

# MAKING queer ZINES

**A resource guide**

# • introduction

West Yorkshire Queer Stories has been gathering oral histories from a diverse range of LGBTIQ+ people across the region, as part of an archiving initiative supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Yorkshire MESMAC. The resulting recordings, together with a handful of objects, will not only help diversify the collections of local museums and archives, but also feed into new resources, artistic endeavours and the way we think about the people's history of West Yorkshire and beyond.

As well as collecting stories and objects, the project also created some resources to support more LGBTIQ+ people to document their stories. This is one of them! You can use this guide to find out about queer zines, including what they are, how to make them and why you should make a zine of your own. The centrefold of this booklet is a template that you can print out to make a one page zine of your own, and at the end you'll find on- and offline places where you can read more queer zines.

# What are zines?

Zines are self-published booklets or leaflets. The term “zine” was originally used to refer to fan-made magazines (or “fanzines”) but zines have also been compared to radical pamphlets, scrapbooks and collage projects. What’s common between all of these things? Zines are not published by big organisations or publishing houses, but more likely to be made by individuals or small groups of people. Zines are not professional, and you don’t need to have any technical skills to make one. As they’re made by people outside of publishing industries, they’re often about things that are important to the person making them and/or otherwise not represented in more widely distributed publications (like magazines and books). As a result they tend to be more radical and unusual than more mainstream publishing.

Here is an example of a zine, which was made for the West Yorkshire Queer Stories project.

Trailblazing Stories was a collaborative zine that I made with a group of around 30 people who took part in the project in October 2018. Together we spent an afternoon drinking tea and chatting about our experiences. Two volunteers (thanks Gabby and Kez!) and I made some notes and then I went away and drew pictures of everyone and wrote down a little bit about every person's story. You can find it online here at [crosswordszines.etsy.com](https://crosswordszines.etsy.com).



# why are there so many queer zines?

Zines are a big part of queer countercultures, and always have been. Sometimes it has been necessary to circulate information via zines because of practices of censorship or marginalisation of queer and trans voices in mainstream media, or because the smaller circulation of zines helps LGBTIQ+ people to control access to who sees them (like employers, parents or co-workers, for example). Zines have always been a way to connect to other people too (zine makers often include a postal or email address on the back of their zines), and this is really important in queer and trans communities especially.

# why should you make a zine?

Because your experiences, knowledge and skills are all important, and people will want to read about them! Zines are also fun to make, either individually or with other people, and it can be really fulfilling to self-publish about subjects that are otherwise not represented in media or publishing.

# What can you put in a zine/what do others make them about?

You can make a zine about literally anything (Your cat, what you had for lunch today, your favourite bands, putting up shelves, your favourite recipes, where you live, craft projects, ANYTHING!).

Generally people make zines that can be categorised into one of the following five types:

**Perzines/life writing** - Perzines are “personal zines” and tend to be personal diary or in the style of life writing. This can be a little like keeping a diary that you then publish for friends, or keeping an online blog.

**Illustration/art** - Lots of artists and illustrators use zines to make little booklets of drawings or illustrations. You don't have to be particularly experienced in drawing to do this - I hadn't drawn in years when I made my first art zine, and used it as a way to get more confident in drawing for zines.

**Comics** - Zines can be a great medium to make short comics or test out ideas for longer projects.

You don't have to have made a comic before to try them out in a zine!

**Interviews or journalism** - Lots of people use zines to interview people, like local musicians, other artists, performers or zine makers. You can use a zine like a mini-magazine in this way.

**Resource/skills sharing** - You can use zines to share information, skills or resources that have helped you. This can be a really useful way to help other people in the wider LGBTIQ+ community if you focus on a specific issue or subject.

# how do you get started?

You might find it easy or hard to start writing. It comes naturally to me now, but it was harder at the start, so I used to make notes about what I wanted to write about. Here are some prompts relating to some experiences that many of us share as members of LGBTIQ+ communities:

- Coming out
- Queer love
- Gender identity

- Activism
- Queer family

You might write about how you came out to your family, your first queer love, navigating life as a trans person, what activism you've done or your experiences of illness and/or healthcare.

Sometimes it can be helpful to have a conversation with friends about what you'd like to make a zine about, and make some notes as you are talking.

If writing about your own experiences is hard, how about using zines to share knowledge and resources instead? Here are some prompts that might help with this too.

- LGBTIQ+ run or friendly stuff to do in your area
- Trans/queer musicians you admire
- How to tailor or alter clothing
- What to expect when accessing gender confirming healthcare services
- How to come out as non-binary at work
- Queer parenting
- Running crowdfunders
- How to navigate NHS services as a queer and/or trans person



# Zine template

Over the page you'll find a template for a mini zine, which you can make with just one sheet of A4 paper, drawing supplies and a pair of scissors.

Using the template from this booklet, try folding the booklet up using the guides provided. If you find this hard, try watching this youtube video while you do it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLKfM8qb-3Fs>

Once you've used the template, try again with a blank sheet of paper. Once you've folded a booklet it's up to you to fill the pages!



