

2009 – 2010

# Impact

Report

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## Welcome from our Chair

2010 is our 18th birthday year. An appropriate time to reflect on our journey so far and an opportunity to anticipate what the future may hold.



Chris Hopson  
Chair, Foyer Federation

**Established in 1992, at a time of recession and high youth unemployment, the Foyer Federation was created to develop and promote a new way of working with young people who were both unemployed and in housing need.**

The Foyer approach was both radical and controversial. It challenged mainstream service provision by attempting to integrate housing with education, training, employment support and other services. It invited young people to become more than passive recipients of services by making a formal commitment to the service through the ‘something for something’ deal that lies at the heart of the Foyer approach.

Over the past 18 years, the Foyer Federation has built a network of over 130 locally based, accredited Foyers, providing integrated services to around 10,000 young people a year right around the UK. The Foyer approach is about turning young people’s experiences of disadvantage into solutions that support their transition to adult independence. We develop transformational programmes and campaigns that fill gaps in community services. We try to inspire policy and decision makers to make a more effective investment in young people.

Working mainly through our network, the Foyer Federation has piloted accredited learning programmes, developed and rolled out approaches to health and well-being, work-readiness and early intervention, as well as developing and implementing nationally recognised quality assurance systems. Our direct experience of young people and those working with them helps inform our understanding of barriers and how to overcome them. Our campaigning and advocacy work provides opportunities for young people to influence decision makers at every level. The success of our approaches can be demonstrated both in the UK and overseas.

As well as being our ‘coming of age’, 2010 is also the year in which I stand down as Chair of the Foyer Federation after six years. While I have been involved, I have seen the organisation grow and develop its membership and have been inspired by the stories young people have told of the difference Foyers have made to their lives. Over the last few years, we have taken time to review and refresh the organisation. Our finances are much more stable than they have ever been. We have an innovative, flexible and committed staff team and a Board of Trustees who are both challenging and supportive. I have every confidence that we are equipped to face the challenges of the future from a position of strength and that the Foyer Federation, its members and partners will continue to offer young people the opportunity to develop their talents, realise their potential and transform their lives.

“This Foyer has totally turned my life around. I have a direction now and I think that’s the most important thing for any person”

Stephen, Ross Foyer resident

# IMPACT REPORT 2009 – 2010

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## Involving young people

**Young people lie at the heart of what we do and how we work. The direct experience we have of young people at risk informs our ability to understand and develop transformational solutions. Our campaigning and advocacy work provides opportunities for young people to influence decision makers at every level. Innovative Test Bed projects that we pilot and develop give young people a platform as Ambassadors so they can challenge and shape services. The involvement of young people forms a key requirement in our quality assurance of services and programmes.**

The ‘Creating a Better Youth Offer’ project, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, has engaged and worked with residents from Foyers across the Midlands and South West, to identify and explore the skills, resource and opportunity investments that young people need in order to achieve thriving adulthood. Through this project:

- ▶ 35 young people have reviewed the services available to them, researched the investments needed for positive progression and made recommendations for a ‘better offer’ shared between young people, their service and community

- ▶ nine young people have taken leadership roles to develop and promote this new approach through regional forums and national events.

As part of our 18th anniversary, our ‘Coming of Age’ debate has engaged over 100 young Ambassadors to reflect on different experiences of transition into adulthood and discuss how young people’s future goals can best be achieved.

## Involving young people next steps

- ▶ Equipping 80 young people with the tools they need to create a ‘development package’ which will help them and other young people make the transition to adulthood.
- ▶ Working with an additional 25 young people to explore the use of personal budgets that can test out the impact of different investments and shape a practice model that delivers transformational change.



## Deanne’s story

**When I was asked by the Foyer Federation to become an Ambassador I felt really proud. I took the opportunity because I wanted to gain experience that would make me more employable and help me to achieve my goal of becoming a support worker in the future.**

I’ve really enjoyed the opportunities I’ve been given to share my opinions and ideas and feel as though they’re valued. Recently, I went to the Foyer Federation’s Practice Event and with two other young people, I led a discussion with an audience of nearly 150 people. A few months ago I would have never had the confidence to speak in front of a group. Now, I not only speak at events, I also chair meetings at my Foyer and organise fundraising projects – I’ve really come out of my shell.

