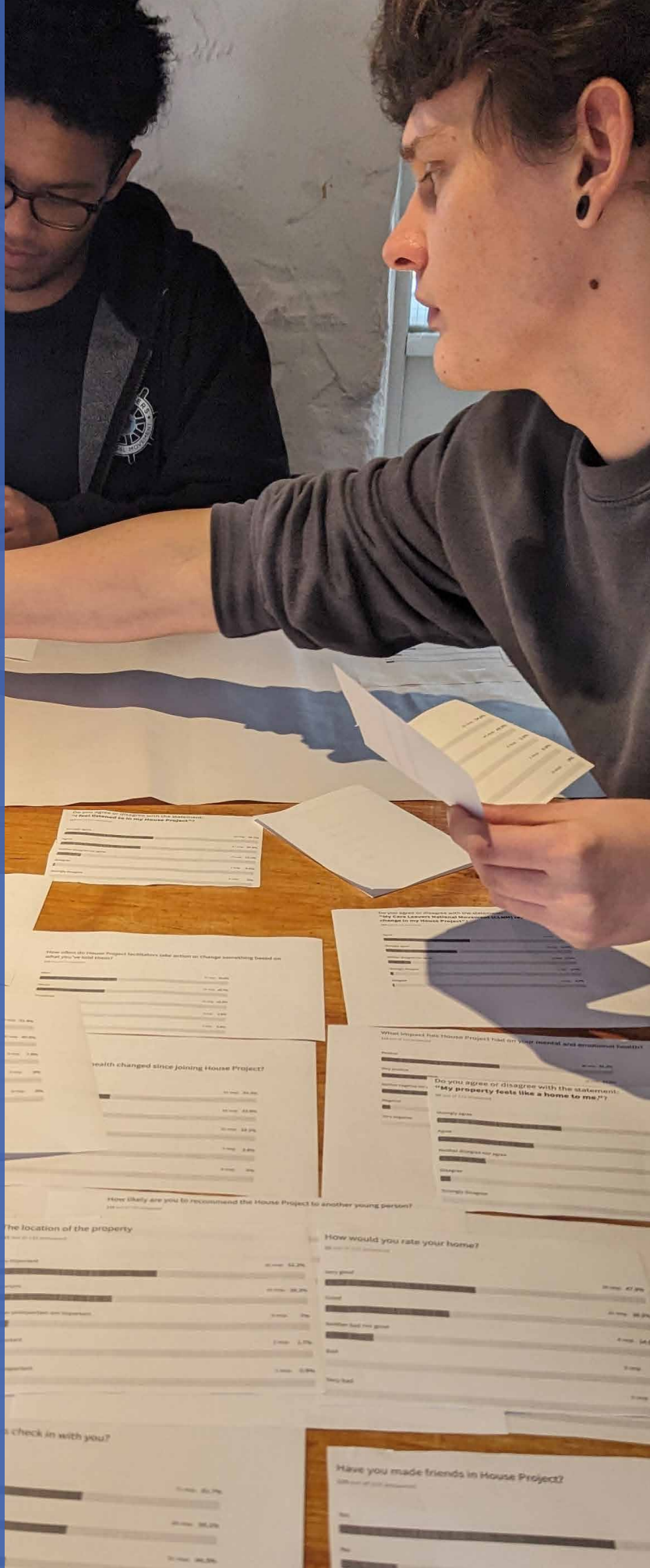


Peer Evaluation 2023:

Ownership, Home, and Sense of Wellbeing



CARE LEAVERS
NATIONAL MOVEMENT



NHP
Living connected
and fulfilling lives

**Partnership
for Young
London**

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Foreword

Welcome to our Peer Evaluation Report. We are the Chairs of Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM), Jodie and Sean.



Sean Robertson
CLNM North Chair







Jodie Kudzewicz
CLNM South Chair

A peer evaluation of Local House Projects (LHPs) is one of the four CLNM objectives and a crucial part of developing the House Project approach based on the views and experiences of young people.

Our evaluations consider how well The National House Project's (NHP) practice framework is working for young people. The practice framework is known as ORCHIDS and stands for Ownership, Responsibility, Community, Home, Interdependence, Direction and Sense of Wellbeing.

Our first evaluation was published in 2021 and focussed on four areas. These were Responsibility, Community, Direction and Interdependence. Over the past 12 months NHP and CLNM have worked on the recommendations from this report and, whilst we have not yet completed all of these, we have designed and implemented a peer mentoring programme that all young people who have completed the House Project Programme and moved into their own home have access to.

This year's evaluation has focussed on OWNERSHIP, HOME and SENSE OF WELLBEING. The recommendations from this year's peer evaluation will be the focus of our work next year.

-  **Ownership**
-  **Responsibility**
-  **Community**
-  **Home**
-  **Interdependence**
-  **Direction**
-  **Sense of wellbeing**

13 CLNM representatives came together over a residential weekend to develop the evaluation framework and train as a peer researchers. These representatives developed a survey and interview template and went on to interview over 30 young people across all our House Projects.

The peer researchers asked questions linked to Ownership, Home, and Sense of Wellbeing to establish how effective ORCHIDS is and make recommendations in order to improve the House Project experience for all young people.

We are incredibly proud of this evaluation and want to thank all those young people who have given their time to develop the House Project approach.

Key findings

1. Young people would recommend the House Project

Most young people (89.6%) said that they were likely or very likely to recommend the House Project to another young person. The majority of young people (85%) also rated their House Projects as very good or good.

2. The support provided by facilitators is excellent and important

We found that on average nine out of ten (93.9%) young people rated their facilitators as very good or good. While most (65.2%) said that their facilitator always or often supported them with their mental health.

3. Young people feel listened to in the House Project

Almost nine out of ten (87%) said that they felt listened to in their LHPs. A similar majority (85.3%) also felt that their CLNM representative listened to them, and supported them to make change.

4. Young people feel involved in decisions made in the House Project

Almost nine out of ten (88.7%) said that they felt involved in decisions made about them. While most (76.6%) said that their facilitators always or often make changes based on what they've told them.

5. The House Project improves mental and emotional health

Three out of four (75.6%) respondents said that the House Project had a positive or very positive impact on their mental health, while a majority (65.3%) of young people said that their mental health had got better or much better since joining the House Project.

6. Young people make friends in the House Project

Three out of four (73.9%) of respondents said that they had made friends in the House Project. Some of these friendships last beyond the length of the project.

7. Location is the most important aspect of choosing a home

Nine out of ten (90.5%) young people said that the location of the property was important or very important, more so than quality (87.8%) or the speed of being offered and accepting a property (74.8%).

8. The House Project helps young people prepare for their own home

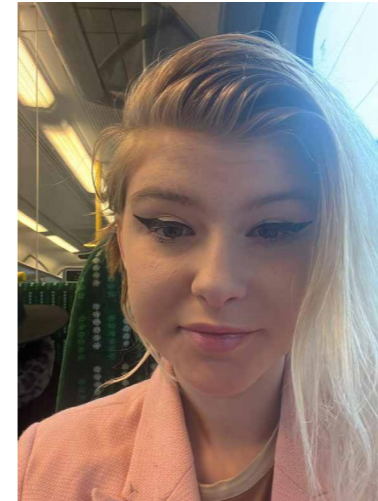
Four out of five (86.1%) young people felt that the House Project programme helped them prepare to live in their own home.





Approach

Introduction to approach



I am Becky, as CLNM representative from Stoke House Project. I have been a part of Stoke House Project for two years and have been living interdependently for one year.

I am really proud of myself and CLNM for completing this peer evaluation and achieving one of CLNM's four main objectives. CLNM representatives have been involved in all stages of the evaluation including the design, data collection, analysis and report writing.

We have travelled across the UK to collect the data from over 150 young people within House Projects which we can now present to you in this report. The data was analysed and has provided us with four clear areas for the House Project to develop, which we call recommendations.

We will work with NHP over the next 18 months to achieve these recommendations and ensure updates are provided to young people and staff in the House Project community through CLNM meetings and community of practice.



Peer evaluation 2021 - Our Community: A peer evaluation of House Projects

This work is a follow up to the first peer evaluation, 'Our Community: A peer evaluation of our House Projects', which took place in 2021, designed by representatives from CLNM.

They looked at four aspects of the ORCHIDS framework: Community, Independence (before it became Interdependence), Responsibility, and Sense of Direction.

They spoke to 70 young people through a survey, and 25 young people in interviews lasting over five hours. You can find the full report [here](#).

Their key findings were:



1. Young people feel positive about their House Project

The vast majority (94.2%) of young people rated their House Project as 'very good' or 'good'.

2. The House Project supports the mental health and wellbeing of young people

Most young people (78%) said that their House Project has a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

3. Young people feel a sense of ownership over their House Project

Young people feel in control of their House Project with most (88.4%) saying that their opinions mattered to how decisions were made.

4. The House Project is effective at building a sense of community

Most young people (91.3%) said that their House Project is hugely important to their sense of community with trust with staff being key.

5. The House Project staff are key in supporting young people

Almost all young people (97.1%) said that their House Project supports them to help deal with their responsibilities.

6. The House Project expands young people's goals past the house

Almost all young people (97%) said that they have a goal for the future. The most common goal was starting a career (75.8%).

You said, we did 2022 - Peer mentoring handbook and training across LHPs



NHP have been working on the recommendations from the 2021 Peer Evaluation over the last 18 months. CLNM have been at the heart of work that has been completed in relation to recommendation four: 'More peer support between the House Projects and cohorts.'

A group of young people from CLNM came together over a residential weekend to consider what 'more peer support' could look like. They decided that a peer mentoring programme for young people when they first join the House Project would meet the recommendation best. They considered what was important to them in the first 6 weeks of joining the House Project and how peer support could further benefit young people at this time.

From this, they designed a peer mentoring handbook and a training package that enables young people who have completed the House Project programme to train as peer mentors and support new young people joining the House Project. CLNM, NHP and LHPs work together to train young people as peer mentors across the House Project community.

Whilst NHP have taken action on all the recommendations from 2021, there has been difficulty accessing funding to enable them to deliver on the first recommendation: 'Develop a new mental health and wellbeing support offer designed by young people'. They have a clear plan in place as to how they would do this and continue to make applications to grants and foundations to enable them to complete this piece of work. You can see from the current evaluation that the importance of good mental health and emotional wellbeing remains a central theme across all LHPs.



A peer evaluation approach for CLNM's Peer Evaluation 2023

This work took a Participatory Action Research approach, which involves those affected by the research in the design and delivery of it. This work has been steered and conducted by 13 CLNM representatives from across House Projects in England and Scotland, who were trained as peer researchers.

This project has been guided by four key principles:

- 1. Power sharing:** It was important that members of CLNM were the ones designing the interview guides, survey questions, and had final say on key decisions.
- 2. Mutual respect for experience/expertise:** Members of CLNM come from LHPs across England and Scotland. Some are new to House Projects; others have settled into their homes. Their experience and understanding of the House Project approach was key to designing this work.
- 3. Informed decision making:** CLNM were trained in research design, how to conduct fieldwork, and how to analyse data.
- 4. Maximum involvement:** CLNM were involved in as many aspects of the research project as possible; establishing research aims, designing methods, conducting interviews, analysing results, and contributing to writing this report.



