



Accessibility

This information pack explains how we make our building welcoming and accessible for all, find out how to access the building and what to expect during your visit. It also outlines support available, such as sensory and comfort items, and what to do if you feel overwhelmed or unsafe.

The Lowdown is an organisation that strives to be as **accessible** as we can be. We are committed to creating an **inclusive culture** and continuing to provide **safe spaces** and **opportunities** for all service users, staff, and volunteers, regardless of background or the characteristics that make them their unique self.

What this information pack includes:

- How to enter: What you need to do on arrival.
- What to look out for in the building: What you might see.
- What our rooms look like.
- What you might hear and smell in the building.
- What to do if you feel overwhelmed, anxious or unsafe.
- What we have that can help you: e.g. sensory packs and supportive items.

What this information pack includes:

(You don't have to read everything, You can skip to the parts you need – click the link below.)

- **Accessibility Statement:**

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Access requirements:

If you have any access requirements, please contact us in advance where possible:

- Email - info@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk or call 01604 634385.

Please-ask if there is anything else you need or something we can do to help.

Physical and Inclusive access

- There is a side entrance with an access ramp for wheelchair users (white side door).
- No parking is allowed in the car park next to the building, drop offs can be arranged outside where necessary.
- Specific spaces for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and/or pushchairs in main waiting area.
- There are arm rests on some seating in waiting areas and in all counselling rooms.
- Gender neutral, disabled and ambulatory toilets with baby changing facilities are available.
- Wider corridors and automatic doors on the ground floor, with larger accessible counselling rooms for easier access for people with disabilities (including wheelchair users/mobility issues.)
- There are Lounge and room layouts designed to be 'clutter free' and easy to navigate.
- There are handrails both sides of the staircases (main entrance and side entrance), studs on one upper handrail. (This is an important part of the buildings heritage.)

Accessible entrance (ramp) – wheelchair users or mobility needs



1. Side entrance, via car park.



2. Ramp to white door.



3. Press buzzer for entrance, automatic door opens outwards.

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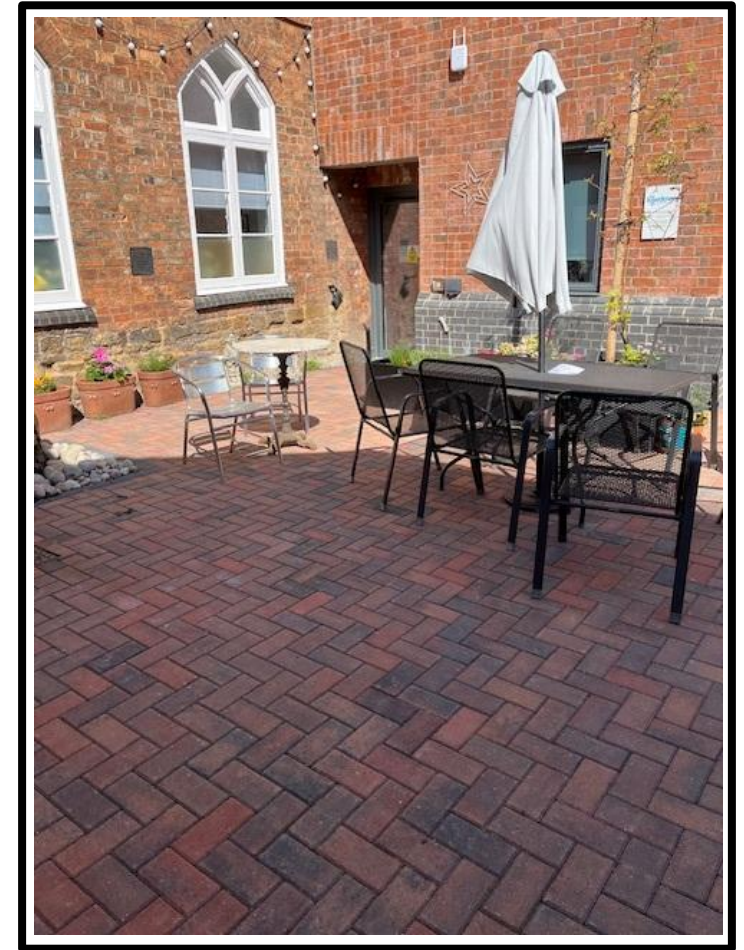
Accessible entrance (ramp) – wheelchair users or mobility needs



