

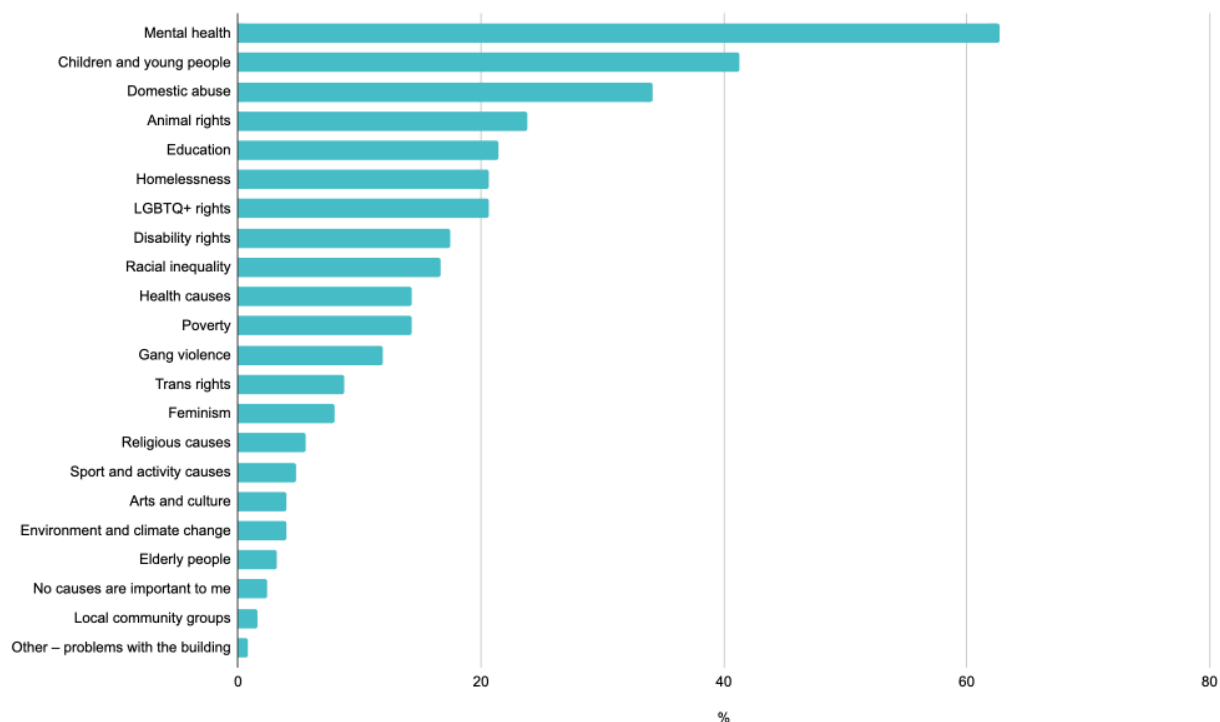
## The Big Questions June-July 2022

The Big Questions is the Foyer Federation's bi-annual survey on young people living in our member Foyers/supported accommodation services. We received 126 responses from 14 Foyers: Blackburn with Darwen, Bridge, Coops, Doncaster, Dove Cott, Enfield, Heather Court, Milton Keynes, Monarch Court, Ravenhead, Salford, Swan House, Verve Place, YMCA Crewe.

The survey features greater representation than the November 2021 survey – an increase of four Foyers and 26 responses.

### What's Important to You

1. We want to ensure the voices of young people in Foyers are heard on the issues they care about most. Which **THREE** causes are most important to you?



