



THE NATIONAL  
HOUSE PROJECT

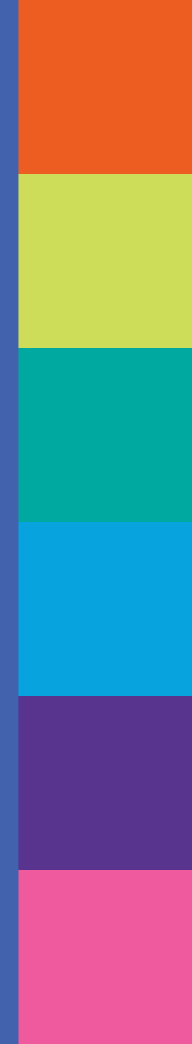
# ANNUAL REPORT

April 2020 - March 2021



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

Young Person



## ANNUAL REPORT

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This year will be remembered by many for reasons relating to Covid19 and the restrictions to everyday living for the general population. Whilst these factors have undoubtedly impacted on young people leaving care across the country their transitions into independent living have not stopped and we have seen incredible work undertaken by Local House Projects (LHP) in England and Scotland and more significantly by young people who have achieved so much in the past year.



## HP Community

### Projects

At the start of the year we had six Local Authorities (LA) who had all been previously funded through the Innovation Programme and wanted to continue with their LHP under direct membership arrangements with the National House Project (NHP). Work to finalise arrangements with Wolverhampton and Manchester saw the formal establishment of Local House Projects (LHPs) in those LAs and in partnership with Life Changes Trust in Scotland, LHPs were established in Fife, Midlothian and East Dunbartonshire taking the total to 11. Whilst there had been preliminary work undertaken with the projects in Scotland, their success is all the more remarkable as they have been established with virtual support from NHP.

### Young People

In April 2020, there were 127 young people across the various LHPs who made up our HP Community and at year end this has increased to 245. 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:

- 64 young people had moved into their own homes and this has increased significantly to 160
- Of the 160, 138 of these have remained in HP properties and 22 have moved from their HP property to other living arrangements (eg family, partners)
- There have been no tenancy breakdowns and no evictions.

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 4-year period.

The age of young people ranges from 16 – 23 with 96 young people under the age of 18 and 149 young people over the age of 18. 28 young people under the age of 18 have been supported to live in their own homes.

### Pipeline of new projects

There has been considerable interest from LAs in having a HP and whereas we knew that conversion of interest to signed up membership was a lengthy process, the impact of COVID-19 on LAs has further impacted on our ability to progress in the way we had imagined. We are currently working with Coventry and West Sussex who have had authorisation to establish HPs and Lancashire are in the process of securing sign off to proceed.

We have had virtual meetings with representatives from 27 LAs either as individual LAs or as combined arrangements. They have all shown interest in the House Project approach and are at different stages of discussions within their respective LA.

Additionally, we have had exchange of correspondence with a further 7 LAs but these contacts have yet to develop to a meeting.

Three LAs indicated that they did not want to pursue the development of a House Project with one LA suggesting they did not have sufficient numbers to make it work. It is difficult to understand this reasoning but this was an internal decision after we had shared our approach. We have reflected on the information that we share in the pre implementation phase and whilst we have been keen to share how this approach works well for those young people who are often described as the 'most challenging' (and therefore represents the greatest saving

potential) we need to be clearer in our messaging that this is a cogent evidence-based approach that can work for all young people leaving care.

To date we have not focused on a 'hard sell' for LA sign up as interest in the main has derived from professional connections or contacts from people who have come across our work. This has helped to develop a 'movement' approach where people are driven by a desire to be a part of what is happening, but we need to convert interest and ensure growth. We reported to our Board in September that due to Covid we would establish 5 projects this year and this experience of lower than anticipated conversion should inform projections for future numbers of projects.