Stage 1: Training and design

CLNM representatives came together for a residential weekend on 12th May 2023 to learn how to become peer researchers and design the second peer evaluation. The key focus of this evaluation is on the remaining aspects of the ORCHIDS framework :

1. **Ownership** - Taking ownership for decisions affecting their lives, their property, and the development of their project.
2. **Home** – Having their own homes.
3. **Sense of wellbeing** - Having a positive sense of wellbeing.

During the weekend they learnt about:

- **ORCHIDS framework:** They learnt about the ORCHIDS framework, and its importance in evaluating the impact of the House Project approach. They also had the opportunity to review the first peer evaluation.
- **Introduction to peer research:** They learnt about peer research, why research is important, and why it is important to evaluate.
- **Introduction to methodology:** They learnt about the difference between qualitative and quantitative data, and the different methods researchers use to gather both.
- **Introduction to survey design:** They looked at how surveys are designed and considered different question types such as multiple choice and Likert scales. They then used this knowledge to design their own survey.
- **Introduction to interviews:** They learnt what good practice for interviewing is, what an interview guide is, and were supported to write their own interview guides.
- **Research ethics and safeguarding:** It was important that all peer researchers learnt about research ethics and safeguarding, namely what to do in interviews to keep themselves and those they interviewed safe.

Peer Evaluation Timeline 2023

12th – 14th May
Backdane Peer Evaluation Design

- CLNM trained as peer researchers, before designing interview guides and a survey.

22nd May
Survey went live

May - June
Field work interviews

- Monday 22nd May Islington/West Sussex
- Tuesday 23rd May- Oxford
- Wednesday 24th May- Coventry/Warwickshire
- Thursday 1st June - Wolverhampton/Stoke
- Monday 5th June- Greater Manchester
- Wednesday 7th June - Lancashire
- Tuesday 13th June- Scotland

11th – 13th August
Backdane Analysis

- CLNM read all the interview transcripts and looked at the survey data to come up with key findings and recommendations.

19th October
Research launch at Conference



Stage 2: Fieldwork

The fieldwork took place between May and June 2023, with a total of 150 young people in LHPs either taking part in an online survey or interviews conducted in person by peer researchers.

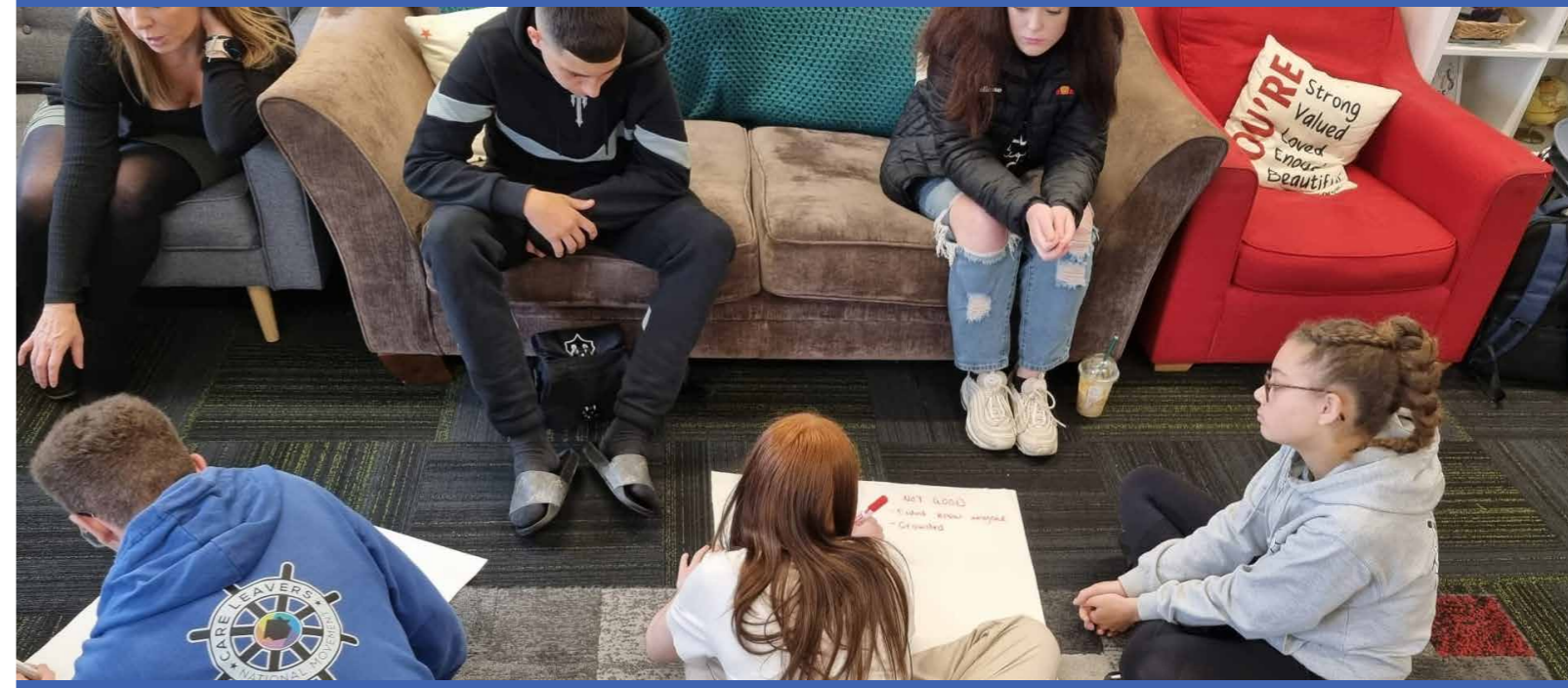
Survey sample

A survey designed by the peer researchers was sent out to all LHPs and was completed by 115 young people between May and July 2023. CLNM want to thank everyone who took the time to contribute to the survey.

- **Age:** Participants were aged between 16 and 25. Most commonly, participants were aged 16 to 17 (40%), followed by 18 to 19 (36.4%), and 20 to 21 (17.3%). A small minority (6.4%) were aged 22 or older.
- **Gender:** The survey had a good representation of both women (52.7%) and men (45.5%), with a very small minority (1.8%) identifying as Non-Binary or Third Gender.
- **Ethnicity:** Three out of four (73.6%) respondents were White young people, with the rest being most commonly Black young people (16.4%), Mixed ethnicity (7.3%), or Asian young people (1.8%).
- **Sexual orientation:** Four out of five (81.8%) identified as straight or heterosexual. A minority (13.6%) identified as bisexual, while a much smaller minority (2.7%) identified as Gay or Lesbian.
- **The House Projects:** The survey had participants from 17 Local Authorities across England and Scotland who make up 13 LHPs. Most commonly participants came from Stoke House Project (26.4%), Islington House Project (15.5%), and Midlothian House Project (10%).

Interview sample

The peer researchers conducted 35 interviews, lasting a total of six and a half hours, and taking place in all 13 House Projects across England and Scotland. They conducted interviews in and outside of LHP's bases, and some interviews took place online. The interviews were recorded on their phones, with the audio being deleted after a written script of it had been created. The quotes found throughout this report are from those interviews.



Stage 3: Analysis

CLNM were brought together at a second residential weekend to look at the survey data and interview transcripts. Young people learnt how to analyse data and from this were able to draw out the key findings.

