Department for Education

The House Project for young people leaving care

Evaluation report

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Jo Dixon,
Caroline Cresswell and Jade Ward,
Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of York

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Key messages

Round 2 of the House Project (HP) (funded 2017 to 2020) created the National House Project (NHP), a co-ordinating hub with charitable status, which successfully oversaw implementation of 5 new local HPs (LHPs), supported the original Stoke HP and managed sustainability and scale-up. LHPs helped young people leaving care aged 16 and over to find and move to tenancies, alongside a package of psychologically informed, intensive and individualised support to improve their emotional and practical readiness for independent living. The mixed-methods evaluation derived the following messages:

- having a national co-ordinating hub, in the form of the NHP charity, brought consistent and expert leadership, creativity and freedom to drive forward the HP innovation, independent of local authority (LA) processes. Benefits included the NHPs capacity to generate momentum and utilise knowledge and learning to enhance the HP framework and refine implementation and operational processes. The membership approach for LHPs provided opportunities for knowledge exchange, peer support, training, and practice consistency and a collective identity
- learning indicated that obtaining commitment from multi-agency partners (such as LAs, housing and health) prior to project set-up, is essential for effective and timely project implementation and operation, and the provision of support to HP young people. Early buy-in from partners was made a requirement for new LHPs
- the HP showed that effective co-production and participation support empowered young people to work collectively to design services that work with them and for them. The innovative HP groupwork and co-production approaches promoted young people's active involvement in planning their transition from care and also developing their LHPs. This also enabled them to form friendships and a peer community to support each other to leave care together
- difficulties finding properties for HP young people and with local access to the essential therapeutic input that underpins the HP, highlighted gaps in the general provision of suitable accommodation and psychological support for care leavers
- relationship-based work with care leavers relies on a consistent allocated worker with relevant skills, access to training and security in their role. The extensive LHP staff role and pilot nature of the project, which brought short-term contracts and uncertainties about continuation, impacted on staff recruitment and retention
- the HP involved young people moving to tenancies prior to age 18. To ensure that they are prepared and ready for independent living, the HP introduced procedures and expectations to deliver support, promote fidelity and protect service quality. It is vital that LHPs adhere to these, can co-ordinate property availability with young people's readiness to move, and work with PAs and carers to create contingency plans should move-in timescales alter or young people's wishes or needs change

Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents findings from an evaluation of the House Project (HP). The HP (an expansion of the Stoke-on-Trent HP pilot) was funded via Round 2 of the Department for Education's (DfE) Children's Social Care Innovation Programme from April 2017 to March 2020. It aimed to implement the HP framework for young people leaving care in 5 local authorities (LAs) and create a central hub, the National House Project (NHP), to coordinate local house projects (LHPs) and further develop and expand the approach.

The project

The HP aims to improve outcomes for young people (in accommodation, education, employment and training (EET), wellbeing, autonomy and integration) and service level outcomes (including sustainability and scale-up of the HP, standardising HP processes to improve implementation and delivery, recruiting further LAs and achieving cost savings). The HP supports young people leaving care aged 16 and over to have greater control of their transitions to independent living. The main components include help to move to their own tenancies with intensive, individualised pre and post-move support. This includes provision of a 6 to 9 month accredited modular skills development HP programme (HPP), underpinned by ORCHIDS (the HP's own framework comprising key areas for working with young people, based on the theory of self-determination) and psychologically informed practice, to improve young people's independent living skills and their tenancy and EET readiness. The NHP took over operational management from the Round 2 lead LA (Warwickshire) in 2018. It supported the initial set-up and early operation of each LHP to enable them to deliver their own projects. Each LHP has a project manager and 2 support workers (facilitators) to work with a cohort of around 10 young people. There is a strong focus on groupwork, peer support and relationships. For example, the HP works with young people to form a community of support via weekly group meetings and the Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM). For LHP staff, the monthly community of practice workshops enable peer support via knowledge sharing, training and access to the expertise of the NHP team and psychology, participation and education consultants.

The evaluation

The mixed-methods evaluation took place from May 2018 to April 2020. It comprised a process strand to understand the enablers and challenges of implementing and operating the HP, an impact strand to explore outcomes for young people and an economic strand comprising a cost benefit analysis. A counterfactual method was not possible due to low response rates from a comparison group of non-HP care leavers. Instead, a before and

after analysis was undertaken with 40 HP young people to explore the HP's contribution to change in outcomes over time, supplemented by qualitative data from young people and their HP and LA workers. Data was gathered at 3 points: baseline (HP entry); T2 (6 to 9 months later); and follow-up (data collection endpoint, December 2019), from the HP monitoring database (workbook), focus groups, interviews and surveys with NHP, LHP and LA staff, young people, NHP consultants and the housing providers. In all, data was gathered from 37 professionals, 33 interviews with young people and workbook data on 54 young people. Stoke HP young people and staff also took part in follow-up interviews.

Key findings

The HP achieved its intended service level outcomes. It was successfully operating in 4 LAs and less so in 1 by the evaluation endpoint, despite initial delays in HP set-up. All 5 LAs and Stoke have committed to continuing their HP and there was widespread interest in the HP with 2 new LAs implementing the framework and 3 more imminent at the end of the evaluation. The infrastructure for the NHP to support implementation and to develop and scale the HP was in place and key components refined, such as the newly AQA awarding body accredited HP programme (HPP) for young people's skills development, and establishing the basic requirements for new LAs wishing to join the HP. The CLNM and local meetings enabled a strong co-production approach, providing young people with opportunities to work together and contribute to HP development and promotion.

Factors that eased HP implementation and operation included having a national co-ordinating body (the NHP) to provide expertise in project set-up and delivery in LA settings. This enabled LHPs to deliver their own projects, streamlined procedures across LHPs and provided access to training and shared learning. Regular HP communication with LA strategic leads and housing providers proved to be essential to secure referrals and properties and manage timescales for move-in. Having a national profile seemed to aid buy-in by bringing a collective identity and credibility, whilst multi-agency working offered a holistic and coordinated support package for young people (including input from housing providers, psychologists, EET providers, benefits agencies and the police) and advice and training for LHP staff. A dedicated and multi-disciplinary LHP team with strengths in relationship-based and psychologically informed approaches was considered by NHP and LHP staff as critical to project effectiveness. LHP staff noted the expansive nature of their role, which involved working across sectors to support young people.

Operational challenges included early difficulties in recruiting LAs and staff prior to the NHP being in place; extended timescales for securing properties due to local availability and protracted contract arrangements; and negotiating eligibility and referral processes for HP young people, which entailed focused work to raise awareness among frontline workers. This required a careful balance to get sufficient numbers into the HP without opening it to all care leavers, as project capacity was limited. Additionally, criteria could

be narrow, involve a degree of matching, and influenced by financial viability (such as care placement type and age of referrals, which had implications for resources brought into the project and the potential cost savings to the LA).

The HP recruited 54 young people during the evaluation,14 of whom did not continue. A group of 40 was followed up between baseline and endpoint. They were representative in characteristics and histories of care leavers in their LAs and nationally. At baseline, 69% were living in foster or residential care and 26% had left their care placements. Analysis of the outcome areas in which the HP aimed to have an impact showed initial progress. This included early indications of improved wellbeing, autonomy and integration. Data from young people via the Good Childhood Index showed improved life satisfaction over time and a proxy measure of autonomy indicated that they felt better able to make decisions. Young people felt listened to and most felt part of a community and valued the support networks formed with HP young people and staff. Young people and workers also talked of the positive impact of the HP offer of a long-term home and individualised support. Just over half (53%) of the group had moved to their HP home by follow-up, thus limiting evaluation of post-move outcomes. The average age of move in was 17 and all were settling well. There was little unexpected movement and no evidence of evictions or homelessness, suggesting stability in the early months post-care. Some young people had waited 9 months or more for a HP property, due to a lack of housing availability or in some cases, young people's readiness to move. There was little evidence of improved EET participation at follow-up. While 60% were in EET, the number not in EET doubled.

The total cost of delivering the HP was £1,303,216. In the absence of a counterfactual, the cost analysis is illustrative and uses an attribution approach, which uses scenarios based on assumptions that 33% (low), 50% (medium) and 66% (high) of the benefits (outcomes) may be attributed to the HP. A return on investment (ROI) was calculated (dividing benefits by the costs). In the 50% scenario, the HP showed a positive ROI of 2 from year 3; indicating a potential saving of £2.00 for each £1.00 invested in the HP.

Lessons and implications

HP staff recommended that LA and housing leads must be on board at set-up stage to secure commitment to the project and sufficient and timely referrals and properties. LHP and LA staff cited the benefits of consistency via the NHP's experienced leadership and the HP framework, while noting that the flexibility to enable local area fit and respond to young people's needs was a key strength of the approach. Co-production and groupwork to develop young people's practical and emotional skills were considered crucial to their engagement with the HP and building peer support networks. For LHPs, the community of practice and psychological input to their work provided a deeper understanding of young people's needs and of strategies to address them. Further monitoring across LHPs will be important for tracking long-term outcomes and experiences for HP young people.

1. Overview of the project

Project context

Many care leavers experience challenges and poor outcomes during their journeys to adulthood (Stein 2012). Most take on the responsibilities of independent living aged 16 to 18, earlier in comparison to young people in the general population, who tend to leave home in their late 20s (ONS 2016). Messages from care leavers highlight experiences of isolation and loneliness post-care (Dixon and Baker 2016) and studies of marginalised adults show an over-representation of care leavers (Centrepoint 2010, MoJ 2012, NAO 2015, DfE 2016). Studies highlight the importance of safe and settled accommodation after care. Positive accommodation outcomes have been shown to compensate for earlier difficulties and are associated with education, employment and training (EET) participation and positive wellbeing (Wade and Dixon 2006, Barnardo's 2015). Studies suggest that for many care leavers, finding accommodation takes initial priority over other life areas and that securing their own tenancy is often the preferred choice over semi-independent or transitional options (Dixon et al 2015). Research also shows the benefits and importance of having at least 1 positive and reliable relationship to support young people through the transition from care to adulthood (Parry and Weatherhead 2014).

In response to these issues, the original Stoke-on-Trent House Project (Stoke HP), which took place from July 2015 to November 2016 (see evaluation report) was developed via Round 1 of the Department for Education's (DfE) Children's Social Care Innovation Programme (Innovation Programme). It recognised the role that early preparation, a stable home and consistent personalised support after care can play in improving overall outcomes for care leavers. Central to the approach was increasing young people's choice, agency and integration by empowering them to actively manage their transition and to work collectively to develop a project that understands and meets their needs. It offered scope to sustain positive long-term outcomes by offering young people the skills, confidence, peer support and opportunities to achieve them.

The current House Project (HP) was funded from April 2017 to March 2020 through Round 2 of the DfE Innovation Programme, to scale-up the Stoke HP and develop a central hub to support the expansion of the HP to a further 5 local authorities (LAs), Warwickshire, Islington, Oxfordshire, Rotherham and Doncaster. As outlined in Table 1, the LAs varied in size and type. Rankings on the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) showed high levels of deprivation in 4 of the LAs, with LA2 amongst the most deprived and LA1 amongst the 20% least deprived. This variation was reflected in the percentage of school children eligible for free school meals, where LA1 had fewer and LA2 had double the national figure (15% primary and 14% secondary), Property rental costs in the LAs also varied and were lower than the national average of £959.00 per month in all but

LA2. In Ofsted inspections (2014 for LA3 and 2017 for others), 3 LAs were rated good for leaving care services, LA1 required improvement and LA4 was judged outstanding.

Table 1. The House Project Round 2 local authorities

	Type of LA	Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking (IMD)	Looked after children (LAC) and leaving care (LC) services Ofsted ratings	Primary and secondary school children eligible for free school meals	Average regional rental costs 2019
1	County	124th (amongst 20% least deprived)	LAC - Requires improvement LC - Requires improvement	9% (primary) 7 % (secondary)	£701 per month
2	London Borough	26th most deprived	LAC - Good LC - Good	29% (primary) 34% (secondary)	£1,613 per month
3	County	35th most deprived	LAC - Good LC - Good	11% (primary) 9 % (secondary)	£845 per month
4	Metropolitan Borough	52nd most deprived	LAC - Requires improvement LC - Outstanding	17% (primary) 16% (secondary)	£633 per month
5	Trust	42nd most deprived	LAC - Good LC - Good	16% (primary) 15% (secondary)	£633 per month

Source: Ofsted Inspections, Average UK Rental Costs (Statistica Research Department 2020) and IMD

The number of care leavers aged 17 to 21 ranged from 206 in LA4 to 456 in LA1. The proportion aged 17 to 18 who were NEET in HP LAs was higher than the national figure of 30%, with the exception of LA3, and ranged from 22% to 44%. The percentage of care leavers aged 19 to 21 who were NEET was also higher than the national figure of 39%, with the exception of LA3 (32%). All HP LAs had higher proportions of NEET care leavers compared with young people in the general population (6.2% of all 16 to18 year olds and 13% of 19 to 24 year olds in 2018). As was the case nationally, most care leavers aged 19 to 21 in the HP LAs were in accommodation judged suitable, mostly in independent living (35%), followed by staying put with former foster carers (26%). See Tables 8 and 9 in Appendix 3 for further details of the LAs and their leaving care populations.

Project aims and intended outcomes

The HP was funded via Round 2 of the Innovation Programme. The bid was led by Stoke on Trent but responsibility transferred to a new lead LA, Warwickshire, at the start of the project in April 2017. Three out of 5 potential LAs decided not to proceed and new LAs

were identified by October 2017. This, and the longer than anticipated time taken to formalise the management procedures, resulted in initial delays to the project becoming operational. This was resolved after Warwickshire appointed the permanent hub managers, who came into post in May 2018, which brought increased momentum to HP operation and scale-up. The hub was incorporated as the NHP charity in August 2018 and operational management formally transferred to the NHP in December 2018.

The HP aimed to build on learning from the Stoke HP and scale up by rolling it out to a further 5 LAs. It also aimed to create a vehicle for steering and accelerating development of the approach through the establishment of a central co-ordinating hub. The main aims and components of the HP included:

- a national hub to coordinate and scale up the HP and create a community of practice to provide support and training to all HP staff. The national hub subsequently became the National House Project (NHP) charity[1]
- local House Projects (LHP) in 5 LAs each with a NHP trained project manager and at least 2 direct support workers to provide intensive support[2]
- recruitment of around 10 young people in the process of leaving care per cohort in each LHP to receive intensive support to move into a property and ongoing groupwork and professional support to graduate from LHPs after 20 months or so
- a young person centred, co-production approach to enable young people to make decisions about LHP development and their own journeys, facilitated by local group meetings and the Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM) steering group
- use of the in-house developed ORCHIDS framework, which provides a psychologically-informed, holistic plan for working with young people, aiming to empower them to meet the goals of Ownership, Responsibility, Community, Home, Independence, Developmental direction and Sense of wellbeing
- a learning programme, now called the House Project Programme (HPP) to engage young people in skills development opportunities to help them prepare for independent living, improve skills to become a good tenant and for employment.[3]

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[1] Further information on the NHP's activities, staff team and affiliates, and the associated Care Leavers National Movement, can be found here: https://thehouseproject.org/

[2] HP support workers had different titles across the LHPs. They are referred to as facilitators in this report.

[3] The HPP is a 13-module accredited programme for all HP young people, offering support to gain the experiences, skills and knowledge for successful outcomes. It was in the pilot stages of development during the evaluation and was being fully integrated into the 5 LHPs by December 2019, with plans for further development and refinement. It is envisaged that the HPP will be made a requirement of the HP model for all LHPs. It is designed to be delivered flexibly over 6 to12 months, to suit the needs of young people and fit around their other EET commitments.

- working with a range of housing providers to identify and secure tenancies
- access to the NHP consultants (psychologist, education and young people's participation experts) to inform the development of the support package for young people as well as staff training and development
- achieve cost savings by pooling the accommodation and support budgets for young people, in order to provide personalised packages of support (beyond 18 where needed) and reducing costs associated with poor outcomes in longer term

Through these components, the HP intended to achieve the following outcomes:

For young people:

- improved accommodation stability and satisfaction
- increased and sustained participation in EET
- improved personal and social networks
- improved confidence, autonomy and wellbeing

For services and the HP:

- more efficient use of resources through pooled budgets and cost benefits of improved outcomes
- improved project set-up procedures
- sustainability of the HP as an effective option for care leavers
- scalability and sustainability informed by a strong evidence base

Project activities

To achieve its intended outcomes, the HP has completed the following activities:

- created the NHP to recruit, coordinate and support new LHPs. This was central to the establishment of standard approaches, processes and templates to enable quicker local set-up, share best practice between the LHPs, deliver training and create a blueprint for easier replication and scaling of the HP
- implemented and supported the development of the HP in the 5 LAs and continued to support the Stoke HP
- delivered HP staff training in ORCHIDS and, via the input of the NHP clinical psychologist, training in trauma informed practice, attachment and self-determination theories and the use of formulations for holistically assessing and understanding young people's stories to plan bespoke support to meet their needs
- supported young people, through co-production techniques and via the CLNM, to take an active role in shaping their LHP and the overall NHP framework and embedded the groupwork approach for supporting young people to work together to develop their practical and emotional skills and form a peer community

- provided young people with bespoke, intensive 1-1 support from facilitators
- developed and delivered the HPP and ORCHIDS framework for the first cohort of 54 young people, to prepare them to manage their transitions from care to a HP property and increase their ability live independently after graduating from the HP
- identified and secured houses and flats from a range of housing providers to set-up tenancies for 21 young people who had moved into their HP homes
- achieved costs savings through pooled budgets and reduced costs associated with accommodation, housing breakdowns and poor outcomes

At the end of the evaluation, the NHP had recruited several new LHPs, with 2 becoming operational during the Round 2 funded timeframe. The DfE has awarded further funding to enable the NHP to continue to scale the HP, develop the digital infrastructure to connect care leavers and the LHPs and to build the capacity and quality of the service to support the ongoing design and rapid roll out of the HP.

Changes to planned activities included:

- the HP did not become fully operational until December 2018, later than planned. Time and effort focused on recruiting new LAs as 3 were unable to continue, and the transfer of HP management from the lead Round 2 LA (Warwickshire) to the newly formed NHP hub. Momentum picked up considerably after the creation of the NHP, it's gaining charitable status, and setting up systems to mobilise the LHPs. All staff and most young people had joined the 5 LHPs by the end of 2018
- 1 LHP adopted a house-share approach instead of individual properties
- an original intention to operate a Staying Close component (a specific approach for residential care leavers to stay close to former carers), was not taken forward

The project's theory of change

The HP theory of change was developed by the Stoke HP team (Figure 4, Appendix 2). A workshop, facilitated by the evaluation team and attended by managers and facilitators from the 5 LHPs and the NHP team, took place in 2019 to review the theory of change and HP activities and outcomes in light of project developments. A revised theory of change that focused on outcomes for young people in the short, mid and long-term, was co-developed using a logic model (Figure 5, Appendix 2). The workshop identified potential risks to the success of the HP (such as a lack of buy-in from young people and LAs and failure to secure sufficient properties that met young people's needs). Enablers included the expertise, commitment and outward facing ethos of the HP, the ability to build relationships with external partners and the young person-led approach. At the time of reporting, the revised theory of change was under review by the NHP and LHPs.

2. Overview of the evaluation

The evaluation began in May 2017, however, due to time taken during the first 13 months of the HP in recruiting LAs and HP young people, data collection took place from June 2018 to December 2019. Comprising 3 strands, it aimed to: describe the HP and how it was operating in practice to understand factors necessary for delivering a sustainable and transferable project; explore its impact on outcomes for young people and on their experiences and those of staff supporting them; and explore costs associated with the project. Co-production with young people was incorporated into the evaluation to align to the overall aim of the HP, to empower young people to take a central role in all HP activities. This included peer research methods, whereby care leavers received training and support to conduct interviews with their peers. The training was delivered in August 2019 by the University of York evaluation team to a group of young people who applied and were recruited from the HP and DfE Staying Close projects.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions for each strand are summarised below:

Process strand

- was the HP implemented as planned and how did it operate in practice across different settings – what common factors supported success and what is the added benefit of the hub?
- what are the recommendations for replication and sustainability?

Impact strand

- what were the characteristics and circumstance of those participating in the HP?
- did the HP approach lead to improved outcomes for HP care leavers? Such as:
    - greater post-care accommodation stability and satisfaction
    - greater participation in EET
    - improved wellbeing (using the Good Childhood Index (GCI and Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) measures)
    - improved social integration and relationships
- what were young people's experiences of the HP and the support they received?

Economic strand

- what was the cost of delivering the HP in relation to service as usual and what savings occurred, based on the avoidance or reduction of poor outcomes?

Evaluation methods

A mixed-methods research design underpinned by a participatory approach was used, incorporating a counterfactual, which involved the recruitment of a comparison group of care leavers. However, a low response rate meant that it was not possible to include the comparison group (see limitations section below). Process and impact data was gathered from a range of participants (see Table 2) across 3 timepoints:

- baseline – when young people enter the LHPs
- time 2 (T2) - a second data collection point 6 to 9 months post-baseline
- follow-up - data collection endpoint (in December 2019)

Table 2. Evaluation data collection methods and response rates

Data collection and respondents	Baseline	T2	Follow-up
Interviews with 2 NHP officers, 5 LA senior managers, and a former Stoke HP manager	8	-	3
Interviews with 4 NHP consultants	4	-	3 (75%)
Interviews with 5 LHP managers	5	-	5
Interviews with 10 LHP facilitators	10	-	10
Online survey of 5 HP housing providers	-	-	3 (60%)
Online survey of 35 social workers or personal advisers of HP young people at endpoint	-	-	7 (20%)
Interviews with the Stoke HP manager and facilitators	-	-	3
Focus groups with young people in 5 LHPs and CLNM	5	5	1
Peer researcher-led interviews with HP young people	-	-	33 (83%)
GCI measure of wellbeing completed at both points	31		31
SWEMWBS measure completed at both points	30		30
HP Workbook (child data tracker) HP group	-	54	54
HP Workbook (child data tracker) comparison group	40	-	0
Online survey of 40 comparison group young people	-	9 (22%)	5 (12%)
Stoke HP cohort housing and EET outcomes data	-	-	5 (50%)
Data on local spend and costs gathered from 5 LHPs	-	-	4 (80%)
Follow-up interviews, GCI and SWEMWBS with original Stoke HP cohort 4 years after entering the HP	-	-	5 (50%)

Source: Evaluation data. (Percentages are given where response rates were lower than 100%)

Changes to evaluation methods

There were 2 changes to the evaluation methods:

- the original evaluation plan involved a quasi-experimental, difference in difference design, involving a counterfactual comprised of care leavers who were eligible for the HP but who were not recruited to the first cohort. This was not carried out as planned, due to difficulties in gathering sufficient data for a viable comparison group. As an alternative, a logically constructed counterfactual, involving before and after comparison for the intervention group was used (for example, comparing outcomes at follow-up to baseline circumstances for the HP cohort). This approach was supplemented by qualitative data and by comparing evaluation data to nationally available data on outcomes for care leavers for the same years as the intervention, to explore the likely contribution of the HP to observed outcomes. The lack of a viable comparison group also affected the costs analysis. In the absence of a counterfactual, the economists used a low-high attribution model

- the DfE requested an additional component to provide an update on the longer-term outcomes of the Stoke HP. This included interviews with 3 project staff and 5 young people from cohort 1 some 3 to 4 years after joining the Stoke HP

Limitations of the evaluation

Overall, the evaluation plan proved appropriate for understanding the factors that had supported implementation and early impact of the HP. Difficulties in obtaining data from a comparison group as outlined above prevented a counterfactual. Limitations to the evaluation, are discussed in Appendix 3 and summarised below:

- difficulties gathering follow-up data for the comparison group via the workbook and a low response to online surveys, led to insufficient data for this group, preventing a full comparative impact analysis. As described above, before and after analysis of outcomes was carried out for the HP cohort, supplemented by evaluation interview data and nationally available data for care leavers
- time taken to formalise management procedures, set up the NHP and the project becoming operational in the LHPs reduced the timescales for the HP intervention and the length of the evaluation follow-up period. The evaluation captured data for 18 months of the HP operation, however, almost half of the HP young people had not moved into their HP homes at the follow-up timepoint and those who had moved in, had been in their homes between 2 weeks and 9 months. The evaluation therefore is limited to findings on early impact and outcomes of the HP support and accommodation experiences for some young people and on the pre-move support only for around half of the group

3. Key findings

This section addresses the research questions for each of the 3 evaluation components (sections A to C) and presents findings from the Stoke HP follow-up (section D).

A. Process findings

Service level outcomes

Findings here are based on a thematic analysis of data from the HP operational phase collected from HP stakeholders at data collection endpoint. This included analysis of 22 interviews and 10 surveys (see Table 2 above). Findings also drew on data gathered from interviews conducted with the Stoke HP manager and 2 facilitators, to provide a longer-term perspective on learning and impact associated with embedding the HP approach (please see Appendix 6 for supporting quotes and detail on process findings).