4. Automatic door opens outwards.



5. Entrance into garden – slight hump.



6. Past table/seating area.

Accessible entrance (ramp) – wheelchair users or mobility needs

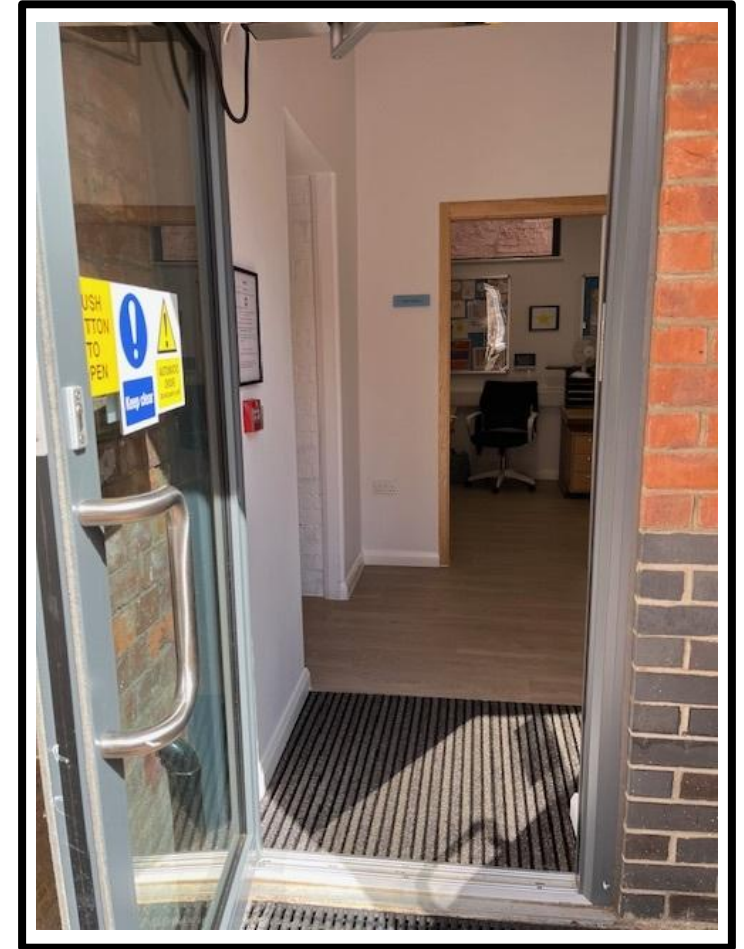


7. Turn left past planters for door to **main building** (on right).



8. Enter via automatic door, opens outwards.

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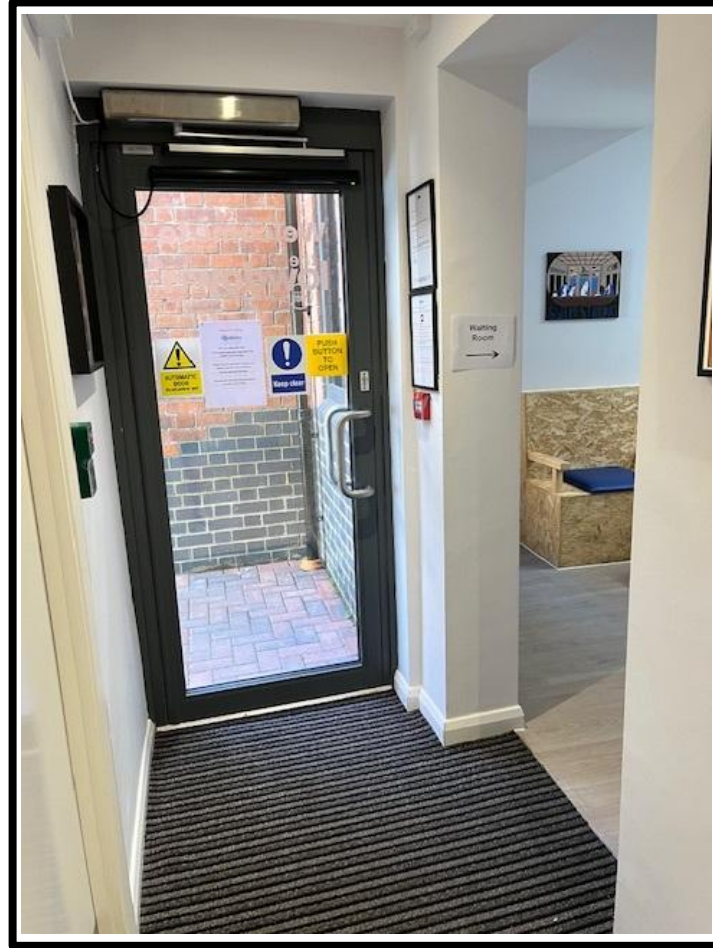