Learning



Familiarisation

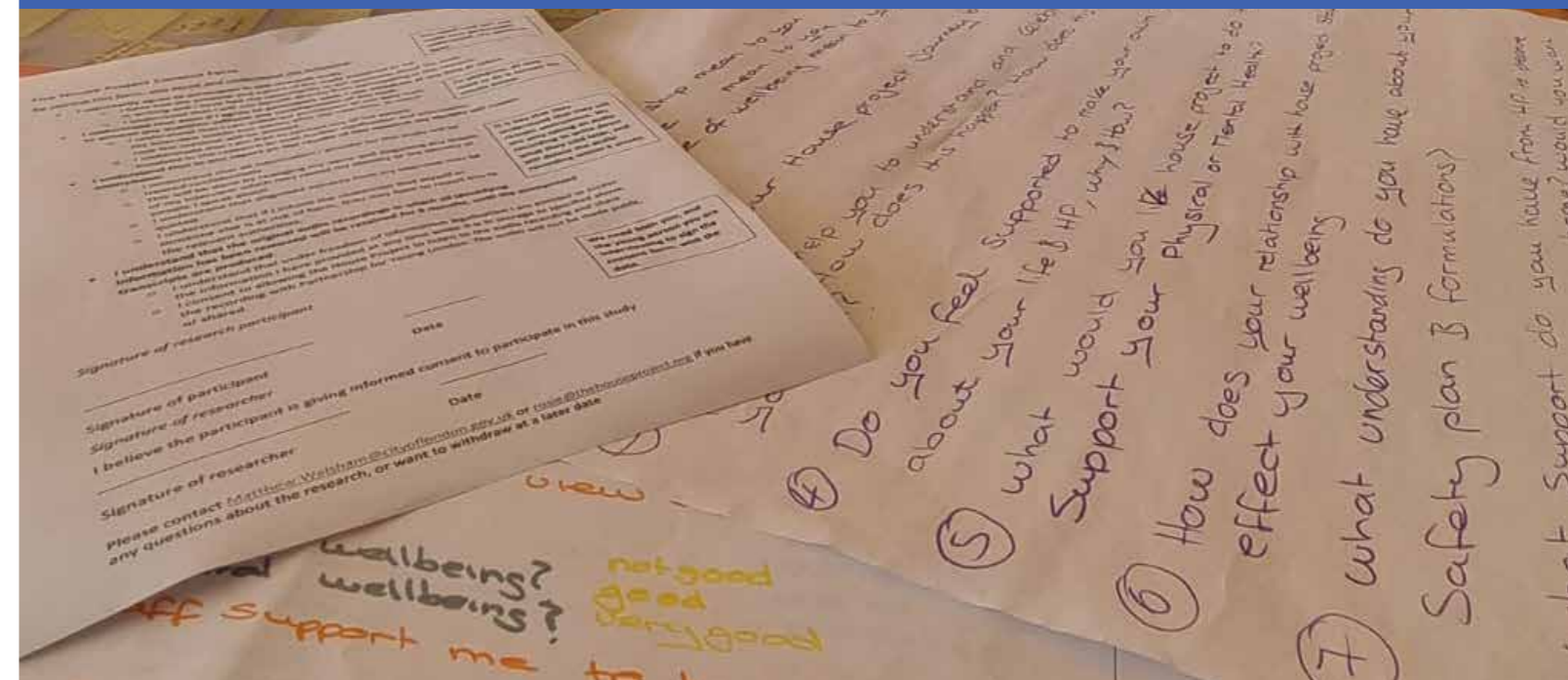


Interpretation



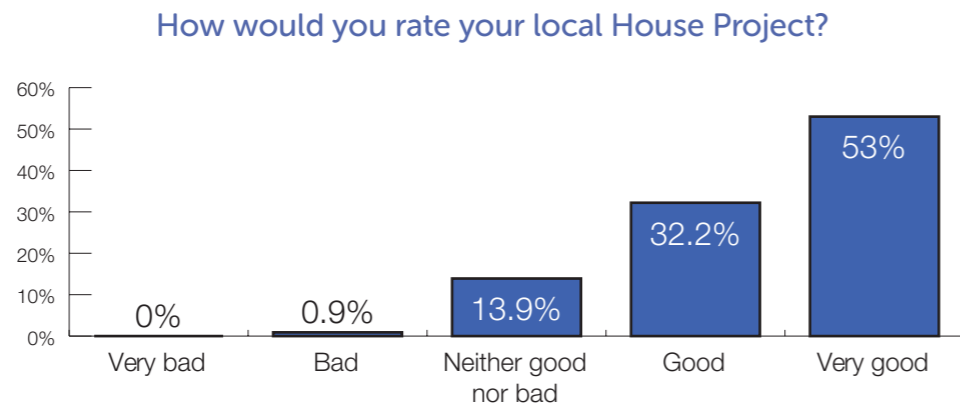
Structure

Qualitative data analysis	Quantitative data analysis
The peer researchers learnt about qualitative data analysis, like content and thematic analysis, and how to code transcripts. They also learnt how cleaned transcripts had been created from the audio.	The peer researchers learned about survey platforms like Typeform, and how cross-tabulation is used to look at different answers in the survey.
Partnership for Young London presented the peer researchers with completed anonymised cleaned transcripts from the interviews and focus groups to read through.	Partnership for Young London presented the peer researchers with all the data from the survey, including the basic percentages for each question.
The peer researchers were asked to code each of the transcripts in pairs. It was important for them to highlight the important quotes and think about what some of the reoccurring themes in the interviews were.	The peer researchers in groups were provided copies of the survey data, then asked to order the questions by significance. This allowed them to tell us what the key findings were from the survey, and why in their view they were important.
The quotes identified from the peer researchers are the ones used throughout this report. CLNM's coding also picked out some key themes that are explored in this report.	The key findings from the survey as highlighted by the peer researchers were used to create this report. It is structured into the three ORCHIDS aspects the peer researchers were looking at: Ownership, Sense of Wellbeing, and Home.

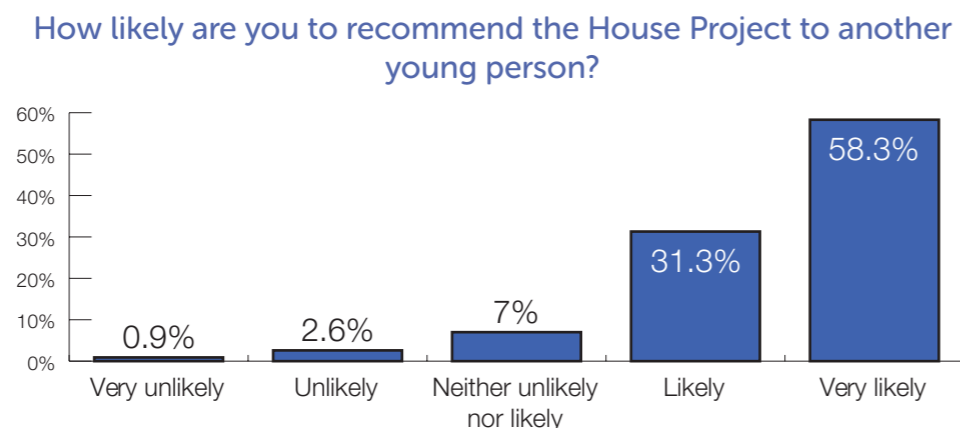


The House Project: At a glance

Overall young people were very positive about their LHPs. The majority of young people (85%) rated their House Project as very good or good, with less than one percent (0.9%) rating it as bad or very bad.



A larger majority of young people (89.6%) said that they were likely or very likely to recommend House Project to another young person.



What have you enjoyed most about House Project?

"The whole thing, really. I was really nervous, but people, everyone's really nice. That's been really good. That's been one of my favourite parts. The fact that I've actually made friends with people and then everyone else that works here, getting on with them, the banter, but also getting work done. They're always there to help you with the work if you don't understand it. Just all of it really, is genuinely one of the best decisions that I made to decide to want to go into the House Project.

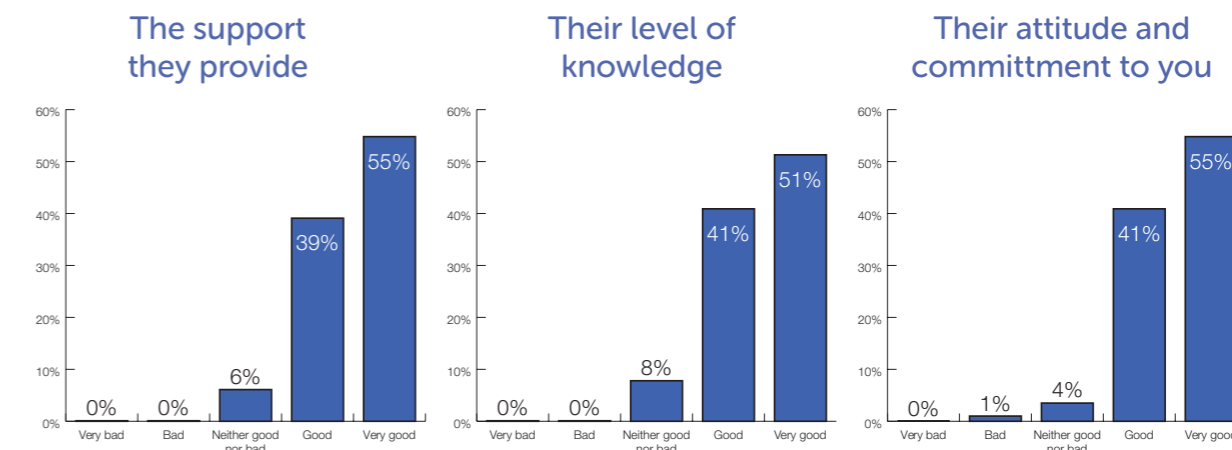
And I live with another young person in care, so I'm like, 'Oh, do you think you're going to join the House Project?' I'm like trying to persuade them like, 'Oh, go on, do it. You'll really like it. I know you will.' I'm trying to persuade her to go into it because I've genuinely enjoyed it. I struggled quite a lot before the House Project and now, look at me like, if I can do it, anyone can do it, literally. So yeah, definitely one of the best decisions I made 100%."

House Project: At a glance

We asked young people to rate their facilitators based on the following: the support they provide, their level of knowledge, and their attitude and commitment to young people.

We found that overall, across all three, nine out of ten (93.9%) respondents on average rated their facilitators as very good or good.

Please rate the facilitators at your local House Project on the following:



The attitude and commitment of facilitators was the most likely to be rated very good or good (95.7%), followed by their level of knowledge (92.2%), and the support they provide (93.9%) Importantly, nobody rated their facilitators level of knowledge or support provided as bad or very bad.

What is the best thing about House Project?

"(The facilitators). We could ask them literally anything and they'd be able to find something to help out like a sheet or something or they'd explain it themselves."

"Probably just like the people who run it. That's about it. Because the way they run it is the way everybody likes it, and everyone prefers it that way."

"(The facilitators). It's been really supportive because if you have any worries or any anxiety or whatever you can speak to them, speak to the staff and they'll try to support you the best they can."





Ownership

Introduction to Ownership



My name is Katie, and I am a CLNM Champion. This is the second peer evaluation I have helped design, implement, analyse and write. In the next section of our report, you will read about the findings linked to Ownership.

I have a great deal ownership over my life. The decisions that I have been supported to make enable me to feel a sense of ownership over my life which enables me to feel in control. Ownership is something we all need to have to give us direction in our life. We all need different levels of ownership, some more than others and that's ok.

It has been clear through the interviews we have conducted and the responses from our survey that the young people in the House Project community understand what ownership means to them. Some of their thoughts and examples of ownership are shared in this next chapter.

Ownership, listening, and decision making

The first aspect of the ORCHIDS framework that was evaluated was Ownership:

“Taking Ownership for decisions affecting their lives, their property and the development of their project.”

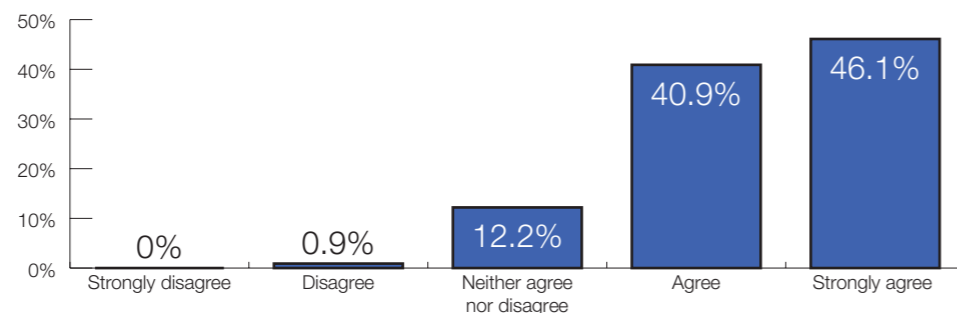
It was important to see whether young people in the House Project felt listened to, and if they had the power to make decisions that affected their lives. Ownership is important for building autonomy: the need to feel in control of what we do and how we do it.

“Do you feel listened to in your House Project how and why?”

“Yeah, I feel listened to 100%. I don’t ever feel like my opinion is not heard. I feel like when I’ve got something to say or suggest, I’m always heard and always listened to.”

In the survey, young people were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement: “I feel listened to in my House Project”. Almost nine out of ten (87%) of those who responded said that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. In interviews, young people told our peer researchers the importance of facilitators listening to them. Some young people wanted just to rant to facilitators, others wanted to tell them a joke, or express simply that they were tired or not having a good day. Knowing that a facilitator was there to listen, regardless of what they wanted to say, helped make young people feel like their House Project belonged to them.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I feel listened to in my House Project”?



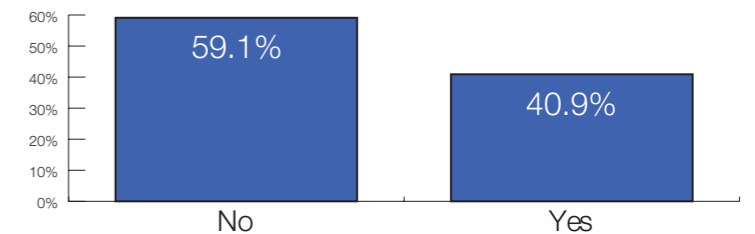
“Sometimes I call (a facilitator) and just rant down the phone. And they’re like, alright. Sometimes a good old rant just helps. Even if you don’t need a solution. Just being able to just call them. They’d be like, yeah, I hate this because of this, and this is happening because of that. You know? It’s always nice.”