The HP in practice

Data from stakeholders showed that the HP successfully achieved its service level outcomes. The NHP charity and Board of Trustees were established, along with the CLNM. The project was operating in 4 LAs as planned, and in 1 LA less successfully, due to difficulties engaging with the proposed HP approach. All 5 committed to continuing the HP. A further 2 LAs were implementing the HP with at least 3 more imminent during the evaluation timeframe. Protocols for working with a range of NHP consultants (education, participation, business development and therapeutic experts) were in place and reported to be working well, with recent plans to embed their approaches in the NHP agreements with new LAs. The NHP took on more staff and developed procedures and contractual agreements to standardise processes and clarify expectations for new LAs to assist buy-in to the HP approach. This included the development of a proforma for potential LAs to self-assess their readiness for the HP (see Appendix 9).

The HP support package for young people was underpinned by the psychologically informed ORCHIDS framework and the newly accredited HPP, which was in the final stages of development at evaluation end. These brought evidence informed approaches and consistency to the HP offer and were co-produced with NHP and LHP staff and young people. The community of practice sessions, which took place monthly for all LHP staff, were reported by staff and the NHP officers as providing an effective forum for delivering best practice training (see Appendix 7 for detail), enabling practitioner peer-to-peer support and learning, and building on experience to streamline operational procedures. The Stoke HP recruited a sixth cohort and was working with 2 cohorts each year. Other LHPs recruited a second cohort and 4 LAs gave commitment to extending HP staff contracts. Negotiations continued with 1 LA regarding sustainability, and with other LAs in England and Scotland as part of the NHP business plan to expand the HP.

The HP young people

The 5 LHPs became operational between July and October 2018, with young people mostly entering the LHPs between August 2018 and March 2019. Each LHP aimed to recruit around 10 young people to their first cohort and numbers varied from 8 in LA1 to 14 in LA3 (see Table 9, Appendix 3).

In all, 54 young people entered the HP during the evaluation timeframe. Of these, 14 left early, most due to disengagement (7) though 4 were not ready to live in a HP property due to high needs or difficulties. One left as they did not wish to wait 6 months for a HP property and 2 had positive moves out of the HP. NHP officers noted that these young people were able to maintain contact with the HP should they wish. Of the 54 who had entered the project, 21 (39%) had moved into their HP home by follow-up. The LHPs continued to work with housing providers to find properties for the remaining HP group.

The HP cohort was representative of care leavers nationally, in terms of reasons for entering care and general characteristics (see Table 8 and DfE 2018). There were slightly fewer girls than boys in the full HP group (48% and 52% respectively) and the age at baseline ranged from 15 to 18 years (mean 16.5). The majority identified as white British (74%), with 10% identifying as Black and 4% as Asian, reflecting national data for looked after children. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) accounted for 6% of the HP group, as was the case nationally, and all came from 1 LHP.

On average, HP young people had been in care for 4 years at baseline (with a mean age of 11.9 years at entry to care). There was evidence of placement instability whilst in care ranging from 1 to 21 placements (a mean of 5.6 moves). Baseline monitoring data (see Table 9, Appendix 3), showed that 33% (13) had physical health difficulties and 10% (4) had learning difficulties. At entry to the HP, 41% (22) of young people were in foster care, 28% (15) were in residential care and 6% (3) lived with family. A further 26% (14) had left their final care placements to live in semi-independent accommodation and hostels.

Data for the comparison group (40) indicated that it was generally well matched to the HP group. For example, the mean age at baseline was 16.7 years, the mean age at entry to care was 12.2 years and the mean number of placements was 6.7.

What contributed to HP service level outcomes?

Interviews and surveys identified several factors as important to the successful operation and sustainability of the HP. Findings draw on LHP, LA and NHP staff and consultant perspectives on what worked well and what posed a challenge for the HP and, aligned to this, what had an impact on experiences for HP young people.

NHP – the added value of a national, coordinating hub

There was evidence from staff views and the level of progress achieved, that the creation of the NHP had generated momentum in the implementation and scale up of the HP. The HP workforce placed value on having the central hub and consistent, experienced leadership provided by the NHP. They highlighted the NHP as an important factor for coordinating HP implementation, easing delivery of the HP approach in the LAs and improving the support for young people. Staff indicated that the NHP brought all LHP teams under 1 banner to engrain a sense of "camaraderie" and, for 1 LHP manager, "a sense of belonging and community, that sharing of ideas… sharing our wealth of knowledge and abilities to make things better on the whole for all young people." One LHP manager commented that this "authenticated" the project by bringing that "national recognition that we're all working together for the best outcomes for our young people." A facilitator noted that the national profile also "benefits young people, as being a national project makes them feel part of something bigger and provides them with opportunities to widen their connections for peer support." The national profile was seen by 1 LHP manager as instrumental in promoting the HP framework going forward, "as a way of practice" rather than another discrete local project.

The monthly NHP-led community of practice meetings were appreciated by LHP managers and facilitators as important forums for peer consultation, "swapping notes", sharing learning and best practice based on successes and challenges and for receiving wide ranging training to increase their knowledge and skills to support young people. It was also seen as an avenue for the LHPs to comment on and shape the HP framework. There had been some initial frustration with NHP activities, which had revolved around the perceived risks of being too prescriptive and the short timescales for delivering activities. LHP staff had welcomed opportunities to feedback to the NHP and influence further development of the approach. LHP staff also valued being able to draw on the NHP team's expertise at monthly consultation meetings with LHPs or being able to "just phone if I'm unsure of anything, if we need some additional training." (LHP manager).

The NHP provided the main vehicle for sustainability and replication of the HP, via streamlining of processes and documents and building the business case to engage new LAs. The NHP team were seen as experts in the field and a safe pair of hands, which was considered vital for reassuring LAs when bringing in a third sector organisation to work with their care leavers. The NHP was also able to bring an element of creativity and freedom in how the project evolved, without being dependent on an individual LA. The independence of the NHP was seen by NHP and LHP staff as useful in steering an innovative project and overcoming some of the obstacles of LA systems. For example, NHP officers commented on the risk averse culture of LAs that, whilst protecting young people, did not best prepare them for independent adulthood. Their experience of working in LAs helped them to address some of the concerns around adopting a project that enabled young people to take more control over their move to independent living.

Commitment of LA strategic leads

LHP managers stressed the importance of making time to focus on establishing links and gaining that crucial commitment from their LA strategic leads and corporate parents. This was seen as essential to embedding the HP framework within the local area and gaining buy-in from housing partners, allowing LHPs to drive the delivery and sustainability of the project forward or regroup to reflect on what they could learn from to improve local fit.

> "So much effort and time and everything [went] into setting it up - getting the right links and services involved and now we've got to a stage where it feels like we have been recognised." (LHP manager).

The climate of uncertainty within LA children's services, particularly in respect to changes in senior management and doubts over forward-funding and sustainability of new initiatives, had at times deflated the LHP workforce. Those involved in the delivery of the HP emphasised the wider value of obtaining the expressed commitment of strategic leads which, LHP managers felt, had encouraged the LHP teams as it validated the impact of their work. LA leads equally noted that recognition and endorsement of the project's potential benefit for young people from Directors of Children's Services had provided that "real sense of momentum" for the project. The impact of gaining LA commitment to the HP was evidenced through its acceptance as a core area of work within the leaving care service and also permanent contracts for some HP managers and facilitators being agreed towards the end of the Round 2 funding. The economic climate within LAs, however, meant that despite strong commitment to the HP, sustainability had only been possible for some because of Innovation Programme funding. As 1 LA lead explained, "without that DfE funding, I think we may have seen the project close after the first year because there's been delays. We're going again because of the DfE funding".

Implementing the HP in different LAs

LHP managers felt that in setting up the first HP in their LAs they had the necessary flexibility to adopt the HP framework and adapt it to meet their local circumstances. This, together with the ability to draw on learning from the Stoke HP pilot and the other LHPs, was, as a LHP manager highlighted, the "best of both worlds". Another explained;

> "[Being] a framework means that you can tweak and change it in each authority. [It] gives each authority [and] each worker a guideline of how to run the project with the young people, but it also gives us a little bit of autonomy and how we can make the project work within our area. We're all coming from different local areas with different pressures from different people in different ways…, that message is quite important."

LHP managers highlighted the benefits of a coordinating body, common processes and of drawing on direct advice of the NHP hub and HP consultants with regards to the gaps in practice. Nevertheless, LHP staff felt that LHPs should retain discretion for local adaptability and take the lead on discrete work packages (such as working with local EET

schemes) to enable them to make the most of the local offer and to tailor the support to the needs of the local care leaver population. To this end, the LHP workforce and some LA leads welcomed the flexibility within the HP approach and cautioned against the development of a more rigid framework that stipulated key components that LHPs must follow to meet fidelity to an ascribed model, “I appreciate that the NHP has to be able to demonstrate its value by adapting and changing and doing some of those things, but it jars against some of the stuff that we would do back at the ranch.” (LA Lead). It was suggested by the NHP officers that as the HP is scaled up across the country, the development of regional sub-groupings will be beneficial for the LHP workforce to consult and share learning regarding distinct issues that arise in their local areas and regions.

The fit between the HP and the existing LA service offer

LHP managers talked of the challenge of embedding the project alongside existing services that focused on accommodation for care leavers. The idea of continuity with existing LA service offers or plans to consolidate the existing support for care leavers (including accommodation and independence), was considered an incentive for most LAs to buy in to the HP. However, as the HP was a new framework combining a pre- and post-move support package and accommodation, LHP staff felt that there was a “lot of relearning” for those managing existing services. For example, LAs had in place a range of pre-existing service-level agreements with multi-agency partners (including housing providers, benefits agencies and EET providers). LHP managers noted that difficult conversations could arise with these partners in gaining their buy-in to the HP as they were effectively asking them to assist with provision for a select group of 10 or so young people, when there was a wish “to do the best for all young people under our service.” One LHP manager highlighted the dilemma posed by the LHP being deemed “a platinum standard” service within the leaving care offer. They noted that whilst this accreditation was welcomed, the HP was starting to be seen by practitioners as a gateway to accommodation support for all care leavers though it was not suited to all, or had sparked questions about equity of support for all care leavers in the area, given the level of individualised support and access to post-care accommodation offered to HP young people.

There were examples of the HP aligning with existing provision, including, as a LHP manager highlighted, closer working with the virtual school head (VSH) to ensure greater alignment between the HPP and young people’s Pathway Plans and personal education plans (PEPs) to ensure everyone was working cohesively to provide opportunities to support a young person’s goals and skillset and avoid any duplication of activity. The education consultant, who had contributed to the development of the HPP, commented on the importance of involving VSHs across all LHPs going forward, to help them understand how the HPP contributes to young people’s skills and learning and to galvanise local support and opportunities for young people.

Communication with children's social care professionals

A key learning point that LHP managers reflected upon for cohort 2 in their respective areas, was the importance of strengthening communication with social work teams and sustaining communication with individual practitioners working with HP young people. Some LHP managers commented that a lack of initial contact with social work teams had stalled project momentum. They suggested that building relationships with social work and leaving care teams, carers and independent reviewing officers (IROs) was essential to delivering the project, obtaining referrals and maximising support for HP young people. LHP staff advised investing time to establish such links early in the LHP set-up so that stakeholders were clear on who the project was aimed at, what it provided and how it worked alongside the wider children's social care workforce, as a LHP manager noted;

> [It's about] getting in there early when new social workers come on board, and making sure they are aware and they back their young people, because it's really important that they are part of their young person's journey on the House Project."

Latterly, LHPs had strengthened communication with social work teams, to publicise the HP, clarify its aims and what support can be expected of the LHP, and the reciprocal expectations of social workers and PAs. This included drawing up terms of reference and joint recording systems to ease working relationships and communication. This renewed approach had been reinforced by gaining the support of LA managers and IROs to encourage wider engagement and, as a HP staff member noted, a "buzz" around the project, which had proved useful given the turnover within children's social care, with some LHPs needing to re-sell the parameters of the HP support offer.

LHP managers also advised establishing firmer relationships with carers, due to the pushback that had tended to be received during cohort 1 recruitment, where some carers were uncomfortable with the HP becoming involved with young people so early. The LHP facilitators noted how gaining the buy-in and interest of a young person's social worker or PA and carers can facilitate the young person's engagement in the HP and assist a coordinated approach to planning and supporting their leaving care journey. One noted, "I think it's really important just to keep the communication up [with] social workers... key workers and the foster carers…as we're all part of the same team really."

Establishing eligibility and recruitment processes

A number of factors emerged as important for recruitment of subsequent cohorts.

- Recruitment

Recruitment of cohort 1 had taken up a lot of LHP staff time, largely due to a lack of awareness of the HP amongst social work teams, as discussed. Some facilitators talked of spending several days going through "massive spreadsheets" of potential young people. The importance of clear communication of the HP support components was

highlighted, as there were signs that LA practitioners had not understood the intentions of the project and had initially expressed caution at referring their young people. For example, some social workers were unaware of the intensive programme of support that occurs before young people move into a designated HP property. LHP managers began to develop new strategies for future cohorts, such as promotional emails to social workers, setting out the criteria, requirements, referral routes and support package. LHP managers also noted the benefits of them maintaining a presence at various panels with LA service managers and practitioners so that the criteria for potential referrals could be updated, “keeping it current in people's heads, so that social workers are now [approaching the LHP] rather than us having to chase them.” (LHP facilitator).

- Eligibility

Whilst maintaining visibility was important, some LHPs cautioned against opening up referral channels too much, as HP capacity was limited to around 10 young people per cohort in most LHPs. Furthermore, there was a need to carefully manage, and to some extent narrow, the HP eligibility criteria, which carried implications for referral processes. LHP staff talked about needing to strike a balance between maintaining diversity and financial feasibility when recruiting the cohort. This meant establishing recruitment strategies that ensured the right combination of placement types and ages. For example, if 10 young people from foster care who might benefit from the HP were recruited, the ability to demonstrate cost savings after covering the operational costs of the project would be reduced. The age and level of need of referrals also had cost implications for resourcing the HP support package. Based on learning from cohort 1, some LHP teams highlighted the importance of maintaining diversity within the cohort and operating less rigid criteria to maintain a needs-led approach. It was also considered important to operate some flexibility to meet local care population needs and to ensure the best range of options for care leavers. Some LHPs had extended eligibility to include young people aged 18 and those with complex needs and disabilities for their new cohorts.

- Matching

The LHP teams advised on building in reasonable time to match young people to the project effectively. Successful matching of young people was also crucial for the development of the HP community, the central component through which young people were expected to thrive and experience the full benefit of the HP. Though levels of matching had varied, some consideration of whether the group would “gel” and whether any existing issues or relationships were evident was required. The NHP officers subsequently noted that experience showed that this was not as significant as first thought. LHP managers also noted that having adequate lead-in time to meet young people had been useful to help reach an understanding of their motivation and needs, not least because being part of the HP cohort required a lot of engagement from young people in terms of their own journeys and also in contributing to the wider HP activities (such as meetings, groupwork sessions, and promotional presentations). Early meetings

with the individual social workers had proved useful to ensure consensus about whether the HP was the right option, the support needed, and the goals for the young person.

Multi-agency working

The HP promoted a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach, as evidenced by the NHP consultants and Board of Trustees. This was replicated at local level, with LHPs drawing on the support of relevant services. Staff talked of the need to demonstrate the potential benefits of the HP to a range of agencies "to keep the message out there that this can work, and it will work if we work together." (LHP manager). The LHP teams successfully liaised with local services and providers to promote the support components offered by the HP and raise awareness of issues faced by their young people as well as their strengths. For example, the HP pre-move support and HPP package to increase young people's tenancy-readiness proved attractive to housing providers, while working with benefits agencies to increase awareness of young people's circumstances could help navigate strategies to avoid young people being sanctioned and the associated impacts. Partnership working with clinical psychologists was also valued, to help with assessments (known as formulations) of young people as well as providing support for LHP staff in their direct work. Some LHPs struggled to secure this input at local level (as discussed below). LHP's also formed links with VSHs, education and employment providers to source opportunities or coordinate support to sustain EET attendance, while links with the Police offered insights into local issues to keep young people safe and their properties secure. A LHP manager reported that community police officers had fostered good relationships with their young people and carried out checks to avert potential risks with properties or neighbours. LHP staff noted that honest conversations about the needs and circumstances of their cohort ensured that partners were committed to HP goals, and that young people were not set up to fail through a lack of support or understanding or by being offered options that did not meet their needs or interests.

Working with housing providers to secure HP properties

One of the most important partnerships for the LHPs was that with housing providers. Some LHPs had pre-established relationships with LA social housing departments, nevertheless considerable work was needed to source other providers (such as housing associations, private landlords, property developers and investors). On all accounts, gaining buy-in to the project and securing properties in the required areas had posed a consistent challenge to project delivery and a protracted and difficult process for most LHP teams. One LHP manager felt that the "burden of housing" should not be placed on them, particularly as the stress associated with sourcing suitable housing in the required timeframe reverberated across the team. Most LHPs acknowledged that it had been difficult for facilitators to experience challenge and disappointment from young people, as well as from their carers, key workers and social workers, over the delay to HP properties becoming available. Once on board, most partnerships were working well, and a LHP

manager described an “absolutely excellent relationship with our housing department and we'd got all that set up and I still meet with them on a monthly basis”. There were some less constructive experiences, for example, relating to the costs of maintaining empty properties if young people were not ready to move in or had moved out. The 3 housing providers who responded to surveys were very positive about their experience of working with the LHPs and young people. All were keen to remain involved.

An important lesson from LHPs in securing housing for their first cohort, was the need to have pre-existing agreements in place committing a set number of properties. The NHP officers stated that going forward, this would be central to conversations with new LAs. In this scenario, LHP managers can plan and be confident that they can source suitable housing for young people within a reasonable timeframe. Moreover, commitment from housing providers needed to be consolidated by groundwork from the corporate parent with regards to setting in motion legal processes and their role in guarantor agreements and equitable tenancy agreements for care leavers in social and private sector properties. Several LHP managers highlighted that these formal internal processes needed to be initiated and signed-off sooner to avoid potential setbacks in moving young people into a designated property and a potential loss of cost savings. The NHP officers advised that to secure commitment and ease planning, new LHPs must bring housing providers “on board from the outset, sharing a vision” and emphasising the mutual benefits for housing providers being supported to become good corporate parents whilst they get “good tenants who have a support system behind them.” It was also acknowledged that co-ordinating the timing of properties being available and young people’s readiness to move could be a challenge and carried implications for costs (extended placement costs or the costs of empty properties) and for ensuring that young people’s needs were prioritised.

Using an evidence and psychologically informed practice framework

The HP operated as an evidence based, outcomes focused framework. It was designed to offer a structure for LHPs to engage in, and a shared and tested approach to guide their work with young people. Central to the practice framework was ORCHIDS, which guided all HP activities and was founded on the psychological theories of self-determination (SDT), attachment, child development and trauma informed practice. SDT in particular, underpinned the framework, identifying the importance of 3 core attributes (autonomy, competence and connectedness) to promote young people’s emotional, social and psychological development (Ryan and Deci 2000).

The use of the framework was considered by the NHP team to have offered a robust yet flexible practice approach to upskill LHP staff and achieve a consistent way of working. They noted that it aimed to direct, but not constrain, their work with young people, as the NHP psychologist explained, “It is just a scaffold, but it's pretty robust. It doesn't say,

'This is what you do.' It says, 'These are some of the principles… to which you need to be working.' (See here for information on the HP psychologically informed framework.)

The NHP worked closely with their consultant clinical psychologist, who had been involved in implementing the Stoke HP and remained instrumental in overseeing the HP approach. The NHP psychologist supported the NHP officers and the LHP staff, providing welcome expertise at strategic level and also advice and training, such as in the use of trauma informed approaches and the use of formulations (shared understandings of a young person's difficulties, risks, early experiences and coping mechanisms) to ensure that all involved were able to tailor support and be responsive to young people's needs and experiences.

The NHP psychologist had recommended that LHPs commission local psychologists to assist with the formulations for young people via monthly consultations. This proved to be a challenge for most of the LHPs, due to lack of availability of psychologists and in particular those with expertise in trauma informed practice. This led to both time-consuming commissioning activities and a lack of psychological input for some LHPs. The NHP officers reported that where regular consultation with psychologists had been possible, there had been noticeable benefits to practice, "in how the staff worked and the management of risk and [the] differentiated approach to young people." The centrality and importance of the psychological input to the HP's support of young people was demonstrated by the NHP's intention to make it a component of new LA agreements. The NHP officers also noted that this aspect had been important learning for the HP, and towards the end of the evaluation, negotiations were underway with the NHP psychology provider to commission provision, so that all LHPs can have access to psychologists from the outset. This was intended to speed up access to support and also avoid "resource hungry" commissioning processes and spot purchasing. The NHP psychologist also suggested the creation of a national collaboration network among psychologists supporting LHPs, to standardise fidelity in trauma-informed work with care leavers.

An experienced and stable LHP team

Following on from the above, a key enabler of the HP delivery was the LHP staff team, however, this had also posed a key challenge. LHP managers each highlighted the value of an experienced and skilled team in ensuring the effective delivery of the project, particularly in building the consistency of relationships with, and for, young people. Knowledge and experience of working with young people was important and an understanding of the housing sector proved equally beneficial in helping to navigate the complexities of allocation and tenancy processes (see Appendix 8 for HP workforce profiles). The majority of LHP staff had professional backgrounds in youth work or housing. The NHP officers considered that getting the right staff was imperative and this often came down to an understanding of the HP ethos and "there's got to be something about them, that they can make relationships with young people and have honest and

straightforward conversations with them." It was apparent from interviews with LHP managers and facilitators that their roles were expansive and often exceeded original expectations, particularly in the early days of getting the LHPs up and running. One facilitator commented, "the role is huge... what is expected of you, not just from the House Project point of view but from a council point of view." Roles had involved liaising with a range of agencies and providers and supporting young people across a range of life areas. This had involved a steep learning curve, for example, some facilitators expressed concern about being involved in the process of sourcing housing providers, "a lot of stuff I was completely out of my depth with in terms of housing, in terms of financial stuff. A lot was being fired at us…which should be dealt with at a management level." LHP facilitators who left the project noted that they had sought other employment to achieve a better work-life balance, as the HP role had been demanding and required considerable flexibility. The long-term facilitators in the Stoke HP, agreed that the role required, "going above and beyond", and being responsive to support young people.

Three of the 5 LHPs had experienced staff turnover in the 18 months or so of operation. This had implications for the delivery of the project activities as well as continuity of support and relationships with young people. LHP managers highlighted a challenge in sustaining a stable team and recruitment of new staff, resulting from insecurity in the social care and youth work sector. One LHP manager felt that a low applicant rate for the facilitator role was linked to the uncertainty around HP sustainability, it being difficult to sell a fixed-term role. The NHP officers also attributed LHP staff turnover to the uncertainty of the HP beyond the original funding period, "there was a rising anxiety across all projects because actually funding was running out in March 20." Subsequently all LAs have agreed to continue, most extending LHP staff contracts, and in some cases making them permanent posts. A LA lead in an area that had experienced difficulties in attracting a suitably experienced pool of potential facilitators, approached candidates from a recent recruitment round for PAs to assess their interest in the facilitator role. As a result, facilitators were recruited for cohort 2 and beyond.

B. Impact findings

Outcomes for young people

Young person level outcomes, identified via the theory of change and evaluation plan, included accommodation stability and satisfaction, engagement with EET, increased wellbeing, integration and autonomy, and reduced risk. These were explored using statistical analysis of the workbook data and measures. In most cases, results were not statistically significant (possibly due to the small sample size and variable duration of the intervention). Results that reached a level of statistical significance are reported using a p-value ($p \leq .05$ level) (see Table 10, Appendix 3). A thematic analysis of qualitative data was used to illustrate views and experiences of young people and the professionals

supporting them. Findings are based on data from the workbook, wellbeing measures and from qualitative data from surveys, focus groups and peer research interviews.

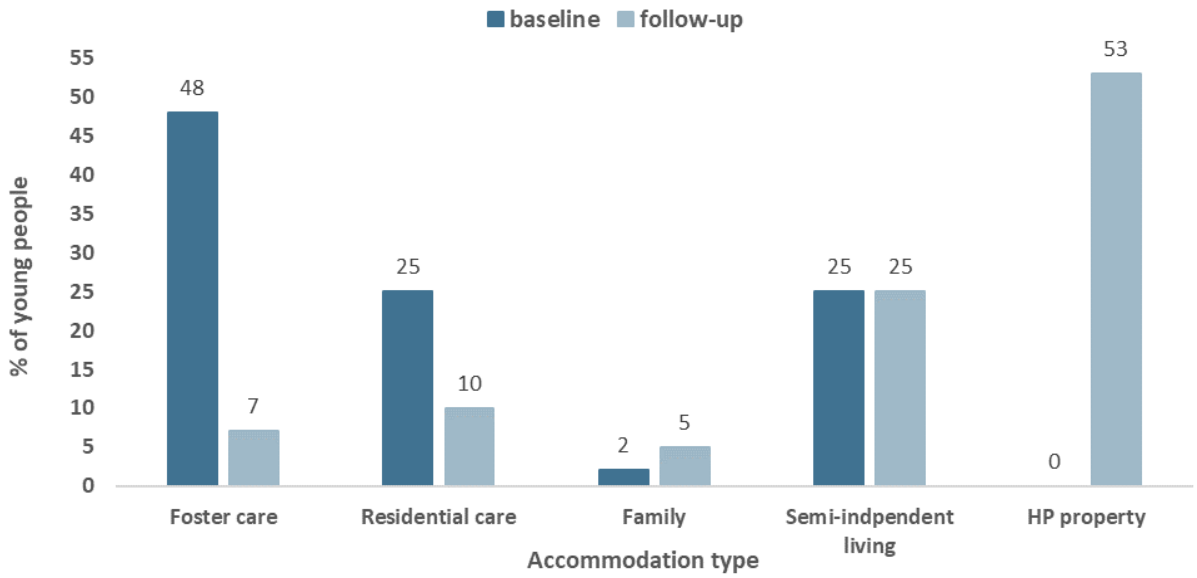
A follow-up group was selected comprising those young people who remained in the HP at data collection endpoint and had been in the project for at least 6 months. This duration offered sufficient time to see early impact and for young people to progress through the HPP. This provided a group of 40 young people for follow-up analysis, to explore distance travelled in outcomes between baseline and follow-up.

