



THE NATIONAL  
HOUSE PROJECT

# 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT





## ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

This year will be remembered by many for reasons relating to Covid19 and the lifting of restrictions that allowed a gradual return to everyday living for the general population. The restrictions undoubtedly impacted on young people leaving care and the opportunities to get back to normal were embraced by them and National House Project (NHP) alike. We have achieved so much this year both at an individual level and in the collective approach to developing the work of the Charity and having an influence on the wider leaving care sector. Whilst it would not be appropriate to share individual stories the true success of our approach is the difference it makes to young people and it is only right therefore that we start by hearing what they have said. I invite you to consider their feedback and read this report in the knowledge that the contribution of young people is integral to all that is good.

### VISION:

Young people  
leaving care live  
connected and  
fulfilling lives

### MISSION:

To establish Local House Projects  
to work with young people  
using a psychologically informed  
practice framework to develop the skills,  
knowledge and confidence  
to grow their community, make their first  
home and have a positive future



## Young Peoples Feedback

With young people at the heart of the House Project approach we capture their inputs and feedback on everything they do so that we can continue to improve our offer to them.

“We are all equal & we all belong, and this feeling comes from being part of the House Project Community”

“Being accepted onto the House Project was massive for me, it has kind of given me a purpose and it shows someone cares and that I’m going to get my own gaff and not be chucked in and left in the deep end”

“It’s amazing to have this opportunity, which wouldn’t have happened without being part of the House Project & CLNM”

“If I were to give anybody advice, it would be soak up every experience you can get. Yes, being a care leaver is a bummer, it’s damn difficult and it leaves you with a disadvantage. But with the help of this loveable, helpful & sometimes wacky bunch, it’s easily a disadvantage that can be made into a massive advantage. I want to spread this project so that my success story can be emulated by thousands of past present & future children in care across the UK!”

“The reason we all enjoy it so much is because we’ve got, cringe, a bond. When we first started, we didn’t really know each other. I knew a few people there because obviously I’m from the meeting itself anyway. Yeah, when we started speaking and get together, it became sort of our own little family sort of thing”

“I’ve grown a lot as a person, I’m happy, I have a home and I’m doing well for myself. I have great plans for my future and life is exciting”

“It’s given me a sense of direction. When I was going through care, I didn’t really have much of a want or a need to do shit. To move forward in life. That’s the reason I didn’t want to really go to college or do anything. But once got into the HP, I wanted to get my own place and move along, I understood what I needed to do, what I wanted to do & what my path is”

“I’m really looking forward to moving my furniture in and making it my home. It feels like my life is starting a new chapter and I am very excited about it”

“I start Uni in September and will be doing audio engineering as I want to own my own music studio. I’ve loved music forever and this is a realistic way of doing what I love. Being in house project has really helped me get where I am as they have supported me in focussing on college and taken some of the weight off my shoulders”

“They helped me get my own place. They helped me sort out my bills. They got me into a line of work. To the point where now I’m looking at my own jobs. I’m doing my own work. I’m paying for my own bills”

“I’d say EVERYONE is my community. Everyone who’s in the House Project. Literally everyone”

“It’s made me realise that there are people out there that are willing to help you and just be there... Yeah, it just sort of helped me a lot because it made me realise the type of adult I wanted to be... it’s been quite a powerful thing for me”

“The House Project is like my second family that I can go to if I have something that is worrying me”

“A place that belongs to us and we belong to it, we are a bit protective of it, cause it’s our space for all of us not just staff but us all”





## CARE LEAVERS NATIONAL MOVEMENT

### Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM)

At the heart of the NHP is the belief that young people are best placed to create solutions to the obstacles that they face. CLNM was formed out of the desire to create an expert 'user voice' that informs and drives what we do. CLNM had a fantastic year and embraced the post lockdown arrangements with great excitement. They met regularly throughout the year and benefitted enormously from spending time together which included a number of overnight residentials (Crewe, Windermere, Manchester) to support their work.

CLNM have four priorities and last year was the first year that they conducted their first Peer Evaluation. It was an excellent piece of work and

a fantastic contribution to the development of the Charity. Young people developed the approach, conducted the field research, drew their conclusions and presented their findings and recommendations to both their own Conference at Hotel Football in Manchester in October and to the NHP Conference in central Manchester in March. Young people shared the stage at the NHP conference with esteemed academics and psychologists and whilst their recommendations are driving the business plan for 2022/23 we also recognise the development of skills, knowledge and confidence that came from being involved in the work and delivering their reports to the various audiences.

A lot of work went into the Peer Evaluation and we are indebted to the support of Partnership for Young London and in particular Matthew Walsham who provided validity and rigour to the process, and was also warmly welcomed by young people in to the CLNM family. We knew that the evaluation training had gone well when, after the first weekend of training that focussed on research methodology, Sue (Director) was asked by one young person about her unconscious bias. Whilst contemplating her response Sue was then promptly told how young people planned to manage unconscious bias within the field work.

CLNM used the practice framework as the starting point for deciding on the evaluation and it was no surprise that 'community' became a key area of focus that then became the key theme for their Conference in October. The day was a great success and consisted of CLNM representatives working



I just wanted to say a huge thank you for such an inspiring day. All the young people involved were so articulate, confident, and passionate that it was an honour to be a part of it. Brilliant them...they were super impressive! So many people talk about 'co-production' 'incorporating lived experience' and all the other buzz words, and it was genuinely inspiring to see it in action



- Funder



together to share their memories and experiences, presenting them to the audience, through videos, photos and their voices; bringing the importance of community to the forefront of the conference and showing how CLNM and NHP have supported them in their journey after leaving care.

It was clear from their messaging that being part of House Projects and CLNM was important to them. They said that it provides them with a community where they belong and feel supported and this in turn helps them to live their life well.

“ During my time at the House Project I earned myself a house, friends and invaluable experiences, a place at university and a role to help people at CLNM. This is where CLNM comes in. As a lone force, I am a very powerless man, however, when many collective care leavers band together in aims of a common goal, it becomes a powerful thing. And that’s exactly what has happened at today’s CLNM conference ”  
- CLNM representative

“ The House Project are unrelated family ”  
- Young Person

“ The House Project has given me a sense of family, support and friendship that I never got from foster care ”  
- Young Person

The findings of the evaluation were very positive and gave a clear message of the impact that they were having on young people. Central to the whole approach is the sense of belonging and being part of something...