Care Leavers National Movement

CLNM is made up of care leavers from LHPs across England and Scotland. Two young people from each LHP are elected to represent the voices of young people in their House Project each year and carry their messages throughout NHP. CLNM work with NHP to develop and implement a programme of support that enables young people leaving care to live connected and fulfilling lives.

One of CLNM’s most important roles is to listen to the voices of the young people in House Projects and ensure that they are heard and then action is taken. They were therefore keen to understand how effective they were at doing this so they could learn and grow from the findings of this peer evaluation.

Are you currently, or have you ever been, a CLNM representative for your House Project?



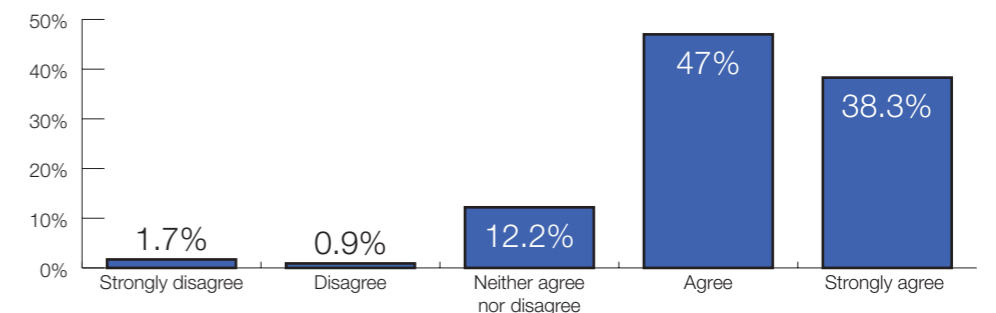
In our survey, CLNM found that a large proportion of respondents (40.9%) were currently or had been CLNM representatives. Being part of CLNM, currently or in the past, meant that young people were far more likely to engage with the survey.

“You’re a CLNM rep? How do you feel about that?”

“I like the fact that I could help other people leaving care.”

CLNM also asked young people if they felt that their CLNM reps listen to them and support change in their House Project. A majority (85.3%) agreed or strongly agreed.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “My CLNM rep listens to me and supports change in my House Project.”



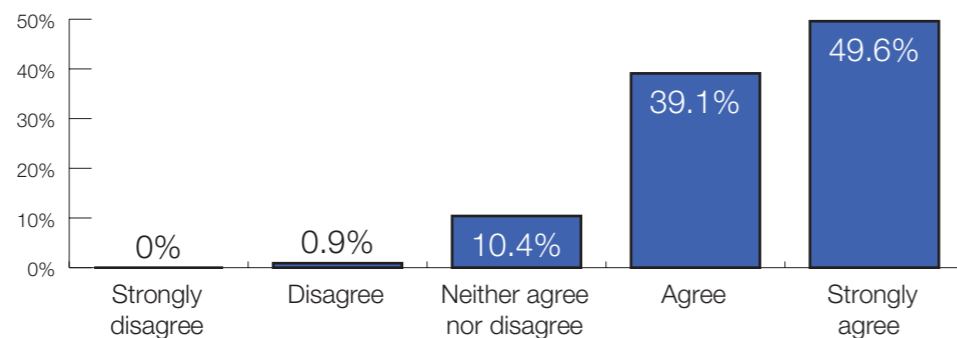
Making decisions and seeing change

If being listened to is the first step, being involved in decision making, or seeing change as a result is the second. Young people should expect to be involved in making a whole range of decisions in their House Project, from what they want to eat, to where they want to go on their residential.

CLNM asked young people if they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "I am involved in decisions made about me", finding nine out of ten (88.7%) said that they agreed or strongly agreed.

Less than one percent (0.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while one in ten (10.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I am involved in decisions made about me"?



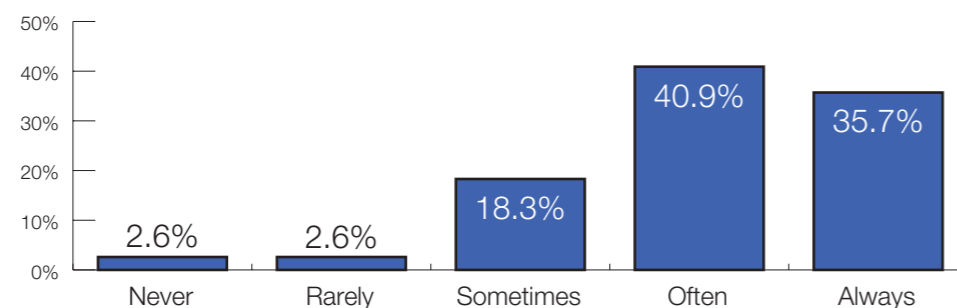
"They never did anything that I didn't want to do. They never left me in the dark about anything. They only made sure I always knew."

In interviews, the peer researchers heard about a whole range of decisions young people felt involved in, from what they want to eat, to where they want to go on residential. Not all young people want to make decisions, but it is important that they are involved in all decisions made about them.

CLNM also wanted to know how often facilitators act or change something based on what young people tell them. One in three people (35.7%) said that their facilitators always

act on what they have said, while almost half (40.9%) said they often do. However, one in five (18.3%) said that this happens only sometimes.

How often do the House Project facilitators take action or change something based on what you've told them?



What say do you have in the the House Project?

"Yeah, we could pick the activities and that and what we wanted to do. And it's nice because instead of being 'this is where we're going, this is what we're doing and this is what we're eating', that we get to pick."

"Everyone really gets to like their own chance to say what they want to say, and if they don't say it in the group sessions, then they'll go to (a facilitator) afterwards, so everyone gets an input in it."

"We get to choose what areas we move into. We get to choose the activities we want to do, or what we talk about."

"Yeah, we don't really have a choice in what we do on the day because it's part of the course but they usually put a message in the group chat once a week asking what everybody wants to eat. "

"Yeah, everyone has to say what they think. Yeah, we meet in the room, everyone has a say. Everyone has to say what they think."

"Well, we decided what should we bring to group sessions, so anyone feels anxious or something like that. So, we mentioned like fidget toys, music, like games and stuff, and the next session you brought all that."

"Yeah, I do personally feel like I do, because I feel like they let us choose what we want to do, kind of like, they'll give us what we need to do, but like, say you want to do something, they'll put it in there, like for us to do, so that's like what I do. We always take those ideas into consideration."

"I can only think of recent ones where only a recent one where I can think of is residential. They let us choose where we were going."

"So, with the group sessions anyone can really speak at any point. And I feel listened to when I speak about something. Because no one's talking over you, and everyone is listening. And we can give feedback at the end."

Safety plans

The peer researchers wanted to know if young people felt aware or in control of conversations being had about them by staff, such as safety planning meetings and formulations. Safety matters to everyone, so does risk, adventure and exploration. Getting the right balance is what keeps you and those around you safe. House Projects should work with young people to understand risk and provide an action plan of support to manage this risk - this is what the House Project calls a safety plan.

The peer researchers found that while some young people understood what their safety plan was, others did not or had forgotten. It is important that every young person is involved in the creation of their safety plan, understands what it is and how to access it, and has it updated regularly.

Do you know what a safety plan is?

"I understand it - I don't see the importance of it. They have explained it, but I just don't feel like it's too important."

"Don't have a *** clue to the others of you. they could be so much *** from there I don't even know about I know for a period of...is this like a safety plan? Is this like my safety plan for the future?"

"I don't know what it says about me but to be honest I don't know what anything says about me half the time."

"Do I know what a safety plan is? Of course, I bloody do."

"I was here when we kind of made the initial one and then for the residential. And then we all have our individual ones as well."

"Sort of. So, it's like, I think that put in place to keep you safe. And then, if something happens, they can change it to make you safer."

"Yeah, I understand why it's there. I'm glad it's kind of there. I'm glad we do a safety plan because there's a lot of change."

"Safety plan. Is that like going to do a bunch of risk assessments to see what could happen to you?"

"I've heard of it before, but I don't really know what."

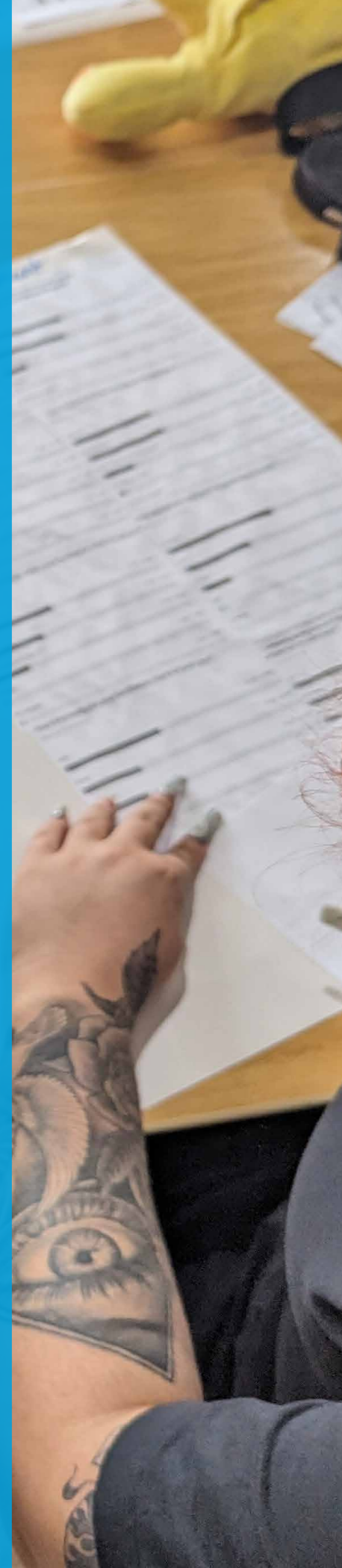
Recommendation One

No conversation about me without me

Young people in the House Project should be included in and informed about conversations that are about them.

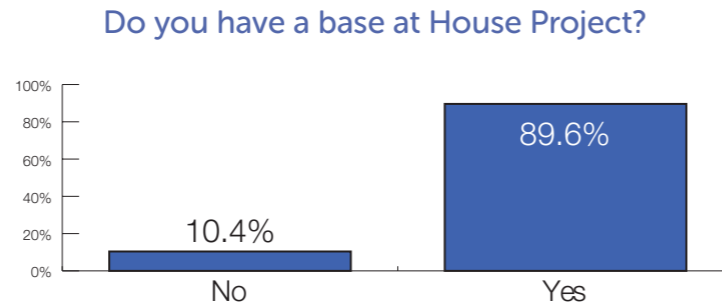
We will:

Review how safety plans and formulations are currently implemented across LHPs ensuring that young people are involved and that plans are updated regularly at key stages (such as when they move into their home).



