architecture's 'Urban Room' <http://live-works.org>; Sarah Rennie, Accessibility and Inclusion Consultant

We have produced two interlinked Toilet Toolkits designed to support planners, architects and designers to creatively re-think notions of access during the toilet design process. They were developed in response to the stories told by people involved in the Around the Toilet project for whom accessing a safe and comfortable toilet space was a continual challenge.

1. The original Toilet Toolkit aims to communicate design possibilities in relation to the issues faced by different toilet users.

View the original Toilet Toolkit at: www.toilettoolkit.co.uk

Read more about it on the project website: www.aroundthetoilet.com then click on the 'Toilet Toolkit' tab.

2. The Toilet Design Toolkit is particularly aimed at architecture students and architectural educators. It encompasses a range of resources that enables engagement with toilet design at varying levels of details and intensity; from alternative Computer Aided Design (CAD) toilet templates, to practice exemplars and pedagogical examples. The resources aims to support more informed decision making and creative approaches to design.

View The Toilet Design Toolkit at: <https://aroundthetoilet.wixsite.com/toiletdesigntoolkit>

Read more about it on the project website: www.aroundthetoilet.com then click on the 'Designing Toilets' tab.

Travelling Toilet Tales Illustrated Soundscape

Sound artist: Gemma Nash <http://gemmanashartist.com>

Illustrator: Sarah Smizz www.sarahsmizz.com

We used the Travelling Toilet Tales recordings to produce a soundscape to share the stories about toilet access. Subtitles and transcripts are provided.

To view via our blog or read the transcript: www.aroundthetoilet.com then click the 'Toilet Tales' tab

To view on YouTube (subtitles available): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbPVE68IS_s

Travelling Toilet Tales Recordings

Sound artist: Gemma Nash <http://gemmanashartist.com>

We explored the ways in which every day journeys are planned around the availability of a suitable toilet. We collected stories from a range of toilet users, including a woman lorry driver, a disabled parent, a cleaner, parents of disabled children, a person with IBS, a Muslim woman with a health condition and a non-binary person. These are available to listen to individually on our blog (follow the 'toilet tales' tab). Transcripts are also provided for all the recordings.

To listen via our blog: www.aroundthetoilet.com then click on the 'toilet tales' tab

To listen via Sound Cloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-377462343>

Appendix 2: Example Signage for All-Gender Toilets

In Section 4.2 we explain that transitioning from binary gendered (men's and women's) toilets and all-gender toilets needs to be done with consideration. Here we outline possible wording which can be used to explain the need for all-gender toilets.

If the toilets are cubicles with shared handwashing spaces:

On the toilet door, we suggest using two signs. One which indicates that the room is a toilet, and one which explains further the need for an all-gender toilet.

Sign One:

Toilet

This toilet can be used by people of any gender.

Men's and women's toilets are available at [insert location of closest men's and women's toilets, if available]. An all-gender accessible toilet is available at [insert location of closest accessible toilet]. Changing Places Toilets are available at [insert location of closest Changing Places Toilets].

Sign Two (similar wording could also be used, for example, to email staff in a workplace):

All-gender Toilets

What is an all-gender toilet?

An all-gender toilet is a toilet that anybody can use, regardless of their gender.

Why have you installed all-gender toilets?

As an organisation committed to equality and diversity, providing an all-gender toilet is important.

All-gender toilets are useful for a range of people and situations including, parents with children of a different gender; those who care for people of a different gender; some disabled people who have a personal assistant of a different gender; and some people whose gender is questioned in the toilet including some trans and non-binary people.

For some people, not having access to an all-gender toilet prevents them from leaving the house or leads to them reducing what they eat and drink in order to avoid using the toilet.

Do you have men's and women's toilets?

The closest men's and women's toilets are also available at [insert locations].

If the toilet is a single stall coming from a corridor or other public space:

These are already frequently available in locations where there is only space for one toilet and will not need explanation. The sign can simply read:

Toilet

An accessible toilet is available at [insert location of closest accessible toilet]. Changing Places Toilets are available at [insert location of closest Changing Places Toilets].

Appendix 3: Glossary

Accessible toilet: the term generally used when talking about the larger toilet cubicle with handrails etc., most often indicated by the wheelchair-user sign. This is also sometimes known as the 'disabled toilet'. Although we question the 'accessibility' of the 'accessible toilet' (particularly in Section 4.1) we use the term 'accessible toilet' rather than 'disabled toilet' following the social model of disability (i.e. emphasising the build and design of the room rather than identifying or categorising the *user* of the room). Furthermore, our research shows that the accessible toilet is used by more than just disabled people.

Changing Places Toilet: a large toilet cubicle containing a hoist and adult-sized changing bench and promoted through the Changing Places Consortium. For more see http://www.changing-places.org/the_campaign/what_are_changing_places_toilets.aspx

Cisgender (or cis): used to refer to somebody whose current gender identity aligns to that which they were given at birth. I.e. a cis man is a man who was told that he was a boy from birth. The opposite of transgender (or trans).

Cisnormative: A worldview or ideology which promotes being cisgender as the 'normal' or preferred gendered state, above being trans.