The average age for the group at follow-up was 17.7, with 60% aged 18 to 19 and having legally left care. The average duration of HP intervention during the evaluation timeframe was 13.6 months (ranging from 9 to 16 months). Limited comparison group data is presented where possible, however, as noted earlier, a full comparative analysis was not possible due to limitations with the data. (See Tables 8 to 10, Appendix 3 for data and Appendix 5 for the views of young people about their experiences since entering the HP).

Accommodation outcomes

The aim of the HP was to prepare and support young people so that they were ready to experience a positive move to accommodation of a type and in a location that met with their needs and wishes, within 6 months or so of entering the HP. As illustrated in Figure 1, many young people were still living in care placements or in semi-independent living or with family at follow-up. This limited scope for the evaluation to explore the experiences and impact of moving into HP homes.

Figure 1. Accommodation at baseline and follow-up



Just over half of the follow-up group had moved into their HP homes (53%, 21), and of these, two-thirds (67%,14) had done so less than 6 months before the data collection

endpoint.[4] All but 2 had sustained their HP accommodation (1 had moved to another HP property and 1 had a planned and supported move to independent living outside of the project). A further 15% (6) had been allocated HP properties and were preparing to move in. The mean timescale between allocation and move-in was 27 days (ranging from 1 to 58 days). Properties had yet to be found for 33% (13) of the group.

- Movement and stability

There was no evidence of homelessness and relatively little unexpected movement during the evaluation timeframe.[5] A total of 60% (24) experienced 1 move and 5% (2) had 2 moves between baseline and follow-up, an average of 13.6 months later.

Some moves were expected as young people moved from their baseline accommodation to their HP home, however 7 (30%) of these young people had an additional move prior to being allocated a HP property. Four had left their care placements and moved to supported semi-independent accommodation, 1 had moved in with family and 2 had moved to temporary accommodation while waiting for HP properties.

This highlighted the challenge of coordinating the timing of HP housing availability with plans for young people leaving their care placements or other baseline accommodation. Existing research suggests that many care leavers experience multiple moves, housing difficulties and accommodation breakdown in the year or so after leaving care. Gill (2017) found that 26% of care leavers had sofa surfed, 14% had slept rough and, in the first year after leaving care, 35% had subsequently moved house. Comparatively, this suggests positive signs of accommodation stability for the HP group, many of whom had settled despite experiences of considerable instability whilst in care (for example, 55% (22) had experienced between 5 and 15 care placement moves since entering care).

Most (90%, 36) of the follow-up group were aged 18 or under at follow-up and therefore, in the early stages of their leaving care journeys. Longer-term monitoring during and particularly after young people graduate the HP, is necessary to assess the impact of the HP on post-care stability and outcomes after 18. This will be particularly important as HP young people reach their 20s, when (as is the case for all care leavers) statutory leaving care support ceases (age 25) and when care leaver exemptions such as the shared rate allowance (up to age 22) and, in some areas, council tax exemption (up to age 25) come to an end, thereby potentially increasing their future accommodation costs.[6]

As planned, HP young people had moved on from their care placements sooner than care leavers generally. National data and research suggests that around 33% of young

[4] Young people had lived in their HP homes from 2 weeks to 9 months (a mean of 5 months) by follow-up.
[5] The mean number of moves between baseline and follow-up was 0.7 and ranged from 0 moves to 2.
[6] See paragraph 2 Department for Work and Pensions (2014) Local Housing Allowance Guidance Manual.

people move from their care placements before their 18th birthday (NAO 2015, DfE 2016). At follow-up, 63% (10) of the under 18s in the follow-up group had left their care placement and moved to semi-independent (19%, 3) or HP accommodation (44%, 7).

Of those who had moved to their HP home (21), two-thirds (67%,14) had done so aged 17, 9% (2) were aged 16 and 24% (5) were 18. This reflects the aim of the HP to provide early supported and planned transitions directly to a potentially long-term home, thus minimising the cost and the impact on young people, of crisis or unplanned moves from care and the use of multiple transitional, semi-independent options (see section 3.C). It was acknowledged by staff and young people that moving pre-18 placed greater importance on the need for robust support networks and relationships, as one LHP manager and a 17 year old HP young person described;

> "[There] is a risk in putting young people that are the age that they are into their properties [and] the most important part of the project that we've seen is those relationships that have been built up. So, they've built up this connection and family of support that's not necessarily just us, there's other people out there that they go to."

> "[I was] quite scared cos I was on my own for the first time, but I knew I had family not too far away so it was all right."

- Accommodation satisfaction and experiences

Data gathered via the GCI showed high levels of satisfaction with accommodation in the group throughout (78% at baseline and 87% at follow-up). This was evident for those who had moved to their HP homes, with all but 1 of the 21 movers reporting being happy with their HP home at follow-up (30% of whom were very happy). Analysis, though not statistically significant, suggested a small increase over time in how happy they were with where they were living. For example, reported happiness with both the home and the area they lived in, increased from means of 7.4 and 6.8 at baseline to 7.7 and 7.6 respectively at follow-up (see Tables 10 and 11, Appendix 3). There was, however, a degree of dissatisfaction amongst some young people about the timescales for moving into their HP homes, as explained, "I just felt like disheartened… cos there was only like 3 people moved into our flats and it was sort of sold to us that everyone was gonna be in by now." (See Appendix 5.)

On average, young people had moved into their HP home 8 months after joining the project. One-third, however, had waited between 9 and 15 months for a property (33%, 9), longer than expected, and some had yet to move in. Delays were mostly attributed to the lack of availability of properties within the local area and protracted timescales for securing properties, as a young person explained, "because of the council trying to find properties it's took longer than it was supposed to." In some instances, time taken to allocate properties was due to young people not being considered ready for independent living, as some acknowledged, "I'm in a hostel at the moment and after [worker] sees

what I'm like in this hostel for a couple of months I will move out and go to my House Project place where I'll be set." LHP staff also highlighted that a need to ensure some parity across the cohort added to the delay in securing properties, as they needed to be of a comparable type and standard to those that other HP young people were living in.

Some young people were understanding of the reasons for the time taken and felt that there had been good communication and planning with LHP staff throughout. Others, however, felt more strongly that they had been misled or let down. In 2 LAs, where there had been changes in LHP staff and concern about continuation of the HP, some young people were unsure if they would be allocated a HP property at all, as explained;

> "I was on the project for over a year, and they basically just kept saying, 'Oh, in a month's time… it's just going to take 1 more month and then it's 8 months later and they're telling people that it's going to be the next year… then after a year-and-a-half, we all just get told that we're not getting flats and that was that."

One young person felt that delays moving to a HP property were due to issues with the project and staff rather than their readiness for independent living;

> "I kind of felt like it was unfair. After all of these months, after I'd met the criteria that I worked really hard to meet…there were still concerns…with them saying they don't know whether if something would happen I would come to them. So it wasn't to do with my independence anymore, wasn't whether I was capable of living by myself."

For a few young people, it was evident that they had entered the HP mainly to find a property, and they had disengaged from the wider HP support. This raised the issue of planning for those young people who were unwilling or unable to comply with the full expectations of the HP, to find other accommodation in a timely and supported manner.

Young people who had moved into their HP properties generally described a sense of excitement about a "new start" and having "my actual own space". Understandably, this could be accompanied by some trepidation about living alone or feeling lonely.

> "When I first moved in I was excited cos obviously, wow there's this new space and it's all mine, but at the same time there was a sense of uneasiness cos I hadn't lived by myself before at all. It was a bit of a scary experience I can't lie, the first couple nights."

A small number were less anxious, either because they were moving into new homes as a group or, as 1 noted, "because I've moved so much it's a sort of standard operation."

Four of the LHPs provided sole occupancy HP accommodation. One, meanwhile, had taken an early decision to provide shared HP accommodation for their first cohort, largely due to the high cost of property rents and limited availability in the area. There was some concern about the house share approach, in terms of the logistics of it providing a long-

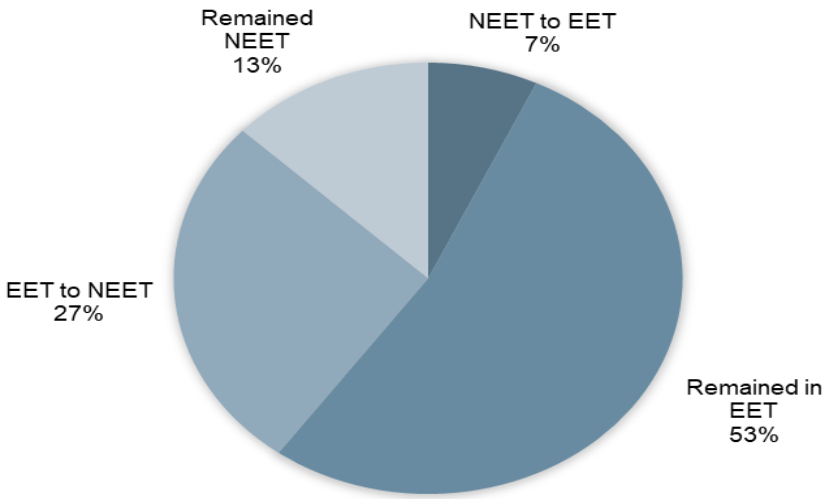
term home and the impact on young people's sense of creating a home and stability if house mates moved out and new people moved in. There were also issues relating to the cost if properties were under-occupied. Young people from other LHPs were asked during interviews whether they might prefer single occupancy houses or house shares. Most said they would prefer to live on their own. Reasons included freedom, personal space, creating a home of their own and the perception that it offered greater stability in the long-term, as 1 explained, "…because, I guess if you live in a shared house you're gonna have to move again eventually, and I thought the whole point was like staying somewhere." Interviews with those in house shares showed that they generally worked well. Young people talked of community and company, often socialising and cooking together. Their PAs also commented on the positive impact on young people;

> "My young person feels more confident in their ability to manage independently. They have enjoyed living with other young people, they are supportive of each other and enjoy each other's company. This has improved his sense of belonging, and improved his integration into the local community."

Participation in EET

There was a high level of participation at baseline, with the majority of the group in EET (80%, 32). Over half were in education (52%, 21), while 23% (9) were in employment and 5% (2) in apprenticeships. One-fifth of the group was NEET (20%, 8). By follow-up, over half (53%, 21) of those who had been in EET at baseline had sustained their participation in EET. Participation had fluctuated for others, with some achieving improved outcomes by entering EET, while others had become NEET (see Figure 2). Most of those in EET at follow-up were in further education (58%,14)

Figure 2. HP young people's participation in EET over time (direction of travel)



There was a significant increase over time in the number of HP young people who were NEET, which had doubled by follow-up (from 20% (8) to 40% (16) p=.057). This was

higher than figures for same age care leavers nationally (30%) (DfE 2019).[7] Overall, there was little evidence of improved outcomes in EET for the HP group by follow-up.

Over half of those in EET (56%,18) were living in their HP homes, whilst 37% (3) of those who were NEET had moved in. It was not clear whether those doing better in their EET journeys had been more likely to be allocated properties, or whether settling into their HP homes had helped young people to maintain or improve their participation. Some LHP facilitators advised that it was better for young people to be in EET before moving to their properties, as 1 commented, “I think it's harder to get the motivation going once they've moved in because they've got the property and they get their Universal Credit.”

Though not statistically significant, there was some area variation with the percentage of HP young people in EET being higher in LAs 3 and 5 in comparison with care leavers in their own and other LAs (see Table 3). LA2 in particular had higher NEET levels, which may be explained by the older age-range of the LA2 cohort, which included 19 year olds.[8]

Table 3. Percentage of HP young people in EET or NEET compared to all care leavers aged 17 to 18

Care leavers	LA1		LA2		LA3		LA4		LA5		National	
	HP	All	HP	All	HP	All	HP	All	HP	All	HP	All
In EET	50%	57%	40%	53%	87%	72%	43%	56%	86%	67%	60%	64%
NEET	50%	38%	60%	35%	13%	22%	57%	44%	14%	-	40%	30%

Source: Evaluation (HP) and DfE 2019 (All). (Some DfE data is unreported, so figures do not total 100%)

- Experiences of being in EET and being NEET

There was acknowledgement that several young people had dropped out of education or had left or lost employment over the follow-up timeframe as 1 LHP manager described, “NEET does seem to be quite high and people will be on courses and then drop out quite a lot.” In most cases however, the increase in the number of NEET young people over time appeared to reflect school and college courses coming to an end and for some, the end of compulsory education during the follow-up period. Most of those in the NEET group (75%, 12), were aged 18 or 19. A further reason for the increase, might be located in existing research that suggests that many care leavers shift their focus from pursuing EET options to prioritising finding accommodation during the transition from care (Dixon and Baker 2016). Some care leavers, may therefore, pause their EET journeys, only

[7] At T2, 8 months later, there had been an increase in the number who were NEET (33%, 13). Data for the comparison group at T2 showed similar participation levels to the HP group (31% NEET, 69% in EET).
[8] As shown in Table 8, Appendix 3 the percentage of NEET care leavers tends to be higher amongst those aged 19 to 21 in comparison to care leavers aged 17 to 18 years (DfE 2019).

returning to education (for example supported by second chance learning), once they have found settled accommodation. Although HP young people were receiving focused support with accommodation, it was still an uncertain time for some.

Those who were NEET were being supported by the HP to improve their education and employment skills. The initial HP offer of learning support through ASDAN had not been wholly popular with the cohort and had been replaced with the HPP, which could lead to an AQA certificate. The NHP education consultant noted that the HPP had been redeveloped in consultation with young people and that its web-based modular approach, which offered young people a more creative way of developing and demonstrating their learning and skills through a portfolio of activity, was designed to be more appealing to young people who may have had less positive experiences of learning in the past and had become disengaged. Through their role in moderating the HPP, the NHP education consultant considered that it was having a positive impact on young people's abilities, "What's lovely actually is we've had 3 big moderations over the last 6 months and each time, the portfolios that people are bringing have improved considerably."

A legal requirement for young people to be in EET until their 18th birthday means that LAs have a duty to support them to participate (DfE 2016b). The development of the HPP helped to meet this duty in line with Raising Participation Age (RPA) requirements, by providing a tailored programme of re-engagement opportunities. The NHP officers stated that once fully operational, young people engaged in the HPP will be considered to be in EET, even if the programme is their only activity. Some LHP staff questioned whether making the HPP mandatory might restrict young people's choice; something that will require monitoring as the HPP approach is further developed and utilised.

In addition to the HPP, some of the NEET group were involved in voluntary work as peer support workers in the LHPs or taking online courses. Some LHPs formed links with local EET providers to identify options and, with LHP support, some young people reported being better able to identify EET goals and access more realistic or relevant options;

> "So, every time I got turned down I just felt like a failure because I was thinking why aren't I getting employed by anyone, but really, I was just applying for the wrong jobs."

> "[Facilitator] created a little group chat on Facebook where she's always posting jobs and stuff for people to look at, and if any takes your eye then there's a job there."

In acknowledging that the number of HP young people NEET was an issue, some LHP managers and facilitators were also mindful that it was important to support young people into something they wanted to do rather than something to "tick the EET box". This LHP manager noted a lack of job opportunities for young people and support from employers;

> "It's like lots of little bitty jobs that haven't got much security and they're not really often aware of the needs of the young people. So [young people] are not being supported in the work place maybe as much as they should be."

Some LHPs were working with jobcentre and benefits agency staff to advocate on behalf of their young people, so that employment advisors were able to put the young person's evidence of readiness for employment into important context, as described;

> "They [now] look at their ability to engage and things like that, so there's not as much put on them - it's [typically] 35 hours a week on job search [and] a lot of our young people can't manage that, so it's looking at what is appropriate." (LHP manager).

Wellbeing, autonomy and risk

- Psychological and subjective wellbeing

Mental health difficulties were reported for 22% (9) of the group by LHPs at baseline, double the rate for young people in the general population though lower than reported in existing research on care leavers.[9] Young people's sense of general and psychological wellbeing was assessed using the GCI and SWEMWBS during the evaluation.

The GCI measure of subjective wellbeing was gathered at baseline and follow-up focus groups and interviews.[10] Three-quarters of the group (76%, 31) completed a GCI at both points. There was a significant change in satisfaction with life as a whole, suggesting improved overall wellbeing (from a baseline mean of 6.7 to 7.8 at follow-up, p=.014). This reflected the mean for 10 to 17 year olds generally (see Tables 10 and 11, Appendix 3).

The SWEMWBS was administered to young people by LHP staff at baseline and follow-up. Data was available for 30 young people at both timepoints. Most analyses did not reach statistical significance so findings are illustrative.[11] Overall scores for young people ranged from 17.9 to 35 at baseline and 15.8 to 35 at follow-up, indicating possible

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[9] Data suggests a higher prevalence of mental health difficulties in care and leaving care populations. DfE (2017) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire report that 39% of looked after children had high emotional and behavioural needs. Meltzer et al (2003) found that 45% of 5 to17 year old looked after children had a mental health disorder compared to 10% of all young people. Research suggests that such difficulties are likely to emerge during adolescence (McCrory et al 2010) and that for care leavers, the experience of transitioning from care and taking on the responsibilities of adulthood early can trigger mental distress and anxiety (The Scottish Health Survey 2001, Dixon 2008, Matthews and Sykes 2012).

[10] The GCI measure of children's subject wellbeing comprises 1 global rating of satisfaction with life as a whole, and a 10-item measure (scoring 0-unhappy to 10-very happy) of happiness in life areas that young people aged 10 to 17 have identified as important to them (The Children's Society 2017, 2018).

[11] SWEMWBS comprises 7 statements scored 1 to 5. Total scores range from 7 to 35, with higher scores indicating positive mental wellbeing. It is designed for samples of around 50 so statistical analysis is limited by the small HP sample (30).

evidence of poor mental wellbeing for 26% at baseline, reducing to 19% at follow-up.[12] This suggestion of improved wellbeing was reflected in an increase in mean scores for the group (23.7 at baseline to 25.1 at follow-up) though this change did not reach a level of statistical significance.[13] (See Table 10, Appendix 3). Mean scores for the HP group were comparable to the UK population norm for the measure (mean 23.6).

Analysis of the change in wellbeing over time showed no significant difference across the LHPs or whether or not a young person had moved into their HP property. There was, however, a significant association between wellbeing and EET participation at follow-up, with those whose wellbeing had improved being more likely to be in EET (for example, of those with higher scores, 88% (15) were in EET while 12% (2) were NEET, p=.022). It was not clear whether this reflected the positive impact of engaging in EET, or an indication that those with improved mental wellbeing were more likely to engage in EET.

- Autonomy

Encouraging a sense of autonomy was central to the HP's aims for young people. It is, however, difficult to measure, therefore, decision making was used as a proxy indicator. Young people were asked whether they were able to make up their own mind about things and about how much choice they had in life. Though not statistically significant, there was an increase in young people reporting that they were able to make up their own mind often or all of the time (from 71% to 83%) and there was a significant change over time in how much choice they felt they had (increasing from a mean of 7.5 to 8.8, p=.007). One young person described, "anything that they told me, even if I didn't feel like it would be useful I would just go along with it, but now like I sort of think for myself."

- Difficulties and risk

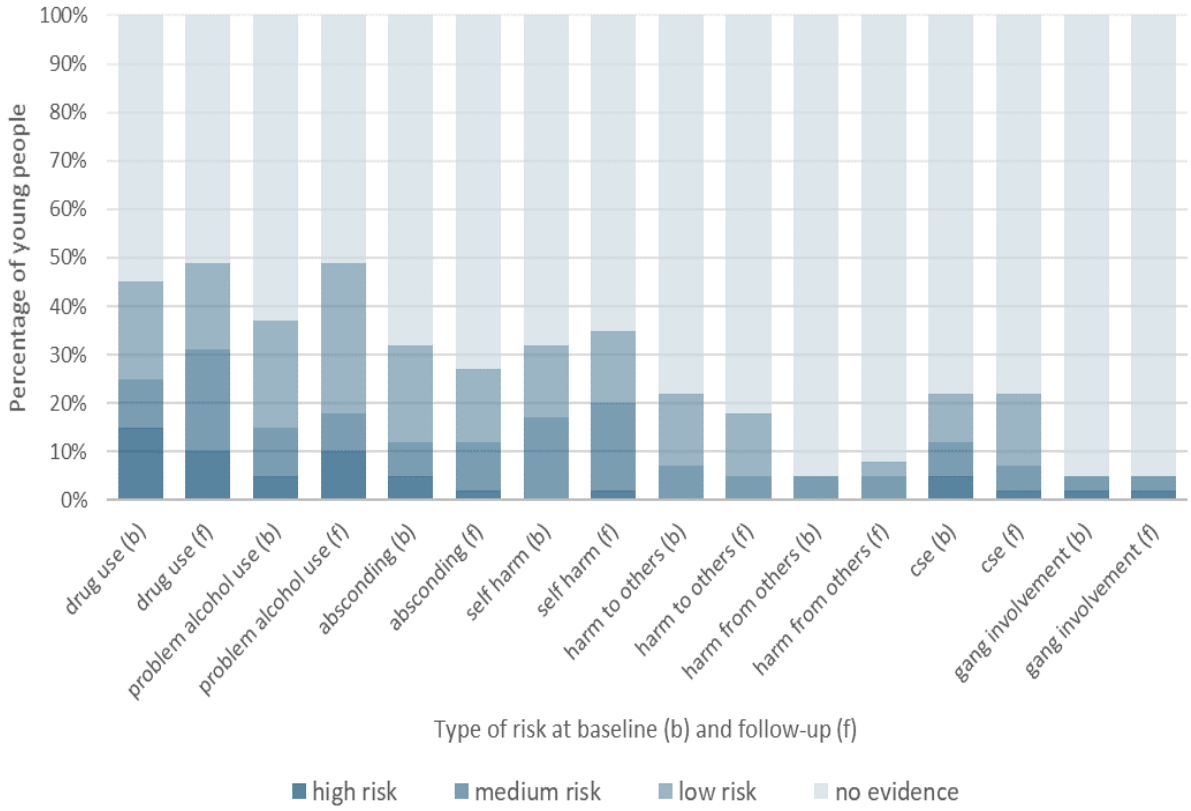
There was evidence of risk behaviour for most young people in the group at baseline and this continued for many. Data recorded by LHP staff indicated that 45% (18) had 3 to 5 difficulties and 37% (15) had 1 or 2. Just under one-fifth (17%, 7) had no identified difficulties. As shown in Figure 3, the most evident difficulties were risky drug use (45%,18) and alcohol use (37%,15), which were higher than nationally reported data. There was also evidence of self-harm (33%,13) and being at risk of child sexual

[12] Studies indicate that SWEMWBS has good validity for measuring mental wellbeing within UK populations (see UK population norms). The SWEMWBS website suggests cut points have been calculated in line with other mental health measures and that scores of 7 to 17 represent 'probable' depression or anxiety and scores of 18 to 20 suggest 'possible' depression or anxiety (Shah et al in press).
[13] Individual scores had increased for 57% (17), suggesting improved wellbeing, whilst they remained unchanged for 7% (2) and decreased for 36% (11).

exploitation (CSE) for about 1 in 5 (22%, 9), demonstrating the level of vulnerability in the group.[14]

There was no statistically significant change in the number and level of risk over time for the group.[15] Patterns in the data did suggest some increase in risky alcohol use (48%,19) and fewer young people were reported as being at risk of absconding (27%,11) and harm towards others (17%, 7). Although specific issues were not explored in detail, HP young people and staff talked about the focus of learning sessions on “keeping safe”, “safe relationships”, “mediation” and being “respectful” of each other.

Figure 3. Risk levels at baseline (b) and follow-up (f) for HP follow-up group (40)



Preparation for independent living

The HP intention for young people to leave care placements before their 18th birthday placed a responsibility upon the LHPs to ensure that young people were able to do so in

[14] Comparative figures for the national care population show 11% of care leavers aged 16 to 19 had a diagnosed substance misuse problem (DfE 2012), 11% of looked after children go missing (DfE 2019) and 32% experience self-harm (Harkess-Murphy et al 2013). Data from the Metropolitan Police reported that 21% of CSE victims are looked after children (MPS).