Ownership over a space

Lastly, the peer researchers wanted to see how young people felt about the House Project base, if they had one, how important it was, and if they felt ownership over the space. Nine out of ten (89.6%) of respondents to the survey were in House Projects with a base.

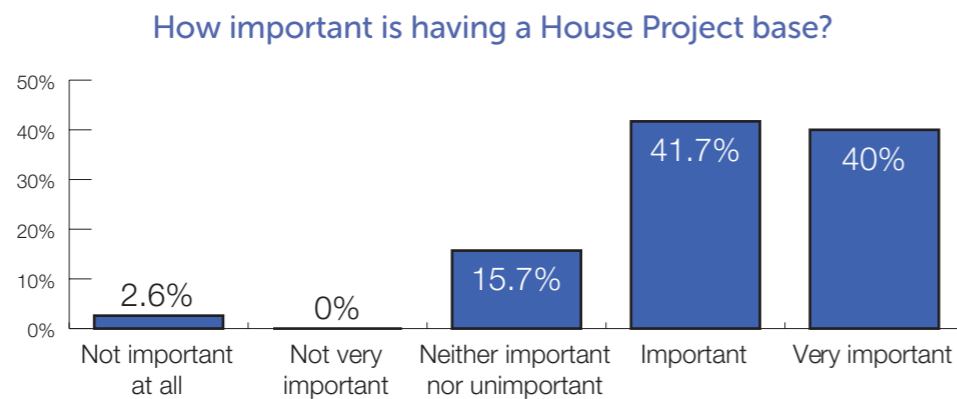


In interviews peer researchers found out how important a base is to young people. It is used in a variety of ways, from a place to study, to a place to chill or socialise, depending on the House Project.

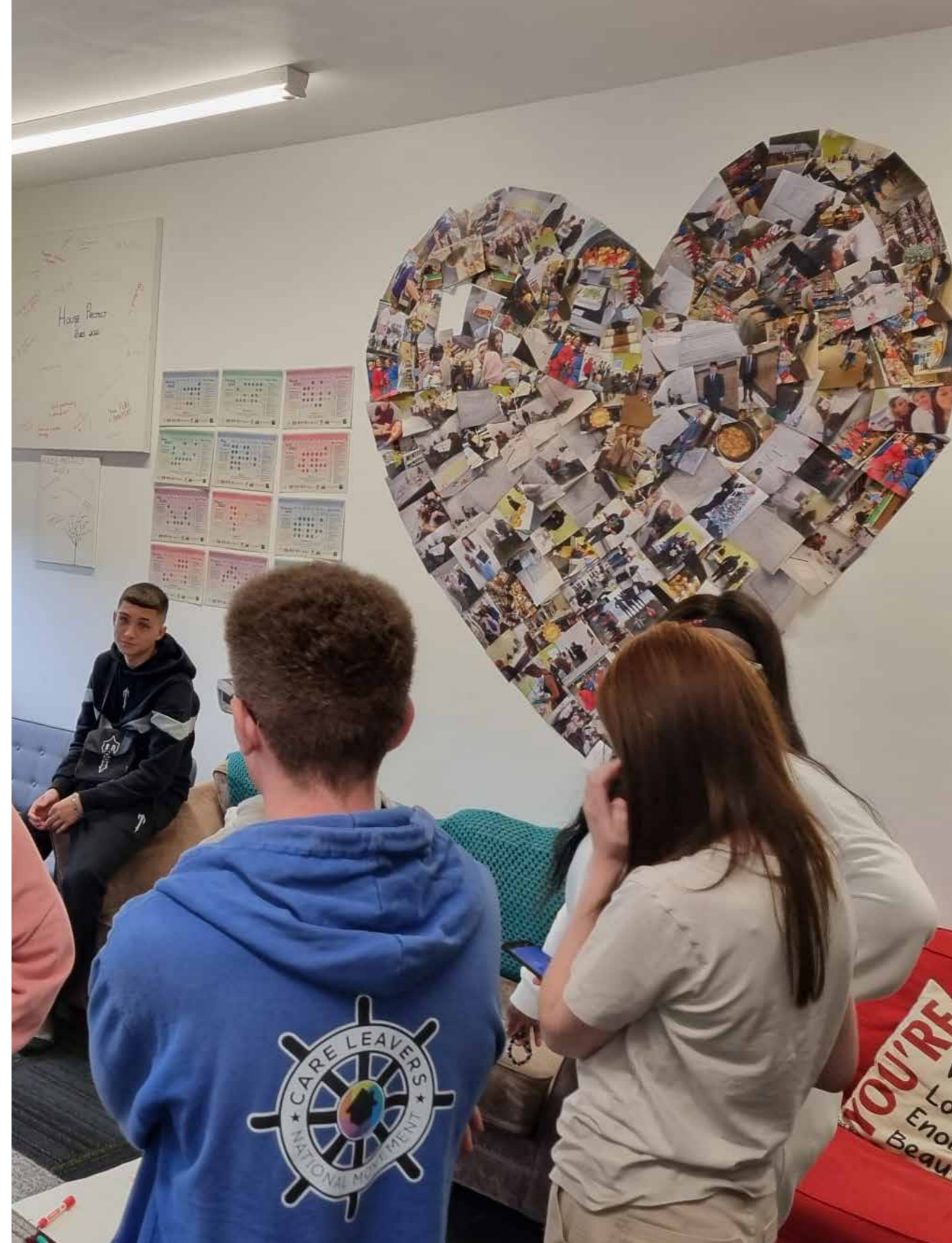
So, do you like coming to the base? Do you like the base?

"I personally love it. The fact that we've got a base, it's really nice because it's like a little escape from home. You come here and it's like another family in a sense because everyone gets along. You walk through the door downstairs, and you forget everything. And you're like, 'Oh my God, I've got the House Project. Oh my God, I get to see (my facilitator). I get to see them. I get to see everyone.'"

When CLNM asked how important it was to have a House Project base, four out of five respondents (81.7%) said that it was important or very important. Only a tiny minority (2.6%) said that it was either not very important or not important at all.



Having ownership over a space like the base, meant young people had a greater sense of ownership over the House Project as a whole. The space enables young people to have an additional sense of agency, with facilitators supporting young people to choose how they used the different rooms, and the times they visited. This was especially true where young people could decorate the base themselves.





Sense of wellbeing

Introduction to sense of wellbeing



Hi, I am Paris, a CLNM rep from Coventry House Project. The next chapter you will read in our peer evaluation report is linked to Sense of Wellbeing.

A sense of wellbeing differs from person to person and there is no singular definition of sense of wellbeing. It can be linked to your emotions, physical health or mental health, or even a combination of all three.

My sense of wellbeing changes from time to time and evolves as I grow and learn about myself and the world around me. What may have been comfortable and safe for me 12 months ago may not be the same in 12 months' time - I am comfortable with this and it's OK if I feel the same.

We are continually learning about how to create a good sense of wellbeing for ourselves, this is often harder for care experienced young people as they are required to adapt to different environments and situations more than non care experienced people.

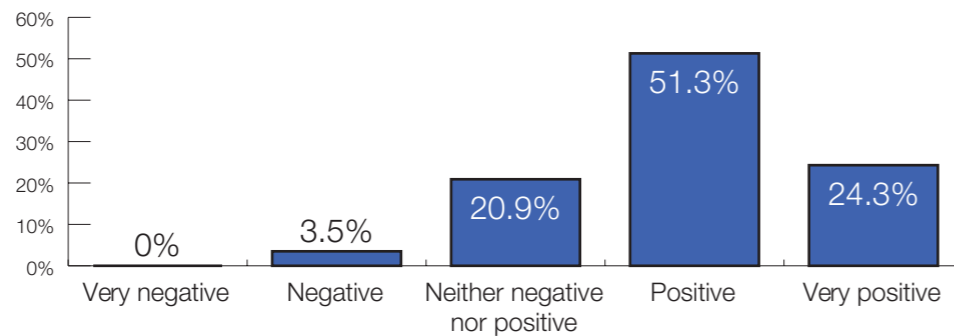
This chapter will give you an insight into what Sense of Wellbeing means to young people in the House Project and provide recommendations based on what they say.

The impact of the House Project on mental and emotional health

Sense of wellbeing is defined as having positive mental, physical, and emotional health. Young people who join the House Project may be at different points and should be supported to improve their sense of wellbeing during their journey.

Firstly, CLNM asked young people what impact the House Project had had on their mental and emotional health. Three out of four (75.6%) respondents said that the House Project had a positive or very positive impact on their mental health. Only a small minority (3.5%) said that it had a negative impact. One in five (20.9%) said that the House Project had no impact on their mental health.

What impact has the House Project had on your mental and emotional health?

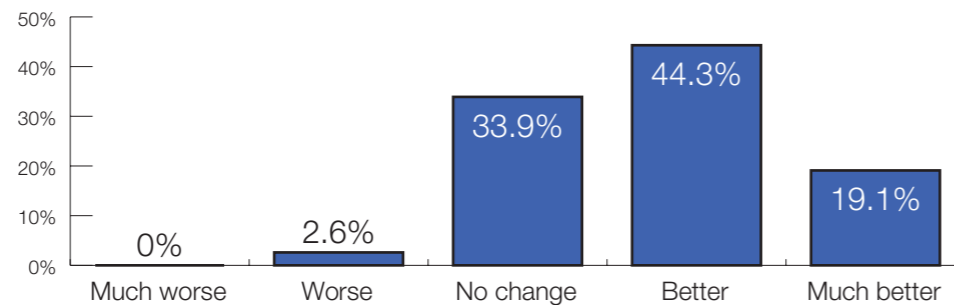


What are you thankful for from the House Project?

"My anxiety is less bad as it was. I feel like I'm starting to trust people and feel less anxious of people."

Importantly, a majority (65.3%) said that their mental health had got better or much better since joining the House Project. Only a small minority (2.6%) said that it had got worse, with a third

How has your mental and emotional health changed since joining the House Project?



(33.9%) saying there was no change. In interviews the peer researchers heard how young people had benefitted from being part of the House Project. For some it was through the support from their facilitators or their peers, for others it was the structure of the House Project sessions and the stability that it provided them when moving into their home.

What would you like to see your House Project do to improve your physical, mental, or emotional health?

"It would be great if they were able to speed up referrals to therapy."

"Have check ins a bit more."

"Listen properly."

"Music."

"Nothing they do a great job off that and help a lot."

"More group days out."

"Nothing really they do a good job."

"For physical maybe providing some gym passes, the other two, taking us out more, maybe even like a session about opening up if youd want to or something like that."

"There is nothing to improve everything fantastic they support us like a family."

"Nothing they have done alot to help me already."

"Keep doing what they do best! :)"

"Support me the best way they can."

"We need healthier options for snacks."

"More groups for the very first lot that have already completed the House Project."

"To book more day outs with as many members of the House Projects that can make them."

"Help me with mobility."

"Good mental health services."

"Do more groups for us that will actually turn up and not just say no cause only a few of us want to go."