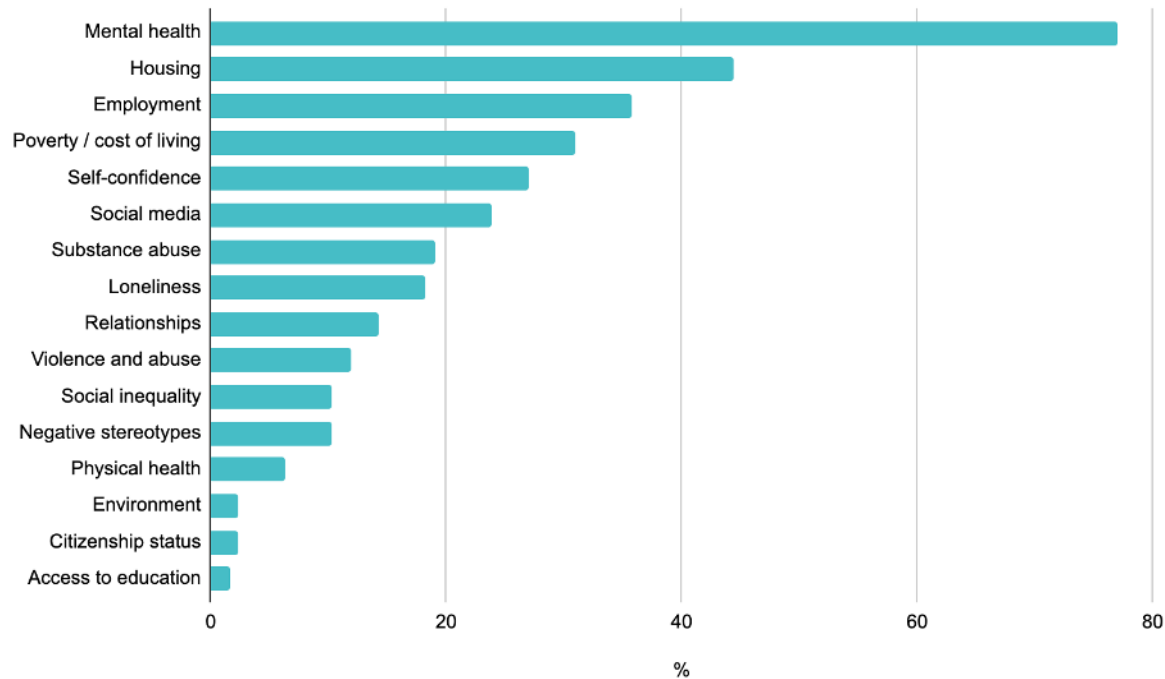
Mental health is consistently reported as the cause most important to young people who live in Foyers. 62.6% – a similar percentage of to the previous survey – noted this as one of their three priorities.

Greater importance than ever before was given to children and young people (41.2%) and domestic abuse remains similarly important as in previous surveys (34.1%).

The number of young people reporting homelessness as of greatest importance fell from 36% to 20.6%.

The three causes that have increased in importance to young people are education (15% to 21.4%), disability rights (10% to 17.4%) and poverty (8% to 14.2%).

**2. We want to influence decision makers to improve the systems that affect young people. What are the THREE biggest challenges facing young people today?**



Mental health is, consistently and by far, the greatest challenge young people face, with 76.9% naming it as one of their three biggest challenges. Employment is also consistently in the top three (35.7%).

Housing is newly in the top three, with 44.4% reporting it as a major challenge compared to 29% in November 2021.

The most notable difference between November 2021 and now is the growth in the scale of the challenge of poverty and cost of living – from just 4% to 30.9%. This shows in dramatic fashion the impact of the cost of living crisis on young people who have experience of homelessness at this crucial stage in their lives.

**3. What do you think is positive for young people right now?**

The number of young people who were unsure or couldn't think of anything positive has dropped from 13% to 9.3%. For the first time since February 2021, 'nothing' was not the most popular answer, which is a real positive. The top five positives for young people at the moment are employment opportunities and friends/socialising (both 12.4%), and education opportunities, the Foyer and having supportive people around them (each 8.5%).

**4. What do you think is worrying for young people right now?**

Lack of money and the cost of living crisis has surpassed mental health as the biggest worry for young people with a huge surge in importance since November 2021 – from 8.5% worried about this to 44.4% in June/July 2022. This is extremely significant and concerning, though sadly unsurprising given the Universal Credit uplift being dropped shortly before the recession began to bite. Young people cannot be in the best possible position to thrive if they are hungry, cold and without money to travel or pay phone bills. This is a strong call to action for the sector to continue listening to young people to find ways to step in and offer support, and to find ways to direct funding directly into the hands of young people so they do not miss out.

Mental health is still a worry for young people, with 17.4% mentioning it as a concern – similar to the number in November 2021. Housing and homelessness is the third greatest worry, up to 10.3% from 7.8% – which ties into the cost of living crisis.

Young people are also concerned about current events issues, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine and threat of war (7.9%), human rights being restricted (3.9%) and the political climate in the UK (3.9%).