“ Being involved in the project makes them feel like they have a family ”  
- Young People to Ofsted Inspectors



“ The relationships built on the project are one of the best things... it creates your own family in the end ”  
- Young Person

“ The Care Leavers National Movement has made me feel wanted in life, it’s a community that is my safe haven ”  
- Young Person



In addition to developing a peer support network locally in their own LHP, young people have a strong connection nationally through their involvement in CLNM. The evaluations by Warwick Business School and Cambridge University have identified the strong focussed approach of CLNM which drives practice at an organisational level but has also become the glue that's builds relationships and connections amongst the House Project community.

“ It's taken years to find a family, now I call the National House Project family  
- Young person ”

“ I love being part of this group (CLNM) as it's a community coming together  
- Young Person ”

This focus on belonging and community led us to re-profile our practice framework from independence to interdependence and we have used COP meetings to focus on how LHPs support young people to develop their communities.

Whilst the evaluation and annual conference dominated the year CLNM also worked on other priorities. Young people report on good practice within projects as well as any challenges. These

thoughts and ideas are shared with project staff at CoP as mentioned previously. We have developed recording and monitoring systems around this and 7 key themes have been addressed which include methods of communication, types of groupwork and how to ensure consistency/attendance at group sessions.

CLNM offer an expert user voice and their contribution to developing both NHP and contributing to wider system change has been recognised by stakeholders and outside agencies. With the wrap around support provided by NHP, CLNM has become increasingly attractive to researchers and organisations looking at developing services and more specifically services for young people with care experience. CLNM decided to professionalise their voice and now offer a consultation service that generates an income. Young people receive individual payments in line with an agreed NHP sessional payment scheme and additional income goes into a budget for CLNM to spend as a group. Young people have ownership of this budget and last year purchased Xmas presents for each other.

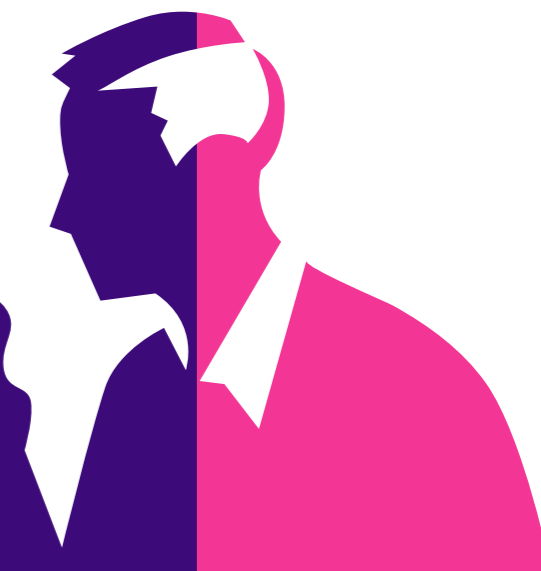
CLNM have 'changing the narrative' as one of their four main goals and young people are encouraged to engage with positive storytelling, blogs and life hacks. Furthermore, being in work and doing community events helps for a wider audience to see care leavers as young people, who have value and can provide support to others.

In addition to representatives from the House Projects, CLNM is supported by four 'founders' who remain a part of the movement to help guide new representatives and act as expert advisers.

Despite the challenges throughout the year the group have remained a positive and buoyant group and Rosie has supported the development of relationships throughout. Testimony to the excellent work undertaken was the interest and appetite for elected roles in the forthcoming year that took place in February. We thank Ibrahim Ali and Joshua Oxley for their work as Chair and Vice Chair and welcome

in Nikita and Katie as Chairs of the North and South regions and co-chairs of CLNM. Additionally, we have developed the role of CLNM Champion for those that have made a significant contribution and continue to want to support and develop the Movement. We welcome Nathan, JJ and Daniel into this role.

Two representatives from CLNM routinely attend Board of Trustee meetings as expert advisors to provide valuable inputs. In June they were joined by other young people when the focus was on CLNM and young people.





## Digital Poverty Campaign

In 2020 young people developed a digital poverty campaign calling for extended provision of digital devices and internet access for care leavers to enable them to thrive when living independently for the first time, and to reduce the impact that digital poverty can have on their futures. Young people produced a film and the launch of this campaign received media attention from Sky News and CYPNow to name a few.

We have focused on ensuring that all young people in the HP community have access to a smartphone and unlimited data and developed this to ensure that they all had a laptop/chrome book with broadband connection. Over the year we have worked with the Learning Foundation and The Digital Poverty Alliance to secure 4 laptops for each LHP base for

young people to use. Whilst a change in CLNM membership can impact on priorities, digital poverty remained a key focus and very much became 'business as usual'.

Islington very much embraced the campaign and after discussion at their steering group it was agreed that the LA would consider paying for Wi-Fi for the first 12 months when a young person moved into their own home. This was agreed and has now become part of their Care Leaver Offer ensuring that all their care leavers are digitally connected and not just young people who are part of the House Project. Islington report that they are already starting to see more young people being in education, employment and training. A big well done to CLNM who have driven this campaign and are now seeing positive actions as a result.



## NHP Annual Conference - Changing the Narrative

**In March our annual conference took place in Manchester. It was an uplifting occasion enjoyed by young people, professionals and presenters with a significant part of the agenda given over to the four evaluations. We had three keynote speakers, all care experienced with different perspectives on how to support, enable and amplify the voice of young people.**

The focus of the event was to share how the House Project (HP) approach contributes to changing the narrative at different levels - the system that supports them and the language that describes them, the narrative that young people have about themselves; the understanding and narrative of the communities where they live and the general population that 'others' them.

The HP approach provides an evidence-based and psychologically informed framework that works. It shouts loud and clear that care leavers are worthy of investment and provides the narrative about how to support them well. Moreover, in a context of austerity and funding shortfalls it demonstrates that outcomes can be improved whilst also saving money. This success creates the narrative, the stories, 'the word of mouth' conversations both within a LA that supports expansion of the service, but between LAs whereby the approach is regarded as credible and supports adoption and scaling. Providing services that improve outcomes that are recognised by professionals and stakeholders (DfE, LAs, Ofsted, Trusts/Foundation) enhances our reputation and the positive narrative around care leavers. This has enabled NHP and CLNM to develop a national profile and given that our reputation and credibility is very much aligned with having young people as equal partners, it reinforces the positive narrative about them.

The event heard how the psychological approach and ways of working enables staff to work with young people where they are at and see beyond presenting behaviours. Getting alongside the young person develops trust and builds relationships which are key to developing an understanding of how best

to support them and keep them safe. In a sector that focuses on risk and labels that are driven by the needs of services, this approach skills and emboldens staff to be able to say "I've got this, we can do it". Staff tell us that they are able to engage and support young people who the system had previously classically labelled as 'hard to reach' or 'disengaged'. This approach demonstrates that interventions work and more importantly that young people who are understood, do engage, can achieve, and are more than the labels they often receive. This disrupts the former narrative and changes the narrative to one that screams out #CARELEAVERSCAN!