[15] 48% (19) the HP group were reported to have 3 to 5 difficulties, 40% (16) had 1 or 2 difficulties, and 12% (5) had no difficulties at follow-up.

a planned and supported manner and that they were ready for the move. The HPP provided a 6 to 9 month skills programme, which young people were expected to complete prior to moving, to help prepare them for leaving care and to develop the emotional and practical skills necessary for living independently. This included providing groupwork sessions, training, information and hands-on experience across a range of practical life skills and tenancy skills, including personal safety, money management, cooking, basic home maintenance and painting and decorating, all of which could feed into their progress through the HPP. Importantly, young people attended sessions on housing and tenancy processes, and on benefits and allowances to improve their knowledge of relevant systems and the associated expectations. These included:

- Support to improve practical skills

Interview data showed that the LHPs had drawn on external professionals to help deliver sessions, such as utilities companies to lead workshops on setting up gas and electricity accounts, working with housing providers to run sessions on tenancy responsibilities, jobcentres to explain benefit entitlements, and the police to advise on personal and property safety. Young people's reviews of the sessions suggested a mixed reception, as indicated below. Some found them useful and fun, others found them too basic and some wanted refresher sessions nearer the time of move-in. Most young people considered the training sessions to have helped them gain more confidence to live independently.

> "I learnt all the different ways about budgeting... it was only like money management, like learning about other taxes and bills, I already knew the basics."

> "Cos now I've learnt more about, like systems in general, like benefits, or like housing … you're just gonna automatically feel more confident cos it's like not an unknown with everything. I wouldn't say I was naïve but I was just a child when I joined the House Project and I didn't understand like tenancies and things like that."

Most young people recognised and valued the HP as a whole package that offered them a range of skills and opportunities, and not just a way of obtaining accommodation.

> "It's not all about, oh you're just getting a flat and you're just going to move in. It's about meeting new people. You learn new things…money management, how to cook."

> "The House Project is like a safety net for [us] care leavers. Before they were just being dumped after they turned 18 and they would just fail most of the time, but [House Project] gives you the support and the guidance to flourish."

- Support to improve social skills, communication and confidence

A central component of the HP, and an exemplar of best practice, was the active involvement of young people. This was evident in the expectation that they contribute to group activities and training sessions and through their involvement in the running of the

LHPs and the NHP. This ensured that the HP was co-produced and also offered young people opportunities to gain a wealth of social and practical skills associated with project engagement and delivery. At local level, groupwork activities and team building events helped to build confidence, resilience, communication skills and interdependence amongst the group. Young people had the opportunity to engage with the promotional work of the HP framework, to gain an insight into business development, including presenting to a range of audiences, pitching ideas to become or develop a LHP. Empowering young people to find their voice, appeared to be a key outcome of the project. The vast majority of young people reported improved confidence, communication and social skills as a result of being involved in the HP, as some noted, "...my communication skills have definitely got a lot better."

> "I project my voice more often. Before and still now, I am kind of quiet but it's getting better. I've met a lot of new people on the project with all the sessions, the people leading them were new people every time, so my people skills are improving."

Those who were part of the CLNM reported a range of skills, such as debating, problem solving, planning, organising and presenting at the HP annual conference. Young people in the LHPs meanwhile, were involved in elections for CLNM members. This involved selecting 2 representatives per LHP, which was a skills development exercise in itself, building an understanding of citizenship. Focus group discussions with the elected members of the CLNM suggested most had benefited hugely from the experience, with feelings of confidence and empowerment emerging from the collective voice. The members also spoke highly of the impact and expertise of the NHP participation consultant and his ability to understand and inspire them.

An area for improvement was highlighted by the NHP team and some LHP young people, who noted that communication between the CLNM and the LHP groups and with the NHP needed to be strengthened to ensure that lines of communication were open in both directions, and actions and discussions remained representative of the wider HP community and mode of working. This and the positive impact of the consultant's work, highlighted the need for ongoing participation support and a full-time dedicated HP participation expert was employed in 2020, to work with new cohorts of HP young people.

Overall, this demonstrated the HP's high expectations of its young people to get involved with all aspects of their own journeys and participating in the business of progressing the project by working as a team. An example was provided by a facilitator, who acknowledged, "we're actually asking quite a lot of them", in addition to the 1-to-1 and groupwork sessions;

> "…we had 2 sessions to plan the presentation for the open day, then the open day itself, then we're meeting tomorrow to do the video. Then we're asking them to meet

up with us next Saturday to help us interview the new cohort of young people. Then a Christmas social and we're asking them to redo their presentation to social workers."

Whilst this was beneficial to skills development, the level of activity often reduced as young people moved into their properties, developed their own pursuits or took on EET commitments. Nevertheless, workers and young people acknowledged that it had served to forge a team, a brand identity, individual confidence and a sense of achievement.

Integration and forming the HP community

Linked to the expectations around young people's active involvement in the HP activities, was one of the innovative aspects of the HP, which was to encourage and support young people to form a community to work together and support each other and future cohorts. This mirrored the co-operative ethos of the original Stoke HP approach. The growth of friendships was demonstrated in HP young people's self-reported satisfaction with friends, which increased from 7.7 to 8.5 on the GCI (see table 10, Appendix 3), which exceeded a mean of 8 for young people generally (Rees et al 2016).

Young people's views suggested that forming a close-knit HP community offered them a sense of collective identity, "It's really good, there's a strong community and…just nice to be in a group of people in the exact same boat as you." It also offered access to an immediate support network to reduce the risk of isolation and loneliness that can accompany care leavers as they move from care to independent adulthood, "…we've done it together and then you can be like friends for life."

The community ethos was evident from the outset with new HP recruits attending a residential team building event that helped the group get to know each other and find out about the HP and the expectations, as described by a young person, "The residential helps improve my team skills, helps me bond with the group and just brought us closer together." This was in addition to regular group meetings and contact during the pre-move support phase and early months of moving into HP homes.

Young people were almost overwhelmingly positive about the supportive nature of the HP community, which for some had become, what they termed their '#HPFAM'., with a WhatsApp group to maintain contact. One young person's comment echoed many in the group, "It's nice to be part of the House Project; it's sort of a wider family that you don't really get and there's a much greater sense of community." Where tensions had arisen, young people and workers commented that these were often addressed swiftly and discreetly, demonstrating respect and the impact of relationship-focused support sessions, as a LHP facilitator noted;

> "The relationships are strong enough that we've noticed that when there's been some issues they've been able to address them, because they do have respect for each other, they can be quite honest and that comes down to relationship."

Wider integration within local areas was also encouraged and some project sessions were aimed at enhancing wider community involvement as well as their independence skills. One event included cooking a meal for local homeless people in the city. Young people who had moved into their HP homes were also supported and encouraged to meet neighbours, which for some had led to intergenerational support and friendship.

Did the HP have an impact on young people's outcomes?

Data from the workbook, measures and interviews suggested improvements in outcomes over time and in comparison to national data, in terms of early post-care stability, wellbeing, integration and improved confidence and communication. In the absence of a viable comparison group and longer-term follow-up, it is not possible to attribute these to the HP. Analysis of qualitative data from young people, HP staff and young people's PAs, however, provided evidence of the HP's contribution to positive leaving care experiences and outcomes for the majority of young people participating in the LHPs (see Appendix 5 for young people's views). Supporting factors included:

A whole package of support

Young people and professionals highlighted the positive impact of the HP framework's offer of a stable, long-term home, individualised wraparound support and a peer support community. For the NHP consultant psychologist, this is what made the HP "unique";

> "… the truly collaborative nature… [the] psychologically informed working, but… in terms of truly providing the physical home as the foundation; [the] home and the relationships, that's the unique bit."

Most young people who took part in interviews and focus groups emphasised the huge impact of the HP on their lives, referring to it as "life changing", "like a dream" and "a safety net". One stated, "my life is starting to go in like the right direction". The HP's impact included help to find "stability" and settle into "an actual place… which is yours for as long as you want it"; supporting them to explore EET options; having a "support system" of young people and staff "behind" them, to rely on in times of difficulty and to share positive experiences with. One young person commented;

> "…you're getting something that you've never had since you've been in care, which is stability… you're not gonna have to move on when you're 18…it is like stability… but as well there's so many other things that come with [it]."

In addition to support with practical skills, there had been a strong focus on supporting young people's emotional and interpersonal skills, with targeted work to increase self-esteem, confidence and communication, and giving them a platform to have their views heard and acted upon, which some young people were particularly appreciative of, "I

think our opinions are very valued. Whenever a concern from one of us young people is raised something will always be done about it; there will always be a discussion."

While the majority of comments were positive, a small number of young people had experienced some difficulties with the HP approach and suggested areas for improvement. It was apparent that where young people had experienced a lack of support from services in the past, it was essential that strategies were in place to help restore their confidence in support services and professionals. A minority had felt very let down by time taken in HP property allocation. One young person felt that their "confidence has been knocked" as a result and they advised that staff should give realistic timescales for moving. Another felt that there could be too much emphasis on team building and group meetings and that consequently, they had not received enough practical help to get a flat. They explained, "I've come on to a project to take myself seriously, to get myself a flat and you guys just want to go to [a café] every week." A small number of young people also raised the importance of finding EET options that matched their interests and abilities, "I tried telling [staff]... what would be useful, what I'd actually go to, they just put loads of us on [the course] and we would all slowly drop off cos we'd just lose interest."

Groupwork and co-production

As discussed, the HP provided opportunities for young people to actively participate in the project as well as their transition to adulthood and the support to achieve their goals.

Groupwork was considered by the NHP officers as fundamental to how young people engage with the HP and the main avenue for building a peer community to support them through the HPP and into independent living. They noted that "groupwork develops capacity and skills to communicate and enables [young people] to take ownership and responsibility, build relationships and constructively repair relationships if they go wrong which is important for independent living." Reports from young people about groupwork activities, demonstrated the dual aims; to foster group cohesion and create new support networks (examples included, team building activities such as bowling, meals out, laser quest, zip-wiring, and archery), and to develop independence skills (such as cooking a meal for others, learning to decorate, recycle, budget, stay safe and undertaking accredited courses). These had succeeded in creating a supportive environment for developing skills and sharing the leaving care journey, as young people described;

> "… whenever someone doesn't want to do a task, we're all supporting them, all cheering for them, trying to get them to go up. Obviously, if they don't want to… we're not going to force them to go up, but the spirit is there."

> "With this HP group we've done a lot of group building activities and obviously been to each other's houses, we all do that kind of a lot, so we're quite good friends as it is, so when the group comes together it's just sorta like, yeah, it's chilled, it's all right."

Generally, young people felt they had a choice about groupwork activities and were content about the way activities were decided upon. A minority of young people commented that activities could better meet the interests or needs of the full group.

Co-production was also evident, such as in the involvement of HP young people in promoting the project to their peers and LAs and contributing to decisions in the LHPs and as advisers on the Board of Trustees. The CLNM facilitated co-production through a peer reference group by which young people fed back on the local and national direction of the HP. Staff also considered the CLNM to provide a forum for young people to "hold each other to account in that young people respond differently to their peers than professionals," which was considered beneficial and had fostered the participation of young people that had previously been considered "hard to reach" (NHP officers).

The centrality of relationships

HP staff from Stoke and the 5 LHPs commented on the centrality of relationships with young people, with every component of the HP programme being founded on relationship building with peers, workers, communities and the NHP. One facilitator felt it was what made the HP stand out, "I think that's what the House Project is enabling, the relationship development and then that helps to connect young people up with all of these resources". The NHP participation consultant considered this to be amongst the most important aspects of the project;

> "The HP is not simply providing a home for young people leaving care…it is founded on a community-based model [giving] workers the freedom to build relationships with young people… and that gives young people a great sense of belonging and stability."

Several social workers and PAs also remarked on the significance of relationships in ensuring the post-care wellbeing and progress of their young people;

> "My young person has had a successful transition from foster care to the HP. This was supported by the trusting genuine relationships the young person was able to develop with House Project staff over the course of the training, accessing groupwork and finally decorating and moving into the property."

> "It has increased [YPs] sense of confidence; their skills in regard to managing their own tenancy. It has improved their integration into the local community. It has given them a sense of belonging and a home of their own. It has given them opportunities to build new, supportive relationships with peers and adults."

> "[The HP has] increased social connections and improved isolation support, building and maintaining appropriate and positive relationships."

Direct and intensive HP support

Central to the impact of the project was the direct support from the LHP team. LHP managers highlighted that the HP bridged a gap with existing leaving care services, as it had capacity to enable facilitators to provide closer direct work with young people and time for building relationships. One LA service manager reflected that facilitators provided the level of support that PAs would like to offer but are unable to due to high caseloads, “that intense support, it's something we can't do because there's too many kids per PA.” This was echoed by a PA who commented that the support provided by the HP team “has supported my workload, leaves me confident that the young people are being supported and offered more 1-to-1 time than I can offer them.”

The ratio of 1 facilitator to 5 young people enabled regular, intensive and accessible support from a consistent worker. This was valued by most of the HP young people, who talked warmly of their project facilitators, with whom many had formed trusting and positive relationships, “I always love 1-to-1s” and “she’s done a lot for me, supported me with jobs... everything I have asked her for, always tried, couldn't ask for more.” As discussed earlier, the LHP teams brought a range of skills and experience based on previous jobs and HP training. Some young people tended to gravitate towards staff based on their needs, “it depended on what I needed as everyone has different strengths.”

In a minority of cases, young people had experienced an unexpected reduction in support after moving into their properties as 1 described, “I’ve not had no visit to me off the House Project in months.” Additionally, 3 LHPs had lost their initial facilitators and this impacted on young people, as 1 noted, “at first it were [facilitator 1 and 2], everything were mint, they got things sorted, don’t know who’s took over it now.” This highlighted the importance of discussions and clear processes for stepping down the intensive level of support offered during the early months, and minimising the impact of staff turnover for young people.

- Peer support

As discussed, the groupwork approach had fostered the development of a peer community, which had led to the development of friendships and support networks. These relationships were central to the positive impact of the HP on young people’s social skills, integration and sense of belonging, as indicated by young people;

> “You've got a whole support system… because it's not just the facilitators behind you it's the young people as well.”
>
> “With the House Project you get a whole load more support and you don't feel like you're going to fail at anything because you have someone behind you.”
>
> “[HP’s] quite life changing... I’ve managed to build relationships with so many different people that I didn’t have before.”

For some young people who had previously struggled with engagement and forming relationships, the HP community had encouraged greater integration as 1 described, “I was never really a people person but I am now” and as a PA noted,“[YP] struggles to build and maintain relationships but [the] relationships with HP staff and young people are positive.”

A dedicated project base

Two LHPs had secured a central base for the project for young people to easily get to and call their own. The NHP officers felt that this made a considerable difference and have since included this as a core element in agreements with new LAs. They noted that, “until young people have got their own homes, that… shared base almost becomes home.” A LHP manager stated the importance of a HP community base, which not only encouraged engagement in the project’s offer but also helped develop connections and build a community, “a base is massively enabling; having somewhere that the young people have been able to design themselves and feel comfortable with just dropping in.” This was echoed by the NHP education consultant, who considered it critical to providing a comfortable space for skills development;

> “[A base is] uniquely theirs. They can do lots of visible indicators of their learning… put things on the wall... have lots of informal learning opportunities, because people can drop in and sit and chat something through, so that's a big impact because not all learning is through a formal session.”

C. The HP cost benefit analysis

Assessment of Costs and Benefits

This cost benefit analysis was conducted by York Consulting based on HP monitoring and evaluation information gathered via the HP workbook and interviews with participants. The approach adopted employed a fiscal return on investment (FROI) methodology. Taking account of the wider economic and social benefits was not in the scope of this exercise. The costs were based on the resource required to deliver the HP. The benefits were based on the monetisation of adverse outcomes avoided by participating young people. The benefits were divided by the costs to produce a benefit cost ratio which can be regarded as a measure of the HP’s return on investment (ROI). If a project has an ROI of greater than 1 it is deemed to have a positive ROI.

In view of issues related to data quality and the relatively short period between baseline data collection and follow-up, the results from this exercise should be regarded as illustrative rather than definitive. We strongly recommend that the exercise should be repeated when the longer-term impacts on key anticipated outcomes, particularly accommodation breakdown and homelessness, can be taken into account.

It was necessary to make a number of assumptions to develop the cost-benefit model. Details of these are set out in Tables 12 to 14, Appendix 4.

The Costs

The costs reflected the resources required to deliver the HP over the period April 2017 to March 2020. These are shown in Table 4 and based exclusively on the level of funding for the project through DfE Innovation Programme support. There was missing financial information relating to LHP5 therefore we assumed the cost to be an average of the other 4 areas.

The total cost of the programme over the 3 year period was £1,303,216. This included an estimated deduction of 10% for 1-off set up costs.

Table 4. Programme costs

Total cost	£1,448,018
Set-up costs	£144,802
Adjusted costs	£1,303,216

Source: York Consulting

The Benefits

The benefits relate to the cost savings linked to improved outcomes for young people supported by the HP during the DfE funded period. They were derived from the observed status of young people at entry to the project (baseline) and at follow-up an average of around 13 months later. Any improvements were then monetised using individual accommodation costs identified in the programme data and proxy savings for other factors using national estimates (such as improvement in EET status). Details of the benefits we have been able to estimate are set out in Table 5, with the full list of benefit categories, including their unit costs and savings, available in Appendix 4.

Table 5. Unadjusted programme benefits

Benefit category	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Improved accommodation	£835,115	£1,670,605	£2,362,283
Placement stability	£119,812	£235,431	£347,003
Improved EET status	£31,398	£61,697	£90,936
Reduced risks	£41,618	£81,779	£120,535
Unadjusted benefit	£1,027,943	£2,049,512	£2,920,756

Source: York Consulting

Benefits were projected cumulatively for 3 years and presented by benefit category. The greatest single benefit by far is accommodation status (Year 3 £2,362,283) followed by placement stability (Year 3 £347,003). The majority of young people showed no improvement in EET status and little improvement in risks such as alcohol and drug use, hence the lower recorded benefits. Total unadjusted benefits in year 1 are estimated to be £1,027,943 rising to £2,920,756 in year 3.

It was necessary to adjust the benefits to take account of what would have happened anyway. Adjusted benefits reflect those that can reasonably be attributed to the project. Ideally this is done by comparing observed outcomes with those of a comparison group of young people with similar characteristics who did not participate in the HP. While a comparison group was constructed, data was only available on accommodation and EET status at T2. Although on both these variables performance between the 2 groups appeared to be the same, issues with the data quality rendered it unreliable.

Attribution scenarios

In the absence of a comparison group, we adopted a low attribution (33%), medium attribution (50%) and high attribution (66%) strategy and applied these to all benefit categories other than moves to HP accommodation. This is because HP accommodation is a certain outcome so we can be confident that the benefit is a direct consequence of the project. For every other benefit category, including the few accommodation moves to somewhere other than a HP property (for example, from residential accommodation to supported living), these 3 attribution scenarios were applied to their costs for 1, 2 and 3 years of benefit. On the low attribution scenario, 33% of benefits were assumed to be attributable to the project, rising to 66% in a high attribution scenario. Full details of the adjusted benefits are set out in Table 6.

Table 6. Adjusted 3 year total benefits

Attribution scenario	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Low (33%)	£899,544	£1,798,347	£2,549,282
Medium (50%)	£932,123	£1,862,076	£2,643,537
High (66%)	£962,785	£1,922,056	£2,732,247

Source: York Consulting

Return on investment

The return on investment (ROI) was calculated by dividing the adjusted benefits from Table 6 by the adjusted costs from Table 4, giving a benefit cost ratio (BCR). Details of the ROI cumulative for each year and by attribution scenario are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Return on Investment

Attribution scenario	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Total unadjusted	0.8	1.6	2.2
Low (33%)	0.7	1.4	2.0
Medium (50%)	0.7	1.4	2.0
High (66%)	0.7	1.5	2.1

Source: York Consulting

An ROI of greater than 1 it is deemed to have a positive ROI. If we take the medium attribution scenario (50% attribution), the HP showed a positive return on investment of 1.4 from year 2. This indicates a potential saving of £1.40 for each £1 spent. The ROI increases to 2.0 in year 3, a potential saving of £2 for every £1 invested in the HP.

D. Revisiting the Stoke HP pilot cohort

The original Stoke HP cohort comprised 10 young people who joined the project in 2015 and had taken part in the Round 1 evaluation in 2016 (see Dixon and Ward 2017). Seven members of the cohort were followed up in late 2019 via interviews, a survey and data collected via HP monitoring systems. One young person had left the HP early, prior to taking up a property, 1 was unable to take part and 1 did not respond.

Follow-up interviews with 5 young people provided an opportunity to reflect on their experience of the HP and to explore longer term outcomes. Survey data for the remaining 3 provided an update on housing and participation in EET. Young people were aged between 20 and 23 years at the time of the 2019 data collection. Stoke HP staff felt that cohort 1 had generally done well and that the HP had achieved its aims in supporting them to leave care and in creating a lasting legacy of what can be achieved, as reported;

> “We’ve still got young people from cohort 1 living in their own tenancies, managing their own tenancies, safe, secure, not involved in antisocial behaviour, not involved with the Police, not bringing a strain to society, so to speak. So definitely the outcomes is the legacy.”

- Moving into their HP homes

When interviewed in 2016, 5 young people had not moved into their HP properties. Those who had, only moved in a matter of weeks prior to interview. At the 2019 follow-up interview, young people were asked to reflect on their moving-in journeys. Most stated that at the time they were well supported by the facilitators. Some remembered feeling nervous about the move and unsure about how to handle difficult situations after moving.

> “It was exciting but nervous at the same time because it was like, you've got to do it yourself, and because I'd been in a training flat, they did everything pretty much for you really, but when you move to here, you've got to do your stuff yourself.”

Looking back, 4 of the 5 young people interviewed felt that they were not fully ready for the responsibilities of adulthood and that the learning really began once they had moved in. As a young person noted, “I don't think anyone knows when they're ready to move in. I'd say I am now but when I first took it on I wasn't ready to move in but I thought I could.”

Life now

- Accommodation

At least 5 of the 9 young people were still living in their original HP properties, an average of 3 years after moving in. Three had moved from HP properties and data was missing for 1 young person (another had left prior to moving into a HP property). For the 5 remaining in their original HP properties, their homes had transferred from the HP back to the local authority as planned, with young people holding secured tenancies. For those who had moved out, 1 had moved away and 2 young people had made a planned move to set up a new home with their partners. One had since moved into a new private property and although this was external to the HP, the facilitators had directly supported them to find a new home. The other young person explained that;

> “I’m not in my HP house anymore, but it was a positive move. House Project staff supported me to move. The only reason I moved was because me and my boyfriend wanted to do a lot more stuff and couldn't afford to be living on our own and wanting to go on holidays and driving lessons, House Project were really supportive of me.”

Data suggested that while 5 young people had not moved from their HP property, at least 2 young people had experienced 1 move and another had experienced 2 moves. Overall, those for whom we had data, appeared to have achieved stability in their post-care accommodation and had lived in their homes (whether HP properties or not) between 22 and 44 months by the time of the 2019 interview. There was no evidence that these young people had experienced eviction or episodes of homelessness, demonstrating positive accommodation outcomes for the Stoke HP cohort and the HP support package.

- Participation in EET

There had been some fluctuation in participation in EET over the 3 years or so since moving into their HP homes. One young person had been engaged in training for 18 months alongside being in part-time work for 6 months. Another had been engaged in various work experience programmes whilst being NEET throughout. A further 2 had attended college and 1 attended university. At 2019 data collection, 2 (29%) of those contacted were NEET, 1 was self-employed, 2 were in education and 2 were parents.

- HP community

A central aim of the HP was to build strong relationships and support networks for young people transitioning out of care, via the co-operative, peer support approach. Young people had been at the heart of setting up the first House Project and spent many months undertaking groupwork, which for some had been intensive. Their relationships with the facilitators and fellow young people had sustained, albeit for some, intermittently. All 5 interviewees still had contact with the HP facilitators and knew that they could reach out for support if and when needed, “[Facilitator] is always there for me no matter what. Even with me not living in the House Project, 2 houses later, 2 years on.” Two members of the original cohort continued to be involved in supporting the subsequent HP cohorts entering the project, as they explained, “I'm part of the community, so I can still come and help out if anyone needs any help.” and “You always ask how everyone else is on the project. There's a lot of new ones. I'll see how they're getting on.”

One of those who had not been in contact for a while, nevertheless felt that they could

contact the staff or young people should they need to, “I don't really receive any support but they are there if I need someone to talk to or if I need help with anything.” For another who had moved, the HP and 1 facilitator in particular had been a consistent source of support in their life, illustrating the successful nature of the HP aim to make a long-term difference to their young people, including being the first port of call at times of difficulty.

> “[Facilitator] is still like my rock. I've got the House Project to thank for that. If I didn't have this project, if this sort of thing wasn't there, I'm not saying I wouldn't be where I am, but she has been a massive character in my life and that has come from the House Project, and you don't get that sort of treatment from other services, you really don't.”

In terms of support from HP young people, there was evidence of mutual support and continuing friendships after moving into HP homes, “We were all really close … we all kept in touch. We were being invited to each other's properties once we all moved in.” Peer support proved important to, “just helping each other get through it.” Another noted;

> “I lived next door to [young person] from the project. He was constantly around. He was doing my gardening and I would make sure he was keeping up with appointments for the HP, so I supported him in that and he supported me.”

By 2019 follow-up, there were varying degrees of contact as personal lives changed. Some were in regular, direct contact, others tended to stay in touch occasionally over social media, “I don't really speak to a lot of them anymore. They've all grown and they've all gone their separate ways now.” Most, however, had remained in the local area;

> “I bumped into one the other day and had a quick coffee, it was nice. It's just people that you're going to know forever now, aren't you? You're not going to forget them cos you've spent so much time together for so long. How am I going to forget them?”