9. Into the corridor (the Staff office is straight ahead), turn left towards the waiting area.

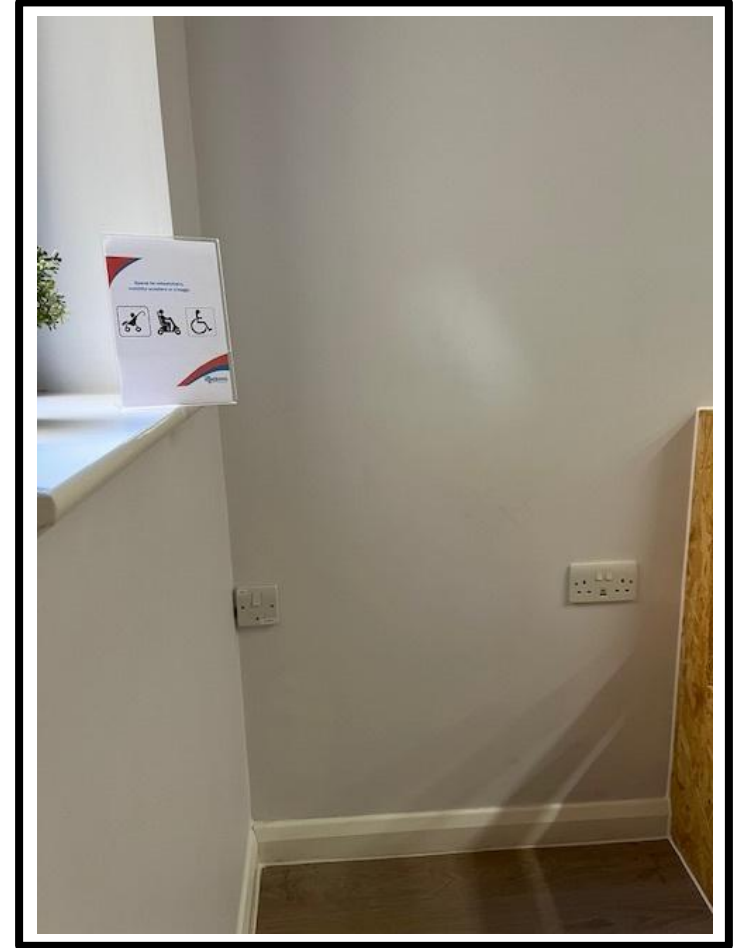
Accessible entrance (ramp) – wheelchair users or mobility needs