The HP approach supports young people to change the narrative about, and for, themselves. It provides opportunities and experiences that develops their skills, knowledge and confidence in themselves which builds ambition and aspirations. These are supported by their contact with positive role models who are care experienced. Young people tell us that being trusted and having agency is key to them achieving success. AQA certification, preparation and clothing for work, undertaking and delivering a peer evaluation, hosting a national conference and presenting their evaluation reinforces this positivity and helps young people to feel good about themselves. Young people share this positivity amongst their own community and to wider audiences via blogs and lifehacks on their own local websites, CLNM website and social media platforms

Independent evaluations provide objectivity to the messaging and when the various approaches report consistently, it can impact positively on the narrative about young people, their value and the ways in which the approach provides the scaffolding to enable them to succeed. Having young people present their findings on the same stage as Clinical Psychologists and Academic Researchers was empowering for them as individuals, inspired their





peers in the audience and provided a stark antidote to the usual negative image of care leavers.

Whilst greater concerted collaborative effort across the public and voluntary sectors is needed to ensure that the new narratives are amplified and heard, the conference reinforced that we cannot underestimate the significance of providing the opportunities and platforms for our brilliant, creative and successful young people to be seen and heard. We all have a role to play in as Saeed Atcha said at conference “it is not about giving young people a voice, they have a voice, it is about providing the platform for their voice to be heard and then acted on”.



“ It is not about giving young people a voice, they have a voice, it is about providing the platform for their voice to be heard and then acted on ”

## Celebrating Success

### Aspirational Awards

Inspired by an awards scheme developed by the Life Changes Trust, NHP and CLNM have now agreed a process and system to enable LHP young people to apply for an award to do something that will have a lasting impact on their lives. We have put aside £50k, £25k of which was given by the Segelman Trust.

A panel has been established which includes representatives from NHP, CLNM and partners including Segelman Trust and Reconomy. The Awards will enable young people to do something that they would otherwise not have been able to do. Young people are very excited about this and we are looking forward to our first panel in the Spring.

### Invitation to roundtable event

In January Mark Warr CEO was delighted to be part of the Foundling Museum's roundtable with The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to highlight current issues surrounding young people leaving care, share our perspective of the challenges our care leavers face and the opportunities that are available in improving their futures. Mark joined fellow organisations to voice professional and personal experiences of working with care leavers and discussed topics such as homelessness and mental health;

and how the valuable work of NHP prioritises the vulnerabilities felt by care leavers to provide a safe and supported future. Whilst a relatively new charity, we are increasingly being recognised for the difference that we are making to the lives of care leavers and more importantly it validates the co-design approach and the value that young people bring to the development of services for them.

### Attendance at Holyrood Event

In March, Mark Warr CEO and Director Sue Hammersley attended an event at Holyrood to celebrate the launch of cross-party support for the Promise in Scotland.

It was inspiring to hear the commitment to deliver changes for care leavers across the country and whilst the Deputy first Minister talked about the need to develop trauma informed services, the background photo reel played the East Dunbartonshire LHP Cinderella Animation. A proud moment.

### Attendance at Housing First Conference

As a result of relationships being built with partners and colleagues in Scotland, we were invited to speak at a Housing First Conference in Edinburgh at the end of March.

This was a great opportunity to share the HP approach with housing colleagues and make further links with third sector organisations and local authorities. The Housing First model aligns closely with the values held by NHP and it was interesting for us to share learning with each other.

### Nominations for Awards

The Wolverhampton HP has been shortlisted for the MJ Social Housing Award and will hear the outcome in 2022/23.

The Warwickshire LHP received an award from their Lord Mayor for their support and work with care leavers.



## Partnership working

### Fuel poverty

Fuel Poverty is a real challenge for young people leaving care and last year we heard that we had not been successful in a bid submitted in partnership with the Care Leavers Covenant, Charis Grants Limited and Energy Projects Plus to the Energy Redress Trust. Whilst the bid was well received, they could not fund white goods. Charis secured £20k from the Sustainable Living Foundation and we made a white good and fuel voucher available to all young people moving into their homes in 2021. NHP added additional monies to this and as we now see this as part of the NHP 'offer' we will be sourcing monies from Trusts and foundations to fund this going forward.

The window for further submissions to Energy Redress Trust closed in the latter part of the year as Ofgem reviewed its awarding process. There will be an awarding process in 2022 and we intend to submit a further bid to develop support around fuel poverty.

### Suited and Booted

Suited and Booted is a small organisation based in Central London which provides smart clothing for young men. We agreed initially that all our male CLNM reps would be able to visit Suited and Booted. They were all able to have the 'Suited and Booted experience' which is so much more than coming away with new clothing. Every young person was measured and fitted for fabulous suits, shirts and shoes and were made to feel very special and important. Maria, CEO, organised lunch and totally understood the HP approach. As CLNM's conference approached she was concerned that the girls should not feel left out, and they were also offered the same opportunity. All of our CLNM reps wore their outfits at their conference and felt fantastic. Maria Lenn, who runs the organisation, spoke at the CLNM conference about what they do and the importance of having clothing that makes you feel good. She was then keen to extend the

offer to all young people who are part of a HP and projects have embraced this combining it with a chance to take young people to London.

Maria has links with journalists at The Guardian and is keen for us to do a joint article about the psychological benefits of having and wearing clothing that enables you to feel part of something. We have seen young people's self esteem grow through this experience and are keen to write something with Maria that will hopefully be published in the National press.

### Smart Works

Smart Works is a similar organisation to that of Suited and Booted but operates on a much larger scale. They have bases across the UK, including Glasgow, making them much more accessible for a lot of our projects.

Smart Works provide clothing for both young men and women which is great as it means that we are able to make the same offer to all young people. They provide clothing specifically for interviews along with interview coaching. We have agreed that HP young people will be able to access Smart Works prior to any interviews having been arranged. They can go in groups to receive some initial coaching and then choose an outfit. When they do have an interview, they can return for individual coaching and when they are successful in gaining a job Smart Works will provide a 'work wardrobe'.

### Valpak

Valpak is linked closely with Reconomy and have been supporting the Coventry LHP over the last year. They have completely embraced this partnership and have added value to what the project offers. Valpak sit on Coventry's steering group and have also attended the project's Business Event.



They made sure that all young people had a Christmas present from Valpak and also provided hoodies for the whole cohort. They are now looking at how they can be further involved in offering work experience opportunities and apprenticeships.