"Provide information about support around me."

"Be kinder."

"Be nicer and less Karen like."

"Outdoor activities."

"I would like if they were able to help with therapy referrals."

"I would like some help with my Mental health."

"More group sessions."

"Keep doing the same contact."

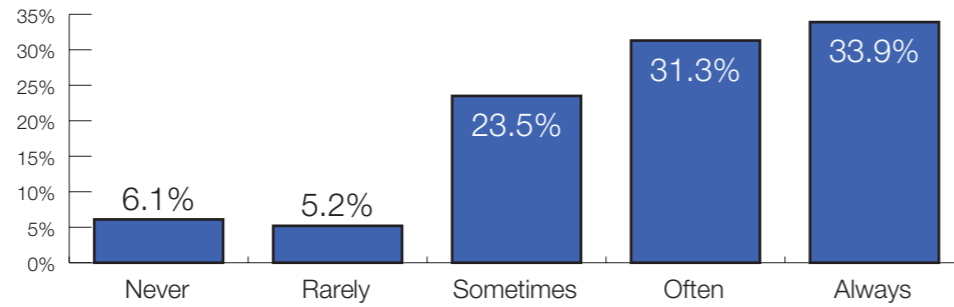
"Well, probably just fund me a therapist or something..."

"Maintain the support offered."

Supported by facilitators

Young people were asked how often the House Project facilitators support them with their mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. One in three (33.9%) said their facilitator always supported them, one in three (31.3%) said they were often supported, and one in four (23.5%) said they were sometimes supported. One in ten (11.3%) said that they were rarely or never supported, but these were mostly those who had completed the House Project aged 22 and over. What was clear was the huge role that facilitators play in providing advice, signposting for support, or simply listening. Consistency, knowing that the facilitators would be there, was key to young people feeling supported.

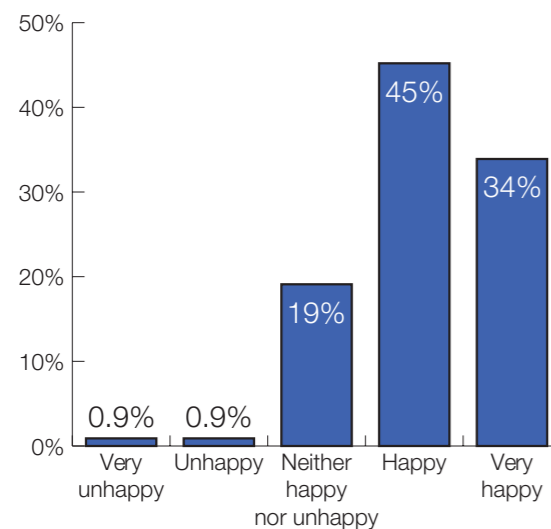
How often do the House Project facilitators support you with your mental and emotional health?



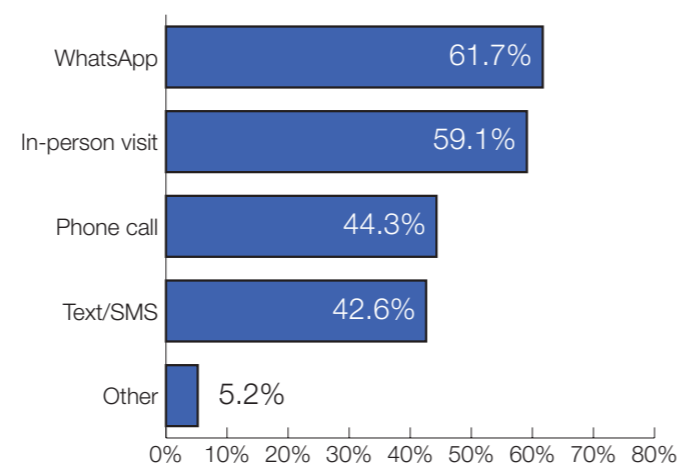
"I'm thankful to the House Project for the friendships I've made along the way and the connections I've built with the facilitators.."

A majority (79.1%) of young people in the survey were at least happy with how often their facilitators checked in on them, with facilitators most commonly checking in via WhatsApp (61.7%), in-person visits (59.1%), phone calls (44.3%), and SMS (42.6%).

How happy are you with how often facilitators check in with you?



How do your facilitators check in with you? (Choose all that apply)



Recommendation Two

Good mental health for all

Young people need different levels of support for their mental health at different points, which is easily accessible.

We will:

Provide facilitators with additional training on how to better recognise the mental health needs of young people and explore how we can provide a better mental health support offer.



How do your facilitators support your mental and emotional health?

"They'll help you in every way that they possibly can. And then they'll give you suggestions like maybe try for this person, that person, maybe make a phone call to the doctors or talk to your carer or talk to your grown-up, someone that you trust. They give you as much advice as they possibly can to help you, as well as leading you in a positive route so you make good decisions."

"Yeah, when I've had a bad week or I've had a bad day, they'll always message me, to find out or if they've found out, or I message them and they'll just go, 'Hey, do you want me to come down this week?' Sometimes you can go out for a coffee, go out for a chat. They're always there. I always get a message every month, it's nice."

"They always check on me and if I'm feeling like shit, then they'll come around and go for a walk, or give me coping mechanisms."

"If you're having a bad day or that you give them a message they're always going to respond. They'll come and visit you if they be. They're always emotionally there for you and helping if they need any support."

"They helped me. I guess they just kept talking to me about new things to do. They kept talking to me. They just kind of raised my spirits to be honest. They just made me laugh. They made me want to do stuff."

"I do feel supported. They have made it very aware that if there are any more personal problems going on that could affect my ability to come to the House Project, that I can call. It has been proven to me recently, because I have been able to call up (my facilitator) and just be like, 'Can you help me with this?', because it's a problem I need it sorted, and it's been sorted."

"So, they kind of just sit and talk to you if you need to talk about it. And they'll come out walks with you or just give you that space where you can just talk. And just give you a bit of company if that's what you need."

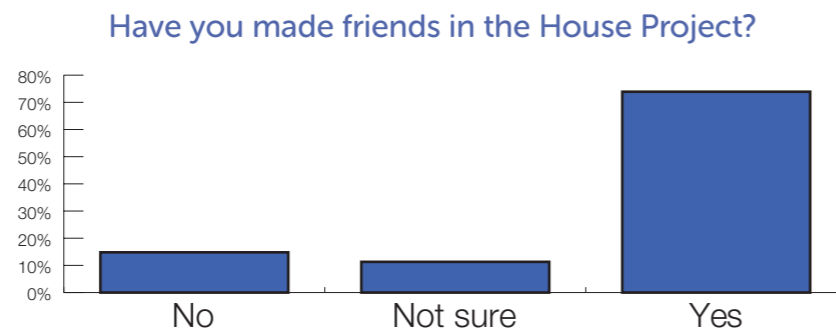


Friends and community

One of the most important ways the House Project improves the wellbeing of young people is through the friendships and community it creates. Young people who join the House Project not only make friends but create a sense of community in their own projects. This community of the House Project friends can often serve as an important source of support for mental and emotional wellbeing once young people have moved into their own homes.

"I mean I love everyone in my House Project. No one likes each other at the start. They get to like each other. There's always going to be problems that arise with a group full of teenagers. So yeah, when there's 15 people in a room together, it is turbulent. Although I love them all and I'll always look after them. They are chaotic messes of energy."

Three out of four (73.9%) of respondents said that they had made friends in the House Project. Significantly, those who said they had not made friends yet (14.8%) were mostly at the start of their House Project journey (less than one year in the House Project).



In interviews peer researchers heard about how making friends in the House Project, and the wider community, can become a supportive family for a young person.

"I've liked making friends and basically being a part of family and getting supported by others as well. And basically, learning from each other."

Through interviews with older cohorts of young people, peer researchers heard how many still felt connected to the House Project community after moving into their own home.

Is having young people who have similar experiences important to you?

"So, I think that is why it's kind of important, like, a community kind of thing for us. And obviously, we have people come and go in our lives so often. So, to know that we're part of this project, we're part of the project for, as long as we need, that's quite good, because it's, like, a little community. So, you don't just get a flat and you're, like, dumped."

Recommendation Three

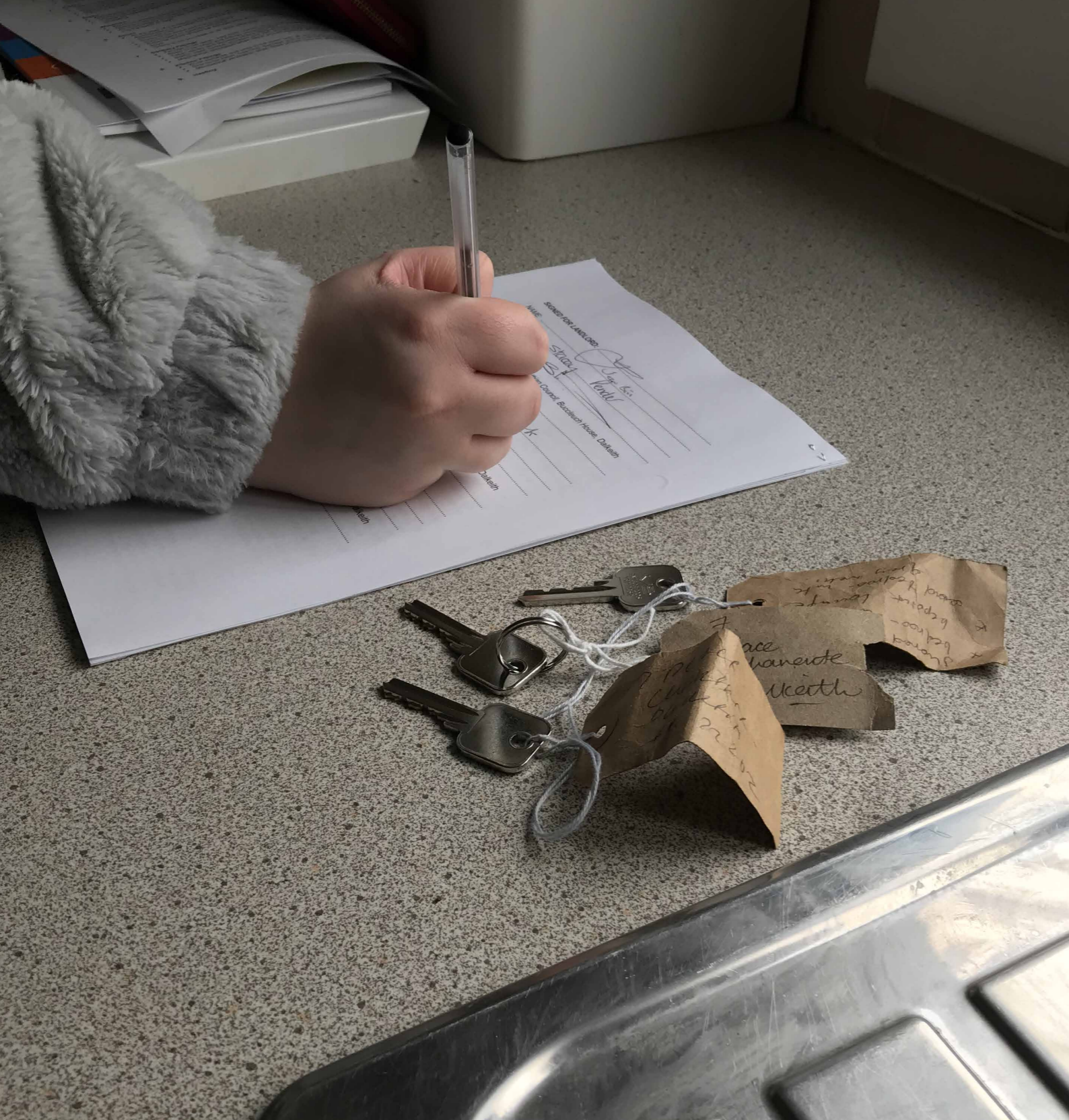
A community beyond moving in

The friendships and connections made are important and young people need support to maintain these when they have moved into their own homes.