## NHP Support to projects

### Community of Practice (COP)

Prior to lockdown at the end of March 2020, we had been visiting projects on a monthly basis and bringing all project staff together on a monthly basis in Crewe for COP. We changed these arrangements and all meetings became virtual. We had been meeting with individual projects on a fortnightly basis and separated COP into separate monthly meetings for Facilitators and Project Leads.

Having consulted with LHP staff we have now agreed the following arrangements:

- Monthly consultation with individual LHPs
- Fortnightly meetings with Project Leads
- Monthly COP to focus on House Project Programme (HPP) and the groupwork element of the programme as well as any themes that emerge. Given that these meetings continue to be virtual we have grouped projects together and run the meetings several times to enable people to have the space to discuss their work.

The COP meetings have a varied agenda and enable staff to talk about their successes and challenges and share ideas. They also offer support to staff who are finding it challenging to work in a project that is based on bringing young people together when they have not been allowed to meet.

A number of meetings are dedicated to sharing good practice and looking at the work that young people have provided for the HPP modules. There is some great work being done but what had become apparent was that staff had become very focused on young people completing the modules and less focussed on the experience they were having in completing this. This is understandable as there are a number of things that young people can do on their own, such as the independence module, but this led to young people feeling that they were just being given tasks to complete. Staff also reported feeling disheartened about not being able to get young people together and have struggled to be able to think creatively about things.



In order to reinvigorate projects, we asked each of them to bid for up to £1k to do something innovative and exciting with their young people to help them manage during the pandemic. Projects were able to pitch for up to £1k to do something that:

- Enabled the LHP community to sustain and build on their relationships
- Reduced isolation and loneliness
- Improved young people's emotional health and well-being.

The money was intended to generate interest and excitement and to add value, and to quote Krystal at our 2019 conference 'bring a bit of hope and joy' into young people's lives. Whilst the pitches from young people were great and led to everyone feeling reinvigorated, the lockdown restrictions meant that very few of the activities were able to take place and we will need to revisit this.

## House Project Programme (HPP)

The HPP is not a traditional learning programme but is instead a series of activities designed to provide experiences that help to equip young people with the skills, confidence and knowledge to live independently. Positive, consistent, and trusting relationships between staff and young people are the foundation to its success and given the poor educational experience of many children in care it is important that it does not appear to them to be like 'school' either in design or delivery.

However, with a desire to have their developments and achievements recognised and acknowledged and to give the programme credibility it was accredited by AQA. This necessitates having work produced to a recognisable standard, checked and signed off. This inevitably led to the introduction

of language and behaviours that took it down a 'school' route. It was unfortunate that this occurred at the same time as lockdown and that project staff who couldn't physically meet with young people let alone do activities in the way that they had planned previously, started to give young people 'work to do' to achieve the 'learning outcomes' that would then be 'moderated' and 'verified'. All of this has taken the HPP away from its origins.

Given that HPP stands alongside ORCHIDS as our practice framework, it is integral to everything that staff do with young people and we have therefore revisited the HPP to make it attractive to project staff and young people alike. We have taken the decision not to recruit an education officer, not only because this reinforces the view of this being a school approach, but because the Practice Leads are best placed to support project staff with the HPP and to split the role would reduce their capacity to manage and direct. As part of our recruitment of Practice Leads, we will factor in the capacity required to fulfil this function.

In order to refocus the HPP on a series of shared activities we have explored the introduction of social pedagogy to the HPP approach. Social pedagogy aims to provide nurturing conditions that support human growth in two directions, towards independence and towards interdependence. It involves a holistic approach to the young person as an individual and in a social context, the use of personal and professional aspects of the worker and the use of shared activities as a medium for building relationships.

As part of this review process the guides for staff and young people to access have been revised and some recent amendments to the programme have simplified the language and processes on the online system to make this clearer and more accessible.