10. Ground floor, accessible entrance/ corridor.

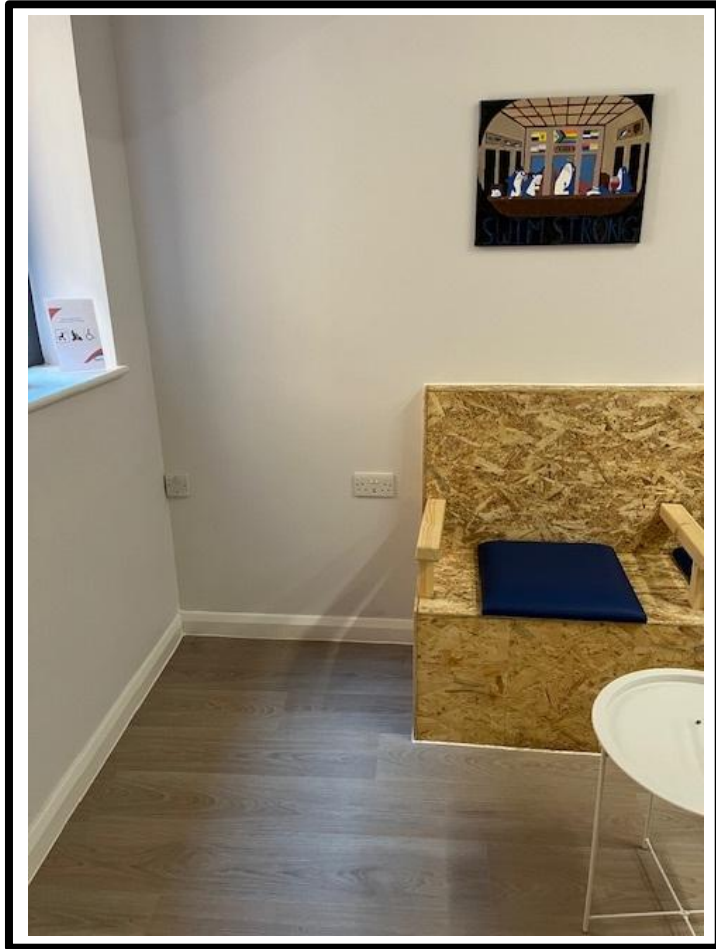


11. Turn right into the waiting area.



12. Waiting area accessible space and seating.

Accessible entrance (ramp) – wheelchair users or mobility needs



13. Accessible seating/spaces for any wheelchairs or mobility scooters and pushchairs. Some seating with arm rests.



14. Ground floor, accessible/larger counselling rooms



15. Enter/ Exit via automatic doors for easy access for all.

Accessible entrance (ramp) – entering all Lounge based activities/ groups



1. For groups - Enter via the side entrance, up the ramp, (to the right of the building - through the Car Park.)

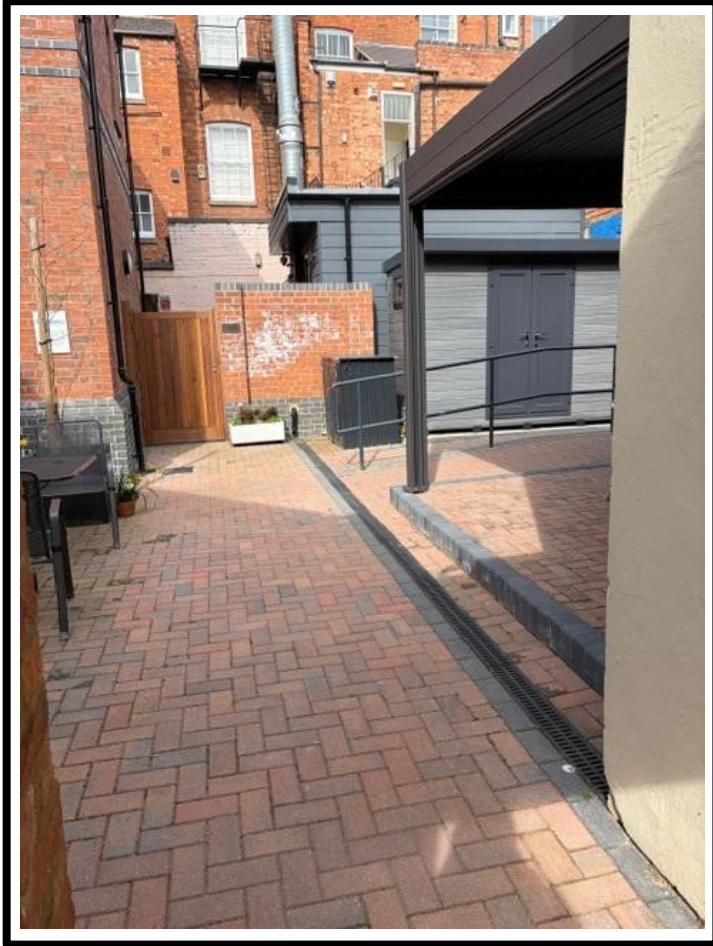


2. Don't press the buzzer for groups - The door will be open when the session/group is on.



3. On arrival - Try to keep noise levels down in the garden area, there are other sessions happening in the main building.

Accessible entrance (ramp) – entering all Lounge based activities or groups



1. Turn right past the step to access the Lounge (slight up hill)

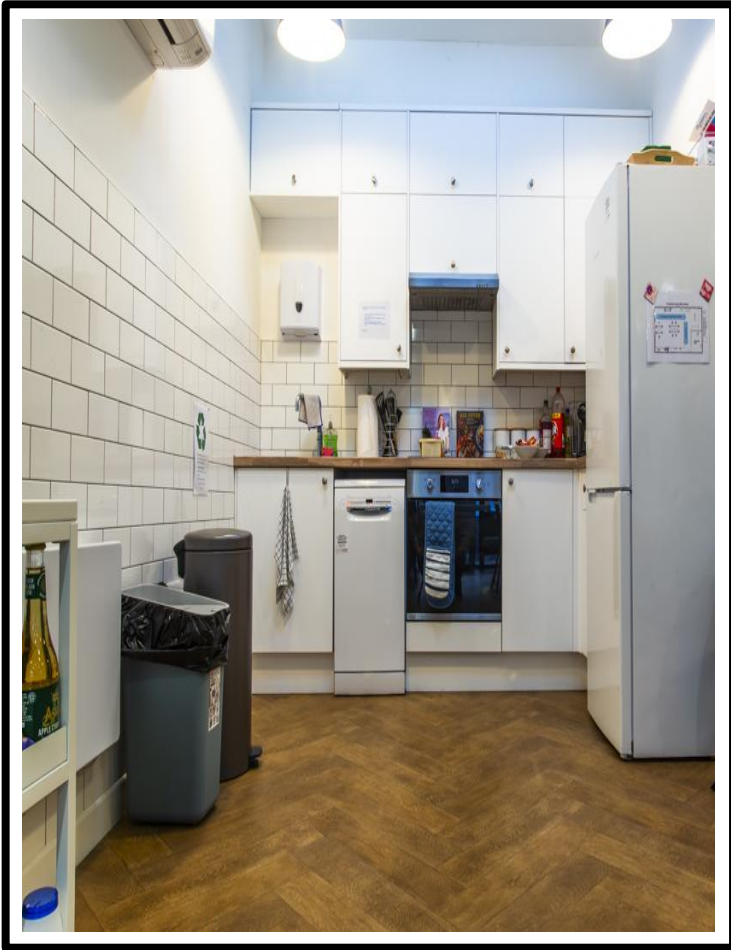


2. Entrance to the Lounge via the garden/side entrance, slightly uphill. Handrail to the left.



3. Lounge area may be set up like this, with access to toilet and kitchen. Seating plan may be adjusted for some sessions.