In summary, there was evidence that the HP had helped most young people to find accommodation stability after care. Over half (56%) of the group were still in their HP properties an average of 3 years on from moving in, and a further 2 had been supported by the HP to find stability in other properties. Just under a third were NEET (1 having been so throughout), and 3 were, or were about to become, parents. Young people had mostly felt well supported on their journeys to independent adulthood. There was a recognition that things had not always gone smoothly, but that they had social and professional support networks to fall back on. Some felt that they were still finding their feet in developing the skills and resources to be self-sufficient. There was agreement that the HP had not been an easy option, and that young people had worked hard to get to where they were now. For some this had paid off, with favourite memories including team building trips, presenting at conferences and helping each other to decorate the properties. One summed up her experience of the HP as being “just brilliant. It's given me a great life and great opportunities.”

4. Summary of key findings on 7 practice features and 7 outcomes

As reported in the Innovation Programme Round 1 Report (Sebba et al 2017), evidence from Round 1 evaluations led the DfE to identify 7 features of practice and 7 outcomes to explore in subsequent rounds. Those features evident in the HP are outlined below.

Practice features

- Multi-disciplinary skill sets and a strengths based approach

The HP staff and consultancy team brought a range of skills and expertise. The NHP team comprised highly experienced children's social care practitioners, while the core consultants and trustees came from education, business, psychology, health and police backgrounds, which helped develop the holistic reach of the project. LHP managers and facilitators were mostly experienced in children's social care and youth work, and some had worked as PAs. Staff also had experience in housing, health, homelessness and family support services. Additionally, professional backgrounds included arts based work and experience of working with vulnerable groups including those involved in substance misuse and CSE. As outlined in Appendix 8, some staff were trained in counselling and child development and all were supported to gain further training and skills through the NHP community of practice monthly sessions. LHP managers and facilitators were trained by the NHP and local clinical psychologists working with the LHPs to use formulations to assess and support HP young people and had access to the consultant clinical psychologist to support them in therapeutic, trauma informed approaches. NHP managers emphasised the importance of staff with a diverse range of skills, but also felt that knowledge and understanding of young people from care was crucial and "there's got to be something about them that means they can make relationships with young people." They noted that getting the right staff with the right work "ethos", who were tenacious and creative in their desire to support young people across a range of life areas and were willing to advocate and have difficult conversations, both with young people and the services that they rely on, was paramount to effective working. The HP encompassed a strengths-based ethos, evident in the ORCHIDS framework, formulation work, co-production approach and HPP that underpinned the HP. Relationships were core to the approach via community and peer support.

- High intensity and consistency of practitioner

Each LHP included a project manager and 2 facilitators to support around 10 young people, currently providing 1 worker per 5 young people. HP facilitators provided weekly 1-to-1 support with each young person and additional support as needed from the full LHP team. Some LHPs supplemented the team with participation assistants or peer mentors. LHP staff provided individualised, needs-led support to prepare young people

for independent living as well as on-going intensive support during their move into a HP property. The plan was for support to gradually reduce as young people became more confident in their HP homes. In addition to direct support, LHP staff roles included liaising with a range of services, including housing, and raising awareness of the HP approach to identify further cohorts, as one explained, “it’s a pivotal role in the recruitment of young people, entailing raising awareness of the HP to social care practitioners and discussing value of the project with potential young people.” There was some staff turnover in 3 LHPs. In some cases, this reflected the intensive and all-encompassing nature of the facilitator role, with at least 2 reluctantly leaving, though citing the need for greater work-life balance. Staff and young people expressed a need for more direct workers to support the increasing number of young people entering the HP via subsequent cohorts.

Outcomes

- Reducing risk for young people

The HP aimed to reduce risk behaviour (such as going missing, harm to self or others, homelessness and substance misuse). The HPP included targeted sessions to address risk behaviour such as CSE and gang related activity, relationship skills, behaviour regulation, and keeping themselves and their properties safe. Most young people exhibited risk behaviour at baseline and follow-up. There was a reduction in the level of some risks and an overall reduction in going missing and harm to others.

- Creating greater stability for young people

The HP aimed to increase stability by supporting young people to find and sustain a long-term home after care, via independence and tenancy skills development. It was too soon to assess the impact on stability for most as only 53% had moved to their HP home. Most had sustained their accommodation. There was little sign of movement by follow-up, although 7 young people had moved accommodation whilst waiting for an HP home.

- Increasing wellbeing for young people

Improving young people’s wellbeing was realised through the ORCHIDS framework that underpinned the HP support, the relationship centred approach that encouraged peer support and a community ethos and through offering a stable home life, integration and greater autonomy. The GCI indicated an increase in subjective wellbeing over time, with increased happiness with life as a whole, the home they lived in and with friendships.

- Generating better value for money

Data gathered from project expenditure budgets, accommodation costs and benefits via monetisation of outcomes was used to calculate a ROI. An attribution ratio was used, in the absence of a counterfactual, to provide illustrative results. An medium attribution of 50% showed potential savings of £2.00 for every £1.00 invested in the HP from year 3.

5. Lessons and implications

Implications and recommendations arising from the evaluation of the HP include:

- the added value of an independent national hub

The evaluation identified the benefits of having a national co-ordinating body (NHP team and consultants), independent of LAs and with the expertise and freedom to adapt the HP and generate the momentum and credibility to drive forward and scale up the project. The NHP brought freedom to innovate and utilise the accumulated national learning and collective experience of LHPs and young people to continue to develop and strengthen the approach. Examples included: requiring key stakeholders (DCSs, LAs, housing, health and education) to be on board to contribute to and commit to project set-up; all LHPs having psychological input to their work; the importance of a LHP base for young people to meet and access support; and making the AQA accredited HPP a mandatory component for all HP young people. These became core conditions of agreements with all new LHPs. The NHP team was actively facilitating early meetings in new LAs to clarify core expectations and conditions of membership of the NHP community, and had created a LA proforma for self-assessing their readiness for becoming an HP site. NHP officers recommended that early and effective multi-agency planning and ensuring the right conditions for the HP to embed were vital to successful delivery.

- contingency planning and realistic timescales

To avoid disappointment or disruption due to the time taken to allocate properties for future cohorts, it is necessary to balance young people's expectations with the realities of housing availability, timescales for getting houses ready and young people's readiness for moving to independent living. HP young people and facilitators recommended open and honest communication about realistic move-in timescales. Providing information on the local housing market, housing allowances, managing a household and budgeting formed the basis of the HPP, to prepare young people. LHP staff highlighted that contingency planning is crucial to protect young people if timescales or plans change, such as for those who become unwilling or unable to take up a HP property or leave early. To aid this, LHP staff recommend ongoing communication and work with carers, social workers and PAs to support post-care moves, preserve support networks and for contingency planning. This includes flexibility to maintain care placements longer to avoid intermediate moves if more time is needed for young people or properties to be ready.

- longer-term monitoring of housing outcomes

There were positive signs of housing stability for HP young people who had moved into their properties. While early days for the current cohort (only 53% had moved in by December 2020), over half of the first Stoke HP cohort continued to live in their HP social housing sector home some 3 to 4 years on from moving in. Others had been supported

by the HP in their choice to move and settle in other independent accommodation.

The evaluation recognises that the positive impact of the HP so far on accommodation stability, may be influenced in the long term by wider policy and practice environments related to accommodation options for young people who do not or cannot live with their families, including the availability and affordability of suitable properties. A general lack of housing availability for young people and variation in housing type and costs across LAs had required Round 2 LHPs to be flexible and approach a range of housing providers (private, housing association, LA). A range of options provided more choice but some LHP staff highlighted the potential for less certainty about the long-term sustainability. The shared housing approach, for example, while addressing the shortage of affordable sole occupancy options, posed questions about long-term stability and cost savings if young people move in and out of shared properties at different times. Issues arising from the evaluation also include whether properties will remain affordable for young people, particularly in the private sector where there is less control over rent rises, and for young people who rely on benefits or age limited allowances. These issues feed into the wider picture of housing stability and affordability for young people who are from care or estranged from their families. Continued data collection and outcomes monitoring after young people graduate the HP is vital to assess longer-term housing experiences and stability and the associated impact on other outcomes.

- balancing national reach and local fit

The NHP planned to encourage greater consistency and fidelity to maintain HP integrity and quality and ease implementation in new LAs. The HP framework to guide practice was welcomed as providing consistency and a tried and tested approach. Some LHP and LA staff, cautioned against the HP approach becoming too rigid. They had found the flexibility of the HP approach to be a particular strength that enabled them to be responsive to local structures and the needs of their local care populations. Adaptability was also felt necessary so not to lose its young-person centred ethos and co-production function, “It’s supposed to be... their project and they design it.” (Local manager).

- stimulating an increase in best practice options for all care leavers

There was consensus among staff and young people that the HP is not suitable for all care leavers and should be seen as an option amongst many. While staff advocated for flexibility in the recruitment of HP young people to best meet individual needs, ensure diversity and enable matching (so group dynamics work well for young people and LHPs), the need for financial viability means that decisions about who and how many are offered the HP may ultimately be influenced by costs and maximising savings. NHP and LHP commented that the HP was increasingly seen as an example of best practice in their LAs. Some staff noted however, that as the HP was not suitable for all young people and that project capacity was limited, this could be difficult to square with practitioners and other care leavers when the HP was seen as the “platinum” option, yet available to a

select few only. They advised that recognising elements of the HP approach as examples of best practice could instead stimulate ideas for overall development within their wider leaving care services. This had been a learning point for the NHP and negotiations had begun with some LAs to develop a service wide approach by introducing HP informed practice in to leaving care services to improve the offer for all care leavers in the area.

- recommendations for further monitoring

The NHP received funding to continue beyond the round 2 funding. The evaluation team has provided advice to the NHP on methods for monitoring and recording outcomes for current and new cohorts. Good quality data is imperative for monitoring the impact of the HP. The evaluation team contributed to development of the workbook and recommended that it is revised to capture key data more manageably and that systems are in place to ensure that data continues to be recorded and analysed for all LHPs. Future evaluations would benefit from a more robust system for gathering comparison group data. Given the likely demand for the HP against limited capacity per cohort, a randomised controlled trial could be considered to measure impact. This method remains relatively uncommon in children's social care research and is not without its practical and ethical challenges (see Green et al 2014).

- sustainability

The continued growth of the HP will have implications for the current support for LHPs and new LAs. The NHP team is beginning to expand to meet increased demand and is considering a regional support model to overcome travel logistics and ensure that regional issues can be addressed. More facilitators may be useful to ensure existing and new cohorts receive a high level of support. Long term HP sustainability in LAs will depend on housing availability and the impact of the financial climate on LAs and scope to meet start-up fees and the costs of ongoing participation. To address this, the NHP requires Housing to commit properties at set-up stage to help with project planning and the NHP is exploring options for covering the start-up fees for new LAs to enable scale up. The ethos and impact of the HP is gaining momentum and widespread interest. Furthermore, many HP young people endorsed the HP as "life changing" and recommended that all care leavers deserved the same opportunity;

> "Eventually I want this … given to you if you want it... it improves you, improves everything, and you work together... you learn all these skills to be independent, you just learn so much… I don't want this to close and I don't want it to disappear…cos I think personally, this will have a benefit to every young person." (HP young person).

Appendix 1. HP local authorities

Context

The national statistical release for March 2018 showed that there were 75,420 looked-after children (LAC) in England (DfE, 2018). Of these, 42,320 were male and 33,100 were female. Six per cent (4,480) were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). Data on the 28,510 care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 showed that 26% were known to be in education and 25% in training or employment. Over a third (39%) NEET, over 3 times higher than all young people aged 19 to 21 years (12%). Most (84%) care leavers aged 19 to 21 years old were in accommodation considered suitable (DfE 2018).

The House Project Round 2 (HP) was developed to roll out the original Stoke-on-Trent HP to 5 local authorities (LA) covering the north, midlands and south of England. The HP implemented a National hub to support in the expansion of the project in these areas.

LA1 is a landlocked county based in the Midlands. The county council provides key services to a population of approximately 556,750. The local authority (LA) is a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) launched in 2016, comprising of social workers and police. The MASH collectively provide services to 261,000 residents, including 35,100 young people aged 15-24 years. At county level, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that LA1 is ranked 124th out of 152 upper tier authorities in England and therefore amongst the 20% least deprived areas (DCLG 2015). However, there is considerable variation across the districts and boroughs, with areas of severe deprivation at a more localised level. Around 21% of the working age population was recorded economically inactive in 2017-2018, similar to the national average of 22% (DWP 2018). In March 2018 (the year that the HP began recruiting young people), the population of LA1 included 717 LAC, of which 66 were UASC. Nationally, care leavers aged 19, 20 & 21 are tracked via their education, employment and training (EET) and accommodation statuses. In 2018, out of 305 care leavers within the age-range, 42% (129) were engaged in EET. Data showed that 72% (220) of care leavers with living in suitable accommodation.

LA2 is a borough council set in Greater London. The council provide key services to a population of approximately 227,692 residents. The LA is a MASH comprising of social workers and police, collectively providing key services to a population of 29,700 young people aged 15-24 years old. The area was rated the 26th most deprived LA in 2015 (DCLG, 2015), with 16% of households having no- one in paid work and just over a quarter of children living in such households. In 2016, there were around 18,000 out-of-work benefit claimants; most (around 12,000) were in receipt of disability-related benefits (DWP 2018). In March 2018, the population of LA2 included 339 LAC, including 41 UASC. Of 264 care leavers, 49% (129) were engaged in EET. Care leavers' accommodation data showed that just 77% (204) of young people were living in suitable

accommodation. The most common type of accommodation for LA2's care leavers in the age range was independent living, as was the case nationally (DfE 2018).

LA3 is an upper-tier county council in the south of England, which provides services to approximately 682,400 residents. The LA is a MASH comprising of social workers and police, which collectively provide services to around 20,300 young people aged 15-24 years old (ONS, 2016.). The area was rated the 35th most deprived LA in 2015 (DCLG, 2015). As of July 2018, the number of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants, plus those who claim Universal Credit currently seeking work is 1,540 (DWP 2018). In March 2018, the population of LA3 included 685 LAC, of which 57 were UASC. Of the 242 care leavers, 48% (117) were engaged in EET. Care leavers' accommodation data showed that 77% (187) of young people were living in suitable accommodation. The most common type of accommodation for LA3 care leavers in the age range was independent living through shared housing arrangements. Independent living was the most common type of accommodation (DfE 2018).

LA4 is a metropolitan borough council located in south Yorkshire. The LA provides key services to approximately 260,800 residents. The area was rated the 52nd most deprived LA in 2015 (DCLG, 2015), with the key drivers of deprivation being health and disability (21% in the English top 10%), education and skills (24% in English Top 10%) and employment (24% in the English top 10%). The rate of those economically active claiming benefits was 3%, compared to a claimant rate of 1.5% nationally (DWP, 2018). The total percentage of people on out of work benefits was 12%, above the national rate of 9% (DWP 2018). In March 2018, the population of LA4 included 619 LAC, of which 6 were UASC. Of 137 care leavers, at least 44% (60) were in EET(DfE, 2018). Care leavers accommodation data showed that at 91% (126) almost all young people were living in suitable accommodation. The most common type of accommodation for LA4's care leavers in the age range was independent living (DfE 2018).

LA5 is a metropolitan borough council (and Trust) in south Yorkshire. The LA provides key services to a population of 306,397, including 57,493 young people aged 0-15 years and 193,768 working age people (16-64 years old). The area was rated the 42nd most deprived LA in 2015, despite significant regeneration in recent years (DCLG, 2015). Around 6% of working aged residents are unemployed and 72% are economically active (DWP, 2018). The rate of residents claiming benefits was 3.5%, around 1.2% higher than the national average (DWP 2018).In March 2018, the population of LA5 included 569 LAC, of which 12 were UASC. Out of 155 care leavers, 52% were engaged in EET. Data showed that 88% (136) of care leavers were living in suitable accommodation. The most common type of accommodation for LA4 care leavers in the age range was also independent living (DfE 2018).

Appendix 2. The HP theory of change

Figure 4. The House Project's original theory of change

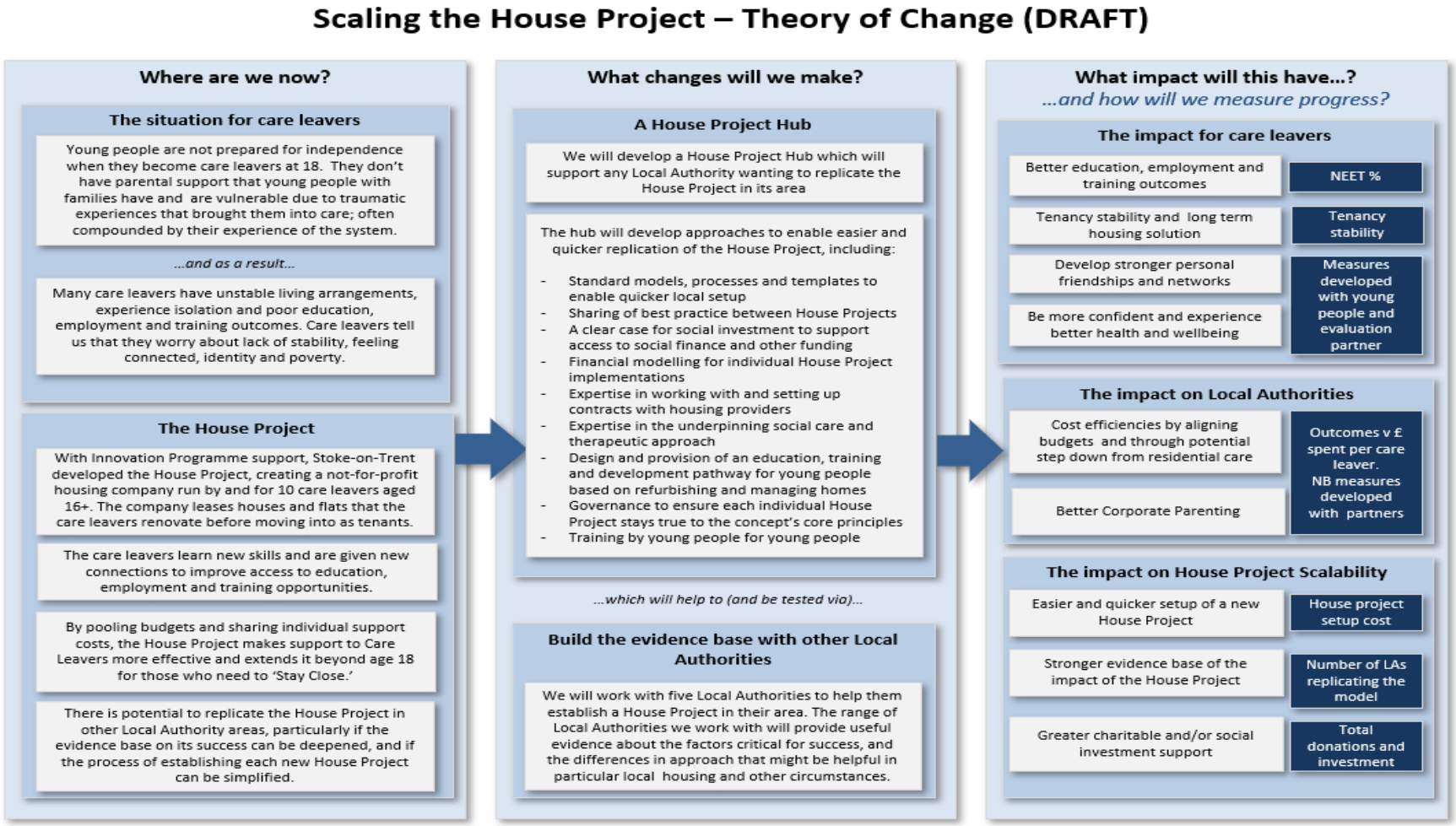


Figure 5. The revised theory of change

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (END OF 6 MNTH INDUCTION)	MID TERM OUTCOMES (1 YR IN PROPERTY – 6-18 MONTHS)	LONG TERM OUTCOMES AT AGE 25)
HP Staff knowledge & expertise **NHP** (Team and NHP framework) Business and financial planning ***HP staff*** *(committed, reliable expertise)* Money advisor ***HP consultants*** (Psychologist, Participation Worker, Learning Expert, external providers) **ORCHIDS Framework** **Apprenticeships within LHP teams** **Peer Support** **Multi-agency working:** • **Housing** • ***Local EET providers***	HP STAFF UNDERTAKE TRAINING, PRESENTATIONS AND DIRECT WORK WITH HOUSING COLLEAGUES AND HOUSING PROVIDERS. *HP Staff have training/support and access re: housing availability/systems.* *HP staff delivering Independence training module to YP:* • *Involved in decision* • *Choosing furnishing* • *Managing budget* Training to HP staff & YP on Budgeting skills & writing budget plans. Understanding what things cost and how to get best deal. Strategic alignment between housing and social care, scoping of housing options – areas and types. Develop working relationship with operational housing provider. Holistic support and assessment of YP to identify strengths and needs. HP STAFF RECEIVE TRAINING AND SUPPORT ON AQA ACCREDITED HOUSE PROJECT LEARNING PROGRAMME (HPLP) AND CARRY OUT THE MODERATION OF YP WORK COMPLETED IN PORTFOLIOS. *HP staff provide:* • *Careers advice* • *Support with courses, attendance &exams* • *Specific input and support in running a business event* **Work experience in range of activities experience** YP are being supported to participate in opportunities • *Business events* • *1 – 1 s* • *Open days at universities* • *English and maths courses/qualifications* • *Volunteering* COMMISSIONING AND COORDINATING PSYCHOLOGIST TO DELIVER TRAINING IN THERAPEUTIC APPROACH "WHAT IS A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP" SESSION E.G. ARCH SESSIONS, RELATIONSHIPS WITHOUT FEAR, 1:1 SUPPORT. *HP Staff support all group work activities sessions which require negotiation and agreements e.g. cook and eat sessions.* **Care Leavers National Movement** **Local forum and weekly group activities, team building activities and residential, social media groups to build YP community of support.** **Agreeing TOR for project. Ensuring project runs as agreed.**	HOUSING PROVIDERS UNDERSTAND HOW THE HP WORKS AND ARE BETTER ABLE TO SUPPORT YP TO HAVE A CHOICE ABOUT WHERE THEY LIVE. STAFF UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF REPAIRING AND/OR PREPARING YOUR HOME BEFORE MOVING IN. PROVIDERS UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THEM AND HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FRAMEWORK. ALL YP ARE MAINTAINING THEIR HOME YP ARE MONEY AWARE (LEVEL 1 ACCREDITATION), SHOWING CONFIDENCE IN MANAGING MONEY, PAYING BILLS; NOT IN DEBT, HAVE MONEY LEFT OVER TO DO NICE THINGS. YP demonstrating improved independent living skills and are *contributing to making their house ready to move into.* Properties are made available to LHPs and YP. • **YP have stable housing** • **YP have mental health and wellbeing needs met** • **YP building resilience and confidence and ownership.** STAFF ARE FOLLOWING A CLEAR FRAMEWORK IN RELATION TO EET AND THE SKILLS TO MOTIVATE YP. YP are completing portfolios and receiving certificates. All YP show increased interest and awareness of EET opportunities. **YP have experience of job application and interviews techniques and access wider opportunities.** *YP show increased awareness of local provision and opportunities, YP practicing career planning and goal setting, YP working towards qualifications & gaining work experience , YP has improved CV through experience and references, YP gain interview experience.* EMBED COMMON PRACTICE MODEL - HP STAFF WORK IN A TRAUMA INFORMED WAY AND RECOGNISE ATTACHMENT STYLES. Staff able to use formulation meetings positively and support YP with their safety planning. YP show understanding of what healthy relationships means to them. / Improved understanding of family & other relationships. YP show improved ability to regulate emotions and understand impact of behaviour on others. YP demonstrating skills in conflict resolution, Increased self-esteem and positive wellbeing. YP valuing self. **YP attend group activities, have confidence to make decisions and sense of community and ownership of project.**	Properties available for YP to move in to. YP are Tenancy ready Confident and have skills to maintain a home (budget etc). **Project staff will have run successful, well attended sessions and YP will have engaged in purposeful activities.** **YP has identified EET opportunities/interests YP has experiences of Volunteering and is engaging in meaningful activity.** **YP acquiring the skills, knowledge and confidence to go back into education or seek employment.** **YP and HP staff have positive relationships where behaviours and beliefs can be challenged in a safe way.** **YP have purpose in life have a plan for the future and have positive and healthy social networks.** **YP able to seek emotional support from each other and staff.** **YP confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing improving.** **HP YP feel supported by others (peer support) and part of a community.** **YP sense of ownership of HP and of own journey.**	Service outcomes: Housing, social care and LHPs working closely together to ensure a regular flow of houses to the HP and an improved offer to care leavers. Next set of houses made available. **YP outcomes** Maintaining their home, and demonstrating good independent living and tenancy skills (care for self, able to access support if needed, a good neighbour, managing money, not in debt). Moved to permanent/secure tenancy or a housing solution of choice. **YP have purpose in their life and ambitions for the future and are participating in EET** **YP have their own community of support** **Able to identify what they need from a relationship.** **Connected to other people – community, friends and family and learning to negotiate relationships and rebuild them if things go wrong. Comfortable with their family connections.** **Thinking about what healthy relationships means to them.** **YP has increased confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing and able to access relevant support if needed.** **HP group - confident individuals who can take responsibility**	**1) Accommodation** **(Care leavers guaranteed appropriate housing at the right time for them & maintaining secure housing solution of choice.)** **2) Participating in EET and financial independence** **(YP are engaged in meaningful employment and holding down a job/ meaningful activity (University graduate, work, business owner, self-employed).)** **Financially secure with savings plan.** **3) Wellbeing, Agency and socially connected** **(Happy and settled – living life well.** **Able to manage and contain a range of emotions in a healthy way and seek support when they need to.** **Number of years of having positive relationships. Able to maintain long term friendships.** **Acceptance of family relationships and getting the most from them.** **Stable relationships.** **Able to identify what they need from a relationship.)** 4) Cost savings through efficient use of resources and reduction in poor outcome.