This change of direction required a refocusing of our consultancy support and we have commissioned Ronnie Woods (bio) to support us in the development and delivery of a programme for project staff. With a keen focus on developing the role of the facilitator he has already started interviewing facilitators to get a real understanding of their work. His practice recordings will be added to the website when completed. These changes in approach have been fully supported and embraced by the project staff.

Over the course of the year young people have continued to make progress on the HPP. AQA has been positive with regards to the administration of the programme and the quality of submissions and young people have been delighted to receive their certificates from AQA.

It is fair to say that whilst projects continue to deliver against the HPP some are less good at recording this on the system with varying degrees of evidence for young people's portfolios. We continue to work closely with projects to support and guide them with the HPP and it is hoped that the recent changes to the online system will make this much more accessible and user-friendly for young people and staff.





## Psychological Services

NHP commissioned 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. We have used much of this time in providing further trauma-informed training to projects in clusters throughout January and February 2021.

It is a requirement of the Membership agreement that LHPs have access to monthly support from a Clinical Psychologist. The Psychologist does not see individual young people but supports project staff with formulations, risk management and team working. This should be in place at the commencement of the project and ideally should be sourced from existing LA arrangements. Projects have struggled to access local psychologists and even within existing commissioning arrangements there have been delays and additional associated costs. As a result, 9 of the 11 LHPs have

subsequently commissioned Changing Minds to deliver this service to them and whilst this is a good outcome, we know that it is both time consuming and more expensive for the LA to spot purchase.

NHP have developed a central contract with Changing Minds so that the Psychology input can be provided at a lower unit cost to the LA and without the protracted commissioning process that would result from a spot purchasing arrangement. We therefore strongly advise that the LA purchase this in addition to the first-year membership which will ensure the provision is available at the outset, is of good quality and hence will set the foundations for delivering a safe and informed service. We cannot mandate projects to use Changing Minds and those that choose not to need access to a similar resource at the same frequency. For those that do use Changing Minds in the first year they can then make an informed decision as to whether to continue in year two or make alternative arrangements.

## Education, Training and Employment (ETE)

Whilst to date we have focused on the HPP approach we have more recently reviewed activities that support pathways into Education, Training and Employment (ETE) once the young people have finished the HPP. We have amended the self-assessment document to increase the focus on ETE pathways. We will also review the Business Event activity in the HPP once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. We have piloted meetings with the Virtual School/Careers as part of monthly consultation with projects; an initial session with Wolverhampton went well and we have discussed involving them in future consultations 2-3 times a year.

## 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 and was highlighted as a challenge in the Evaluation report. Not only is it a stumbling block to LAs signing up but once established, the availability and timing of access has been critical to the success of

the projects both in terms of outcomes for young people and LA budgets as potential savings are considerably reduced if young people are not able to move in a timely manner.

As we engage new LAs 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. Furthermore, it is an expectation that they sit on the LHP steering groups and can plan and forecast when properties are required. There is evidence that this is working for the majority of new LHPs. In development work with Coventry and Lancashire stakeholder engagement events included sessions for housing providers and in Fife, housing providers are taking the learning from the project to develop the wider approach of accommodation to all young people leaving care.

Those Housing providers that fed into the Evaluation report were positive about being involved with their LHP and recognised the preparation and support that went into young people being good tenants. We will continue to ensure engagement of housing providers at all stages with the LA and will specifically ask to facilitate a session with the Strategic Housing Partnership with new LA interest.



## NHP INFRASTRUCTURE

### Staffing

Rosie joined as a Young people's Participation and Development worker shortly before the start of the year and we have since recruited Luke Fox to the role of Business Administrative Apprentice and more recently Liz Tittle to the role of Fundraising and Partnerships Manager.