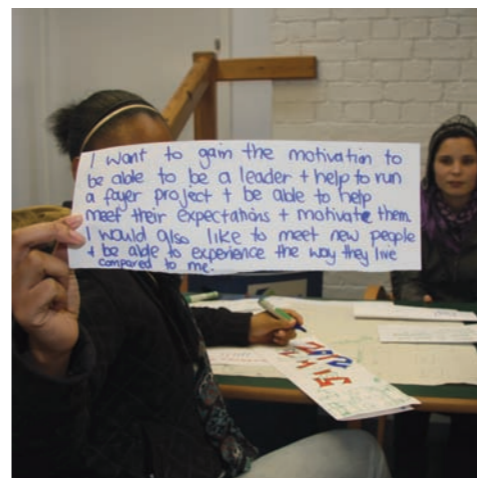
I’d like to change people’s opinions of supported housing. Our local community didn’t have a very good impression of our Foyer, but young people like me representing the Foyer and organising local fundraising activities has done a lot to improve our relationship with the community.

I start my NVQ course in Level 2 Health and Social Care in September. I want to become a support worker because I’d like to give other young people the help and encouragement that I have now. The experiences I’ve had through the Foyer network have helped to improve my communication, leadership and organisational skills, all of which I’ll need to be a good support worker. I’m learning and being involved in so much more than I ever expected.

200 Foyer residents have been engaged in activities to develop 'work-readiness'

5,000 young people in over 105 Foyers nationwide have received one-to-one life coaching sessions to support them to identify and work towards health and well-being goals

Young people have been meeting with external local service providers to work with them in order to improve provision in their areas



### Building quality

We want to 'raise the bar' so that all young people, including the most marginalised, have access to services that can transform their lives. That means taking a dynamic approach to ensure that we embed quality in all our programmes, evidence what works and challenge and support services to achieve better outcomes.

The Foyer Federation's **Transformational Asset Framework** supports the development of new approaches that can be applied across all our programmes and with different partners.

We see the 'Foyer' as a process rather than a place. Our **Foyer Status Mark (FSM)** allows us to look at how the Foyer focus, approach and relationships can be tailored to local needs and circumstances. It also increasingly provides us with a set of common measures that can be used to benchmark impact across a range of different service models.

The **FISH toolkit** is a quality development and staff training programme designed to improve service delivery and help providers as they work towards both the Foyer Status Mark and external accreditation, such as the Government's Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework (QAF).

By rolling out our new **Transformational Innovation Mark (TIM)**, we are able to formally recognise high impact interventions and celebrate transformational practice that enables young people to thrive.

- ▶ 54 Foyers have benefitted from FISH and the FSM to recognise and improve the quality of their provision over the last 12 months
- ▶ 50 Foyers have used TIM to assess how programmes on health or employability have made a sustainable difference to young people's lives.

### Building quality next steps

- ▶ Applying the Foyer Status Mark across a wider range of services and helping Housing Associations to share learning between Foyers and other provision.
- ▶ Promoting the Transformational Innovation Mark as a tool to encourage innovation and support the replication of 'what works' from high achieving projects.
- ▶ Increasing the participation of staff and young people in building quality by introducing a new peer assessment process and leadership course.

### Employability

We focus on improving young people's employability outcomes through a positive, 'asset-based' approach that develops young people's talents for the world of work.

The Foyer Federation's Working Assets programme provides a framework for Foyers and other service providers, to build and recognise young people's skills or 'assets' through a community-focused volunteering project linked to future employability. Over the last year, through the Working Assets programme:

- ▶ 200 Foyer residents have been engaged in activities to develop 'work-readiness', including the delivery of projects, enterprises and events in five local communities that raised the profile of young people's achievements
- ▶ young people and Foyer staff reported that group work, leadership, communication, time keeping, planning, being creative, getting it wrong and getting it right, were all key experiences generated by the approach
- ▶ the individual outcomes for young people included taking on responsibility as community champions, developing

apprenticeships, securing job placements, creating a business plan for a social enterprise, enrolling onto and maintaining involvement in college courses, achieving 'v inspired awards', improving well-being and confidence, raising aspirations to apply to university and moving on positively from the Foyer

- ▶ final project celebration events of individual Foyers attracted over 500 visitors from businesses, funders, partner agencies and local community groups
- ▶ programme funds were used to enable services to identify and harness local opportunities, doubling the original investment provided for Working Assets from the Tenant Services Authority.

### Employability next steps

- ▶ A Working Assets toolkit, designed to support and guide service providers to deliver the programme, has been promoted nationally and will support a further 18 programmes over 2010 – 2011 to work with more young people.

### Healthy futures

We believe that all young people should be able to live in an environment that supports their health and well-being. Our goal is help every Foyer to become a healthy place to live and learn enabling young people to develop the skills, resources and opportunities required to make a healthy transition to adulthood.

