



# THE NATIONAL HOUSE PROJECT

## THE HOUSE PROJECT PROGRAMME YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE



## WHAT IS THE HOUSE PROJECT?

'The House Project is an opportunity that hasn't been done before. It is the best scheme for moving and being independent.'

(Young Person - Islington House Project)

**The House Project gives you the skills, experiences and support to make a home and be part of a community and have a better future.**

If you are thinking of applying to join the House Project, this guide will explain all about the project.

The House Project enables you to develop a community of support, provides a good home to live in and gives you control over your life, and ownership of your future. Young people have joint ownership of the House Projects with staff. They make decisions about how the House Project will run, have a say in how some of the budget is spent for the benefit of the project, put forward ideas for how extra funding could be used and can get involved in fund raising activities so that they can put good ideas into practice.

In the House Project you work as a team. When you join a House Project, you join as part of a new team of around 10 young people.

As a team, you support each other, learn the skills you need to be independent and fix up and look after a property that will become your home for as long as you want to live there.

And it's fun!

Hear what Lizzie and Marshall have got to say: ['What is the House Project?'](#)

Find out more about the House Project on [The National House Project website](#) and the [YouTube Channel](#).

## Is the House Project for you?

The House Project is brilliant but challenging. You don't have to have everything sorted in your life and you don't have to be a genius. You do have to be prepared to work hard and be part of a team.

- ◆ I'm not perfect and I didn't do well at school...  
*That doesn't matter; we are learning*
- ◆ I'm not that confident...  
*That's OK; you get lots of support*
- ◆ I'm prepared to try new things...  
*Perfect*
- ◆ I'd like to fix up a property that can be my home...  
*Perfect*
- ◆ I'd like to be part of a team and a community...  
*Perfect*

The House Project is already making a difference to the lives of young people leaving care, as Mia a project member says:

**'I feel like I am not going out there alone now. That is different to how I felt before the House Project started.'**

*(Young Person - Stoke-on-Trent House Project)*

We can arrange for you to visit and meet other young people from the House Project to find out more.



*Taylor & Krystal*

## How can I join the House Project?

The House Project accepts young people aged 16+. Speak to your social worker/PA or contact the House Project directly to find out when you can next apply for the House Project using the following email address:  
[enquiries@thehouseproject.org](mailto:enquiries@thehouseproject.org)

**'The House Project is a great thing to do. If you are offered a position to go on the project, do it - it builds a future for yourself... It's a very independent project that you do by yourself with as little or as much support as you want'**

*(Young Person - Stoke-on-Trent House Project)*



*Mohammed, Taylor, Joe, Abby, Krystal, Luke, Jodie, Marshall*



## STEP 1 – Apply

People need to know you are interested in the House Project, so speak to your social worker/ PA/IRO/carer. You will get support to make an application to the House Project. You will fill in a form and add a letter, video, voice recording or something that says why you want to join.

If your application is successful, you will be interviewed.

You get lots of help about how to do an interview. If you pass the interview you join the House Project.



*Ibrahim, Liam, Darcianne, Aaron and Cindy.*

## STEP 2 - What I do in the House Project?

The House Project Programme (HPP) consists of 13 sections that you will work through with your team and staff (facilitators) to cover everything you will need to achieve independence.

You will capture your journey by uploading pictures, notes, documents or videos to the online system and you will get AQA certificates to give credit for what you've achieved.

This is what you do on the HPP

- I help **make the rules, our base and our identity** as a House Project team – we decide how we will work together, make a base (an office) and something that says who we are as a team – a T-Shirt, a logo, a mug etc
- I **write my learning plan** – I explore my interests and passions. I create my own ambition for what I might do or become in the future – my job and career. I follow these plans and adapt them as I go along
- I **write a safety plan** – I discuss my own safety and how, as a group, we can keep each other safer
- I **cook and share** meals with the group – everyone contributes a recipe, tips and pictures of their cook and eat event

- I **plan to go on a residential**
- I **do something creative** to express mine or my team's ideas – photographs, a film, art work, writing, a song...
- I **learn to do things for myself – how to look after myself, my home and my budget**
- I **highlight success, raise challenges, suggest new ideas and develop policies** as part of our Local House Project, and have the opportunity to do this in the Care Leavers National Movement and the National House Project
- I work with my team to **write a business plan** and **pitch for money and support** to do something that matters to us
- I **get support for my House Project – by running a network event** for businesses, trainers and others
- I help run an event for other people to **benefit my community**.
- I **graduate** with recognition for what I have learned and achieved

## What do I get from the House Project Programme?

The HPP is about getting skills and having experiences that develop **Ownership, Responsibility, Community, a Home, Interdependence, Direction, a Sense of well-being** (or ORCHIDS for short):

ORCHIDS	What does this mean?
Ownership	I make decisions and have control over my life
	As part of a team, I make decisions and have control over the project
Responsibility	I take responsibility for getting things done
	I take responsibility for sorting things out when they go wrong
Community	I feel I am part of a community that supports and cares about me
	I support and care about other people in the project
Home	I feel safe
	I feel I have a place I can call my home
Interdependence	I can sort out practical stuff [cooking, money, travel] on my own
	I know how to get help and support when I need it
Direction	I am confident in my plan and goals for my future
	I feel I have the skills and confidence I need to make progress towards my goals
Sense of well-being	I feel good

'I feel as though this is a golden opportunity to learn new skills and become independent as well as taking responsibility. I feel I have achieved confidence as well as being an important part of the team and take part in all the activities'

*(Young Person - Wolverhampton House Project)*



Krystal

## How do I get credit for my work?

The work you do on the HPP is recognised by certificates from AQA - an organisation that manages achievements and qualifications.