### Reconomy

Reconomy offer a strong partnership with the Wolverhampton LHP. Prior to lockdown they were working on a specific work experience/apprentice offer to young people in the HP but this had to be put on hold until restrictions ease. They were proactive in securing a Christmas gift – tailored to each individual young person – and all were very gratefully received.

They are currently working closely with the project to support and explore apprenticeship opportunities in waste management, construction and HR as well as offering a funded apprenticeship with the LHP. One young person has joined Reconomy as an apprentice. Reconomy also created the Reconomy Entrepreneurial Award which will form part of our Aspirational Award scheme and will sit as part of the Award panel.



### Donald Insall

Donald Insall provided two substantial donations towards the Digital Poverty Campaign and have ambitions to work with Manchester LHP and provide opportunities/experiences to young people where possible. Whilst challenged by the Covid restrictions and turnover of staff in Manchester's LHP they are keen to be involved in the Greater Manchester collaborative next year.



### Madlug

Madlug is a Community Interest Company set up by Dave Linton. Dave is a foster carer and was concerned that young people in care were moving their belongings in bin bags.



He set the company up to address this issue and every bag that is sold also pays for a bag for a young person in care. Each bag that goes to young people in care contains the label “You are incredible” to remind every child that they have value, worth and dignity.

Our work with Madlug has developed over the last year with Dave speaking at the CLNM conference and attending the NHP conference. He is a huge supporter of NHP and CLNM and detailed earlier in this report, is working with CLNM to develop a work programme and business idea.

## MyBnk

MyBnk is an independent charity supporting young people to make better money decisions and are the largest specialist financial education provider supporting vulnerable young adults between the ages of 16-25.

They offered to work in partnership with the NHP and support HPs to deliver a ‘Money Works’ programme in Islington, Manchester and Rotherham on a virtual basis with a view to rolling out to other projects. The approach is to focus on budgeting & saving, income & benefits & consumer rights. Young people completing the programme receive a Level 1 accreditation in Personal Money Management. MyBnk have also asked to consult with CLNM around financial education for young people leaving care.

## Metro Bank

Through ongoing partnerships with Care Leaver Covenant an opportunity arose for our young people to conduct research in conjunction with Metro Bank.

Oxford HP took on the role of working with Metro Bank in relation to care leaver accessibility to opening bank accounts and the challenges they face when doing so.

Oxford HP young people were paid for the research and provided feedback to enable joining systems to be simplified and improved. This was a successful

partnership and will be replicated in Manchester LHP in the year ahead.

## Engie

Engie is an energy and services company that produces and supplies energy, services and regeneration. It aims to make zero carbon transition possible and is committed to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and employs a team of Social Value Officers.

They became one of the first signatory partners to the Care Leavers Covenant and their Social Value Manager was made a Government sector-based Champion, only one of four in the UK.

Engie have been linked with Rotherham and Wolverhampton to pilot ways of working. The pandemic has meant that the practical support that Engie offer had to be put on hold. However, more recently they have been able to support young people with practical tasks in the home including gardening and decorating.

Young people have enjoyed working alongside representatives from Engie and learning more about them as an organisation. They have planned to attend group sessions within these projects to offer the ‘Mentoring Circles Programme’ based over three sessions which aims to provide an in depth understanding of what employers look for in future talent and applications. This will be specifically linked to House Project Programme (HPP) to enable young people to recognise the skills acquired on the programme and how this could be attractive to potential employers or education/training providers.

## Greater Manchester Youth Alliance (GMYA)

We were introduced to the GMYA by CHK. GMYA bring together a variety of youth and deliver a range of development programmes and drop-in activities to help young people transition to adulthood with the aim of them feeling skilled, supported and positive.

They provide a Care Leavers forum which we have attended with young people from our Manchester LHP. We have agreed to support a proposal from Greater Manchester Youth Network (GMYN) to CHK to fund an extension to their work programme to provide something specific for HP young people in the GM area.

This programme is delivered in a groupwork setting with individual support to each young person. This aligns well with the HP approach and we are looking forward to working with GMYN next year.

## Ofsted

NHP were invited to join Ofsted’s National Consultative Care Leaver forum. This is a useful arena for exchange of information and allows the opportunity to input information on how young people are best supported into independent living.





## Evaluations

As a learning organisation we are keen to continue to drive excellence both by internal review and revision and by external Independent Evaluations. We have implemented the findings from the York University Evaluation (Nov 2020) and last year embarked on four evaluations. Qualitative in nature, all four approaches took a 'story' approach looking at the meaning and impact from the young person's perspective. Whilst keen to develop both the knowledge and understanding of how our approach works the real ambition is to develop the understanding on how we can improve what we do

to better serve young people. True to the DNA of the organisation we have developed a 'community of researchers' who share literature findings, research papers and current findings in order to develop their approaches.

### Warwick Business School - Bedfordshire University – 2021-2023

Warwick Business School (with academic researchers across University and health sectors)

have been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council to carry out research to improve understanding of how innovation for care leavers' transitions can best be supported at both a policy and practice level to scale-up and become part of widespread practice. They are particularly interested in the journey from the first project being LA led, to the development of a separate entity in the form of a National Charity which now provides services back in to LAs.

Their initial findings report that; the Innovation has been fully implemented, interdependent functions (NHP and CLNM) have been created, diffusion and spread has been successful and scaling has created a strong position in the leaving care sector.

It reported that attention to fidelity (housing, base, psychology, practice framework, groupwork, trained staff) combined with a framework approach has allowed adaption to the local context at diffusion stages which has supported scaling and improved the quality of services provided.

It identified the importance of the following as core elements;

- *Young people being at the heart – for, by and with young people (shared understanding, co-production, empowerment)*
- *Relational cornerstone as a laser focus (underpinning relational/ psychological philosophy, practice and processes)*
- *Safe and secure physical environments (HP, young person's home)*

When looking at NHP it identified the following as key enablers: flexibility, arising from its charity status, its ability to draw in funding and its emerging identity based on improving outcomes and reducing costs. It reported on the relational leadership of the core team, the development of strong partnerships and a commitment to learning and development as key elements.

This is an incredibly positive position at this initial stage and we have identified four elements for further focus which will be developed in 2022/23.

- *Business model – this will focus on NHP as a social movement and is being supported by a Masters student from Warwick Business School.*
- *Co-production – this will be supported by a PhD student from Warwick University who will work with Rosie and CLNM to look at coproduction in action and the influence that this has on NHP development, practice and the impact on young people.*
- *Learning Journey – this will focus on the work with partners.*
- *Fidelity and adaptation – this will focus on the evolution of the approach, the development and refined of fidelity.*





## Scotland Throughcare and Aftercare Forum (Staf)

Staf is a national membership organisation for those involved in the lives of young people leaving care and were commissioned by Life Changes Trust to work with the three projects in Scotland to; understand the process and impact of relational (as opposed to transactional) ways of working, support reflection and adaptation, highlight positive impact and outcomes for young people and capture and disseminate key learning.