We have delivered a significant work schedule with five permanent employees for most of the year and the Independent Evaluation commented on the NHP providing 'consistent and expert leadership'. Whilst we draw on the skills, expertise and capacity of consultants it has become clear that as we move forward and grow there have been challenges to our core operational and strategic capacity. In her role as Director, Sue retained responsibility for some projects and whilst this was the right thing to do at the time it has limited her capacity to look at wider strategic and stakeholder development. The bulk of support to projects has moved from Sue to Kelly over the course of the year to enable Sue to work with LAs in the process of having a HP, support the three HPs in Scotland and take on more

of a strategic role to develop the NHP. We will recruit an additional Practice Lead in 2021/22 to support the increasing number of projects.

### Office Accommodation

We rent office space from the Apollo Buckingham Health Science Campus (formerly Manchester Metropolitan University) and our contract was renewed in 2020 to allow us to remain 'in situ' until December 2021. Whilst lockdown restrictions have limited our time in the office, it has been important to retain a base and with a rental cost of £3000 pa it represents good value. The accommodation 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 on University settings.

### Website

Our new website launched in January 2021.



## FINANCE

We received £340k from membership fees from LAs and have been able to draw down £633k from a DfE Grant Award for NHP activity. This latter award has focused on sustainability and developing systems and structures for future scaling.

Our expenditure for the year has been circa £800k and whilst representing higher than usual operating costs it reflects the investment in systems that will serve us well into the future.

At the March Board in 2021 a Reserves policy was agreed. Given the commitment that young people make to their futures in the projects and the offer from NHP of a pathway into independent living, if there was ever a situation in which the Charity was not likely to continue, NHP would want to ensure that all young people had been supported in to their own homes. At any one time it takes a year to engage, support and move young people into their homes and the Board agreed a reserves policy with a financial commitment commensurate with a year of operational costs.

The end of year position for 2020/21 was a positive balance of £820k and this stands as our commitment to the reserves policy for 2021/22 (with forecasted operational costs of £815k).

In addition to the Grant Award to NHP we also received a DfE Grant award of £350k to deliver a LA platform so that each LA had a website function to engage with their care leavers. Whilst this has been built within the year it has yet to be rolled out and hence we have only drawn down £30k. DfE are to fund the roll out of the platform in 2021/22.

During the year we changed banks from Unity Trust to Triodos and opened a deposit account with Nationwide Building Society. The decision to change banks was twofold, to experience an improved service offer and to bank with an organisation with a shared value base who have a commitment to "create a society that protects and promotes quality of life and human dignity for all".

*" The Care Leavers National Movement has made me feel wanted in life, it's a community that is my safe haven. "*

## Diversification of Income Streams

The NHP approach has been supported by DfE funding since its inception in 2015. Last year income was also generated from membership fees and in order to develop further income streams we have worked with Charity Fundraising Ltd to explore the potential income from grants, trusts, foundations, corporates and High Net Worth Individuals. A strategy has been developed and we have been supported to recruit a Fundraising Manager, Liz Titley who came in to post on 1st March to lead on this work. This year we have had contact with Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and have been approached by the CHK Foundation

Additionally, we have been working with two LAs to explore how the HP approach could be developed to wider care leaver services either as an enhanced pathway planning process into independent living by accessing HPP modules or by taking a whole system approach (including partners) to children in care and care leaver services through the lens of trauma informed practice. If these are developed, they can be offered to those LAs who have a HP and will provide an additional income stream.



## Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)

The HP approach was always 'outcome focused' and at its inception the agreement to proceed was based on the principle that it couldn't cost any more than usual provision. Over time the way of working (annual cohorts) and its ability to engage young people who cost LAs high amounts of money (in placement provision) has enabled it to deliver improved outcomes and save monies. There was a CBA in the Evaluation Report 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 saving £900k in the past year, and intend to undertake a piece of work to review the CBA to LAs.



## NHP GOVERNANCE

### Charity Commission

As a registered charity we are required to 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 2020 and approved at the Trustee Board meeting in September 2020

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 four Trustees and have appointed three additional Trustees who bring different and contributory value to the Board. Information can be found on our website. We are shortly to recruit a care experienced Trustee.