You upload your work (pictures, film clips, things you've written, comments by adults) into a record of your House Project journey.

When you have completed each section you get an AQA certificate.

At the end of the HPP you have a record of your House Project journey and AQA certificates to use when you apply for jobs or college courses.

### Example 1 - Sam's portfolio from the residential trip

After the trip Sam put things in her portfolio:

- Pictures of the activities and captions 'I'd never done climbing before. I loved it and I'm going to start going to my local climbing wall.'
- The budget sheet for the trip and comments 'We saved £100 by shopping around for food, getting a better deal for transport and so we are saving this for the next residential.'
- A diary and comments on what went well and what the team would do differently next time.



Keely



Byron, Jodie, Marshall

### Example 2 - Sam's T-Shirt business

Sam made and sold T-Shirts to raise money for charity for a community event. This is what she put in her portfolio:

- Her business plan and comments
- Her email to the chair of Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) and the response
- Pictures and a video of pitching to CPP, making T-Shirt, the Mayor's event
- The flyer she made
- Her evaluation of what she learnt and how: 'I worked with the team to come up with the T-Shirt activity. I needed some help with the emails to CPP but feel more confident that I could write a formal email now... I am really proud of what we achieved. I feel much more part of the group now'
- Her facilitator's witness statement: 'Sam did an amazing job of her T-Shirt business. She wrote the business plan, pitched for the money and sold 20 T-Shirts for charity.'

### STEP 3 - My Home

You learn how to make a property into a place you can call home.

- The House Project staff will help you find somewhere safe and suitable for you that will become your home. You will get as much choice as possible about where you will live.
- You will be involved in project managing and doing work on your house. You work with the team to manage the budget for making your house into a home.
- You will get help to do as much of the work on your home as possible – painting walls for example.
- You will get a chance to learn basic DIY skills.
- You will learn how to fix things: change a plug, turn off the water if there is a leak etc.
- You will use your leaving care grant to buy furniture and anything else you need for your home.
- You will carry on working on your independence

When you are ready – not before – you will move into your home.

That's not the end of it. You carry on being part of the House Project community and continue to be supported as much or as little as you want.



Ashley

### STEP 4 - House Project Community

Each House Project has a base, somewhere you can go and spend time with your team (other young people and staff), either working on your project or chatting and having a brew.

When you join the project, you work with other young people who are leaving care. You get to know them, support each other and work together as a team. This makes leaving care 'less scary'. The people in your project are people that are there for you.

**'What I like about the House Project is everyone is family and they support each other, you have a sense of belonging in a friendship group. So, the House Project offers you so much after leaving fostering. It has helped me so much in confidence and talking to other people and helping them on the same journey as me.'**

*(Young Person - Oxfordshire House Project)*

When you have a property identified, the staff will support you to make links with people who live in your community. You will think about what you want people to know about you, how you will introduce yourself to neighbours and other people. Not everyone needs to know everything about you – you can decide what is private to you.

Once you've moved into your home, you carry on working with the House Project. You get the support you need from your friends on the project and the House Project team. You go to meetings, meet your facilitator and keep learning.

When you are ready, you graduate but stay part of the House Project for as long as you want. It is still your House Project.



# Interested in joining?

Speak to your social worker/PA/IRO/carer/adult you trust or contact us [enquiries@thehouseproject.org](mailto:enquiries@thehouseproject.org).

We would love you to apply!

## The Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM)

[CLICK TO VISIT WEBSITE](#)

There are House Projects all around the UK. Each House Project has at least one representative on the Care Leavers National Movement. The CLNM group meets to look at issues that affect young people and ways to improve the project.

The CLNM makes sure that the House Project is working for young people and that it sticks to its core values, which are that young people have **Ownership, Responsibility, Community, Homes, Interdependence, Direction and a Sense of well-being** (ORCHIDS).

The CLNM does 'peer reviews' of House Projects: young people visit and inspect each other's House Projects and see if the House Project is supporting young people to meet their ORCHIDS and to share ideas.

The CLNM looks at issues that affect or could help everyone. For example:

- What is going well in House Projects?
- What control should young people have over budgets?
- How can we provide better support for Care Leavers?
- How can we make sure young people who have not got one, know about the House Project?
- Find out more about CLNM on the [CLNM website](#) and [YouTube channel](#)




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