

## Local House Projects

By National House Project, a registered charity

The National House Project (NHP) empowers care leavers to transition into adulthood with confidence, skills, and a sense of community. Using a psychologically informed practice framework, **the initiative focuses on helping young people develop the knowledge, relationships, and resilience needed to build their first home and achieve long-term independence.**

This approach was co-designed with young people, asking a fundamental question: "What makes a house a home?" The result is a relational model where care-experienced young people work together with staff to create a home and build a supportive, enduring community.

### Key features of Local House Projects (LHPs) include:

#### 1 Young People at the Centre

LHPs are co-designed and co-created with care-experienced young people. They play an active role in decision-making, ensuring their voices shape the programme and that it reflects their needs and aspirations.

#### 2 Trauma-Informed Practice

Staff are trained in trauma-informed and responsive practices, supported by psychologists. Using the ORCHIDS Practice Framework, staff tailor their support to each young person, ensuring consistent and informed care.

#### 3 Building Community

Young people join LHPs as part of a group, fostering a strong sense of community and mutual support. This network reduces isolation and loneliness, providing young people with a sustainable support system as they transition into adulthood.

## 4 Education, Training, and Employment (ETE)

Young people participating in the House Project Programme are engaged in education, training, or employment (ETE). They achieve AQA accreditation and are supported to follow long-term ETE pathways, enhancing their career prospects and independence.

## 5 Creating a Home

Young people work with housing providers to select and renovate their homes. They have the opportunity to personalise their living spaces, transforming houses into homes. Importantly, they are able to stay in their homes indefinitely if they choose, ensuring stability and security.

### The House Project approach delivers significant improvements for care leavers:

- Enhanced emotional, physical, and mental health.
- Stronger connections to community and reduced feelings of isolation.
- No tenancy breakdowns or evictions to date, highlighting the effectiveness of the support provided.
- Reduced involvement with the criminal justice system.

Accommodation costs are one of the highest expenses for local authority social care budgets, often with limited evidence of good outcomes for young people. **The House Project provides a cost-effective solution:**

- The primary cost is the establishment of the LHP team, which supports young people during their transition.
- Young people remain in their placements while preparing for their move into independent housing. Once they move, placement costs are avoided, resulting in significant cost savings that exceed the operational costs of the LHP.

By replicating the principles of "staying close," LHPs offer a safe, supported step-down from residential, foster care, or supported accommodation. This intensive yet cost-effective model reduces demand on broader local authority and partner agency budgets.

The House Project approach is built on a flexible framework co-designed with young people, staff, and professionals. It identifies **key fidelity elements** that ensure consistency while allowing adaptation to local contexts:

- Corporate and political support to champion the initiative.
- Dedicated staff teams trained in trauma-informed practice.
- A shared base for staff and young people, fostering collaboration.
- Partnerships with housing providers to secure suitable homes.
- Psychological support to equip staff to meet young people's needs effectively.

This framework allows local authorities to meet the unique needs of their care leavers while maintaining the core principles of the House Project approach.

Since the launch of the first LHP in 2015, **the model has demonstrated the following outcomes:**

- Care-experienced young people have shared their experiences with government ministers in England and Scotland, influencing policy and practice.
- The programme has expanded to multiple local authorities, offering a flexible solution that can be tailored to different regions.
- Young people have reported feeling empowered, supported, and equipped to build meaningful futures.

**"I've managed to find somewhere and be a part of something that is the best part of life, which is friendship, which is love, which is hope, which is making the world a better place in our small way by making the passages through to adulthood from the care system that much better."**