Appendix 3. Evaluation methods, sample and data

Evaluation data collection and methods

A mixed-methods research design was used. Process and impact data was gathered at:

1. baseline - young people's entry to the LHPs
2. time 2 (T2) - a second data collection point 6-9 months post-baseline
3. follow-up - data collection endpoint (November to December 2019)

Each method is presented below alongside the associated numbers of participants.

Process strand data collection methods:

- structured interviews with NHP officers, a former manager involved in the Stoke HP, and LA senior managers (LA leads), to explore the enablers and barriers to project implementation and operation, the perceived added value and impact of the project within each LA (8 at baseline and 3 at follow-up)
- consultants delivering HP components (such as psychologist, education and youth participation specialists) to explore the contribution to the personalised support package and impact for young people (4 at baseline and 3 at follow-up)
- structured interviews with the 5 LHP managers to explore project implementation, operation and impact in each LA (5 at baseline and 5 at follow-up)
- structured interviews with LHP facilitators engaged in direct work with young people, to explore their role, how the project worked in practice, and the perceived impact of the project on young people (10 at baseline and10 at follow-up)
- one-off online survey of HP housing providers to explore their role in working with the 5 LHPs (3 (60%) responses at data collection endpoint)
- online survey of social workers or personal advisors that were supporting HP young people, to explore the observed impact of the HP on young people and to explore their views of the project (7 (20%) responses at data collection endpoint)
- structured interviews with the Stoke HP team (including managers and facilitators) to capture learnings from delivery of the first HP and perceived impact on the pilot cohort, 5 years on from implementation (3 interviews)

Impact strand data collection methods:

- consultation with HP young people occurred throughout the evaluation. A baseline focus group was conducted in all 5 LHPs, with the aim of allowing young people to shape the evaluation through identifying key issues relevant to leaving care in each area and to inform the development of evaluation tools. A T2 focus group was conducted in each site to explore how the HP was working and a focus group with the Care Leavers National Movement took place at endpoint
- a child level data tracker (the workbook) was developed specifically for HP monitoring in the 5 LHPs, which fed into a central monitoring system held by the NHP. This incorporated data for HP young people (54) and a comparison group of care leavers (40) who were eligible but did not enter the HP. This tracker provided data on characteristics, care history (such as age at entry to care and number of placements), and circumstances and progress in outcome areas
- semi-structured peer researcher-led interviews were carried out with HP young people to explore their views and experiences of the project (33 (83%) at follow-up). Evaluation researchers carried out interviews with the peer researchers
- the Good Childhood Index (GCI) and Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) measures were used to capture self-reported life satisfaction and wellbeing of the HP young people at the 3 timepoints. The SWEMWBS was gathered via the HP workbook and the GCI during focus groups and interviews
- an online survey of a comparison group of 40 young people from the 5 LAs, to explore characteristics and outcomes for those taking different accommodation routes after care and to collect wellbeing measures (9 (22%) responded at T2 and 5 (12%) at follow-up. Only 3 respondents completed surveys at both timepoints)
- impact data collected for Stoke HP cohort 1 young people, included:
    - interviews with young people from HP cohort 1 to reflect on experiences of the project and perceived impact on their current lives (5 (50%))
    - collection of GCI and SWEMWBS measures to capture self-reported life satisfaction and wellbeing (5 of each measure were gathered)
    - update on outcome data (EET and accommodation), to track progress subsequent to their exit from the HP and data collected in 2016 (5 (50%))

Economic strand methods:

- the economic evaluation, carried out by York Consulting LLP, explored the costs and benefits of establishing the HP (the NHP and 5 LHPs). Costs were expressed as actual spend or resource input and used to establish the cost of delivering HP support. Calculation of the possible savings was based on accommodation costs and the monetisation of adverse outcomes avoided (for example, accommodation breakdown, risks, being NEET or homeless) via the impact data. Data included the LHP budgeting records at endpoint. All but LHP5 submitted data (80%)

Limitations of the evaluation

Overall, the original evaluation plan proved to be appropriate for understanding the factors that supported implementation and early impact of the HP. There were several limitations to the evaluation that affected findings, as summarised below:

- the evaluation maintained positive collaboration and effective communication across all but 1 LHP, where levels of commitment and participation in evaluation activity fluctuated, leading to missing data and low response rates
- getting sign-off for GDPR, data sharing agreements (DSA) and research governance delayed initial data collection
- there were initial delays in implementing the HP workbook (developed by the HP IT consultant in collaboration with the HP leads and evaluation team, to record child level data and progress). Development of the workbook began in December 2017 and work to integrate the system into the 5 LHPs continued to the end of 2018. Trial data transfers to the NHP identified variability in the amount and quality of data. Workbook data was to be transferred to the evaluation at 3 timepoints. The transfers were postponed due to delayed DSAs and delays in the LHPs entering data onto the workbook. Two data transfers were made, 1 at T2 and 1 at the end of the evaluation. Some LHPs were unable to provide complete data for their HP cohort or for the comparison group
- recruitment of HP and comparison groups took longer than anticipated . Referral of young people to the project took longer than expected due to new LAs being recruited and set up. The time taken for HP young people to join the evaluation and the availability of workbook data on the HP cohort characteristics resulted in delayed recruitment of a comparison group that broadly matched the HP group (in age, gender, care placement type etcetera). The LHPs assisted in identifying and gathering data for a comparison group of 40, however, there were difficulties gathering follow-up data, with few responses to online surveys, which led to little or no follow-up data for this group. This prevented a full comparative impact analysis. Instead, a before and after analysis of outcomes was carried out for the HP cohort, supplemented by qualitative data and comparison to nationally available data on outcomes for care leavers. The lack of a viable comparison group also affected the costs analysis. In the absence of a counterfactual, the economists used a low-high attribution model

Evaluation sample, data and measures

Data gathered via the workbook, evaluation measures and interviews for HP young people, is presented in Tables 8 to 11 (see section 3.B for a discussion on impact findings). Nationally available data is included to provide comparison with care leavers

generally and in each of the HP LAs. The follow-up group comprised 40 of the 54 HP young people (1 who was still in the project at endpoint but who had joined late and 12 who had left the project early were not included in the follow-up group. One young person who had left the project weeks before endpoint after 14 months in the HP, was included).

Table 8. Local authority and national data on outcomes for care leavers

The year up to March 2019	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA4	LA5	Stoke	National
All children looked after	722	313	779	642	533	851	78,150
All care leavers 17-21 years old	456	297	377	206	244	227	41,200
Care leavers aged 17-18	138	91	102	61	75	71	11,270
In EET aged 17-18	57%	53%	72%	56%	67%	56%	64%
NEET aged 17-18	38%	35%	22%	44%	-	44%	30%
Semi-independent living aged 17 Semi-independent living aged 18	-	-	-	-	-	-	7% 27%
In custody aged 17 In custody aged 18	-	-	-	-	-	-	10% -
With parents or relatives aged 17 With parents or relatives aged 18	-	-	-	-	-	-	43% 12%
With former carers aged 17 With former carers aged 18	-	-	-	-	-	-	- 20%
Living independently aged 17 Living independently aged 18	-	-	-	-	-	-	- 35%
Care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21	318	206	275	145	169	156	29,930
In EET 19 to 21	50%	46%	49%	44%	41%	32%	52%
NEET 19 to 21	41%	43%	32%	48%	50%	55%	39%
Independent living	-	-	-	-	-	-	35%
Staying Put with former carers	-	-	-	-	-	-	26%
With parents or relatives	-	-	-	-	-	-	11%
Semi-independent living	-	-	-	-	-	-	14%
With former carers (other)	-	-	-	-	-	-	8%
Suitable accommodation	81%	80%	75%	94%	91%	81%	85%

Source: DfE 2019 (Some DfE data is unknown and some is unreported to protect anonymity.)

Table 9. Characteristics and circumstances of the evaluation sample

Characteristics	Full HP group (54)	Comparison group (40)	ALL (94)	HP early exit group (14)	HP follow-up group (40)
Female Male	48% 52%	48% 52%	48% 52%	57% 43%	45% 55%
Mean age at baseline (range)	16.5 (15-18)	16.7 (16-19)	-	16.6 (16-17)	16.5 (15-18)
UASC	6%	8%	6%	0	8%
Full care order Section 20	77% 19%	59% 38%	70% 27%	77% 8%	77% 23%
Category of need: abuse and neglect absent parenting family dysfunction other	 65% 15% 7% 13%	 45% 13% 10% 32%	 56% 14% 9% 21%	 86% 7% - 7%	 58% 18% 10% 14%
Mean age first entered care (range)	11.9 (0-16)	12.2 (6-17)	12.7 (0-17)	10.8 (0-16)	12.1 (3-16)
Mean number of care placement moves (range)	5.6 (0-21)	6.7 (1-14)	6.2 (0-21)	7.1 (1-21)	5.2 (0-15)
from LA1 from LA2 from LA3 from LA4 from LA5	8 (15%) 11 (20%) 14 (26%) 12 (22%) 9 (17%)	8 (20%) 10 (25%) 8 (20%) 8 (20%) 6 (15%)	16 (17%) 21 (22%) 22 (23%) 20 (21%) 15 (16%)	- 1 (7%) 6 (43%) 5 (36%) 2 (14%)	8 (20%) 10 (25%) 8 (20%) 7 (17.5%) 7 (17.5%)
Mean number of months in HP at endpoint (range)	10.8 (0-16)	-	-	3.4 (0–14)	13.6 (9-16)
EET at baseline NEET at baseline	72% 28%	69% 31%	71% 29%	50% 50%	80% 20%
Baseline accommodation: foster care residential care semi-independent family independent living	 41% 28% 26% 6% 0	 36% 15% 36% 8% 5%	 39% 23% 30% 7% 3%	 16% 38% 31% 15% 0	 48% 25% 25% 2% 0

Source: HP evaluation data

Table 10. Key outcomes and change over time

Characteristics and outcome	HP follow-up group at baseline (40)	HP follow-up group at endpoint (40)	Change over time (significance levels)*
Mean age (range)	16.5 (15-18)	17.7 (16-19)	n/a
Stability: mean number of care placement moves mean number of accommodations moves between baseline and endpoint	 Mean 5.2 (0-15) -	 - Mean 0.7 (0-2)	n/a
Mean duration in HP	-	13.6 (9-16)	n/a
Accommodation type: foster care residential care supported, semi-independent family HP supported tenancy	 48% 25% 25% 2% 0	 7% 10% 25% 5% 53%	n/a
Mean age at move to HP home	-	17.14	n/a
Mean months in HP home	-	4.8 (0-9)	n/a
Happy with accommodation	78%	87%	n/a
Mean score for happiness with home	7.4	7.7	ns
Mean score for happiness with area	6.8	7.6	ns
Education	52%	38%	n/a
Employment	23%	12%	n/a
Training and/or apprenticeship	5%	10%	n/a
EET or NEET	80% 20%	60% 40%	p=.057
Wellbeing (GCI) Satisfaction with life as a whole - mean score	6.7	7.8	p=.014
Wellbeing (SWEMBWS) Poor mental wellbeing - mean score	23.7	25.1	ns
Autonomy (Choice in life) Means score	7.5	8.8	p=.007
Number of Risks	2.1	2.2	ns

Source: HP evaluation data. (Note: * n/a indicates that statistical analysis was not applicable, ns indicates that the analysis result was not statistically significant. P values indicate a statistically significant result.)

The Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)

The SWEMWBS is a short version of the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), which was developed to enable the monitoring of wellbeing in the general population and the evaluation of projects that aim to improve mental wellbeing. The 7 items in the SWEMWBS were drawn from the 14-item WEMWBS, which measures both happiness and psychological functioning. The SWEMWBS contains more indicators of the latter. Each item is scored on a 5-point scale from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time). A conversion table is available to transform the raw score for the SWEMWBS scale into a metric score, ranging from 7 low to 35 high (denoting a positive score). Neither the WEMWBS or SWEMWBS was designed to measure mental wellbeing at an individual level, however, research with adults suggests that they can detect clinically meaningful change (Collins et al 2012, Maheswaran et al 2012). Different statistical approaches give different results with regard to minimally important levels of change, however, a minimum of 1 point and maximum of 3 points can be applied to SWEMWBS.

The Good Childhood Index (GCI)

The GCI was developed following detailed qualitative and quantitative research with children and young people (The Children's Society 2017, 2018). It should be noted that this measure has not been validated for use with small samples or specifically to test effectiveness of interventions and services. Several versions of the GCI are available measuring subjective wellbeing in aspects of children's lives, which they say, and analysis shows, are important to them. Respondents are asked to rate their happiness and satisfaction in 10 domains on a 0 (very unhappy) to 10 (very happy) scale. For this evaluation, a 10 item scale was used for comparison with national data. One overall measure of satisfaction with life as whole is included and 5 extra items were added to the measure to gather young people's satisfaction in areas relevant to the HP group. The GCI has been mostly used for young people aged 10 to 17. The average age of young people in the HP cohort was 16 at baseline and 17 at endpoint and therefore at the upper end of the age-range for the GCI.

Table 11. GCI mean scores at baseline, T2 and follow-up compared to national data

Life domains	HP YP Baseline mean (31)	HP YP T2 mean (24)	HP YP Follow–up mean (31)	Mean for UK 10-17 year olds*
Your life as a whole	6.7	6.9	7.8	7.8
1. Health	7.2	7.5	8.3	8.2
2. Choice in life	7.6	7.9	8.8	7.4
3. Relationship with Family	6.6	7.0	7.5	8.4
4. Things you have (own)	8.0	7.5	8.1	7.5
5. Friends	7.7	7.3	8.5	8.0

Life domains	HP YP Baseline mean (31)	HP YP T2 mean (24)	HP YP Follow–up mean (31)	Mean for UK 10-17 year olds*
6. Appearance	7.5	7.4	7.7	7.3
7. Future	7.5	6.8	7.6	7.0
8. Home you live in	7.4	8.0	7.7	8.2
9. EET	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.2
10. Use of time	7.0	7.4	7.6	7.6
Total score on 10-item scale	72.9	-	77.2	-
Additional items for this evaluation:				
11. People you live with	7.6	8.1	8.1	-
12. How safe you feel	8.5	8.6	8.2	7.6**
13. Support from others	8.3	8.6	8.2	-
14. Self confidence	7.2	6.8	7.8	7.0**
15. Local area	6.8	7.6	7.6	7.2**

Source: HP Focus group data collection at entry to HP and data collection endpoint

*The Children's Society 2018 (mean scores for 10–17 year olds in 2018).

** Source: Rees et al 2010, mean scores for 10–17 year olds in 2008).

Appendix 4. Cost benefit analysis method and results

Method Overview

The CBA methodology considered the savings made by the HP compared to what would have otherwise been spent on accommodation, placement moves and on interventions or services relating to risk factors or EET status.

On the cost side, a total programme cost of £1,303,216 was used, based on financial data returns from 4 of the 5 participating areas, and accounting for an assumed 10% start-up costs (in the absence of detailed start-up cost data). For the remaining area which did not return a financial data form (LHP 5), the average across the other areas was taken and added to the total cost.

On the benefit side, the data from 40 young people participating in the project was analysed. The process to identify the benefits attached to each young person by category are outlined in subsequent sections below. As shown in Table 7 of the main report, the HP had a positive return on investment (a benefit cost ratio of above 1.0) across all attribution scenarios from year 2 onwards. Benefits from years 2 and 3 were discounted using the government's standard annual discount rate for costs and benefits of 3.5%.

Benefit Monetisation

The benefits related to the cost savings associated with improved outcomes for young people supported by the HP. Information used in the CBA was identified from project monitoring data for the following outcome variables:

- Residential care avoided
- Foster care avoided
- Supported accommodation avoided
- Placement stability improved
- Risk factors reduced
    - Gone missing/absconding
    - Self-harm
    - Drugs
    - Alcohol
    - Child Sexual Exploitation
- Education, employment or training status improved

The unit cost for each item and their sources are outlined in Table 12 and 13:

Table 12. Accommodation unit costs

Accommodation			
Category of cost saving	**Change**	**Saving (per YP for 1 year)**	**Source**
Residential care	Due to the HP, a young person moves out of residential care	Individual saving per young person	Individual's accommodation cost per annum detailed in programme data
Foster Care	Due to the HP, a young person moves out of foster care	Individual saving per young person	Individual's accommodation cost per annum detailed in programme data
Supported accommodation	Due to the HP, a young person moves out of supported accommodation	Individual saving per young person	Individual's accommodation cost per annum detailed in programme data
	Due to the HP, a young person who was in residential or foster care at age 18 and would have then been in supported accommodation is instead in a House Project Property	£39,146	The average cost of supported accommodation across all five participating sites

Table 13. Other benefit category unit costs

Other benefit categories			
Category of cost saving	**Proxy change**	**Proxy saving (per YP for 1 year)**	**Source**
Fewer placements than in pre-intervention period	One or more placement moves have been avoided	£2,310 per placement move	Median cost of a placement move. Based on Costs and Consequences of Placing Children in Care (Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008) and adjusted for inflation
A positive change in education, employment or training status	The young person has changed status from NEET to EET	£10,466	Average annual cost to the exchequer of a NEET young person. Based on Youth Unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford (ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment, 2012) and adjusted for inflation
Reduction in drug risk	The young person reduces or stops substance misuse and does not require a treatment programme	£3,994	Average annual savings resulting from reductions in drug-related offending and health and social care costs as a result of delivery of a structured, effective treatment programme. Based on Estimating the crime reduction benefits of drug treatment and recovery (National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse, 2012) and adjusted for inflation
Reduction in Alcohol risk	The young person reduces or stops misusing alcohol and does not	£2,133	Estimated annual cost to the NHS of alcohol dependency, per year per drinker. Based on Alcohol Use Disorders: diagnosis , assessment and management of harmful

Other benefit categories			
Category of cost saving	**Proxy change**	**Proxy saving (per YP for 1 year)**	**Source**
	require treatment		drinking and alcohol dependence (NICE Clinical Practice Guidance, 2011), and adjusted for inflation
Reduction in self-harm	The young person self-harms less regularly. It is assumed that 1 unplanned hospital admission is avoided.	£1,664	Average cost of a non-elective hospital admission. Based on Reference Cost Collection: National Schedule of Reference Costs - Year 2017-18 - NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts, and adjusted for inflation
Fewer absconding episodes	The young person has absconded 1 fewer times than in pre-intervention period	£2,719	Average cost of a missing persons investigation. Based on Establishing the Cost of Missing Persons Investigations (Greene & Pakes, 2012) and adjusted for inflation.
Reduced risk of CSE	The young person does not require support due to CSE	£3,583	Average cost of providing intensive support to each individual. Based on Reducing the risk, cutting the cost: an assessment of the potential savings (Barnardo's interventions for young people who have been sexually exploited, 2011), and adjusted for inflation

The full unadjusted benefits accrued in each category in years 1, 2 and 3 (not listed cumulatively as in the main report, but by individual years) are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Monetised benefits by category and year

Benefit Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	3 year total
Residential care cost savings	£432,133	£217,086	£0	£649,219
Foster care cost savings	£363,922	£165,177	£0	£529,099
Supported living cost savings	£39,060	£453,228	£691,678	£1,183,965
Placement moves savings	£119,812	£115,619	£111,572	£347,003
Positive change in education, employment or training status	£31,398	£30,299	£29,239	£90,936
Reduction in drug risk	£19,970	£19,271	£18,597	£57,838
Reduction in alcohol risk	£2,133	£2,058	£1,986	£6,178
Reduction in missing/absconding risk	£5,438	£5,248	£5,064	£15,750
Reduction in CSE risk	£10,749	£10,373	£10,010	£31,132
Reduction in self-harm risk	£3,328	£3,212	£3,099	£9,639
Total	£1,027,943	£1,021,569	£871,244	£2,920,756

Source: York Consulting

The full method for monetising each category is outlined in the subsequent sections.

Accommodation savings

For each of the 40 young people, programme data was analysed to determine their accommodation type at baseline and follow-up. Where a move had taken place, this was monetised. For those young people who had moved to a HP property (14 from foster care, 4 from residential, 2 from supported), their individual care costs per annum were used to monetise accommodation savings. All young people were assumed to gain at least 1 year of savings from their accommodation move, given what we knew about their placement at baseline and its cost from programme data. The savings for young people aged 17 or 18 at baseline were transferred to a supported accommodation cost for years 2 and 3. For the young people who were 16 at baseline and moved into a HP Property, 2 years of benefit was assumed. However, one-third were assumed to have otherwise left

their care placement before their 18th birthday, in line with national data.[16] In order to reflect this in the benefit calculation for year 2, the median individual accommodation costs for both residential and foster were multiplied by one-third of the young people from residential (1 young person) and foster care (2 young people), and subtracted from the year 2 total. These young people were instead transferred to a supported accommodation saving. By year 3, every young person who had moved to a HP Property was assumed to have otherwise been in supported accommodation for accommodation savings, given their ages at baseline.

For those young people who had moved to a different type of accommodation, the average cost of the new type of accommodation (supported, see accommodation unit costs in Table 14 above) was subtracted from their individual accommodation cost per annum and taken as a saving until they were 18.

Placement stability

For each of the 40 young people, programme data was analysed to determine how many placement moves had been avoided since participating in the HP. This was calculated by dividing total number of placements ever at baseline by the total years in care by baseline, for each young person, thus reaching a figure for each young person's placements per year, prior to joining the HP. Each young person's moves since entering the HP was subtracted from their placement per year figure, leaving a figure for moves avoided. This was then multiplied by the unit cost.

Risk factors and EET

For each of the 40 young people, programme data was analysed to determine the EET status and risk rating reductions from baseline to follow-up. Where a positive status change or risk rating reduction had occurred, this was counted as a saving using the proxy unit costs noted above in Table 13: Other benefit category unit costs.

Attribution scenarios

In order to account for what may have happened anyway in the absence of the HP, 3 attribution scenarios were applied to the total benefits for 1, 2 and 3 years. These figures were then used to calculate adjusted benefit cost ratios (see Table 4 of the main report). Low attribution (33%), medium attribution (50%) and high attribution (66%) were applied

[16] See research by the National Audit Office in 'Care leavers' transition to adulthood', 2015 : https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Care-leavers-transition-to-adulthood.pdf

to all benefits other than the accommodation savings, which were accrued due to a move to a HP property. This is because for these accommodation moves, we can be confident that the benefit is a direct consequence of the project. For every other benefit category, including the few accommodations moves to somewhere other than a HP property (for example, from residential accommodation to supported living), these 3 attribution scenarios were applied to their costs for 1, 2 and 3 years of benefit.

Return on investment

The return on investment (ROI) was calculated by dividing the adjusted benefits from Table 6 by the adjusted costs from Table 4, giving a benefit cost ratio (BCR). Details of the ROI cumulative for each year and by attribution scenario are shown in Table 7 of the main report. On the medium attribution scenario (50% attribution), the HP showed a positive return on investment of 1.4 from year 2. This indicates a potential saving of £1.40 for each £1 invested in the HP. The ROI increases to 2.0 in year 3.

Appendix 5. Young people's voices

Towards the end of the evaluation, young people from the 5 LHPs were invited to take part in a face to face interview about their participation in the HP. This section presents the experiences and perceived impact of the HP from their perspectives. Young people had the choice of being interviewed by a care leaver who had received interview training (peer researcher) or an evaluation researcher. Most (83%, 33) of the follow-up group agreed to an interview and all were happy to be interviewed by a peer researcher.

Being part of the HP

Young people were asked about experiences of being part of the HP and their views on how this had affected the aspects of their lives that the HP had aimed to address.

Views and experiences of key outcome areas

Readiness for independent living - skills development

During the focus groups and interviews young people were asked to reflect on whether they felt ready to move into independent living. Young people told us prior to joining the HP they lacked a number of key skills such as budgeting, practical skills and cooking. In some cases young people had not had the opportunity to practice these skills whilst in care, although since joining the HP, they had gained opportunities via group sessions;

> "Learnt how to like do cheap meals on a budget, like say £10 for like to feed ten people, and also learnt like have a routine in place, like a cleaning routine, cooking routine, stuff like that."

> "I've learned a few. I know how to cook. I know how to work a washer now as well. I know how to wash pots and dry them and put them away."

As part of the LHP sessions, young people were able to pick activities linked to HPP modules that would enhance their learning and the development of independence skills such as money management, basic home maintenance, decorating, cooking group meals and supporting the local community by cooking for homeless people in the city centre;

> "I think with feeding the homeless we thought we can make this, we can make that, so we basically chose the food that we make for them. We made a stew with some buns. Other guys made a curry. Some made flapjacks."