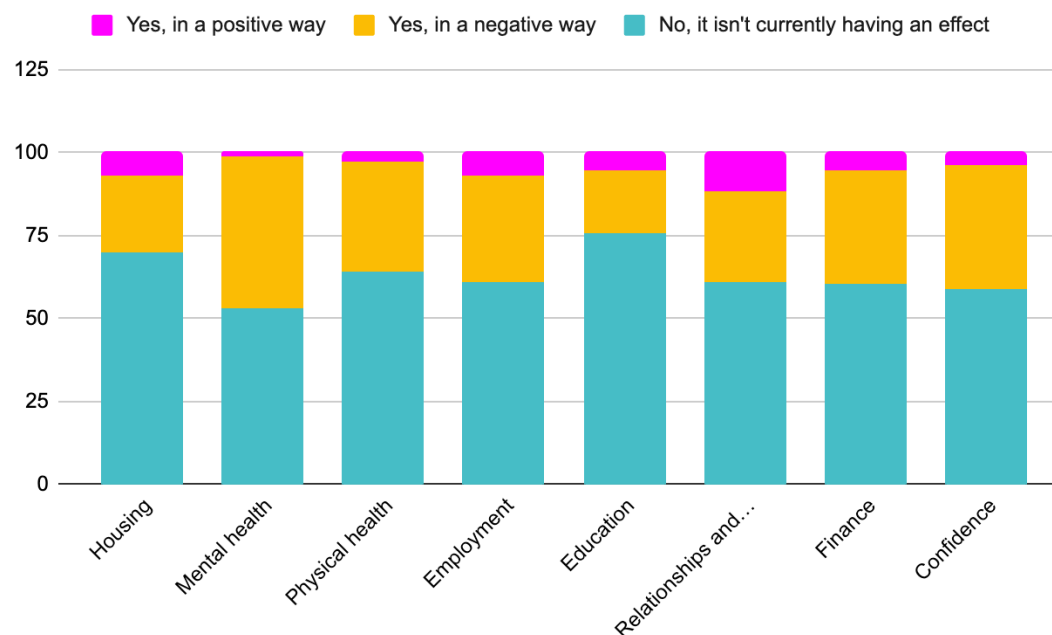
This question highlights the fact that young people living in Foyers today are experiencing instability from all angles – in their families, in their housing options, in their ability to afford food and energy, in terms of their own human rights and government in the UK, and in the global political climate. This lack of stability is likely to have a negative impact on mental health. It is imperative that staff and services are equipped and have the capacity to support young people through this time.

### 5. Is the Covid-19 crisis still affecting your progress in any of the following areas?

We wanted to know what, if any, lasting effects the pandemic is having on young people.

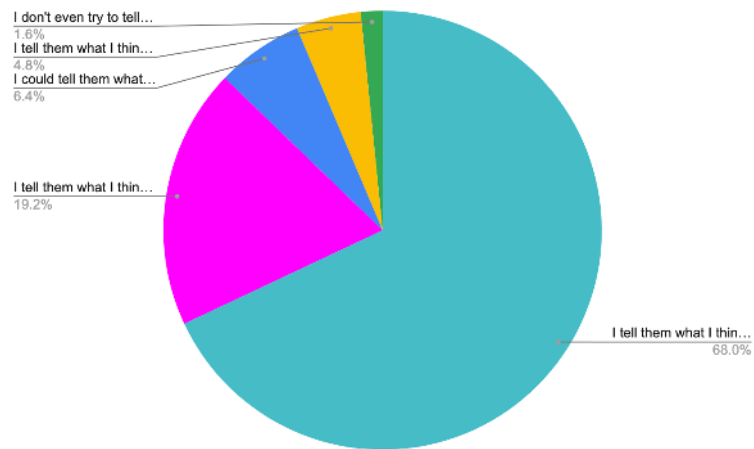
Overall, the effects of the pandemic appear to be waning, particularly in the areas of education and housing. However, the negative impact on mental health, confidence, employment and finance are still significant in the lives of young people experiencing homelessness. These ongoing negative effects are likely being magnified by the cost of living crisis and the instability mentioned in question 4.

11.2% of young people who responded report still experiencing positive impacts on their relationships and social connections as a result of the pandemic, which is a great effect to note and hold on to!



## Leadership and Influence

### 6. How well does your Foyer listen to what you think?

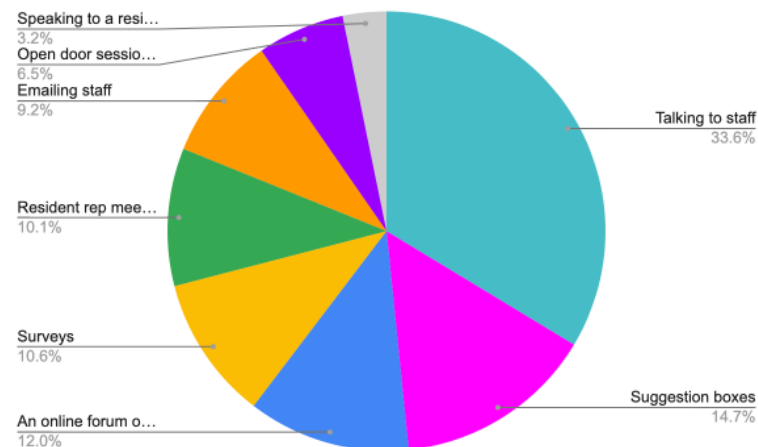


92% of young people living in Foyers feel confident to tell staff what they think. This is a slight reduction from the previous survey (95.7%), likely due to the greater response rate and variety of services responding. It is a very positive result. Also positive is the increase in the percentage of young people who see things change as a result of the things they say in good time – 68%, up from 57.9% in November 2021.