Board meetings took place in June, September, December and March which have been a mixture of 'virtual' and hybrid



arrangements with some staff and Trustees based at the Crewe office.

### Strategic Leads Meetings

These meetings (formerly referred to as the 'Executive Leads') took place in November 2020 and March 2021. 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. The frequency has been subject to review but was confirmed in November as bi-annual.

### Local HP Annual Reviews

Meetings were held with each of the English LAs throughout the year and whilst these are intended to include the DCS, Head of Housing, Lead Member for Social Care, Virtual School Head and Lead for Health we had varying attendance.

The purpose is to share information (SWOT analysis by NHP) both ways to better support the projects and improve outcomes for young people. It has been agreed that next year the LA will provide an annual report on their project and NHP will provide this report and a brief update on their project.

### DfE

We have had monthly meetings with the DfE to update them on progress against the grant award and have provided project plans and three progress reports throughout the year. There will be no formal reporting requirements post March 2021 but the DfE Leads for Care Leavers are keen to continue to meet to be updated on the progress of our work.



## 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 and all staff received GDPR training in October. We had one data breach that was investigated. It was concluded that it did not reach the

threshold that would require notification to the Information Commissioners Office. This was discussed with both the Chair and Safeguarding Lead on Board.

## Innovation Unit

We have had monthly sessions with our coach from the Innovation unit throughout the year.



## CARE LEAVERS NATIONAL MOVEMENT

### Meetings

For a charity whose focus is on building relationships and being connected the restrictions to mixing socially have been significant for how CLNM has operated this year. CLNM met physically when able to do so but this was not always possible and great effort was invested by Rosie travelling to meet individual young people or by maintaining contact through social media. Planned events such as the residential and Christmas party did not take place and whilst young people missed out on these experiences, we have committed to ensuring that all members of CLNM from this past year will get the opportunity to partake in activities and experiences that they may have missed.

### Young People

With an increase in the number of projects there was necessarily an increase in representatives from these projects and more recently CLNM have been planning how to involve representatives from Scotland. Additionally, a group of committed young adults, known as the 'founders' decided to 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. As Luke Fox stood down after serving 18 months as Chairperson, Ibrahim Ali from Islington was appointed Chair and Joshua Oxley from Rotherham was appointed vice chair. We welcome

both to their new posts and thank Luke for the excellent work he has done over the 18 months.

With a new emphasis on networking they developed relationships with business partners. This includes Madlug (a luggage company who provide a pack away travel bag to a child in care for every bag that is sold) who will provide backpacks to CLNM members and a travel bag to all children in care in the LAs that have House Projects and Suited&Booted (a charity who provide clothing and preparation support for interviews) who will provide suits to CLNM members.

Over the last few months representatives have taken part in zoom sessions, webinars, campaigning, interviewing, directing and acting in films. They are regularly consulted with around the development of the NHP, in particularly website design, peer evaluations and the HPP

CLNM has four objectives and developing improved ways of working is an integral part of what they do. They have developed a sessional payment scheme and best practice monthly infographic.

Two representatives attend the NHP Board of Trustee meetings as expert advisors to provide valuable inputs around topics such as our Digital Poverty Campaign and our bespoke Care Leaver Offer for all.

### Peer Evaluation

As one of the 4 CLNM objectives, we commissioned Partnership for Young London to support the development of a Peer Evaluation process. This commenced in October with a workshop for young people and briefing to project staff. The process has been kept live and will be completed in 2021.

## Digital Poverty Campaign

Young people first raised the issue of digital poverty at a CLNM meeting in February 2020. Shortly thereafter lockdown was imposed and the impact of this was magnified for care leavers and keenly felt by the wider general population. Young people wanted to address this inequality and whilst not established as a campaigning Charity our desire to improve the 'offer' to young people fits with one of their objectives to challenge practice and this necessitates that we challenge the status quo and hold corporate parents to account.