Across all three projects they found

- a common understanding of both Relationship Based Practice and its positive impact. This was attributed to the way the LHPs were set up and COP where they had the time to reflect and discuss practice development.
- consistency, unconditional trust and persistency.
- an intrinsic understanding of the groundwork that needs to be done when working with young people.

As part of the study Braw Talent were commissioned to co-produce with young people a creative telling of their HP experience. East Dunbartonshire produced an animation called Cinderella which can be viewed on our YouTube channel. Whilst the Staf evaluation is completed we await the final report which is expected in the Summer of 2022.

## CLNM Peer Evaluation 2021

In 2021, 15 young people worked with Partnership for Young London and carried out their own evaluation which was centred on the practice framework ORCHIDS. They were trained on research methodology, designed their evaluation questions and carried out the fieldwork (interviews, online survey and focus groups) across England and Scotland. They evaluated their findings, made recommendations and wrote up their report that was presented at their conference in Manchester.

The findings from the Evaluation are incredibly positive with young people valuing the support of their HPs which they believe are managed well.

They have had the opportunity to develop ownership and take responsibility and with the development of a community (mates) and sense of belonging they are positive about their futures and report improved emotional and mental health.

The evaluation led to a number of recommendations and whilst some require a response from LHPs there are significant responsibilities for NHP. These focus on; developing a peer mentoring process, a mental health and wellbeing offer designed with young people and local to their projects and support to develop stronger careers guidance, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities. The recommendations also led us to review our practice framework and whilst it is important for young people to live independently of the care system, the focus going forward will be on developing interdependence with a greater focus on developing relationships with, and in, the community. Furthermore the charity has replaced the word 'independent' with 'connected' in its vision statement.

The National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers attended the CLNM conference and was so impressed by their findings that he took their report to Whitehall. Young People then attended a meeting with the Minister for Children and Families to share their report and explain how changes needed to be made to the care system! They were excited, articulate and passionate in their delivery as to how the HP approach had supported them and how things needed to change for all young people leaving care. We are continually amazed and humbled by the insight, creativity and desire of young people to improve the care system and make it fairer for all. The young people had a similar impact on the Minister who described the meeting as 'informative' and 'inspirational' and he went on to mention his meeting with CLNM at the Educational Select Committee.

## University of Cambridge: An Evaluation of the Psychological Framework 2020-2022

The Charity commissioned Psychologists from Cambridge and Royal Holloway, London Universities to develop our understanding of the psychological

framework that underpins the work with a focus on how it supports young people and staff, and how it might be further developed. This qualitative evaluation focuses on understanding young people's stories, working with people in a way that explores how past experiences impact on their lives in the present and in understanding that, how staff are supported as individuals and as practitioners to best support young people and change the system around them so that young people experience better transitions from the care system.

“ Those relationships of the adults are so, so important to maintain because they parent the system, they hold and regulate what happens underneath ”

The final report will be ready in the summer of 2022 but what we know from the work to date is that the relationships between young people and with staff is key, and moreover that recognising your sense of 'self' as a practitioner combined with an understanding of where the young person is at is critical to providing the right support.

The value of the 'base' is critical to providing the safe space from which young people can practice the skills that will support their successful transition.





# House Project Community

## Projects

At the start of the year, we had 11 Local House Projects (LHP) across Local Authorities (LA) in England (8) and Scotland (3). The target was to establish a minimum of a further 5 LHPs and this was achieved with the development of 6 LHPs in Coventry, Lancashire, West Sussex and three LHPs across LAs (Bury, Rochdale, Oldham; Tameside, Stockport; Manchester, Trafford) in a collaborative arrangement in Greater Manchester. With a strong focus on projects adhering to the fidelity of the House Project (HP) approach it was agreed that one LA would not continue their LHP but would deliver services in other ways.

The collaborative approach across Greater Manchester was supported with funding from CHK Trust and gave us the opportunity to develop new ways of working and an approach to scaling on a subregional footprint. The monies from CHK incentivised LAs to develop their LHPs within the year and whilst this has almost been achieved there has been much learning from the approach. We will undertake a more formal review once we have completed the first annual cycle and young people have moved in to their first homes. We are particularly keen to explore how young people who live across LA boundaries can be supported in other LA HPs within the regional agreement.

## Young People

In April 2021, there were 245 young people across the various LHPs who made up our HP Community and at year end this had increased to 401. These young people are at different stages of their HP journey and whilst some will have only recently joined projects, others will have been living in their own homes for some years.

At the start of the year:

- 160 young people had moved into their own homes, and this has increased significantly to 222.