The overwhelming majority of young people reported improved social skills and confidence as the result of having been involved in the HP. This is 1 of the main impacts of the project;

"I can speak more, I can, I'm not bottling it up, I'm not like being shy around 'em, I'm not like, like scared to talk just in case they don't like me talking and all that anymore."

"In every way. I'm like, I find it easier to talk to people, I find it easier talking to people I don't know."

Accommodation

Not all young people had moved to their HP homes however, most of the group were experiencing stability, with no indication of homelessness and most were happy with where they were living. The main concerns were around timescales and expectations related to their move to their HP homes.

- Some had moved in

Out of the 33 young people interviewed, 15 had moved into their HP accommodation at follow-up. Most of them experienced a longer than expected wait before moving to their new home.

"It's kind of mixture; like it was waiting for ages, I didn't think it would take so long, but then when a house came up it was within a week that I moved in. So when things start rolling it is quick."

- Some were just about to move in

Eight young people had been allocated accommodation that they were going to move into shortly;

"But now I should be in my [flat] in about three weeks so it's getting back on track with things getting there. It's just hard to find, do you know? A lot of flats, they're not always like oh yes, someone's going to move out straightaway. It's going to take time. So we've been waiting [9 months] and we've only just got them. We understand because it's hard for someone to move out of a flat and just get another one or get a new house. People have got to understand it is hard for other people as well."

"Well, I've been to view my flat about a week and a half ago. They said 2 weeks to 3 weeks I should get my keys. Should be moved in within the next 2 months-ish."

- Some were still waiting

Ten young people had not been able to find a flat at the time of the interview. Some LHPs experienced shortages in council accommodation;

"Just because of the council trying to find properties. It's took longer than it was supposed to."

"It was mostly down to availability of housing apparently."

Sometimes, the young people were waiting to find the right property in the right location; “Yeah, just that they haven’t really found a property that suits me best.”

In 1 LHP, some young people were told, after waiting longer than expected, that they would not be allocated HP accommodation.

> “…it's 8 months later and they're telling people that it's going to be the next year… and obviously it's a pilot project so it's going to go tits-up at some point, but they just didn't really want to admit it, they'd rather just string us along. Then after a year-and-a-half, we all just get told that we're not getting flats.”

Since the interview, some young people in this LA were allocated properties, though a small number were still waiting.

- Feelings about moving into independent living

Most young people were happy and excited to finally have their own place;

> “How did I feel? Very relaxed, overwhelmed that I’d got a house and excited for the times ahead.”

> “It felt nice, yes, because it was finally it was my own space.”

Some young people expressed feelings of anxiety and worry about becoming lonely and living on their own;

> “Well actually I was supposed to move in [last month], and I didn’t, I postponed it for two weeks cos my anxiety, I mentally wasn’t ready, but then when I did move in [last week] it was, the first night was scary, like having, like going to bed and not hearing anyone, there’s still no-one there like, so it was scary but it was exciting at the same time, cos the minute the door locks you know this is your house, like this is my space.”

> “I was kinda nervous and like I was, had the fear still of loneliness, so I used to have like quite a lot of people stay, like every night; I still do kind of.”

> “if you don’t feel ready then it’s sort of daunting. Or even just in general, moving into a flat by yourself when you’re 18 is a big deal.”

- Preferences for shared or their own accommodation

Most young people expressed a need to live on their own because they felt they had shared their space with others for a long time. Some said they did not want to clean up after others and some felt they might not get on with housemates;

> “Well, because obviously growing up I was in a care home with other people so I have always had to be around people so now I've got my actual own space I feel better.”

> “On my own. I mean if I share with someone, I'd be able to cope, but I'd want my own space because I've be in with different people since I've been in care. I just want my own freedom.”

> “Because instead of just having one room you can have the rest of the house and you don’t need to share a kitchen…and it’ll be clean all the time instead of a mess sometimes, cos sometimes you get the dirty people who are living there and they don’t tidy up after theirselves so you have to tidy it up.”

Another reason for wanting their own accommodation instead of shared accommodation, was that some viewed it as providing more stability in the future; as a young person noted, “because I guess if you live in a shared house you’re gonna have to move again.”

Other young people expressed a preference for shared accommodation, where they could be supported by others around them;

> “Because like you, you help each other every day and you’re cooking, everything you do really; like you, even if sad or like unhappy, it is friends, like for relax [and] everything, even you learn English.”

> “Cos if you’re living on your own you’re sort of like well if something goes wrong I’ve got to deal with it myself, whereas if you’re in like a shared house you’ve got others.”

There was also an indication that moving into a home as a group provided reassurance and reduced the potential for feeling overwhelmed or uneasy about independent living, as a young person explained when describing the day they moved into their HP home,

> “Well [facilitator] come and picked all of us up, me, [YP1], [YP3] and [YP3], and we sort of went round to the house, did a look round with the housing company we use, and then, then after we had a look round we all chose our rooms, put our stuff in and… actually one person moved in then another person moved in like half hour/forty minutes later just to keep it flowing easier, so we’re not taking loads of shit in and out at the same time. I was a little bit nervous but obviously I, I’ve got [YP2], who’s my mate, and was in the same house as me so I was sorta like nervous and confident at the same time.”

Being supported by the HP

- Direct support from House Project staff

Young people valued the personal attention they received during 1-to-1 support sessions. They felt these sessions were more tailored to their needs than the group sessions;

> “They're helpful because any issues that I have, instead of any issues the group has, can be dealt with, so it's more personal.”

> “Yeah, they are very helpful, a lot, because when you’re in a group it’s too much going on at once so when you do get the 1-to-1 time you can express everything and properly speak about things. So, they are useful and helpful at the same time.”

> “I get to discuss my issues in-depth with personal support; very formal.”

- Support with EET

Most of the young people who were in EET had managed to sustain their participation between baseline and follow-up. There was, however, an increase in the numbers who were NEET, which mostly seemed to be due to the ending of compulsory education or college courses coming to an end;

> “Because when I started [the HP] I was at sixth form and then I finished sixth form, I joined this project that's helping... to get into work.”

Young people talked about the direct support of facilitators, who actively helped them to get on the right college course, to stay on at college or to gain employment;

> “[Facilitator] was helping me to get hospitality and voluntary [work] as well, for experience.”

> “[Facilitator] and I fill the forms together now.”

> “[Facilitator] just tries and helps me find jobs, either online… Like he messages me if a new job comes up on the website.”

> “[Facilitator] took me to the college for enrolment; we spoke to the people which courses they had available and which would best suit [my] side of things and then yeah, I was there, and then she supported me actually to get in the other college for my functional skills, maths and English as well. So she contacted them and I ended up going then.”

> “So with the project they offer quite a lot of jobs; they’re always throwing jobs my way but none of ‘em ever seem to match. But with the project you also get a lot of help from the LA Job Team, whatever it is, so [staff], she’s quite helpful with jobs and stuff.”

- Social and emotional support

The HP group were supportive of each other and met either weekly of fortnightly as a project group as well as in smaller, closer friendship groups. In addition to helping each other with settling into their homes, the group talked of hosting birthday parties, being there for a chat online or in person and responding to requests for support;

“I know that the girls talk a lot within the House Project. They are close, they’ve helped each other actually when they’ve gone to each other’s properties, they’ve wallpapered and helped them in the home if they just need to get it done faster, or anything really.”

“if someone’s forgot their travel card or whatever [we’ve] dropped it off to wherever they are, or... they went to each other’s like houses and everything.”

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

- Practical support

“So every Thursday we all, well we’re meant to get together and if any of us have problems or anything we always help each other; if anyone needs any help they’re always there to help. So, for instance, people are starting to get their houses now and if anyone needs help with the decorating or anything they’ll ask people from the House Project and people will be there to help ‘em.”

“I would say we help each other with like moving into our flats. So, like I helped with like them moving stuff, like the physical side, and everybody else, they help as well, as well with like the mental side, like putting stuff in position, what looks good, what doesn’t, and also supporting people when they’re in there as well.”

“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.”

- Online community

“They have a WhatsApp group, so if anything comes up you can basically get a hold of everyone in the House Project at the same time, which is quite handy, if it was an emergency, rather than having to contact everyone separately, or wonder who you should contact, you can just message it straight into the group and then the right person can help you out.”

Being listened to

Generally, young people felt they had a voice within the HP, examples included the renaming of the HP learning programme to HPP, after young people commented that the use of ‘learning’ was off putting. Another included;

“As part of the work experience with the House Project I sort of suggested that there should be a peer mentoring scheme for the new cohort that’s coming in after us and [staff] sort of picked it up and ran with it.”

What were the best things about the HP?

- Meeting people and forming friendships

The majority of young people said that the best thing about taking part in the HP was meeting new people, making new friends and feeling supported;

> “Meeting new people; like loads of other new friends.”

> “Meeting new people, feeling like you're generally being supported and people genuinely care for you; that's a good feeling to have.”

> “The best thing about this House Project was that we had like, , we did the best activities cos it took us out and treated us well.”

> “I guess the people on the project, the people I've met, other young people, they've been really nice, we've got a nice little group.”

> “Getting to meet so many amazing new people.”

> “My relationship with [facilitator] was great. We got on well.”

- Getting a property

For young people, getting their own home and making this first step towards independence was the next most important thing about the HP;

> “Well obviously like the prospect of getting a flat and I guess maybe it was like a push for me to go and be a bit more independent, because I’ve realised certain times were sort of like catching up to me and I wasn’t really gonna be young forever, like I was turning 18 and like I needed to sort of like get my act together, whether it was through the House Project or not, it did sort of like scare me in that way. And the other young people that I met and like the group sessions have been good, like the activity based, like it does make you feel like more part of a group and stuff.”

> “Meeting new people and being able to… When you're in a foster placement you don't think you have much opportunity to be like everyone else. They get helped by their family, and with our families, we've been put into care. They might not have much money now than what they did when they did have us. It's a struggle, but now we've been given this opportunity to have our own place, it's literally the best thing ever.”

What things were not so good?

A small number of young people talked of difficulties and negative experiences of the HP. Some had felt under pressure to fulfil the HP requirements to be eligible for a house.

> “Negative, cos I was really confused cos they’re like, in the House Project there’s certain requirements and they really pushed getting a job because I wasn’t… none of us at the start I think only 1 person was in education or employment, so like they really pushed that, so I worked really hard. Basically, I stopped having 1-to-1s because I felt like, that they was like useless and because I really wanted a job from the beginning but they kept sending me to these things, and I guess they kind of are productive for some people, where it’s like a 6 week programme to help you find training, education or employment, but I didn’t like it cos it was like school settings … stuff that wasn’t gonna be sustainable, like apprenticeships and stuff that I wouldn’t enjoy and stuff.”

One young person did not feel supported in achieving what was expected of them;

> “They’d just come round and say that I need to get a job to get a flat, and then they say, 'Don't worry about it. Next time I come around, we'll look for something.' Then they come around the next time and say, 'To get a flat, you need to get a job. But don't worry, next time I come around, we'll look at it.' It was that cycle for like 6 months.”

Another felt that they could have been better supported with their mental health issues; “I’ve got quite poor mental health, [I’d like] probably support around mental health.”

Some young people felt that the problems they had raised had not been dealt with efficiently or that they were not being listened to, whilst others wanted more planning and notice of when meetings were to be held;

> “I feel like every time we have a problem we’ll just be going round in circles about it; I’ll talk to someone about it and hardly anything will get done and we’ll just come out with the exact same answer as we did before.”

> “If I can remember, yeah, sure. It were just the fact that they don’t listen to us, they don’t get in touch with us or anything, I didn’t know when the meetings were gonna be taking place, they never actually told me, I’d have to go in to the office to sort something else out and then they’d see me and then go, oh yeah, by the way there’s a meeting at so-and-so. And they don’t message you, they don’t ring yer or anything, and it’s, it’s awful, and waiting time for accommodation is just unbelievable.”

Sometimes the facilitators had not matched the interests of the young people to the employment or education opportunities they had offered them, hence they felt they were set up for failure;

> “[its] ok now but in the past I felt like restricted with the House Project, because with employment, education, whenever I tried telling them what I want and what would be useful, what I’d actually go to, they just had all of these other things, like they came to us with all of these things and whenever we challenged it or they put loads of us on it and like we would all like slowly drop off cos we’d just lose interest, but whenever I

> tried to tell them why, they wouldn't really listen and it just made me feel like… why can't I ever complete a project or complete something? But then when I thought about it [it's] understandable because I just wasn't interested from the beginning, cos it's like something that they want you to do not something that you're actually that interested in."

Sometimes the activities were not suitable for some of the young people. For example, a young person reported that a LHP repeatedly arranged social outings to a chicken restaurant despite a member of group being vegetarian. This same young person felt that there was too much emphasis on socialising and that they were not receiving enough practical help from the facilitators;

> "All right, well a good example I guess is, when you try and leave the House Project, I had a phone call off someone that had basically noticed that I wasn't coming into sessions, and I just voiced to them I'm not happy, I've come on to a project to take myself seriously, to get myself a flat and you guys just want to go to Nando's every week, and I'm getting in trouble for not going to Nando's with you. It's not on."

It was apparent that where young people had experienced a lack of support from services in the past, it was essential that support was in place to help restore their confidence in support services and professionals. A small number of young people felt let down and that their concerns had not been taken seriously. As a result, 1 young person felt that their confidence had been knocked by the experience;

> "[Confidence] probably just gotten worse. It actually has gotten a lot worse considering the fact that this was the last time that I was going to trust social services, and actually believe that I was going to get something good out of something from social services."

Difficulties within the HP that did not relate to waiting times or organisational problems, concerned friction between the young people taking part in the project. Most LHPs experienced fall-outs among their young people, though in most cases issues had been resolved swiftly;

> "I had a clash with the person I was living with but it was resolved; well it was sort of resolved and my views and needs were met by what I felt needed, and when I raised a concern and I wasn't happy with the way it was going they still worked with me and helped me and found a new house for me."

> "An example, me and my friend fell out in the HP, but we've not made a massive deal about it. We've just basically left each other alone, to have a breather."

> "I know like other friendships have kind of broken down."

How could the HP be improved?

Young people had a number of suggestions about how the HP could be improved for future cohorts. Some felt that meetings could be better planned and that there could be better communication between the CLNM and the other HP young people;

> “For meetings, it really annoys me how the meetings, they’re not planned enough and they’re just so boring and I don’t understand it, I don’t know why they are but they are.”

> “A bit more communication cos I haven’t been to a meeting in like weeks but they’re not telling me when they are.”

Some raised the issues of needing more support staff, particularly as the project was taking in new cohorts; “I’d say more facilitators, more workers and staff, just to make sure everyone’s got, or feels like they’ve got someone’s attention.”

Some young people felt that the facilitators could better handle the planning of properties to avoid raising hopes about moving into a property within a short timeframe, only to be let down by multiple setbacks;

> “Do not give us a certain date, get us all excited, and then it not happen... because it could get delayed, and it could come quicker. Tell them when it's close to that point. When you still think it's going to happen.”

Others felt that the project should make sure that the properties were made ready for the young people to move into;

> “Well, as it's taken so long to actually get the flat, I know it's the first obviously in [LA] we're the first group to actually do it, I just think it needed planning a bit more.”

> “I think because obviously we was the guinea pigs for this and I think a lot more organisation might be a bit needed for the next cohort but generally there's nothing I would change about this project.”

One young person in particular moved into a property that lacked basic services (gas, electricity) and had no carpets or furniture;

> “Just honestly, I would seriously consider not giving anybody any placements until you’ve actually come to an actual plan, cos at the minute there’s no plan. Why would you give keys to a kid? I mean he’s going into his house, he’s got nowhere to sleep, sleeps on floor in a blanket, no gas, no electric, nowhere to cook…water’s been sat there for months and it’s been coming out green or brown rust. I mean it’s not good is it? This is what I think really... get everything in order, get everything ready, get people out to carpets, get somebody out to do gas.”

This young person highlighted difficulties in liaising with relevant utility services after moving to his HP home, due to being under 18 years of age;

> “Do you know what, I can’t even ring my own gas supplier, my own electric supplier because my social worker’s name on it and I’m not 18 yet so I can’t even change it, you’ve got to be 18 to change it. So why don’t you give them flats at 18 not 17? Some of these kids are only 16.”

One young person felt that the weekly groupwork sessions, which all HP young people were expected to attend, could focus more on independence skills rather than socialising;

> “What they could do better… if there's a session, if you're sitting down talking about money management or doing something serious, of course I'll go. If I don't go to that 1, sanction me... don't sanction me cos I don't want to sit and eat, it's a social gathering.”

Final comments

Most young people considered the HP a great opportunity for care leavers;

> “You wouldn't want to pass off an opportunity where you basically get stuff handed to you… an opportunity where you know you're never going to get it again.”

> “Now everyone sort of wants to be on it and it’s like, sort of unheard of, the youngest person in is 16 and they’re getting a flat, and... to be honest it is a dream thing… but as well there’s so many other things that come with having a tenancy, like being an adult and stuff like that, and if you don’t feel ready then it’s sort of daunting. Or even just in general, moving into a flat by yourself when you’re 18 is a big deal.”

> “It's a great opportunity for care leavers but it's also an opportunity that regular people don't see, people with regular upbringings, they don't get an opportunity like this, so it's a once in a lifetime thing, really.”

At the same time, young people acknowledged that the HP process is not an easy option and requires a lot of commitment and patience;

> “It depends what they wanna do in the future because, for instance, if they’re a bit unsure of whether or not they wanna live by themself I’d be like, no, don’t do it, or if they aren’t very good at committing themself to something, don’t do it. But if they, you know, really want their own place and they don’t mind how long it’s gonna take to, you know, get their own place, by all means go for it, but yeah. They just need patience for it cos obviously, you know, it’s a piloting project at the moment.”

Young people’s views showed that those interviewed appeared well informed about the HP aims and expectations, and about tenancy processes. They were aware that the HP

was a new option and different to the other leaving care support and accommodation options for care leavers in their areas. Despite some frustration about the length of time to move into their properties or about moving in before properties were ready, most were understanding and informed of the reasons. There was advice on how the project might better communicate and plan for move-in time scales. There was also recognition that the HP was not only about getting a property and that it required commitment to benefit from the wider support and participation expectations. This demonstrated the importance and impact of co-production, which had involved young people in the running of the LHPs and at the centre of decisions about their own journeys and that of the project overall. Most talked about increased confidence, community and the empowering nature of the community approach that underlies the aims, activities and support package of the HP.

Appendix 6. Process evaluation thematic analysis

Added value of a central ‘hub’ and a national profile
Project managers suggested there was a sense that their input in the national project is valued by the hub and that the ‘community of practice’ is an ideal forum through which they can express their ideas to shape the development of the HP. For example, a project manager highlighted an example of this exchange of ideas, where feedback was provided on the HP learning programme in its original format, with young people stating as it was “too much like a qualification” and difficult to engage in considering any historic barriers to education. A sharing of ideas from project managers with experience in the delivery and engagement of young people in independence and education-related programmes for care leavers subsequently led to this programme being developed further to ensure young people can benefit from it. The support and guidance delivered collectively to LHP through the hub ‘community of practice’ group meetings are consolidated by monthly onsite visits by a NHP director. During these visits, discussions are held individually with project management and the team as a whole. These discussions cover locally any issues raised through the ‘community of practice’ and detail on how training relates to their specific project; any challenges that the projects may face and advice in dealing with these (housing, staffing issues); individual support for project management; the formulations of individual young people and related support requirements; continued support for those young people living in a HP property; and, working alongside relevant teams, including foster carers and residential staff. These visits are identified by project managers as useful in bringing a different perspective on the progress of their local project and as an opportunity for continued learning. Project managers also valued the support external to the LA that they receive from the hub; “they’ve been really supportive, not just with House Project, but some like non-line management supervision, thrashing some ideas out [and] just someone to moan to at times”. The independence of the NHP was also considered useful in steering an innovative project and overcoming some of the obstacles of LA systems. For example, NHP directors commented on the risk averse culture that whilst protecting young people, did not best prepare them for independent adulthood. They felt that their experience of working in LAs helped them address some of the concerns around adopting a project that enabled young people to take more control over their move to independent living.
Implementing the House Project in different local authorities
Although there were common learnings to be drawn from the 5 LHPs implementation, there were recognisable regional distinctions, particularly in terms of how different LAs operated and the variance in access to community services that would enable the participation of project young people. The hub facilitated the

ability for the HP workforce to draw upon the learnings of the first HP in Stoke. The original HP team were identified as a valuable source of advice and mentorship for LHP project managers. Project managers highlighted how they have had leeway and additional support from the hub in how the project is set-up in their respective LAs, which may operate differently and have various other policies and procedures. However, there was suggestion of a need to safeguard the notion of the HP being a framework for practice, and ensure its components were adaptable to the discretion of the experienced local team and profile and views of the involved young people. For instance, project managers and facilitators alike highlighted that they adopted aspects of the learning programme but applied it as a template to guide them in shaping sessions and activities for and alongside project young people. As 1 facilitator stressed, the notion of a prescribed programme clashes with the young-person led ethos of how the original HP approach was set out; “number 1, it’s supposed to be their programme, it’s their project and they design it completely; number 2, 1 of the criteria of being on the project is that you’re supposed to be in or working towards learning or education, now if we’re then saying there’s a [accredited qualification] that you have to do you’re not given that option [and] it’s their life and they to choose”. Others understood the relevance of the ORCHIDS framework but highlighted it to be a framework for practice outlining the principles and areas of their direct work they are naturally following.

The fit between existing services and the House Project

There was a sense that this investment in implementing an innovation, and ensuring it operated well, could detract from further developing existing services for the entire group of care leavers; as 1 local manager explained; “We were going to make changes for all young people within the care leaving service and then having to do it for 10 were quite strange”. The leaving care cohort is relatively small in certain areas, meaning the young people may know each other or have had contact with or pre-established relationships with staff within the leaving care or HP teams. One project manager highlighted having case responsibility of young people who are not involved in the HP that has been difficult for practitioners to square; “for them to see me treating young people differently has been quite hard for them”. However, what is evident from several HP sites is how the recognition that elements of the HP approach reflect ‘best practice’ in leaving care is stimulating ideas for further development across their respective service. For instance, the development of ‘leaving care’ drop-ins across a LA area, mirroring the ethos of young people leaving care having a community base with peer and specialist support, the roll-out of a learning programme for all care leavers, and a ‘lighter’ adapted project, providing access to a community of support and first home but without the intensity of support.

Referral and recruitment processes

LHP managers highlighted how their teams are now thinking differently around the recruitment of young people to the second cohort and beyond. A valuable learning from the recruitment of cohort 1 concerned the need for project management to demonstrate potential cost savings for the LA, which entailed consideration of eligibility criteria according to age and current placement. This requirement means the “recruitment selection process isn’t potentially as transparent” as could be (LHP manager). This situation can be difficult for LHP managers to square when they seek to be inclusive and recruit a diverse group of young people. However, according to 1 LHP manager, the continued buy-in and funding of the project allowed the site to engage in intensive work with those young people whose needs are relatively high. For instance, a UASC will join the project due to the requirement of intensive support to aid independence and stability now the young person has turned 18 and has leave to remain. Moreover, 18-year-olds with underlying health conditions will also join cohort 2, with indication that the continued HP funding will benefit them as the team are able to provide elevated support. One site is also considering recruiting more than 10 young people, and as their experience has been that several are likely to leave the project, they are likely to add a couple of eligible young people to a ‘back-up’ list. In the event young people leave the project, this Leaving Care team in this LA will provide a financial reward for completing the HP programme, with the intention that this would be used to support the young person to set up a home in another accommodation service within the LA.

The experience of recruitment of cohort 1 across the 5 LHPs identified it as crucial to promote the HP principle and support components to children’s social care teams. LHP managers generally highlighted that they were being more proactive and taking more control over the recruitment processes to ensure a feasible group. For example, some practitioners had put forward young people for whom family reunification was an aim, meaning 1 HP team spent a great deal of investment in recruitment for a young person to then return home and the LHP manager to have to manage the financial losses associated with a void property.

As the HP approach became further engrained within each LA, and gained recognition for its impact, a higher rate of eligible young people was put forward by individual social workers without being officiated by the LHP team. LHP managers also highlighted a need to strengthen relationships with foster carers. Foster carers may express that the young person is Staying Put or it is too soon to work with a young person who is 16, hence 1 LHP manager stressed the importance of establishing relationships with foster carers and broaching the conversation with a young person to enable them to make an informed decision about moving on and to initiate preparation for when they come to be ready. The LHP manager emphasised that a collaborative approach of “let’s support each other” is required with foster carers to help ensure “a really positive move on” and “relationships [that are] intact with that young person [to] help support them in future; keeping those lifelong links”. Another LHP manager emphasised how the supportive relationships developed between the LHP team with some foster carers of young

people in cohort 1 provided learning for building these relationships to benefit future cohorts.