The number of young people who report either change taking a long time or things rarely changing has dropped from 37.9% to 24%. A strong trend in the right direction!

6.4% of young people do not have confidence that speaking up would change anything, and 1.6% believe that staff do not want to listen. Building trust with young people in the service is key to growing their confidence to speak up, and closing feedback loops is crucial to demonstrate to young people that their voices have been heard and – more importantly – amplified and acted on.

### 7. How would you most like to make your voice heard or offer help in your Foyer?

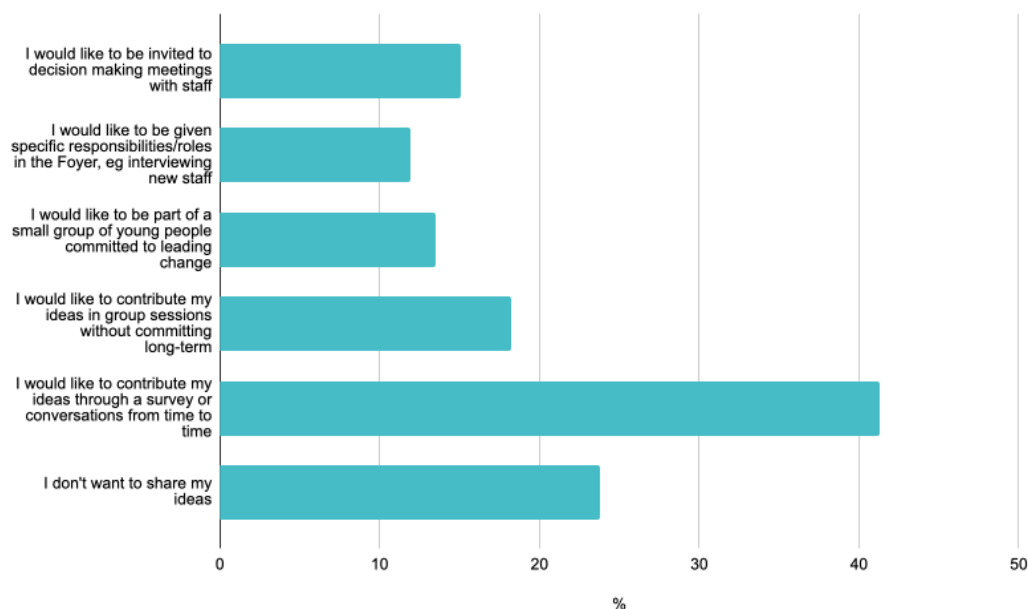


Talking to staff is consistently the preferred method of sharing views or offering help, highlighting the importance of these trust-based relationships when involving young people in shaping the service.

Using an online forum or app has increased in popularity, from 5.5% to 12%. Services that do not currently offer this option may wish to explore it in order to provide a digital option for those who want it.

The responses to this question highlight the importance of having a range of options available for young people to get involved, catering to a range of confidence levels and preferences.

## 8. How much would you like to be involved in leadership in your Foyer?



23.8% of young people said they did not want to share their ideas – a slight reduction from November 2021 (26%).

It is positive to see that 76.2% of young people would like to be involved in shaping the service in some way.

40.4% are interested in taking on leadership roles in making change happen. This is a very significant number of young people who, provided with the right support, could make long-term, sustainable changes to how power is shared within youth supported housing.

59.5% of young people are interested in methods of involvement that enable them to contribute without necessarily committing for a long period, for example by a survey, a conversation or a group session. These are very valuable ways to make sure the voices of all young people, regardless of confidence levels or ability to commit, can be heard and can influence the way the service is run.

## 9. When in your life do you feel powerful?

90.9% of young people were able to name at least one time in their life when they feel powerful – an increase from 85% from the previous survey.