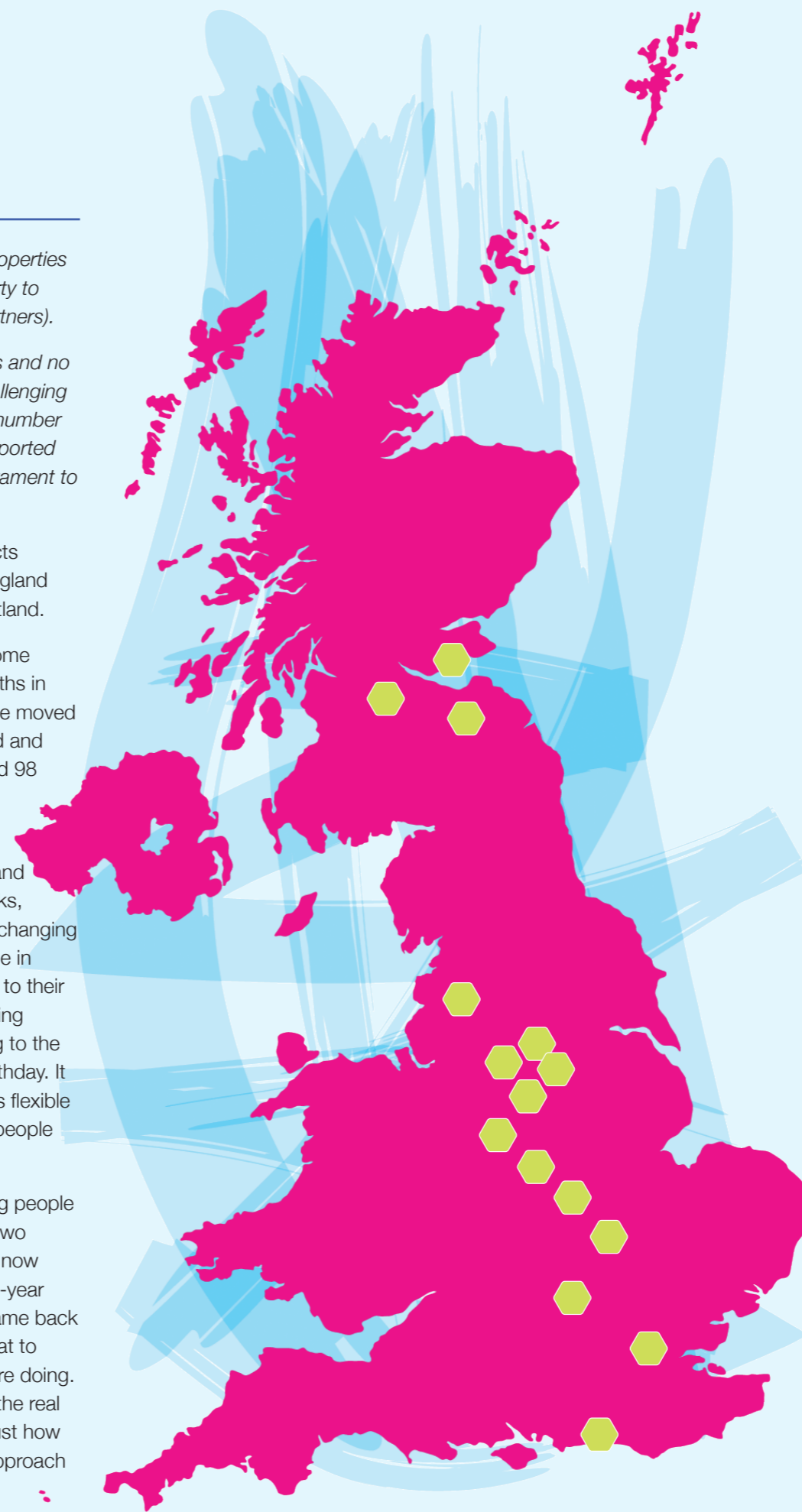
- Of the 222, 193 of these remain in HP properties and 29 have moved from their HP property to other living arrangements (e.g. family, partners).
- There have been no tenancy breakdowns and no evictions. When things have become challenging or circumstances have changed a small number of young people have however been supported to move into other properties. This is testament to the ongoing support that is provided.

The age of young people who join the projects ranges from 15yr 7mths to 19yr 7mths in England and from 16yr 3mths to 23yr 11mths in Scotland.

The average age of moving in to their first home is 17yrs 10mths in England and 19yrs 2months in Scotland. Of the 222 young people who have moved into their own home, 124 did so in a planned and supported way before their 18th birthday and 98 moved after they had reached 18.

The difference in ages of people moving into their properties between England and Scotland reflects the difference in legislative frameworks, with the threshold for financial responsibility changing at 18 and 21 respectively. Most young people in England move from regulated placements in to their first home with more people in Scotland having moved to independent living before returning to the LA for accommodation prior to their 21st birthday. It is of note that the HP framework approach is flexible to work across age groups and with young people who have a wide range of experiences.

Whilst for the majority of projects most young people will have moved into their homes in the last two years, the first project in Stoke-on-Trent has now seen stability of living arrangements over a 5-year period. Indeed, the very first cohort HP10 came back together in March of this year and it was great to catch up with them and see how well they are doing. We were keen to consult with this group as the real test of how our approach is working is not just how well young people leave care but how our approach enables them to live fulfilling lives.



We are keen to evaluate longer term success but were equally conscious of not wanting to intrude on people's lives as successful adults. HP10 very much welcomed the ongoing contact from NHP and said that we should remain in touch with all of the HP community but give individuals the option to opt out should they wish. This mirrors the feedback that we had received about sending handwritten birthday and festive cards which are greatly appreciated and lets young people know that we hold them in our thoughts.

## Pipeline of new projects

We held meetings (physical and virtual) with representatives from 32 LAs with a commitment to proceed from 10 (6 across Greater Manchester and 4 across the West Midlands). We remain in contact with the majority of these whilst they progress discussions within their respective LAs.

In response to the Covid Recovery and Build Back Better Fund which was available through ADCS regional arrangements we have been working with Wolverhampton CC (as a 'Good' LA with a current innovation) since September 2021 to develop four LHPs in the West Midlands. We are in the early development stage of this approach but are looking forward to working across 8 of the 14 LAs in the region. This is in line with our ambition for regional and subregional arrangements.

There has been considerable interest from LAs and whilst we know that conversion of interest to signed up membership is a lengthy process, we are ambitious to scale. We have set a target of 10 new LHPs in the forthcoming year with this repeated for the following two years resulting in 46 LHPs by March 2025.



## NHP Support to Projects

### Community of Practice (COP)

COP has continued to meet virtually on a monthly basis. Given the number of staff that this now involves, the same session is run twice so that there is an opportunity for discussion rather than just delivery. Staff report those virtual sessions work best for them given the distance that a number of them would have to travel.

COP is led by the Practice Leads. These are well planned and delivered using a range of mediums, including jamboards and small breakout rooms. The sessions this year have covered relationships, safety planning, what learning means in the HP, ORCHIDS, peer evaluation, network events and graduation.

Rosie also attends the COP following a CLNM meeting in order to provide feedback to staff from young people. When possible young people also attend to give that feedback directly. Project staff will then discuss issues and, after having further discussions in individual projects, will feedback to CLNM on what actions have been taken. This feedback loop is working well and enables LHPs to continue to develop based on what young people say works for them.

Time is always allowed for staff to bring anything that they want to share with their colleagues. This has led to some interesting discussions and enabled staff to share good practice as well as the challenges and dilemmas.

### House Project Programme (HPP)

HPP continues to be certificated by AQA and we are now seeing an increasing number of certificates with 1150 certificates awarded 2021/22. Practice Leads have worked hard to encourage and support staff to enable their young people to upload evidence of the experiences they have had and what they have learnt. One of the recommendations from the Peer Evaluation to further involve young people in offering ongoing support has led us to

plan in Peer Mentoring Training for young people. This is something that will be delivered in June 2022 and that will also be certificated by AQA and SQA.

We are in the process of also getting HPP certificated by SQA in Scotland. This is something very much welcomed by our Scottish projects and their young people.

### Psychological Services

NHP commission Changing Minds to provide a psychology input over the course of the year with four days dedicated to COP sessions, two days to induction training for new projects leaving six days to be used by NHP as agreed throughout the year. Last year they delivered training to all of the Facilitators and Project Leads on attachment and trauma, therapeutic relationships, developing resilience, risk and safety, and boundaries. All sessions have been reviewed with project staff and their feedback will inform the training for next year.