Accessible entrance (ramp) – entering all Lounge based activities or groups



4. Kitchen area - Fridge, freezer, cooker and all utensils/ kitchen accessories, for use of groups.



5. Access to gender neutral/accessible toilets. Giant bean bags for further comfort and seating.

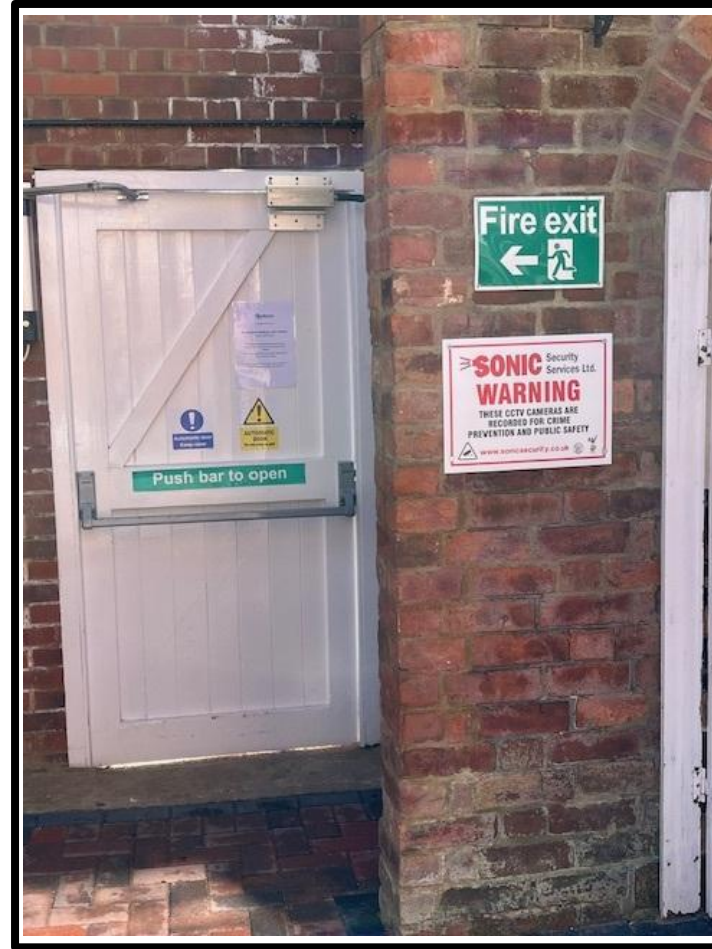


6. Gender neutral and accessible toilet in the Lounge.

Leaving/exiting the building – exit via garden/ white door & accessible ramp



1. Ground floor internal, garden exit.



2. Garden exit to accessible ramp (white door) .



3. Accessible ramp to car park.

Access requirements:

Sensory needs

- **Bring with you any ear defenders or headphones (noise cancelling/ reducing) or loops and light sensitivity glasses, or anything else you need.**
- Fidgets are available in all rooms and waiting areas.
- We have some sensory items available, please ask a staff member if you need them. Please note items will be generic and may not be specific to your needs.
- Ear defenders/ headphones are available in all rooms if the noise levels are not comfortable or are overwhelming for you.
- Quiet spaces are available if you arrive and are feeling overwhelmed.
- The stairs are contrasting colours to the walls with textured hazard tape to mark the edge of the steps.
- The name of the Shift manager and Drop-in support worker will be on a board in the waiting area if you have any questions or concerns. They are there to help and support you/staff during your visit.
- All rooms and doors are signposted to allow easy entrance and exit.

Your sensory needs - Comfort and sensory items



1. Pictured: ear defenders – found in every counselling room, in the shift office and Lounge. For use in the building, please ask a staff member.



2. There are dimmable lights, blinds and lamps in every room, let staff know if light needs adjusting for you.



3. Blankets in every counselling room and waiting areas (storage baskets, pictured.) Floor cushions found in some rooms.



What to expect in the building

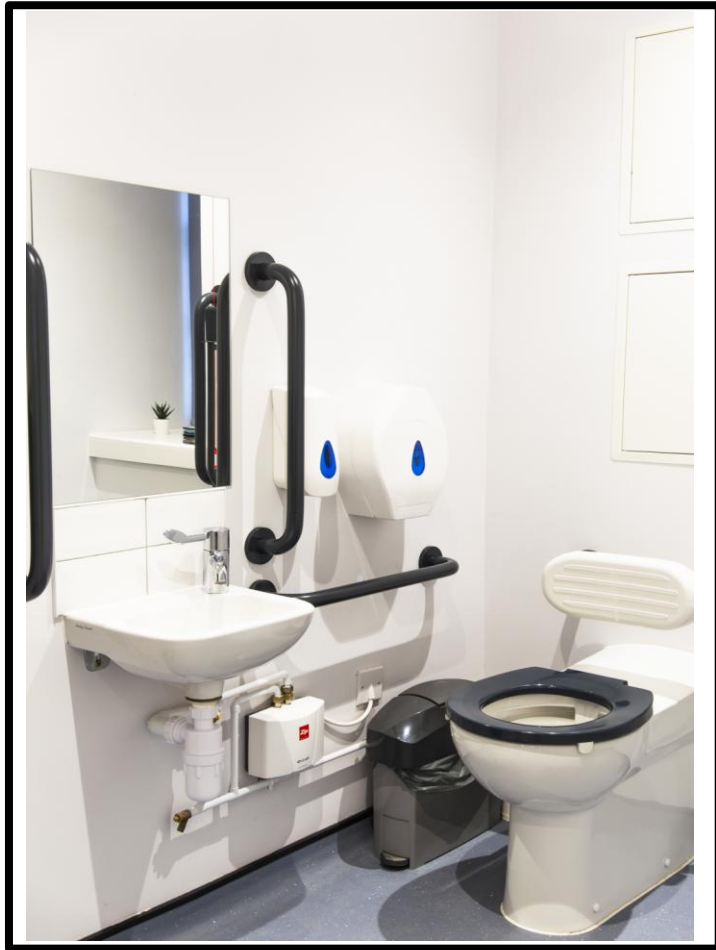
What to look for, what you might see, hear, smell.
What to do if you feel a certain way during your visit.