A digital poverty campaign was initiated with a group of more than 35 charities and youth organisations coming together in an open letter to Ministers Ford, Williamson and Zahawi 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. The campaign was fronted by young people with financial support to pay them from Esmée Fairbairn.

We focused initially on ensuring that all young people in the HP community had access to a smartphone and unlimited data and developed this to ensure that all young people had a laptop/chrome book with broadband connection. Whilst these are admirable achievements young people wanted the support to be embedded and sustainable and hence wanted to change the leaving care offer to include a digital element to every LA 'local offer' so that young people received both a laptop and internet connectivity for 12 months when moving into independent living.



## Website

CLNM website relaunched in May 2020 and compliments a consistent social media footprint and opportunities to raise awareness and build the profile of CLNM and NHP.

## Local Authority Platform (care leaver support)

Following discussions with DFE in March 2020 it was agreed in August 2020 that in response to COVID-19 and lockdown restrictions we would develop a platform so that care leavers across the country could be connected in a similar way as to how care leavers are connected through the CLNM website. The platform will host LA sites and has the look and feel of a website and will enable staff to communicate with young people to 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 the young person will need. Given the delay in agreeing the award and changes to the specification the platform has not gone live this year. The DFE are to fund activity in 2021/22 to roll this out.

## IMPACT OF COVID-19

### NHP

Whilst we have maintained an office base and have used this at times throughout the year we have in the main been working from home. This has developed new ways of working and has demonstrated the value of remote support. Given our national footprint and the efficiencies gained by reduced travel this will significantly alter our way of working going forward.

In recognising the impact of the pandemic and remote working on our staff group we commissioned an input from Changing Minds (Psychology Services) to explore ways of developing emotional and mental well-being support. This approach was not initiated because things were bad but as social 'beings' we recognised that we were all impacted at various times and to various degrees and needed to look out for each other. It was a useful piece of work that focused on the three systems of emotional regulation and helped to develop a common language to describe our responses and feelings. We also made this available to project staff to support their emotional and mental health and with a common approach it has enabled NHP staff to draw on the work when supporting individual projects.

### New LA Membership

There has been considerable interest from LAs in having a HP and whilst we knew that conversion of interest to signed up membership was a lengthy process, the impact of COVID-19 on LAs has further impacted on our ability to progress in the way we had imagined. Life in a LA can be hectic at the best of times and the pandemic will only have increased the challenges with considerable new demands and a compromised workforce. Understandably

the focus has been to manage the pandemic and the availability and capacity to develop new work has been limited. We have developed our pre-implementation approach and we have completed these virtually to interested LAs.

### Young People's readiness for independent living

With a 'groupwork approach' to a series of activities and experiences to develop skills, understanding and confidence the restrictions arising from lockdown have impacted on the HPP. Staff have not been able to bring young people together in the same way and have had to engage young people in new ways. With elements of the HPP being community based these have not progressed in the way intended and hence whilst young people have worked through the HPP and have rightly moved into their homes, they have done so without the benefit of the 'whole' programme. Discussions have been ongoing as to whether they will be asked to revisit these activities and even if they do, it is uncertain if they will then submit work for AQA accreditation.

### Availability of Housing

We know that availability of properties can impact significantly on the experience for young people and responses to the pandemic have added to the demands on the potential housing stock to the projects. A drive to rightly address homelessness has increased demand on one-bedroom stock thus reducing the availability of social housing.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

### Fuel poverty

Fuel Poverty is a real challenge for young people leaving care and in partnership with the Care Leavers Covenant and Charis Grants Limited we submitted a bid to the Energy Redress Trust in November 2020. This was not successful, and we resubmitted in February 2021 with Energy Projects Plus as an additional partner. The focus of this bid was to provide; an education and learning component, white goods at the point young people move into independence, an introductory fuel voucher and an equivalent winter fuel allowance, replacement white goods on assessed need, and train staff to be able to support young people with the best suppliers of energy. There is interest in this approach from the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers who is keen to establish options to alleviate fuel poverty across the sector. Whilst we await to hear if we are successful in our bid, Charis have secured £20k from the Sustainable Living Foundation and we will be making white goods and fuel vouchers available to young people moving into their homes from mid-March 2021.