The importance of matching for a successful House Project
"A really good cohort of young people has really helped; [whilst] they continue to have issues and problems and challenges; they've actually come together as a group really well. [So] the formulation side of things and the risk analysis that you do with clinical psychological support is really, really important" (LHP manager). The LHP workforce consistently highlighted the importance of matching a group of young people that are likely to gel and establish that sense of commitment to each other for the HP to be impactful. One LHP facilitator highlighted that due to the care leaver population being quite small in the area, young people matched to the first cohort had some historic issues relating to their time in placements and others simply did not connect. For the recruitment of cohort 2, this LHP placed more emphasis on the matching and the group element. This was reinforced through conversation with potential young people to ascertain who "would best fit in a group, so that they can get together as a community" (LHP facilitator). As part of the recruitment process, it was important to ensure the young people understood the ethos of the project, what support it offered, and what type of commitment was anticipated. This process of recruiting young people that will benefit from the project, and matching young people to the LHP group, was underpinned by formulation activity produced by the LHP team and adults that a young person was closely connected with (such as, foster carer, key worker and social worker) with the support and expertise of the consultant clinical psychologist. Some LHP managers highlighted that they use the formulation process to produce a more holistic and in-depth assessment of potential risks when considering matching young people to a cohort, so to establish risk management plans.
Strengthened communication with social care teams
A key learning that LHP managers reflected upon for cohort 2 in their respective areas was the importance of strengthening communication with social work teams and sustaining communication with individual practitioners of project young people. A lack of early communication had stalled momentum and affected recruitment. An LHP manager noted that low engagement from social work teams during the early recruitment events, had stalled recruitment, "support from the social workers [was] the problem, no social workers turned up." LHP managers and facilitators had put in place mechanisms to strengthen communication and joined-up working between the LHP and social work teams. For example, 1 LHP manager introduced guidelines for individual social workers of young people who will join the project, these determined terms of reference for the subsequent referrals and enabled an agreement to be reached on how the LHP team will work alongside social workers and placements (residential group home)

to best support the young person joining the project and plan and schedule future review meetings. Another site also introduced guidelines for social workers to define and underline what their role may be in supporting project young people relative to the responsibilities of the LHP facilitators. In some instances, the roles had become blurred and social workers had been considered to be taking a "step back" due to the intensive support offered by LHP facilitators, allowing social workers to focus on their "statutory responsibility".

One LHP facilitator ensured they offered sustained feedback to individual social workers and PAs as to the progress of their young people through a shared recording system. This was identified as a useful communication tool that, despite being time-consuming for the facilitator, enabled the involvement of individual practitioners; "I think it's really important just to keep the communication up because the social workers and the key workers and the foster carers [are] all part of the same team really" (LHP facilitator). Moreover, the facilitator highlighted that recording progress is helpful for social workers when informing IROs and others of the young person's progress, "What was really important for me was to pass on all the good stuff that they were doing; [and] actually challenging also at times people's conceptions of these young people".

Multi-agency partnerships

Housing providers have been assured that young people will be supported to become 'tenancy-ready'. Despite pressures on housing resource, resulting from a housing crisis and an increased need for 1-bed properties, the HP team have developed agreements with providers. Being able to assure housing providers that young people can become 'tenancy ready' before moving into a property has been useful in securing buy-in. One LHP manager emphasised that a provider views themselves "as a joint corporate parent" and has enabled the HP team to link in with the provider's intensive tenancy support workers. Some LHPs had sourced support from various trades to get properties ready or maintain them, "We've built up some relationships with some of the other trade people for the kids' flats... and 2 contractors that do most of the maintenance."

LHPs have established links with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and jobcentre staff to support young people who are navigating the out-of-work benefits system, which had proved important to in order to advocate for the young person so employment advisors are made aware of the issues they may be experiencing upon leaving care. Establishing relationships with relevant DWP staff on behalf of the young person helped in the event a sanction is processed, with the HP LA being able to provide the young person's backstory and how the project will promote change in behaviours to try to remedy the issue.

There were signs of effective joined-up working with employment service, which in some areas guaranteed an interview for HP young people whilst the LHP staff provided the extra pastoral support for the young person to prepare them.

The HP workforce negotiated with education providers regarding additional support that may be required and to be kept informed regarding any issues that may impact on progress (for example, poor attendance). It had been essential to have a point of contact with local education providers and to work with leaving care workers where possible, and engage in collaborative working to support a young person.

Some LHPs had forged links with the Police and were working in partnership with community policing teams to help ensure the young people stay safe in their properties. For example, community police officers had led a workshop in 1 area as part of the learning programme with regards to young people keeping themselves safe and their properties secure. Other examples of multi-agency organisations involved in workshop activities included a housing provider in 1 area leading a 'good tenancy' session, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Severn Trent Water with regards to utility schemes, local organisations that deliver substance misuse support sessions, Brook regarding healthy relationships, contractors who advise on DIY, and the fire service to deliver safety talks.

In some cases, the LHPs shared a common base with other services, such as the in-house psychologists or youth offending teams, which could provide access to information and direct connections, as 1 LHP manager noted, "well, they're all … literally, a walk upstairs to speak to, so instantly, we've got them decisions".

Securing House Project properties

Each project manager has regular contact with the housing providers to be able to effectively match an available property to a project young person. The HP teams have at times had to have difficult conversations with young people as they aim to be transparent about the difficulties faced in securing suitable housing. One project manager recognises that delays in moving into their future home is understandably disappointing for young people who have engaged in the programme, particularly as "you've got a name of something like the House Project [and] you're setting up a project to support young people into housing prior to their eighteenth birthday". The issue of housing availability is exacerbated by parameters around suitability for the young person, either in terms of type of property, the level of refurbishment required, or the area in which properties become available. The HP puts young people at the heart of decision-making, this also extends to choices in terms of the 'move-on' property. During workshops the young people undertake mapping activities where they designate the local area(s) they are interested in living in (for example, based on proximity to any existing networks or the education or employment base). An added complication is that some areas identified by young people or where property becomes available may essentially pose a safeguarding risk to project young people, with social problems such as gang-related activities that potentially "opens them up to more vulnerabilities". The process of finding property in safe areas and meeting expectations places further restrictions on the process of acquiring a property, particularly within a reasonable timeframe. There is evidence, however, of young

people in local projects showing understanding and maturity regarding the problems the HP face in around securing suitable housing and having open discussions with staff and their peers to reach solutions. For instance, young people have chosen to broaden their area criteria as their perceptions of what is achievable changes and as they become more mobile and are able to drive or car share with other HP young people.

The importance of an experienced and stable team

The role of the LHP managers was expansive, with a broad range of responsibilities in respect to the delivery and managerial oversight of the local project. LHP managers required skills in effective communication and strategising with both stakeholders within the LA (including, with project boards, other child and youth services, internal legal and data teams) and external partners (including, housing providers and the Police). One LHP manager reflected that the role was more expansive than envisaged; “[it’s] just mind blowing how much you need to know, how much you need to find out and how many people that actually play a part in this project; even though there’s only 3 of us as a team, the impact is much wider than that”. Essentially, it was helpful for LHP managers to have professional experience of working with youth and care-experienced young people, and the knowledge and skillset required to lead a programme that prepares young people for independence and understand the associated issues that arise. It was equally useful for to have a firm understanding of the housing sector, particularly in relation to young people or vulnerable groups. Several members of the LHPs had a background in the housing sector, which helped in navigating the complexities around allocation and tenancy agreements. Personal resilience was also needed to withstand the “huge amounts of stress and dealing with the unknown” (LHP manager).

LHP facilitators agreed that on a fundamental level the role required an ability to relate well with young people and professionals alike, given the degree of association with both to support project delivery. A LHP manager emphasised the value of recruiting facilitators with direct experience of working alongside care-experienced children and young people. For instance, experience of working professionally in schools and other contained environments required a distinct set of skills as compared to direct work to promote the welfare of care leavers with multi-faceted needs; “I think this job it's much more like you always feel like it's your responsibility; it's not contained by a door in the place [and] might be a bit much for those people that are not used to dealing with, say, supported housing or working in a residential children's home or those kind of sectors” (LHP project manager). The Stoke HP facilitators placed emphasis on the advocacy aspect to the role and how a facilitator should have the qualities to ‘challenge’ where necessary on behalf of the young person, as “you're the 1 that's face-to-face with them constantly telling them that they're going to have this perfect life, this perfect property, and be a thriving member of society; so, you're the 1 that's accountable to make sure they're represented.”

The centrality of relationships to the progress of young people
A Stoke HP facilitator highlighted how the induction phase, before young people move into their property, is an opportunity to build relationships rather than a prescriptive programme of learning independence skills that young people may pass or fail; “it's about in 6 months' time, you're going to be moving in to a flat on your own, you're going to have support from nobody else except for the House Project - how can [we] work in cooperation to get the best outcomes for you?”. The HP approach fundamentally enabled access to a range of resources via the project, whilst also connecting young people to a community of support and increasing the possibility of developing consistency in everyday relationships. A network of supportive and consistent relationships was important as typically, once care leavers are housed with a commissioned accommodation provider, they are unlikely to receive the same degree of involvement from key workers. Despite there being an array of services and spaces that young people leaving care may access, existing social workers and new PAs often lack the 1-to-1 time with their young person due to their heavy caseloads. As 1 HP facilitator commented that their relationship is founded on a continuity and continuous support, which is essential as most HP young people have seemingly “never had a consistent worker who has stayed with them throughout their journey”. The HP workforce were accepting of the fact that, in practice, a young person’s practitioner will not generally have capacity to provide the intensity of support required, as 1 LHP manager explained; “It's not to say the social worker's bad, it's just to say that we're more likely to see them on a day-to-day basis and I think that is the key to consistent ‘parenting’” (LHP manager).
A dedicated project base
An aspect that was considered beneficial to creating a community and encouraging consistency of relationships was a dedicated project base. Two HP sites had secured a regular central base for the project, and 1 LHP manager stressed the importance of a HP community base to encourage engagement in the project’s offer and also to develop connections and build a community. LHP facilitators without a suitable space highlighted this to be a recommendation for future cohorts in their areas, as it is a challenge to encourage young people to meet within the office space of child and youth services, as they are “not exactly a young person’s space [nor] the friendliest environment walking into an office where things kick off in the reception a lot and it’s very unpredictable”. For those sites that lacked a specially adapted and consistent base, sustained contact and a sense of community has been encouraged through group events and outings and keeping connected via social media (Facebook and WhatsApp).

Appendix 7. NHP ‘community of practice’ training areas covered by HP workforce

The specific areas of consultation and training covered by the HP workforce during monthly hub ‘community of practice’ meetings are as follows:

1. the ORCHIDS framework – what this means and how to develop young people’s ownership, responsibility, sense of community, home, independence, direction and sense of well-being
2. The House Project Programme (previously called The Learning Programme) – training and discussion on each of the modules, sharing and developing activities that can be used to deliver the modules and the various ways for young people to record their evidence
3. A bi-monthly Learning Programme moderation process whereby each local project shares the work completed by young people, scores the portfolio and makes suggestions for improvement to ensure that the quality of work is of a consistent standard across all projects
4. Using the online House Project Programme system
5. Training from the Consultant Clinical Forensic Psychologist who works with the hub. This training has covered trauma-informed practice, attachment styles and behaviours and the importance of understanding the young person’s story via formulations
6. Risk assessments and safety planning
7. How to keep young people at the centre of decision making
8. How to work with groups of young people
9. Working as part of the wider system – engaging with social work teams, leaving care teams, housing, etc., and the importance of involving all significant individuals in planning
10. Statutory responsibility and who holds this
11. Governance within the House Project – how this works and how young people are represented at all levels of the organisation
12. Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM)
13. Using the workbook to record outcomes and data.

Appendix 8. HP workforce profiles

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
LHP1 (Project manager & 2 facilitators remained at endpoint)	Background in youth work. Manager of a youth centre. Project management experience working with young people who were NEET, organising alternative curriculum projects/course to enable them to gain qualifications or move into employment and training.	Managerial direction and strategic vision over project's development, which includes liaising with key partners and workforce management to ensure the meets its targets. Creating project plan. Recruitment of HP staff. Early identification of young people for the project. Promoting project to key partners so to establish its reputation as a viable approach for care leavers.	1. Has a professional background as a Family Support Worker and a Priority Family Support Worker supporting families that required intense support. As a family support worker, has experience in 1-to-1 work with individual children and young people within that family, so that their wishes were brought into view. Received child protection training for support worker role. 2. Experience in direct work with young people across various roles; including youth worker, a progress coach in FE; and, a support worker for teenage parents facing homelessness.	The facilitator has a supportive role in ensuring that the project runs smoothly on the ground, with a focus on the young peoples' recruitment and journey through the project. The facilitator also has a front-facing role in representing the local HP to the hub, the LA and social care practitioners and external partners.

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
LHP2 (Project manager left post by midpoint; 1 newly recruited by endpoint. Both facilitators remained at endpoint)	1. A youth worker and project manager in the charity and housing sector. Lead in young peoples' participation within Children's Services, gaining experience in engaging young people in service design development and the Children in Care Council. 2. Master's degree in housing policy and management, leading to roles working within a housing department - homeless persons' advisor and neighbourhood housing officer. Policy and research role for Centrepoint, focussing on health and wellbeing of homeless young people. Policy research and development advocacy for National Children's Bureau, leading a range of national and regional programmes around the health and	Lead responsibility for project management, which includes creating a project plan, budgeting within funding limits, creating a staffing model and overseeing recruitment of staff and young people and being the contact link with the LA on project developments. Overseeing the development and implementation of the House Project framework locally. Responsibility for ensuring the core activities get delivered and overseeing the 2 project facilitators and setting their work objectives and supporting them in their work with young people. Seeking ways to develop and improve what the project is doing locally, and any implementation barriers we come across, how to resolve	1. Youth worker within youth clubs and schools. Last 2 roles in sector was as a LA Personal Advisor for care leavers. 2. Was an office manager and later a project facilitator and manager employed by an NGO, an arts charity that works creatively with refugees and females who have experienced trafficking. As part of this NGO role, worked with unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers.	Preparing care leavers for independent living through 1-to-1 support and at group level, which draws on broad range of independent skills. The facilitator's role is to help the young people develop life skills – such as budgeting, safety in the home and cooking - and organise the workshops where they can develop these skills. In planning the workshops, the facilitator must think creatively about engaging and interacting with young people, rather than having directive instruction on life skills. Facilitators helps build young peoples' emotional capacity to cope, so helping them under the red flags in terms of their emotional wellbeing and being empowered to seek support. Once the young people move into their property, the facilitator

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
	wellbeing of vulnerable young people (e.g. young people in custody or in care). Community development programme manager, managing and running a programme to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people in deprived areas of a LA.	them and thinking about the future sustainability.		has a practical role relating to addressing any issues they may have and building a channel of support through the HP community. Liaising with young people's social workers and/or PAs to work together to support progress whilst in project.
LHP3 (Project manager remained at endpoint. Two original facilitators left post by midpoint; 1 newly recruited facilitator by endpoint; 1 newly recruited facilitator not	Managed 6 Children's Centres. Worked on delivery of community homelessness projects. Support work with care leavers. Worked within a public health team in commissioning for a sexual health service. Most experience is within community arts, part of role involved managing events with care leavers, foster parents, birth parents and social workers. Experience in outreach work for care	Highlights key responsibilities are, in the early stages, to raise awareness of the project and present its aims to social care staff and young people at meetings and prepare resources in respect to this. Promotion of HP to social care staff (within Children's Services and residential/supported accommodation settings) so to initiate referrals.	1. Professional background in education as a primary school teacher, later teaching older age group. Experience in behavioural concerns in education settings, which involved working 1-to-1 or in groups with young people in respect to anger, anxiety and obsessive thinking. Ran a programme within education settings that enabled young people to build their confidence and a positive identity and to tackle an area of their lives that has been a barrier for them (e.g. engaging in education, or in their personal lives). Experience working with young people with a range of	The main role of the facilitator is to work alongside young people to ready them for independent living within a HP property. Co-developing a new framework in the LA for supporting teenagers who are leaving care, either residential or foster care, to enter local accommodation. The work will involve 1-to-1 sessions around identifying personal goals, in terms of management of emotions or the learning of life skills. Also

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
interviewed for evaluation)	leavers who were experiencing homelessness.	Liaising with housing providers so to establish how housing may be sourced. Leading in all aspects of the housing project delivery in relation to contracts, young people, management of all the things related to ensuring that we have a successful House Project.	backgrounds and specifically with young people that have experienced CSE following their period of counselling and therapy. Support worker for foster carers who specialised in fostering children with emotional and behaviour difficulties. Completed foundation course in neuro-linguistic programming. 2. Experience working with pre-school children, as a play worker and family support worker within a family centre. Support worker in residential care homes and in a Leaving Care team. Support worker for a housing project supporting care leavers, including asylum seeking young people. Across his previous roles, has completed training in child development; input on the psychological-informed environment; generalist and specialist safeguarding training, both the online programmes and face-to-face day long programmes for child protection; solution- focused theory training; grief therapy training; some training in CBT; and, a year-long	involves groupwork and facilitating that groupwork and making sure that the young people are supporting each other. Promotion of the project to practitioners or carers across the various settings that young people are currently living. Building relationships with young people and their key workers or carers; ensuring that these people trust the facilitators and see the project as an option.

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
			course in personality disorder. There was ongoing training for the role with asylum seekers. 3. Experience in the care sector working with adults with learning difficulties in supported living accommodation. A residential childcare worker for the LA, in a residential home that solely supported young males between the ages of 12 and 17. Has level 3 diploma as a residential childcare worker.	
LHP4 (Project manager & 2 facilitators remained at endpoint)	Directly before assuming role for the local House Project, was a supported housing manager for care leavers aged 16+ service in the LA overseeing tenancy and independence skills support for the young people.	At baseline, LA was in the middle of a restructure and the participant was acting as interim project manager, before later successfully applying for the role. Attendance at HP meetings to ensure that the LA has a presence until official appointment of the project manager. Seeking a HP base in the LA for the project young people to meet in. Assuming responsibility for raising awareness in the LA	1. Studied drama at university, applied disciplinary knowledge to facilitate community drama activities for a mental health support group to develop confidence and life skills. Programme co-ordinator supporting women whose children had been placed in care, acted as the first point of contact for the women and accompanied participants to GP appointments and supported some to access drug and alcohol services or housing services. 2. At time of interview, was supporting the early operation of HP	Promoting project and gaining interest of young people. Meeting young people in their homes for the initial stages of recruitment. Preparing young people for their recruitment interviews. Liaising with social workers for referral purposes and with regards to case formulations. Attending LAC reviews.

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
		about the project and instigating the initial selection process of young people. Attending meeting with finance officers in the LA with regards to budgeting. Forging links with housing providers.	before leaving his current post for the F/T facilitator role. Current role is Supported Housing Officer for the LAs semi-independent care leaver accommodation; has been in post since November 2017. Effectively mans the office within a block of 10 flats to ensure everything operates well and that the young people and their key workers have what they require. Also involved in direct support work with young and facilitates the care leaver hub sessions, which can involve cooking, art, etc., and leads group activities, such as a girls' group, football. Before this, spent 3 years as a key worker in a short break provision setting for young people with disabilities or challenging behaviour and spent some time working with adults who have disabilities. Spent time in the Army upon leaving school and later had various roles in business settings within sales. 3. Experienced in working with adults and young people with disabilities. Key worker in short-break	Setting up the weekly group sessions. Organising events for young people. Engaging in training events for staff (at hub, etc.).

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
			provision for young people with disabilities or challenging behaviours. Supported Housing Officer for the LAs semi-independent care leaver accommodation. This role entailed direct support work with young people, facilitating the care leaver sessions (involving cooking, art,) and lead group activities (such as a girls' group, football). Completed pedagogy training that links to relationship building with young people, Signs of Safety training, and instruction in reflective practice. When worked in a service for disabled adults, completed training in Team Teach (incorporating de-escalation techniques, recognising issues and avoidance, and working with different challenging behaviours), which the facilitator subsequently delivered in the LA.	

HP area	LHP managers' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP	Facilitators' professional background	Identified main responsibilities for HP
LHP5 (Project manager remained at endpoint. 1 facilitator remained at endpoint; 1 transferred to another HP area early into post; 1 left post; 1 interim facilitator not interviewed for evaluation; 1 newly recruited by endpoint)	Key worker and manager within semi-independent living provision; personal advisor in a leaving care service; semi-independent living service manager overseeing accommodation for care leavers within a LA area, also involving delivery of independent living skills for all care leavers in area.	Managerial oversight of the delivery of HP in given LA area, which involves ensuring staff follow the HP framework and work accordingly in respect to referral processes, recruitment of young people, managing expectations of young people coming into the project, and management of key issues relating to housing and independent living. Maintaining effective working relationships between the LA, HP and housing providers. Working alongside HP team and relevant people known to each referred and recruited young person (e.g. LAC nurses, social workers, youth justice workers, foster carers, etc.) to produce case formulations for decision-making or support guidance as to a young person's project involvement.	1. Youth advisor for LA, advocating for Children in Care Council. Participation apprentice within a leaving care service. Support worker for semi-independent living service for care leavers, involved in developing an independent living skills programme. Delivery of training to foster carers on independent living skills. 2. Support worker for semi-independent provision for 16-18-year-old care leavers, supporting young people to complete the independent skills programme. 3. Background in business support within LA. Applied for HP facilitator role for relevant social care experience before starting a social work degree. 4. Moved to another LHP	Pivotal role in recruiting young people, entails raising awareness of the HP to social care practitioners and discussing value of HP with potential young people. Involvement in the interview process for the HP cohort and, once recruited, ensure HP and evaluation paperwork is processed. Organisation of HP launch events for new recruits. Assisting with case formulations for referrals to decide on final cohort and conducting interviews with those suitable. Planning workshops for young people recruited to the HP. Organise residential activities for project young people. Supporting young people to work towards the HPLP. Advocate for young people with the house provider, express their wishes, helping to ensure the property is renovated and decorated to their liking.

Appendix 9: HP self-assessment and commitment for potential HP local authorities

THE NATIONAL HOUSE PROJECT

Local Authority commitment to undertake a House Project

- This evaluation will help you consider if you are ready to set up a House Project in your Local Authority.
- We can help you at all stages of this process, from informal discussion, to Senior Management Team consultation, to larger information sharing and learning events for young people and adults.
- Alternatively, we can complete an onsite two day evaluation for you at a cost (which if you process would be deducted from the initial set up free).

Local Authority Care Profile (please complete)

Young people in care by age group. Please confirm date completed: _____

Age	No of young people	Number Internal fostering	Purchased fostering		Number Internal residential	Purchased residential		Supported accommodation
			In LA boundary	Outside LA boundary		In LA boundary	Outside LA boundary	
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								

The House Project Self Evaluation

Do you have commitment and capacity for a House Project?

Rate your Local Authority 'Red Amber or Green' against the following key areas (table on next page) Use the comments box to note any questions, supporting evidence or if more support is required.

- Red [no and potential barrier]
- Amber [no but no barrier]
- Green [yes]

Key Area	**Red Amber or Green**	**Comments**
Young People		
What is it about the House Project that will work for your young people?		
Do you have young people who would benefit from the House Project?		
Is the House Project what young people want for themselves?		
How does your LA currently hear the voice of young people in care?		
Tell us how you will support young people to 'pitch' to set up a House Project? (NB these may not be the young people who will move in)		
Corporate/Council commitment **When and how did the following give their support to establishing a House Project:**		
Council Leader / Cabinet		
Chief Exec Officer		
Director of Children's Services		

Director of Public Health (CAMHS commissioners etc.)		
Other political or officer agreement incl. Legal, HR, Finance		
Do you have access to a 'base' that will be shared by staff and young people in the project, that is easy for young people to travel to.		
Social Care		
The HP work with young people in a 'risk aware' rather than a 'risk averse' way. Are your workforce supported in this approach?		
With a need to set up and embed this way of working, are you prepared to commit to the project for 3 years?		
Housing		
Agreement with Housing Provider to make properties (8-12) available on an annual basis and pass over costs associated with getting the house ready ***Housing provider agrees to**:* • *Provide about 10 properties to the HP per year* • *Provide budget to the HP they would otherwise use to bring property up to an agreed set standard* • *Offer a secure tenancy, in their house that has become their home when they graduate from the HP programme.* ***House Project agrees to:*** • *Support the young person to get the house to an agreed set standard and within the budget* • *Manage the lease* • *Support young people to be good tenants*		
Suitable properties are available in safe and appropriate areas (near enough to each other for young people to function as a community)		
HP Staff and the Wider Team		
HP Staff		

Are you able to recruit: • A Project Lead who will manage the project and supervise the facilitators. Needs to work with a number of stakeholders incl. psychologist and be young person centred. • Two or more facilitators who can work tenaciously, safely, creatively and in an empowering way with young people		
The Wider Team		
You will need access to a Trauma Informed Psychologist to support the project. Do you have this 'in house' or will this need to be commissioned? (NHP can support this if required)		
All young people will complete the House Project Learning Programme that qualifies them as being EET as long as this acts as a pathway on to further opportunities. How will your Virtual School support this?		

Financial modelling

We have a 'generic' financial forecasting paper based on the costs for projects that have already been established. We can factor in your local costings if you are able to tell us the average annual costs of:

1. Internal fostering placements for 16-17 yr olds
2. Purchased (independent) fostering placement costs for 16-17 yr olds
3. Internal residential placement costs for 16-17 year olds
4. Purchased (independent) residential placement costs for 16-17 yr olds
5. Supported accommodation/living cost
6. Indicative annual salary for Project Lead (Team Manager)
7. Indicative annual salary for Facilitators (PA)

This document will be used to inform the first meeting with NHP staff.

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CSC.Research@education.gov.uk or www.education.gov.uk/contactus