What to look for in the building

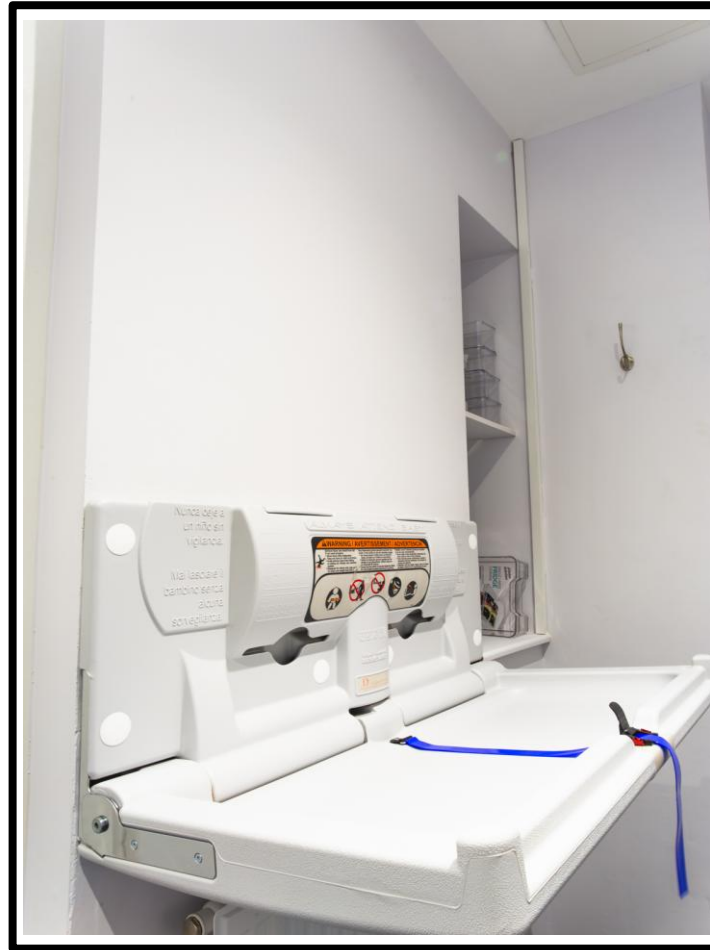
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- **People** – there will be others in and around the building, staff and volunteers are there to help.
- **Toilets** – all our toilets are gender neutral. We also have disabled and ambulatory toilets and baby changing facilities.
- **Automatic doors** – The main entrance into the building (via the blue door), counselling room doors (1 and 4), doors from waiting areas and corridor to garden have automatic doors. (open inwards) to allow easier access for all.
- **Handrails** – These can be found on both sets of stairs from the ground to the first floor of the main building.
- **Emergency exits** – These are at the front and side of the building (what you might see - picture no.7) There are signs to highlight all exits.
- **Signs** – These are throughout the building, to help find your way to rooms and exits. The signs are blue with dark text. Some rooms such as toilets also have pictures. (see examples of signs)
- **Information** – details for who to speak to in the building, what you need to know about today and where and who else outside of The Lowdown can you get support.
- **Artwork & paintings** – these are in various rooms (some have been created by young people.)
- **Comfort & sensory packs** – Fidget toys, ear defenders, blankets and cushions are available to use in the building.
- **Accessible seating & wheelchair spaces** – In the main waiting area there is a specific space for any wheelchairs/ mobility scooters and pushchairs, next to benched seating. There is also some seating with raised arm rests for ease of getting into and out of seats.