### 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 has had to be put on hold, but plans are in place for this to start as soon as they are able. 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 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.

### 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.

### Under the Sky Events

Under the Sky Events is an organisation that provides experiences for care experienced people aged 18 plus to partake in outdoor activities ranging from guided walks around cities to five-day sailing trips. We are working with them to explore options of; CLNM residentials, a residential base for projects, an overseas trip and an annual retreat for the HP community offering lifelong connections.

### 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.

### 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.

### Reconomy

Reconomy offer strong partnership working with the Wolverhampton Project. 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.

### Donald Insall

Provided two substantial donations towards the Digital Poverty Campaign and have ambitions to work with Manchester HP and provide opportunities/experiences to young people where possible. This has been challenged by COVID-19 but will be picked up post pandemic.

### Setsquare

They 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.

### ANewArc

Tony Clifford has been integral to the development of the HP approach and worked with us until January 2021.



### Ronnie Woods

Recently began to work with us and is helping us to develop a continuous learning approach within HPP. He is working with Sue and Kelly to create a 3-day programme for facilitators based around the skills and qualities that they bring to their work with young people. He will help to deliver the programme as well as help us to continue to improve and develop the HPP offer.

### Reels in Motion

Our documentary film partner. Despite lockdown restrictions we have been able to produce a number of new films made with a combination of footage that was already available (Krystal's film and the 'How does it Work' film) and animations.

### Brightstar

Developed our initial performance framework and have continued to support this whilst we have redesigned and repurposed this with Setsquare.

### Changing Minds

Have continued to support NHP and LHP's. They have provided a number of training sessions on Managing during COVID-19 and Trauma Informed Care which were well received. We are discussing future training needs with LHP staff and Changing Minds. Staff are keen to explore how to work with and support young people who misuse substances.

### Next Steps

Have provided support and expertise of AQA registration so that our HPP is developed in line with their requirements. This has worked well and AQA have continued to have a positive response to HPP.

### Peter Cox Business and Governance Advisor

Peter has continued to provide support to all matters relating to governance, finance and legal matters.

## EVALUATIONS

### Independent Evaluation Report – University of York - 2017-2020

The University of York Evaluation was published in November 2020 and highlighted the excellent work of the charity. A virtual meeting to discuss the report was held for Trustees on 09th November. York University evaluators fed back to young people virtually on 23rd November 2020 and on 4th December 2020 Rosie hosted a session with five of the CLNM founders to reflect on the evaluation. Chair of Trustees joined this session which was filmed by Reels in Motion.

The Evaluation report has been condensed to three-page summary and whilst consolidating the positive findings to ensure that good practice becomes our standard offer, we have taken the learning to improve our approach and those areas yet to be completed will inform our business plan for 2021/22.

This evaluation was picked up by CYPNow who were keen to showcase the HP approach with a keen focus on how projects work and the impact on young people. Linking in with the publication they interviewed staff, projects and young people and ran a positive feature article in their December edition. Krystal, a young person from Islington featured on the front cover and has been revelling in her newfound fame.



### Ofsted Inspection

There is a regulatory framework for the Inspection of Local Authority provision. Islington was inspected shortly before lockdown (9-14 March). Young People from their HP wanted to speak to the Inspectors and prepared their own presentation. The Ofsted judgement included the following:

*“Care leavers benefit from access to an employment specialist, who works with them to access work, apprenticeships and further education that meets their needs. The HP is an innovative and highly valued service that is making a significant difference for care leavers. The service helps young people to build confidence and to make friends for life, through preparation for independence and the provision of secure and affordable accommodation. Young people said to inspectors that being involved in the project makes them feel like they have a family”.*

This is a powerful statement and the sense of ‘having a family’ really marks the NHP approach out from any other accommodation/housing option for care leavers.