Our £2.5 million Foyer Health Programme, funded by the Big Lottery, is in its third and final year. In its last year, we can report that:

- ▶ 5,000 young people in over 105 Foyers nationwide have received one-to-one life coaching sessions to support them to identify and work towards health and well-being goals
- ▶ 10,522 wider beneficiaries have accessed the Foyer Health Programme including friends and family of Foyer residents, members of the local community and staff from other agencies and organisations
- ▶ young people have experienced a range of healthy living activities through taster sessions on healthy eating, physical activity and mental well-being
- ▶ local Health Action Teams made up of Foyer residents and staff have delivered a huge variety of activities which, this year, have included: a healthy eating-on-a-budget themed

'Credit Munch' challenge; community football tournaments and cycling challenges which focused on the physical activity aspect of health; plus tai chi, yoga, poetry writing and meditation in Foyers as part of a mental well-being theme

- ▶ more young people than ever in Foyers have accessed specialist health services through local partnerships
- ▶ the Foyer Federation has appointed 16 specialist professionals to act as Health Ambassadors who have been travelling the country to deliver workshops to Foyer residents and staff in areas such as: stress management; cognitive behavioral therapy; resilience; self harm; yoga; art and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues.

### Healthy futures next steps

- ▶ By the time the Foyer Health Programme comes to an end, we anticipate to have reached our target for 7,500 Foyer residents and 11,400 wider beneficiaries to have accessed the Programme.
- ▶ Producing a Health toolkit and training programme, to support the sustainability of Foyers as healthy places to live and learn, and promoting this to all services working with young people across the UK.



"It's a real confidence boost to have your opinions heard and feel as though you're having an input."  
Boyd, Launceston Foyer resident



## Learning in Foyers

**We have focused our efforts this year on enabling the application of media technology to facilitate new learning experiences and opportunities. This has been achieved through two of our Test Bed projects, MyNav and MediaWorks.**

### MyNav

MyNav is an online platform bringing together new media technology and informal learning opportunities to deliver a personalised package of support to young people. With initial funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Transformation Fund, and expert support from the University of London Computer Centre, the Foyer Federation worked with five Foyer 'hubs' to develop an online portal offering its users tailored learning opportunities, a reflective social networking space and an online personal learning plan. Through the MyNav project:

- ▶ over 200 young people have been engaged, recording an average of 145 log ins per day which demonstrated strong learning habits
- ▶ young people felt they had been given greater control of their learning journey, gaining new skills and knowledge while enhancing their abilities to track housing, education and employment goals including progression from custody and other challenging backgrounds
- ▶ most of all, young people felt MyNav improved their confidence to participate in and contribute to group work, and the experiences of participating in learning and networking through the technology were highly valued.

### MyNav next steps

- ▶ Exploiting MyNav as a tool for engagement and communication.
- ▶ Promoting MyNav as an instrument to help young people navigate their individual and transitional life challenges, and exploring the impact of MyNav on particular groups of young people such as those with a history of offending.
- ▶ Developing the potential of MyNav to challenge traditional approaches to support planning and key working with more effective learning and development tools.

## MediaWorks

MediaWorks has been created by the Foyer Federation and supported by Virgin Unite, the non-profit foundation of The Virgin Group, who have provided funding for all the equipment and training in media centres across the country for staff and young people. The centres have been set up in nine Foyers across the country – Bristol, Bedford, Bradford, Harlow, Hereford, Ludlow, Southwark and Hayes in London, and Arena Options in the North West. After a year long project to create the MediaWorks network, we can confirm:

- ▶ a user group of 30 young people has steered the development of the project including selecting equipment for the centres and influencing the branding for the MediaWorks project
- ▶ in July 2010 a launch event for the project was held at the Channel 4 Head Quarters in London, during which five films produced by groups of young people using equipment in the media centres were showcased
- ▶ 53 Foyer staff members and 116 young people have been involved to date in media content creation skills such as film-making, podcasting and photography
- ▶ an online portal, [www.wearemediaworks.org](http://www.wearemediaworks.org), has been created to enable users across the network to share content and collaborate with each other.

### MediaWorks next steps

- ▶ The nine Foyers have their own future plans for the media centres which include creating social enterprises, media workshop and training sessions and entering film, photography and other media competitions.
- ▶ Encouraging the MediaWorks network to continue adding content to the online portal.
- ▶ Continuing to engage young people through MediaWorks by looking for opportunities to involve the media centres in our work and projects.