All LHPs, with the exception of Islington, commission their psychological support from Changing Minds (Islington has excellent in-house provision which the project uses well). Changing Minds have been involved with NHP since its inception and were central in helping us to develop the ORCHIDS practice framework. They are aligned with NHP in their thinking and value base and provide a depth of knowledge which enhances the service that we provide to young people.

The psychologist facilitates formulations for each young person and provides a day a month of consultation to project staff. Young people from CLNM have been working with the Changing Minds staff team to help them think about how the young person's thoughts and feelings can be brought into this meeting without the young person actually being present. These are to be discussed with NHP in the Spring of 2022. Changing Minds are developing a leaflet for young people to explain the role that the psychologist plays within the LHP team.

NHP have used their days to think about the development of the project, how we managed during periods of lockdown during the pandemic and also for all team members to complete a Spotlight profile. The profiles enabled us to develop a greater understanding of ourselves and our preferred style of working which in turn helped us to think about how we work together as a team. A day to reflect on this learning was facilitated by Changing Minds and was incredibly helpful in helping us understand where each of our strengths lay and gave us an insight into where support and development was needed. We have agreed that all new staff members will complete a Spotlight profile when they join us.

### Education, Training and Employment (ETE)

The HPP enables young people to develop the confidence they need to go into the workplace or continue/return to education. The Business/Network Event activity, which is part of HPP, was hugely impacted on during Covid. Some projects ran virtual events, but these didn't have the same impact as the in-person events. We have supported projects to think about planning and arranging these once restrictions started to lift. Several events took place towards the end of the year and were very successful. They were supported by our partners, Reconomy and Valpak. This event gives young people a real sense of ownership of their futures and has resulted in apprenticeships and work experience being offered to HP young people.

One of the recommendations from the Peer Evaluation was to provide more support with careers advice and work opportunities. In discussions with Madlug we have agreed a partnership to create a work programme for young people who have graduated from the HPP and are now living in their own homes. Madlug have secured funding to enable members of CLNM to go to Northern Ireland in August 2022 to work with themselves and another business partner to create the programme and work on a business idea which Madlug will seed-fund to become a reality. The programme will run as a pilot over several months and will enable young people to gain transferable skills to take into the workplace.

### Housing

The engagement of Housing Providers with social care and the access to housing provision for young people is a critical component of the HP approach. Those Housing providers that fed into the Evaluation report (York university 2020) were positive about being involved with their LHP and recognised the preparation and support that went into young people being good tenants. We are clearer about the role of Housing as a strategic partner at the self-assessment stage, the set-up meeting and at stakeholder engagement meetings. There is evidence that this is working for the majority of new LHPs.

As we continue to work with housing providers, and they see the benefits that House Projects bring to young people, we are starting to see a change in culture and attitude to young people who are care experienced. They are directly involved in talking with young people about their housing options and actively involved in project planning via the steering groups they sit on. Islington's housing offer has increased from 10 to 20 one bedroomed flats per year which is hugely beneficial to young people and has led to the project expanding to run two groups per year. In Fife, housing providers are taking the learning from the project to develop the wider approach of accommodation to all young people leaving care.

Housing managers have been keen to be involved in talking to prospective LAs and housing providers about the benefits that the House Project approach brings. Wolverhampton Homes have been a key part in delivering sessions to local authorities in the West Midlands and the CEO of MSV Housing has been instrumental in the work with GM, agreeing to chair the Strategic Board.

Last year we received the publication of the 'Homelessness: A National Scandal' report from the Housing and Communities team at the London School of Economics. The study focused at innovative and collaborative models that successfully prevented homelessness and NHP was one of 17 case studies.



## Ofsted Inspection

There is a regulatory framework for the Inspection of LA provision and three LAs (Stoke, Wolves and Warwickshire) who have had inspections in the last year. Two of these have been reported on with the third inspection is as yet unpublished.

The reports find that care leavers benefit from their involvement with their LHP which offers practical and emotional support that develops their independence skills and that intensive support alongside the offer of properties enables them to maintain their tenancies and live independently. This is “valued by young people”.

## Care Leavers Support Portal (CLSP)

The platform hosts LA sites and has the look and feel of a website and enables staff to communicate with young people who can also communicate with each other. Whilst the sites have generic information for all care leavers, LAs can populate information about local services and the local offer, young people can load blogs and good news stories and a messenger service allows staff and young people to speak with each other. The platform has capacity to securely access key documents (health passport/pathway plan/EHC plan) that young people need.

The roll out of the Portal commenced in August with the appointment of a care experienced apprentice to support the process. We attended NLCB Forums, presented at our two national conferences and wrote to every LA sharing information about the platform. We followed this up with a social media campaign and have produced two videos as a way of sharing information about the platform. The take up has been slower than anticipated but whilst the DfE funding has finished the Charity will continue to fund the portal and roll this out to LAs across England and Scotland.



## NHP Infrastructure

### Staffing

We were joined at the start of the year by Liz Titley, Fundraising and Partnerships Manager and then in the summer by Marshall Rowlands, Business Administrative Apprentice and Becky Reynolds, Practice Lead.

In recognition of the increase in the number of LHPs and an ambition to scale we commenced a recruitment drive in January 2022. Three staff members; Sam Ankers (Practice Lead), Susan Farrington (Project Support Officer) and Bernardo Pezo (Participation Worker) will join us in April 2022, taking our staffing complement to 12 with just under half of our workforce being care experienced.

### Consultants

Peter Cox Business and Governance Advisor. Peter has continued to provide support to all matters relating to governance, finance and legal matters.

### Changing Minds

See ‘Support to Projects’.

### Setsquare

Setsquare have continued to support NHP across a number of work strands and there has been real

value to a single supplier who understands and can connect our work. They developed our initial performance framework and have continued to support this whilst we have redesigned and re-purposed this. They have done an excellent job in developing the HPP online system as well as the CLSP.

### Reels in Motion

‘Reels’ are our documentary film partner. Despite lockdown restrictions we have been able to produce a number of new films and animations with a combination of new footage and footage that was already available. As well as producing films of the two conferences (NHP/CLNM) they have produced films with LHPs including a residential film for Wolverhampton LHP and the Network Event in Coventry.

The ‘Direction’ film created really showcases CLNM considering the findings of their Peer Evaluation and delivering these findings at their CLNM Conference. The ‘5 years on’ film was recorded with HP10, the very first HP in Stoke. This film is a celebration of the start of the HP journey and where young people are now.

These films are all available to view via the NHP YouTube and really highlight the experiences and sense of community across all projects.