What to look for in the building - what you might see



1. Toilets - Gender neutral, disabled and ambulatory toilets.

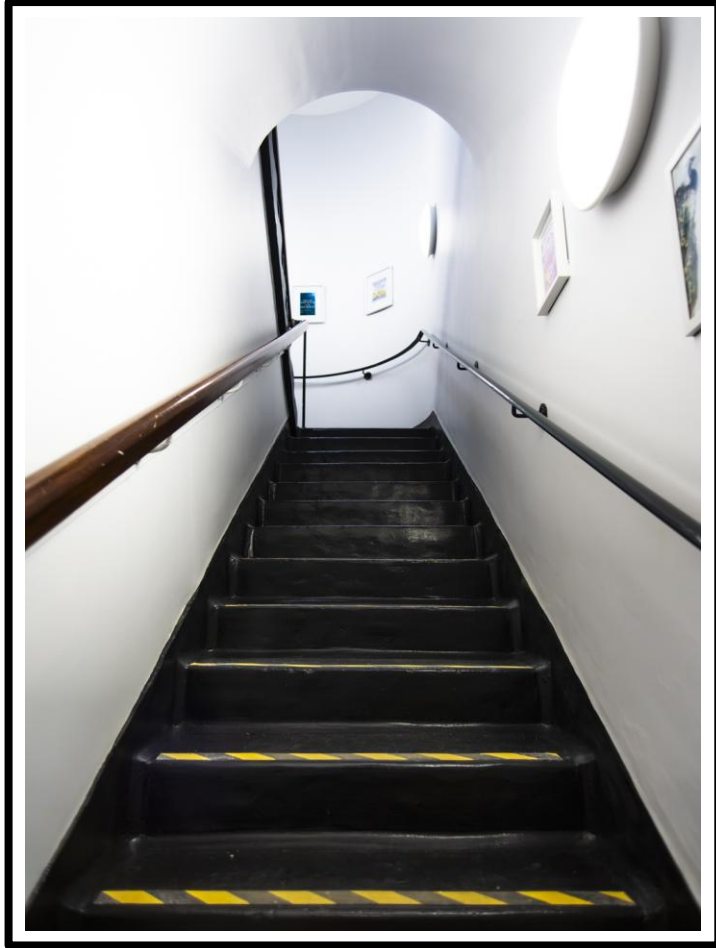


2. Toilet - with baby changing facilities.

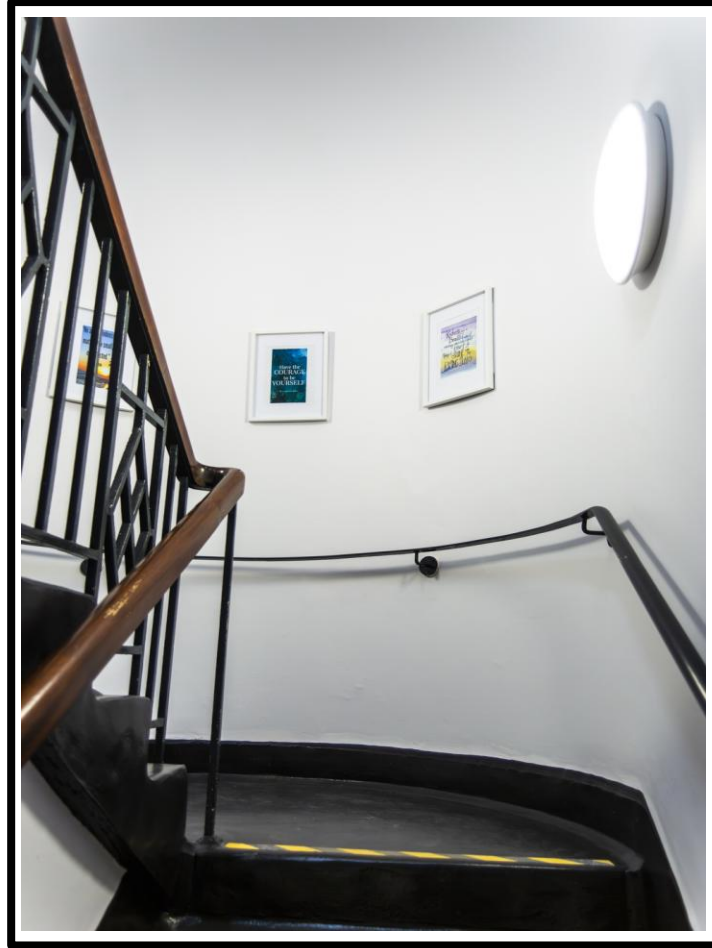


3. Automatic doors – inside and outside the building (pictured above an example of an inside automatic door).

What to look for in the building – what you might see



4. Handrails - These can be found on both sets of stairs from the ground to the first floor of the main building.



5. Different colours for walls and floors, including tape to highlight steps.



6. RE:Start stairs - from garden/ courtyard to office and upstairs counselling rooms.

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What to look for in the building – what you might see