“ Young people when given the chance can be incredibly creative and can play a positive role in society today. Virgin Unite is always looking for ways to ensure young people's voices can be heard, that's why we love the MediaWorks initiative. As a strategic partner, the Foyer Federation's work is fully supported by Virgin Unite and we are delighted to have funded the media centres in England. It is encouraging that businesses and community leaders are beginning to act as a force for good and help organisations like the Foyer Federation. ”

Jean Oelwang, CEO, Virgin Unite

## Workforce development

**The relationship between a young person and a trusted adult is an essential ingredient for a positive transition. That is why we are dedicated to providing professional training for staff working with young people. Over the last year, we have continued to promote social work student placements in Foyers and offered Life Coaching as an approach for staff to empower young people's future goals.**

### Developing Social Work students in Foyers

With funding originally from Skills for Care Learning Practice Taskforce, we have increased the number of social work degree placement students in Foyers across London. Students gain a breadth of experience not always available on other placements, while Foyers benefit from an additional member of staff who brings a level of new theoretical knowledge. This year we have:

- ▶ expanded the number of managed placements from five to 12
- ▶ engaged six new Practice Assessors from Foyers to support placements, sourcing funding from the Universities who are placing the students.

## Resettlement and rehabilitation of young offenders

**We continue to stretch the Foyer approach so it can help reduce the number of young people involved in offending and enable their transition to an independent, crime-free adulthood. Over the last year, we have:**

- ▶ raised the profile of youth justice issues through a number of initiatives, including ongoing support for plans to establish a Young Offender's Academy
- ▶ introduced a Resettlement and Rehabilitation Strategy to help staff in Foyers to shape more effective resettlement services through Foyers
- ▶ helped the Youth Justice Board pilot an 'enhanced offer' for young people leaving custody in the North West and South West of England
- ▶ produced a 'Delivery Platform' model, by which Foyers can support a range of services that improve outcomes for more young people from offending backgrounds.

## Life Coaching Training

Life coaching enables people to set and achieve positive goals, allowing individuals to make life choices that have a positive impact on their future. The Foyer Life Coaching training programme was designed specifically for staff working with young people in the support planning process.

In this third year of implementation of Life Coaching in Foyers:

- ▶ 81 staff completed four day training packages over the year to adopt life coaching approaches
- ▶ over 1,000 young people were able to benefit by having a trained life coach to focus on their future goals.

### Workforce development next steps

- ▶ Promoting social work placements, life coaching and other transformational approaches in order to improve the investment in workforce development.

### Resettlement and rehabilitation next steps

- ▶ Exploring alternative approaches to youth custody, resettlement pathways and community sentences, while securing an evidence base that promotes the Foyer process as an effective 'Delivery Platform'.
- ▶ To use learning from our other Test Bed projects that can be applied to youth crime solutions, such as the application of MyNav and Working Assets.

## A note from our Chief Executive

At least one in five young people in the UK today will struggle to realise their potential as active and engaged citizens. The worrying growth in youth unemployment, fuelled by the current economic downturn, means a new generation of young people face an uncertain future.



Jane Slowey  
Chief Executive, Foyer Federation

As a society, we continue to invest a huge amount in those young people who make their journey to adulthood through higher education. So why do we seem so much less able to harness the talent and potential of those who have had a difficult start in life? A successful transition for a young person should be much more than the keys to an isolated flat, a job with no prospects, a life most of us would not aspire to for ourselves or for our own children.

The Foyer Federation was created to promote and develop a different way of doing things. As we 'come of age', we are looking for a new language and fresh thinking to challenge the deficit based approaches that dominate services for vulnerable young people. We are reconnecting with our original service reform agenda and recapturing the entrepreneurial spirit that drove early Foyer development. We are refocusing the campaigning side of our work and building alliances with others who share our values and who, like us, are impatient to create, fund and deliver transformational services. It is only by nurturing talent and aspiration that we will release the untapped potential in all our young people. We hope you will join us in the next stage of our adventure.

## WITH THANKS ....

We would like to say a special thank you to our partners for supporting our work to help young people at risk make their transition to adult independence:

Chase Moran, Greenwich Inner Wheel, Houghton Dunn Charitable Trust, University for Industry, Big Lottery Fund (England), Big Lottery Fund (Northern Ireland), Bowland Charitable Trust, Cabinet Office of the Third Sector (now Office for Civil Society), City Bridge Trust, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, East Thames Housing Group, KPMG Foundation, Mark Leonard Trust, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Tenant Services Authority (HCA), The Monument Trust, V (Youth Network), Virgin Unite, Vodafone Foundation.