### **Psychological Evaluation – Cambridge University - Jan 2021 – March 2022**

A condition of the DfE grant award this year was to continue the monitoring and evaluation of the NHP approach and as a result we commissioned an evaluation to be undertaken by Psychologists from Cambridge University and Royal Holloway, University of London. The evaluation will focus on the impact of Trauma Informed Practice and its impact on young people leaving care in five projects. The findings will be published in Psychological journals.

### **Life Changes Trust (LCT) - April 2021 – March 2022**

Alongside the grant award to support three projects in Scotland for a three-year period LCT are commissioning an evaluation. We have been involved as a partner in all stages of the tendering process. Shortlisting has taken place and a preferred evaluator will be identified by the end of this reporting year.

### **Warwick University – 2 years**

Warwick University (with academic researchers across University and health sectors) have been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council to carry out research to support the transition of looked after young people into adulthood.

Specifically, they aim to provide learning for policymakers and practitioners to help them implement and scale up service interventions that work, so looked after young people transition into adulthood with better life chances.

Whilst they are interested in our framework and what we provide, their particular interest is 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. Integral to this is our approach to sustainability and scaling. This is a two-year study and whilst a time commitment to NHP, we have discussed how the University can support our Charity and we are interested in exploring the options of a more detailed cost benefit analysis.

### **Celebrating Successes**

There is great work happening with young people across LHP's and we are always keen to celebrate this. Wolverhampton LHP were nominated by the LA for a CYP Now Award in the Leaving Care category in October 2020. We were delighted to hear that they were successful in winning this category during an online award ceremony on 4th March 2021. This has been a great opportunity to highlight the successful partnership between Wolverhampton House Project, Reconomy and Wolverhampton Homes and how this has really benefitted young people leaving care in Wolverhampton.



## YOUNG PEOPLES FEEDBACK

So whilst Covid dominated the headlines in 2020/21 young people, projects and the Charity went about their business so that young people could live independent and fulfilling lives. We would say that the year has been successful but don't take our word for it, read some of the things that young people have been saying...

*You're with other people so you don't feel alone.*

*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.*

*I think it's just that I know I've got the support around me, if I ever do fall that I've got someone to pick me up and get me back on the right track.*

*It felt nice, yes, because it was finally it was my own space.*

*The House Project is an opportunity that hasn't been done before. It is the best scheme for moving and being independent. I have never been so serious in attending meetings like with the House Project. House Project has made me more committed and clearer in my mind. I am feeling happier as things make more sense now. I'm walking on a path towards something.*

*How did I feel?  
Very relaxed, overwhelmed that I'd got a house and excited for the times ahead.*

*Over the year we've all been friends, something good happens or we have something to say we know who to call.*

*It has put into perspective how close the real world is. They guide you through everything and it has made me realise how much I need to start preparing; I cook my own food now, do my own washing, have my own money to budget. It's definitely allowed me to grab my independence and move forward with it better.*

*My life has been saved and I can do anything that I put my mind to.*

*I text a group chat on Sunday asking if anyone can help me paint my flat on Wednesday and near enough everyone has said yes to helping me paint my flat, in which case, like, yeah, they're all trying to support me.*

*The whole project has really supported us in the prospect of moving into independence. It gives us a stable environment. We all come together & support each another.*

*House project staff are more like friends to me, although still very professional. I call this professional friendship. This is so important as it establishes a real bond without effecting their professionalism.*

*I started from the bottom & now I'm here. I'm really excited to have my own place and to decorate it the way I want.*



*If I was telling another young person about the House Project, I would say that it is a starting point for a brilliant future. The House Project offers young people a roof over your head and they teach life skills to be able to be independent after leaving the structure of fostering to become a care leaver and moving into your own place. 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.*





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