We will:

Develop more opportunities and better support for those who have completed the House Project Programme and are living in their own homes.





Home

Home introduction



I am Louis, a CLNM rep from Islington LHP. I am pleased to introduce you to the Home chapter of our peer evaluation, partly due to me moving in to my own home in the last few months and the immense pride I have about what I have achieved with the support of my LHP.

I moved into my home when I was 17 and loved having my friends and family coming to visit me so I could show them around and tell them what I was planning on doing with each room.

It is fair to say that I had ups and downs in those first few months of living alone but that isn't solely because I am a care leaver, everyone, whether young/old/care experienced or not- it's a huge milestone - that I have now done, and I am on my journey to interdependence.

In this next chapter the high and lows of what having a home is like for care experienced young people will be shared with you, it will also highlight the differences between a house and a home and the importance these differences have on our lives.

Preparing for a home

The final part of the ORCHIDS framework that the peer researchers looked at was Home, namely having their own home. They were interested in how young people across different House Projects turned their houses into a place they can call home.

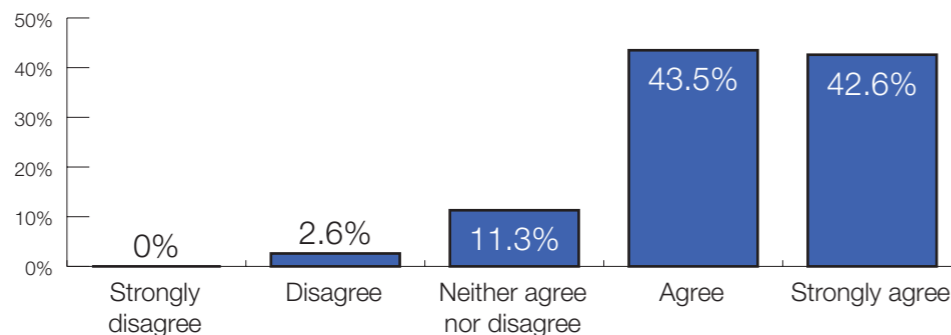
Young people who join the House Project are supported by staff (facilitators) and young people to complete the House Project Programme. This is an AQA/SQA certificated programme that young people complete in order to learn and grow together when preparing to leave care and move into their own home. The House Project Programme covers a range of areas designed to prepare young people to live interdependently. It offers young people a range of experiences so that they have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to manage their own home and live happy and connected lives. It also creates opportunities for relationships to be made and for communities of support to develop.

So, what's House Project been like for you then?

"It's actually been alright. They don't really just focus on housing. They help us achieve things that we need to achieve."

Four out of five respondents (86.1%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Completing/doing the House Project programme has helped me/is helping me to prepare for my own home." Only a tiny minority (2.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement: "Completing/doing the House Project Programme has helped me/is helping me to prepare for my own home"?



Young people told our peer researchers the range of things that they had learnt and taken away from the House Project programme, such as cooking or how to understand electricity and gas bills. Learning in the House Project was seen as practical, and directly supporting young people to live independently.

How has the House Project helped you prepare for your own home?

"Through the different sessions we've had, they've gone through all the different necessities to move into independence."

"It's more like teaching us the skills that we're going to need when we live on our own because obviously, we'll have nobody around to help so they're just telling us what we need to do."

"They pushed me out of my comfort zone is so much like my comfort zone is miles behind me now. I do cook for myself now. When I'm moving to my own flat, I can't rely on anyone to cook for me. I've got to do it."

"They support us to choose what we want to do with our life. They give us guidance but they're not constantly there...They give us the freedom to make our own choices."

"I guess, improving my skills. Just to make sure that I remember how to do my washing and cooking and all of that. So I know what I'm doing when I leave, because I want to leave really bad."

"We get a training flat, so then we go there for a week and see how that goes. And then we complete our portfolio and then go and take a flat."

"We did a first aid training course, which is voluntary. Got a level three certificate out of it. We also did an energy saving course. Which you also got a qualification out of that."

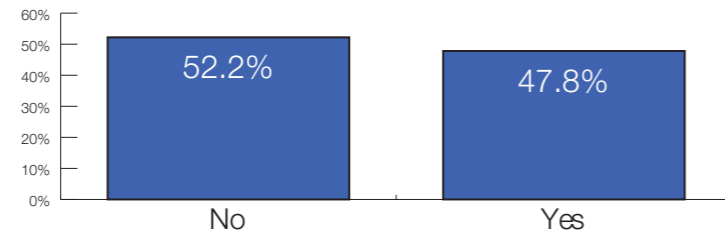
"They, um, help you with budgeting and everything. Cooking and cleaning and keeping good mental health."

"I like the fact that you can improve your cooking skills. You can also improve your confidence skills by talking to people that are in the group as well. And there's nights where we are cooking ourselves for the other people in the group. So that's building up your cooking skills. And then you can get told how to read the boiler, read the meters and stuff like that. That's quite important too."

Moving into a home

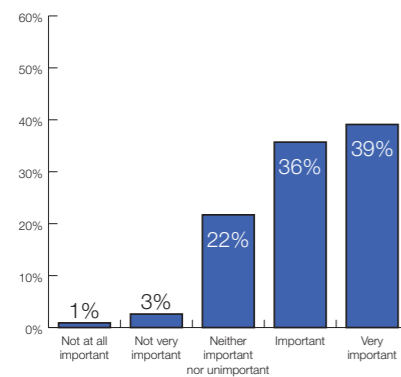
Once young people have completed the House Project programme, the next important step is to move into a property of their own. Out of the 115 people who completed the survey, around half (47.8%) had already moved into their own home. The majority of those (80%) accepted the first property they viewed, with one in five (20%) viewing two or more properties. The peer researchers wanted to know what was most important to young people in the House Project when they were considering a property: the quality of the property, the speed of being offered and accepting a property, or the location of the property.

Have you moved into your home through the House Project yet?

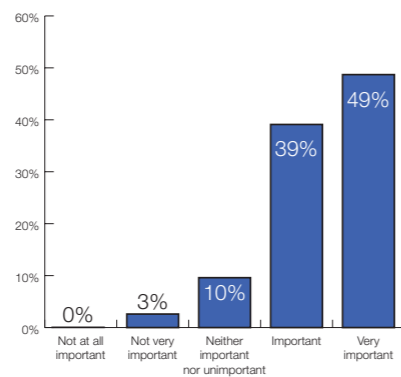


How important is the following when considering a home through the House Project:

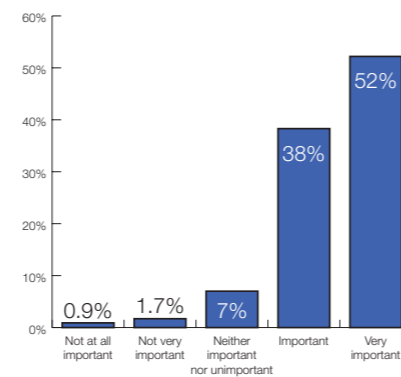
Speed of home being offered



Quality of home



Location of home



The survey found that nine out of ten people (90.5%) said that the location of the property was important or very important, with slightly less saying that quality was important or very important (87.8%). However, the least important aspect was the speed of being offered and accepting a property (74.8%). For some young people in interviews, location was just about their property having good transport links and being close to the centre of town, for others it was about living in an area that they felt safe in.

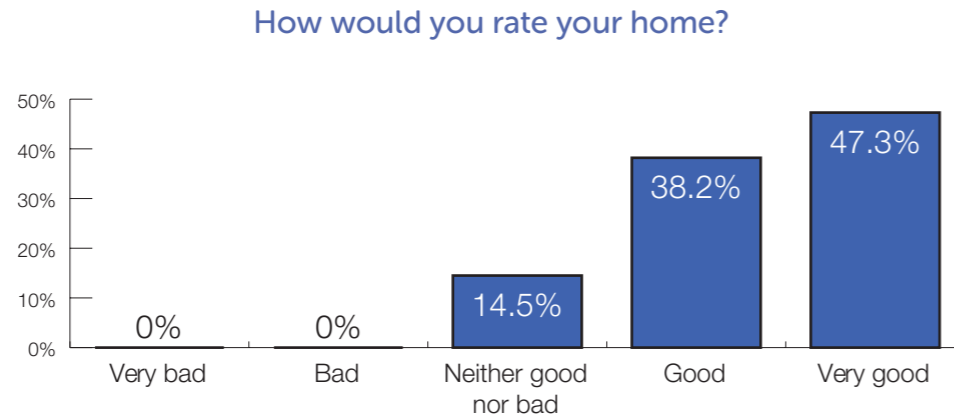
"So, I was able to pick where I would want to live. In my opinion, they're in safer areas. And as a young Black man, I feel like that's something I've got to consider...I happily pick the places that I know that I'm comfortable around and I feel safe and secure around."



Making a house a home

The peer researchers wanted to ask young people who had already moved into their home: how good the property was, and whether they considered it home.

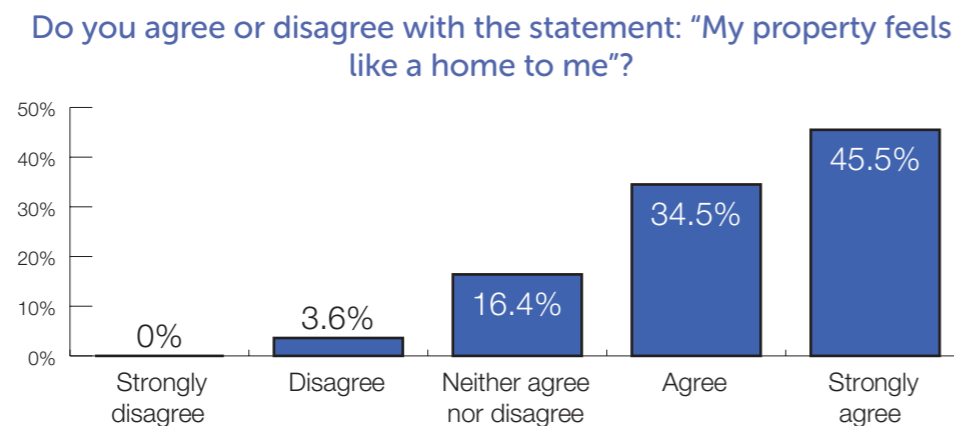
The survey found that the vast majority (85%) of young people who had moved into their property rated it either good or very good. Not a single respondent on the survey rated their home as bad or very bad.