— — CUT HERE  
—— FOLD HERE

2

3

5

4

1

8

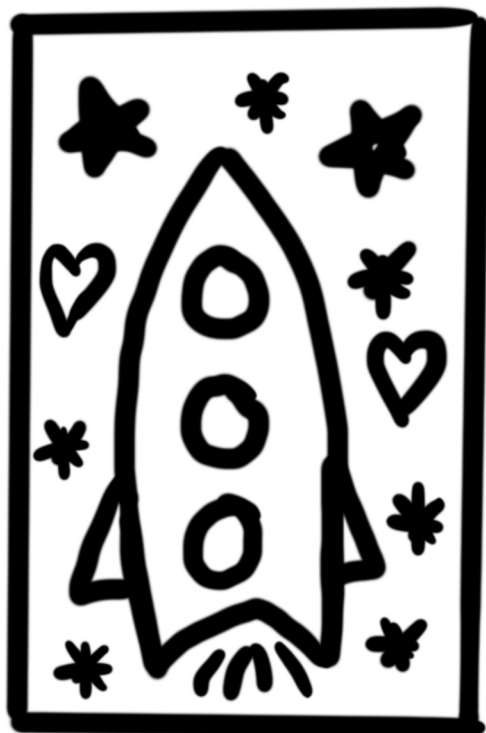
6

7

# Make a poster ♡

Once you've filled all of the pages in your mini-zine, you can unfold the booklet back out to an A4 page and draw a poster on the blank reverse of the page. Lots of zine makers do this so you can read the zine and then stick the poster up on a wall in your house.

Once you've finished the zine, it's easy to copy it - you can use a photocopier and a single sheet of A4 (printed on both sides if you've made the poster too) to make a copy, then fold it again. You can now pass your zine around to your friends, family and peers!



# What do you need to make a zine?

Not much! You can make a zine with as little as some plain paper, a pencil/pen and a stapler. You might also want to use...

Scissors and glue

Collage materials (newspaper clippings, magazine clippings)

Coloured pencils and pencils

Stickers

Coloured paper

Shapes

Doodles or drawing

A ruler

Stencils

# printing your zine

As with the rest of zine making, you don't have to know much about printing to print a zine. I print mine by scanning the pages and then using open access software like Gimp or Inkscape (or Microsoft Publisher works too) to create a printable booklet. You can also use a photocopier to make copies of physical pages if you're less computer savvy.

If you work in an office and you're sneaky, you can often print your zines for free outside of hours (try not to leave the originals in the copier though, as I have done very many times). Otherwise you can generally pay to photocopy zines in corner shops, libraries, universities, or google printers located close to you.

If you're a little more advanced in printing, look up riso printing, which is a cool printing technology that lots of zinesters are now using.

Once you've printed your zines, if you need to staple them, it's a good idea to invest in a long armed stapler (or nick one from an office).

# distributing your zine

You've made a zine now, what do you want to do with it? You could start by giving or selling some to friends. You can also use platforms like etsy and big cartel to sell zines online, or approach zine distros (see the next section for an explanation of these) so see if they'll sell them for you. You can also apply to zine fairs (also see next section!) to sell them in person as well.

# Where can you find queer zines?

Queer zine archive project is an online project in America with lots of digitised zines that you can view for free - [qzap.org](http://qzap.org).

## **Zine distros**

You can buy zines online via zine distros, which are individuals or collectives who distribute zines. Zine distros are great because you can order a bunch of zines at once, and there are lots of different makers stocked in each.

Here are a few zine distros with queer zines:

- Vampire Hag Distro
- Pen Fight Distro
- Synchronise Witches Distro
- Sister Ectoplasma Distro

## **Queer zine makers**

Some queer zinesters sell their zines online, including the following:



- Rachael House
- Cool Schmool Zines
- Cross Words Zines
- Jacob Joyce
- Rudy Loewe
- Heart of Hearts Zines
- QTIPOC Narratives
- Zines and Ting
- Gears for Queers
- melão brando
- Charlotte Cooper
- Non-Binary Leeds

## **Zine fairs**

Zine fairs are events that happen in most cities in the UK. At a zine fair you will find stalls run by zine makers, so you can browse and buy zines in person. Zine fairs happening in Yorkshire include:

- Bradford Zine Fair
- Weirdo Zine Fest (Leeds)
- Sheffield Zine Fest
- York Zine Fest

You can find info about all of these by searching online.

## **Zine library list**

Zine libraries are physical places that you can access zine collections for free. Sometimes they may have limited opening hours, so always check in advance before going to one! My favourites in or near West Yorkshire are:

### **Leeds Zine Library**

(in Leeds Central Library)

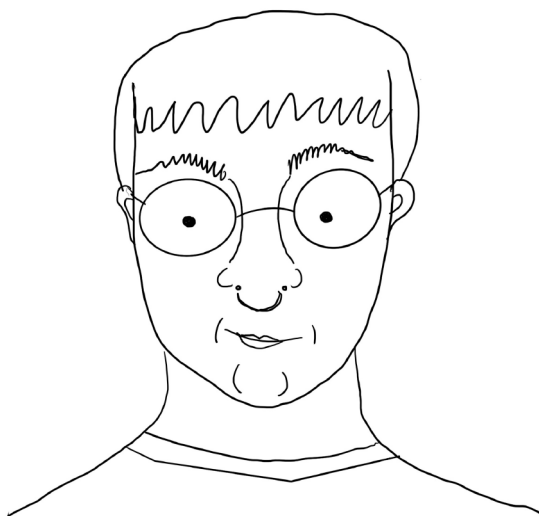
### **Salford Zine Library**

(in Nexus Art Cafe, Manchester)

### **York Zine Library**

(upstairs in Travelling Man)

**Queer Zine Library** is a UK based roaming diy queer zine library celebrating radical LGBTQ self-publishing. [queerzinelibrary.com](http://queerzinelibrary.com)



This booklet was put together by Kirsty Fife, a queer zinester living in Leeds, West Yorkshire. I run Cross Words Distro, and publish zines about class, fatness, queerness and DIY cultures. I also coordinate Weirdo Zine Fest, a zine fair celebrating cultural production by radical and marginalised people, and run zine workshops for cultural and heritage organisations

You can find out more about my work or contact me at [kirstyfife.wordpress.com](http://kirstyfife.wordpress.com). You can also follow me on twitter @diyarchivist.



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