7. Emergency exits

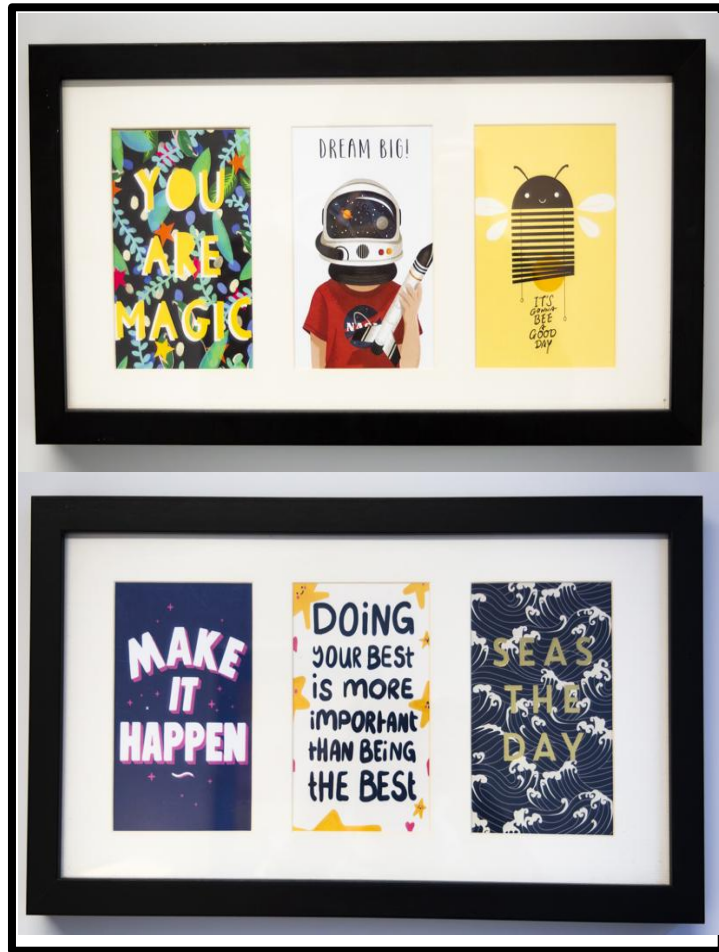


8. Signs – for directions and information



9. Notice boards - details for who to speak to in the building and what you need to know about today.

What to look for in the building – what you might see



10. Artwork, paintings and decorations – can be found around the building.



11. Each counselling room has its own picture quote to match the room name.



12. Some of these have been created by young people.

People – Who you might see

- **Staff & Volunteers** – there will be staff and volunteers to help or support you. Below is an example of some of the people you may come across during your visit:
 - **Shift Managers** – the role of a Shift Manager is to manage the Counselling appointments and ensure you are where you need to be to get to your session. They help staff, support clients and keep everything safe and organised. You can ask them questions while you are in the building, they are always happy to help.
 - **Drop-in Support Workers** – There are always two Drop-in support workers whilst the Drop-in's are open. They are there to see anyone who attends and offer mental health and wellbeing support, sexual health support, information and guidance and where necessary further signposting.
 - **Admin Staff** – They may be the first people you speak to, on the phone or in person. They answer phones, organise and communicate about all appointments and services at The Lowdown.
 - **Other staff** - including Counsellors and Support Workers across all services such as RE:Start support workers, service managers, management and others.

Sounds you might hear in the building

Below are some of the things you may hear during your visit, sounds can be different depending on what day or time it is.



Sounds/ hearing:

- Buzzers- when pressed to enter.
- Voices/conversation and noise from other people in the building.
- Radio – often on in waiting area as background (if noise is overwhelming let us know).
- Doors – high pitched beep on some automatic doors, slamming doors.
- Banging and movement from other rooms – furniture moved, doors closing/opening and footsteps.
- Building work or repairs improvements, these are less frequent, but you may hear these occasionally.
- Street noise – vehicles, people and other noises from nearby shops or buildings.

A lot of this is out of our control but let us know if there is an issue and we will do our best to help

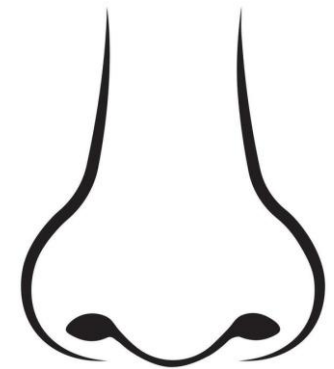
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What you might smell in the building

Below are some of the things you may smell during your visit. These can be different depending on what day or time it is.

Smells:

- Cleaning products.
- Essential oils (may be used in some Counselling rooms).
- If you are in garden areas, food smells from nearby.
- Food smells from kitchen areas in the main building and Lounge area.
- Other smells from the street or surrounding areas.
- Perfumes and body sprays worn by others in the building.



A lot of this is out of our control but let us know if there is an issue and we will do our best to help

What to do if you feel.....

Overwhelmed:

- Speak to a staff member, there are alternative quiet spaces and ear defenders available.
- Take a minute to remind yourself this is a safe space and breathe deeply, what 3 things can you see, hear and feel.

Anxious/ Stressed:

- Speak to a staff member – what helps you feel more calm or relaxed?
- Comfort items, fidgets, ear defenders are available to use in the building.

Unsure or unsafe:

- Check the waiting room notice board and find out which Shift Manager or Drop-in Worker is in they will be happy to help you. Speak to them or another staff member. Our aim is to provide a safe and welcoming space for you.
- Use the rule of 3 grounding techniques above – what can you see, hear and feel.



A safe space – lights & CCTV outside the building.

1.



1. CCTV outside of the building to keep everyone safe.

2.



2. Lighting at the front of the building for when its dark.

3.



3. Lighting also at the side of the building (white door/ accessible entrance.)

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Thank you for reading.

If you have any questions or need any further information, contact us:



@thelowdownnn1



thelowdown



info@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk



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