## Ronnie Woods

Ronnie worked with Sue and Kelly to develop a continuous learning approach within HPP. He delivered training to Facilitators and Project Leads during the Summer which enabled LHP staff to explore new tools and activities to use with young people. Ronnie also helped to create narratives of practice which enabled us and LHP staff to think about what makes a good Facilitator and Project Lead. It is clear that this is very much related to having a strong value base and doing 'the right thing'. Ronnie also facilitated an Appreciative Enquiry between 2 LHPs and helped us to share the learning. Other projects are keen to be involved in this and Ronnie will facilitate more of these next year which will take a thematic approach. Ronnie will work with the Project Leads to plan the visits and share the learning.

## Office Accommodation

We rent office space from the Apollo Buckingham Health Science Campus (formerly Manchester Metropolitan University) and whilst we moved to hybrid working arrangements in 2021/22 that sees us all in the office for a minimum of two days a week, we have increased/rented a further 4 rooms. This serves us well in terms of; office space, access to facilities and travel networks and the message that it conveys to young people about their accessibility and engagement in University settings. CLNM use our office space for meetings and there are many aspiring CEOs who have made themselves comfortable in the office!

## Finance

Our total income for the year 2021/22 was £764k with memberships fees of £403k. Major Grant income of £188k and income for psychology of £110k. Additionally, NHP received a Department for Education (DfE) Grant award of £26k to deliver the LA platform so that each LA had a website function to engage with their care leavers. Our expenditure for the year was £816k resulting in a 2021/22 deficit of £51k.

### Reserves Policy

At the April Board in 2022, a revised reserves policy was agreed. In the past, the NHP has maintained a commitment, that at any point in time, the organisation will be operational for a full year (to

ensure that all young people are supported into their homes in a planned and supported way.) Following professional accountancy advice, the financial reserve will be set at a level commensurate with ordinary running costs of 8 months. The trustees are confident that the policy meets Charity Commission guidance.

The end of year position for 2021/22 was a balance sheet total reserve of £868k.

The projected full operational expenditure for 2022/23 is £1.24m.

Therefore, the reserve aspiration will be £827k for the year ending 2022/23.





## Diversification of Income Streams

The NHP approach has been supported in its development by DfE Social Care Innovation Funding and 2021/22 was the first year in which it did not receive DfE grant funding for core activities.

A Fundraising Strategy was approved at the June 2021 Board and £545k has subsequently been secured from Trusts and Foundations. £175k has been received for activity in 2021/22 and with multiple year awards £235k has been secured for 2022/23, £85k for 2023/24 and £25k for 2024/25. The majority of these awards are unrestricted and hence are set against core costs (CLNM salary costs and practice lead costs) but one award of £25k was received in 2021/22 for the Aspirational Awards in 2022/23 and an award of £50k to incentivise scaling across Greater Manchester in 2021/22 will be received in 2022/23.

As we are not whole cost recovery in terms of membership fees, we are grateful to the support that we have received from trusts and donors. With their contributions often being greater than the financial awards, we very much see them as being part of the wider NHP stakeholder community. We are working with the following to support the expansion of our work both in terms of scaling but also in the quality and range of opportunities that are available to young people; Garfield Weston Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn

Foundation, Leather sellers Company Charitable Fund, Bleu Blanc Rouge Foundation, Jongen Trust and CHK Foundation.

We have been supporting LAs to develop their capacity for a second LHP or by running two cohorts a year. To date we have not developed a pricing mechanism for this but will do so into cover the overheads of increased volumes.

## Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)

The HP approach is 'outcome focused'. Over time, the way of working (annual cohorts) and its ability to move young people from regulated placements in a planned and supported way, LAs have been able to make genuine cost savings. There was a CBA in the York University Evaluation Report 2020, that on the medium attribution scenario (50% attribution) showed a positive return on investment of 1.4 from year 2 (a saving of £1.40 for each £1 invested in the HP) which increases to 2.0 in year 3. We are less than convinced that this accurately demonstrates the savings to LAs - with one LA saving in excess of £900k for the past two years and we are considering a further CBA and to look beyond the cost savings to the children's social care budgets and evaluate the impact of good transitions on the demand on services across adult service provision.



## NHP Governance

### Charity Commission

As a registered charity we conform to Charity Commission guidance and this is largely managed by Peter Cox, Business and Governance Advisor. Our annual report and financial statements were prepared by our chartered accountants in July 2021 and approved at the Trustee Board meeting in September 2021.

We are required to inform the Charity Commission of Serious Incidents (as defined by the Commission) and given the vulnerabilities of young people there been events that we have considered at Board but in line with Charity Commission Guidance (our internal policy), none have met the threshold for formal reporting. We involve LAs in all reporting arrangements to Board.

### Trustees and Board Meetings

We started the year with seven trustees and at Christmas two of our trustees stood down and we thank them greatly for their support and guidance over the past 3.5 years. Both were founder trustees and were appointed in August 2018 when there was only two of us working out of our respective kitchens! We have travelled a long way and we thank both Davids' for their support and guidance.

A new chair, Mark Leith was appointed from within the group. As we are expanding our services we are to review capacity and skill mix in the early part of 2022/23 which will inform a development day that we are planning for early summer. Information about trustees can be found on our website.

Board meetings took place in June, September, December and January which have been a mixture of in person and hybrid arrangements with some staff and trustees based at the Crewe office. In January it was agreed that all future meetings would be in person (covid permitting) and hybrid arrangements would not be supported.

In addition to the four designated Board meetings, an advisory meeting was held in January with a

single focus on finance. Monthly meetings take place between the CEO/Director and the Lead Trustee for Safeguarding and bi-monthly meetings were established towards the end of the year to develop fundraising activities.

### Strategic Leads Meetings

These meetings took place in November 2021 and March 2022. They bring together middle managers from the LAs to consider the strategic direction of the Charity and to engage in matters that will require authorisations within their LA.

### Local HP Annual Reviews

Meetings were held with all LAs in the year and we had good engagement from most. Senior officers within social care, health and housing attend with the Lead Member for Children's Services. This is a key meeting and represents the 'authorising environment' which supports the operation of LHPs. The purpose is to share information both ways to better support the projects and improve outcomes for young people. The approach takes the form of an Appreciative Inquiry

### Department for Education

We have had quarterly meetings with the DfE to update them on both the progress of the Cambridge Evaluation which they funded as part of the 2020/21 grant award and the Care Leaver Support Portal that they funded in 2021/22.

### GDPR

We have a GDPR policy and whilst we are not required to have a Data Protection Officer (given the size of our organisation) Kelly Mottram, Practice Lead has taken the lead role for all data protection matters. Kelly has been supported in this role with access to specialised training. Staff update their GDPR training annually. We have had no data breaches.





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