Disability (and impairment): The word disability is used in different ways. Disability may refer to something that is perceived to be 'different' about somebody's body or mind. Usually this has a medical diagnosis attached to it. In *Around the Toilet*, however, we follow the social model of disability, and use the term impairment to mean the above, whilst disability means the disadvantage that disabled people face due to the organisation of society. This includes people who have visible and invisible physical impairments, people that identify as neurodiverse, those with chronic pain or conditions, labels of learning difficulty and so on. Where we have used disability as a synonym for impairment it is following the language choice of participants. For more on language around disability see Mallett and Slater (2014).

Disabled people: Following the social model of disability, we use the term disabled people (rather than 'people with disabilities'), to highlight that disabled people are people who are disabled by society, rather than by their impairments. Disabled people therefore represent a politically oppressed group of people within society. For more on language around disability see Mallett and Slater (2014).

Disabled toilet: The term sometimes used to describe the 'accessible toilet'. Where we use 'disabled toilet', it is following the terminology used by participants.

Gender and sex: Gender is often understood as socially imposed roles, expectations and behaviours that are considered to be masculine or feminine. Sex is often understood to be a person's biological/physical makeup which defines them as either male, female or intersex (with intersex wrongly and harmfully considered to be a 'rare abnormality'). In this case, sex is understood as biological and gender is societal. However, this has been contested as people have argued that 'sex' itself is also socially constructed and more complicated than just being male or female.

Gender binary: The 'gender binary' refers to an assumption that there are only two genders ('man' and 'woman') which are polar opposites. This is often reflected on the signs that are put on toilet doors. In reality, there are more than just two genders. The assumption that everyone identifies as either 'man' or 'woman' excludes people who identify outside of these terms, such as genderqueer and non-binary people. The reliance on a gender binary and its relation to sexed understandings of 'male' and 'female' also means that it can be problematic for intersex people. The assumption that one's gender will remain the same as the gender that they are assigned at birth is also part of the gender binary, leading to trans people being seen as 'different' or 'Other'.

All-gender toilets, gender neutral toilets, gender free toilets or 'unisex' toilets: toilets which can (in theory) be used by anybody, regardless of gender identity or presentation. In this report we use 'all-gender toilets' to explicitly highlight that these are toilets that can be used by people of any gender (or none), whilst also recognising the impossibility of a gender free or gender-neutral space. When other terms are used it is following the terminology used by participants.

Genderqueer: Genderqueer refers to somebody who doesn't identify within the gender binary. They may identify as neither, both, or a combination of man and woman. Gender identity may also change from day-to-day, or over time. Like 'queer', 'genderqueer' is often also a politicised term which is used to highlight the limits of the gender binary.

Heteronormative: A worldview or ideology which promotes being heterosexual (and cisgender) as the 'normal' or preferred sexual orientation above others.

Impairment (and disability): Following the social model of disability, we separate disability from impairment, and use the term impairment to mean a perceived 'difference' in the body or mind of a disabled person. Disability, on the other hand, means the disadvantage that disabled people face due to the organisation of society. For more on language around disability see Mallett and Slater (2014).

Intersex: Intersex describes the situation when a person's physical make-up doesn't fit into medical sexed understandings of either 'male' or 'female'. Just like anyone else, an intersex person can have any gender or sexual orientation.

Learning Difficulty: we use the term learning difficulty following UK self-advocacy organisation, People First (www.peoplefirstltd.com). People First use 'learning difficulty', rather than 'learning disability', to highlight that disability is the creation of society (see Social Model of Disability) and that learning support needs change over time. They also maintain that by 'people with learning difficulties' they mean 'people that are labelled with learning difficulty'. Internationally, 'intellectual impairment' is sometimes used.

LGBT: the acronym used for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Sometimes it appears as LGBTQ where the 'Q' stands for queer or questioning. Sometimes it appears as LGBT+ or LGBT*. In these instances, the * or + signal the inclusion of others identities which exist outside of heteronormativity, such as intersex or asexual people.

Non-binary Person: Somebody whose gender is not binary (man/woman).

Person with a disability: This is what is sometimes known as 'person first' language. It is often used in writing around disability from North America. The argument for this use of language (as opposed to saying 'disabled person'), is that the 'person' should be put before the 'disability'. Different people have different perspectives about whether it is better to use 'person with a disability' or 'disabled person'. In this project, we have made a political choice to use 'disabled person' (see Social Model of Disability), although choosing to use 'person with a disability' can, too, be political. Where we use 'person with a disability' it is following the language choice of participants. For more on language around disability see Mallett and Slater (2014).

Queer: Although 'queer' is a term that you may recognise as being used as a term of abuse, it has also been reclaimed by those identifying outside of heteronormativity. It is an umbrella term to represent identities outside of normative ideas of gender and sexuality. It is also used to represent a political position which opposes the assumptions and dominance of heteronormativity.

RADAR key: RADAR keys, also known as NKS keys, can be applied for or bought online and offer people independent access to locked accessible public toilets across the UK. They are predominantly aimed at disabled people, although are also used by some non-disabled people.

Trans man: A man who wasn't assigned male at birth.

Trans woman: A woman who wasn't assigned female at birth.

Transgender (or trans): The term used to refer to somebody whose gender identity does not align to that which they were given at birth. I.e. a trans man is a man who was told that he was a girl from birth. The opposite of cisgender (or cis). Trans is often also used as an umbrella term which includes genderqueer and non-binary people who do not identify as wholly or always men or women. Sometimes this is written as 'trans*' to explicitly signify the inclusion of the full 'spectrum' of trans people (e.g. including non-binary, genderqueer and gender fluid people).

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