Young people told us about the work that young people had done to improve their own home, often aided by grants for white goods or for decoration. The peer researchers did not hear about any serious issues with property standards, such as mould or damp.

"They would help me to go pick up furniture and build it and get all the stuff that I need and tell me about me leaving career grant and stuff."

Importantly, four out of five (80%) of respondents said that their property feels like a home to them. The peer researchers also asked what made a house a home in interviews, finding that everyone had a different answer.



A home was made by the food cooked in it, the feeling of safety and relaxation in it, or the freedom to be able to do what they liked with it

What makes a house a home?

"Whether you feel like you're safe there and comfortable in living. Just somewhere where you can like put your own mark on it. Make it like somewhere where you can just go and chill out if you've had a bad day."

"Food."

"Everything that you enjoy is there, and everything that makes you happy, is there with you. You can decorate it yourself and all that."

"My place of safety."

"Yeah, like it feels comfortable all the time. It sounds weird to me to sit on a sofa, because I've been in places where I can't sit on a sofa before. Or like I can't eat there because I don't feel comfortable."

"A warm home."

"Like people around you, I thought supporting you and helping you."

"It's somewhere you feel safe, you know, comfortable to live in. I feel like a home is your own private corner of the world. You don't need to go out if you don't want to. It's a little safe haven for you. If you feel comfortable to bring people over, that's even better."

"Knowing that there's people that can support me that make me feel comfortable."

"I imagine looking quite vibrant, like furniture and stuff like that. Bright colours, because if it's just like grey and stuff, its looks like a prison."

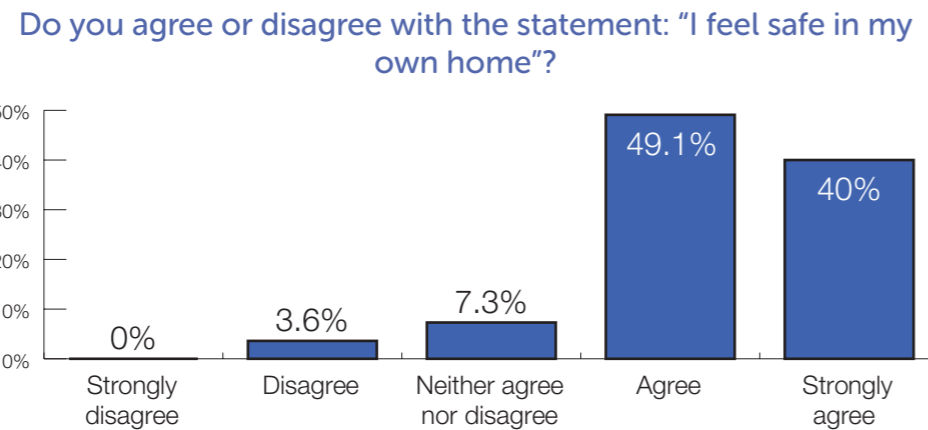
"I think security and care. I feel like security is a massive one. You want to be able to feel safe where you lay your head."

"If you have your own furnishings, make it feel your own, like stuff that you've had previously. Or just like the people that are around you, like obviously going into your own house is going to be yourself."

Feeling safe and decorating

When looking at what makes a house feel like a home, the peer researchers identified two key factors: feeling safe in your home and the area you live, and the ability to make the property your own through decorating or changing the space.

The peer researchers found that out of those already placed into a property, nine out of ten (89.1%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I feel safe in my home".

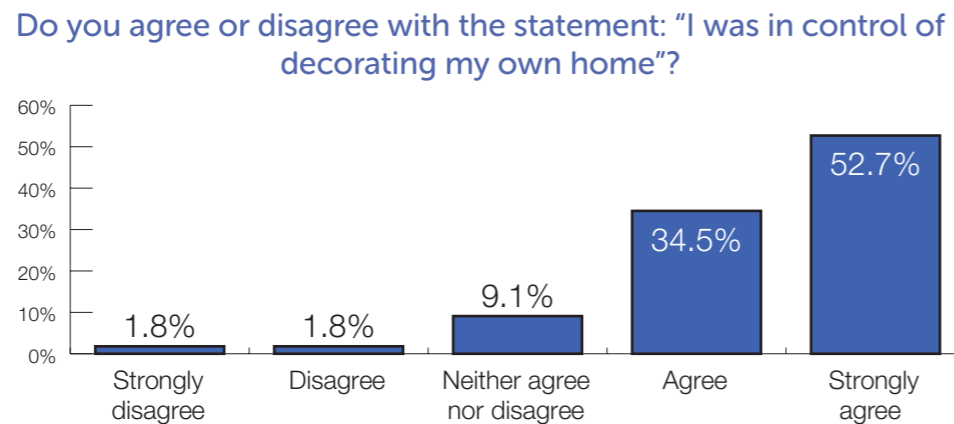


Sometimes young people would see the area they were living in as unsafe but would feel safe in their own home. Others would choose the areas they wanted on which areas they felt more safe living in.

"It's a safe place where you feel you can be yourself, like have no worries of being scared or anything, you can just be yourself, you can be safe."

The second most important factor to making a house feel like a home was decoration, and the ability to decorate and make the space feel like their own.

Almost nine out of ten (87.2%) of respondents agree or strongly agreed with the statement "I was in control of decorating my home." Supported by facilitators and, in some cases financial grants, young people are able to make decisions about the colour they want to paint their walls, the lighting they want, and how they want their space to look and feel.



Recommendation Four

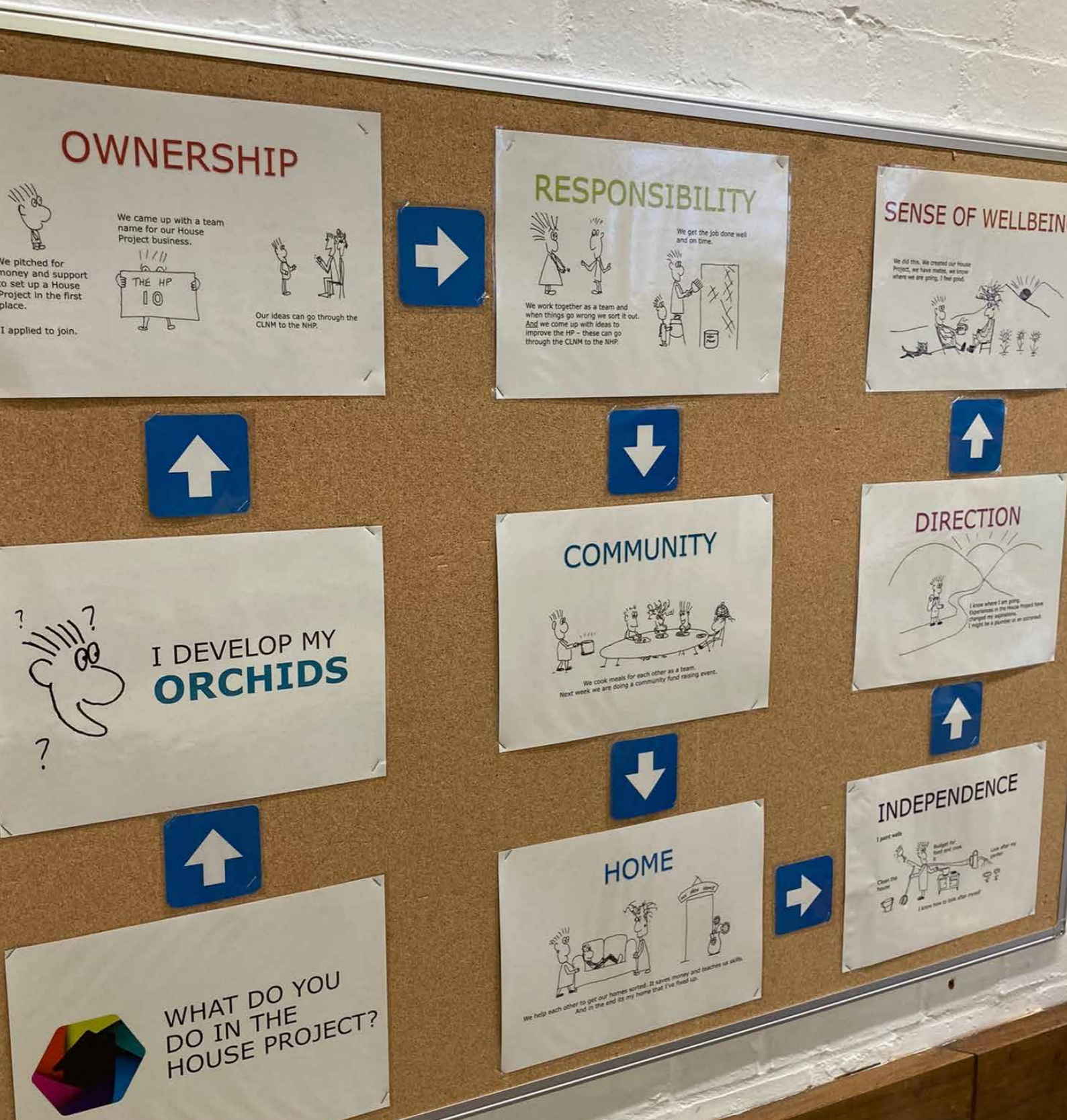
Local opportunities for Local House Projects

Young people want support to access a wider range of opportunities in their local communities.

We will:

Work with the Local Authorities to map out youth provision locally available to each LHP, creating partnerships and signposting more young people to opportunities in their local community.





Recommendations

Recommendations

1. No conversation about me without me

Young people in the House Project should be included in and informed about conversations that are about them.

We will: Review how safety plans and formulations are currently implemented across LHPs ensuring that young people are involved and that plans are updated regularly at key stages (such as when they move into their home.)

2. Good mental health for all

Young people need different levels of support for their mental health at different points, which is easily accessible.

We will: Provide facilitators with additional training on how to better recognise the mental health needs of young people and explore how we can provide a better mental health support offer.

3. A community beyond moving in

The friendships and connections made are important and young people need support to maintain these when they have moved into their own homes.

We will: Develop more opportunities and better support for those who have finished the House Project Programme and are living in their own homes.

4. Local opportunities for local House Projects

Young people want support to access a wider range of opportunities in their local communities.

We will: Work with the Local Authorities to map out youth provision locally available to each LHP, creating partnerships and signposting more young people to opportunities in their local community.



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