Understanding when young people feel personal power is an important place to start when working with them to grow their power in other places, such as within the Foyer or in the local community. The most common experiences that give young people a feeling of power are:

1. Making an effort with hair, makeup or clothes (12.9%)
2. Playing sport or working out (12.1%)
3. Listening to music (9.1%)
4. Being with friends, partner or family (7.6%)
5. Helping someone or passing on a skill (6.8%)
  - Taking part in a hobby (6.8%)
  - Meeting goals or taking positive steps (6.8%)

**"When out with friends" "When I'm gaming" "When I have my make up on and I'm out with friends dancing – I feel confident" "I recently gave belongings back to an ex, this was very empowering to me" "I ice skate and feel in control on the ice" "I play football this is my skill" "When i have done something positive, like climbing a mountain" "When i play football" "When i am with my close friends and just chilling" "I like to play online games" "at the gym" "when i look after my younger brother" "When I'm in college" "When I'm crafting" "When I'm at college" "When I do my hair and make up" "when i have had a good week in the gym" "When i lift weights in the gym" "when i am rapping" "On my Xbox playing with friends, I am in control" "When I feel listened to by my mum and dad and they say how proud they are of my progress" "When I am doing someone's makeup" "I work fixing broken phones, I like to see people's faces when their phones are fixed" "I do army reenactment weekends – I like being in a uniform" "When my hair is shaved and outfit is comfortable when I listen to rock music when I am drawing and painting" "being on my own knowing i'm independent" "Playing Football, sleeping as nothing can happen and i'm safe" "when I am helping others wither supporting them with their mental health and assisting with certain activities I am comfortable with" "when I can get ready with make up and make myself feel ok and look better" "when I go out with friends" "when i'm helping others" "During physical activity e.g gym, football, rugby" "When i'm riding/handling horses, not necessarily powerful just at ease" "When i'm playing or hanging out with friends" "When i'm dressed up" "When i'm happy and not depressed" "when i'm writing a song" "When I'm at the gym" "When I am listening to music, and when I am with friends" "When I've done all my chores" "When i tell someone about my problems" "When I speak to staff" "Being in a dark place but still surviving. At night time when there's only me awake in the world. Outsmarting people and having an amazing recall ability of memories and dates etc." "When my support coach listens to my views and ideas and things happen about it." "When I feel and look good, I'm more confident" "When in a dress" "When I overcome my fears from time to time. Also pushing myself to go further." "Wearing nice clothes, spending time with family, when all chores are done" "When I'm honest with someone about my feelings because I want to make sure they know how I'm feeling towards them / someone else" "When I achieve my goals" "I feel powerful when I'm able to talk about my mental health and anything to do with my life" "whenever I do something that is a good thing" "when watching heart stopper and chilling" "Hair and makeup" "When I finish working out in the gym, when I listen to my favourite rapper" "Never" "Rarely" "When I graduated and do well in things I put my mind to" "After I've been angry and I feel like I need to empower myself" "When i feel confident in a situation or my decision" "when i'm on my bike cruising along" "Listening to music" "I don't really care about being powerful just having a good time." "When I'm listening to music" "I don't" "When I listen to music I enjoy or if I complete something when I find it difficult" "When I get a haircut" "Being around cars" "Being ambitious" "I feel like I have power because I have my own place and do my own thing" "When I'm with my family" "When I'm having a good day and I feel happy with myself" "When I do my makeup and when I have helped someone" "When I'm challenges and find more in myself by sticking with it instead of quitting" "When I finish University" "When I am in a good environment, when I am listening to music, when I am playing football and when my voice is heard" "When I am playing football" "When I help someone out who is struggling with something" "When I go to the gym" "Listening to music" "Dunno" "I dunno" "When I am on top of my responsibilities" "Football" "When what I say is understood" "when I set a goal and actually commit to achieving it" "When I've found an outfit that looks amazing on!" "I only feel powerful when I'm helping someone or doing something that isn't for me" "When I offer advice and support to those who need it" "When I've got dressed up, when I'm listening to music" "I don't" "Going work" "When I do my makeup" "I never really feel powerful, I just like handing out knowledge that I think others should know" "Idk I just live my life?" "Listening to rock and metal music" "I feel powerful after I have seen my daughter" "When I'm listening to a certain band" "Either when high or listening to music" "Teaching someone something I already know" "n/a" "When I'm in a positive place and my physical and mental health is good. Also, when I'm dressed nice, makeup done, ready to face the day" "When I look pretty" "When I drink or take drugs" "When working, at the gym, listening to music" "I don't often feel "powerful"" "When I'm honest" "None" "when i work with cars" "when i play my ps4" "When I go to the gym at the YMCA Crewe" "when im gaming or live streaming on twitch" "at work managing people" "It's situational. Power isn't limited to a certain event." "I don't know" "When I have my hair cut" "College"**



### 12. What are three skills, talents or positive qualities you have?

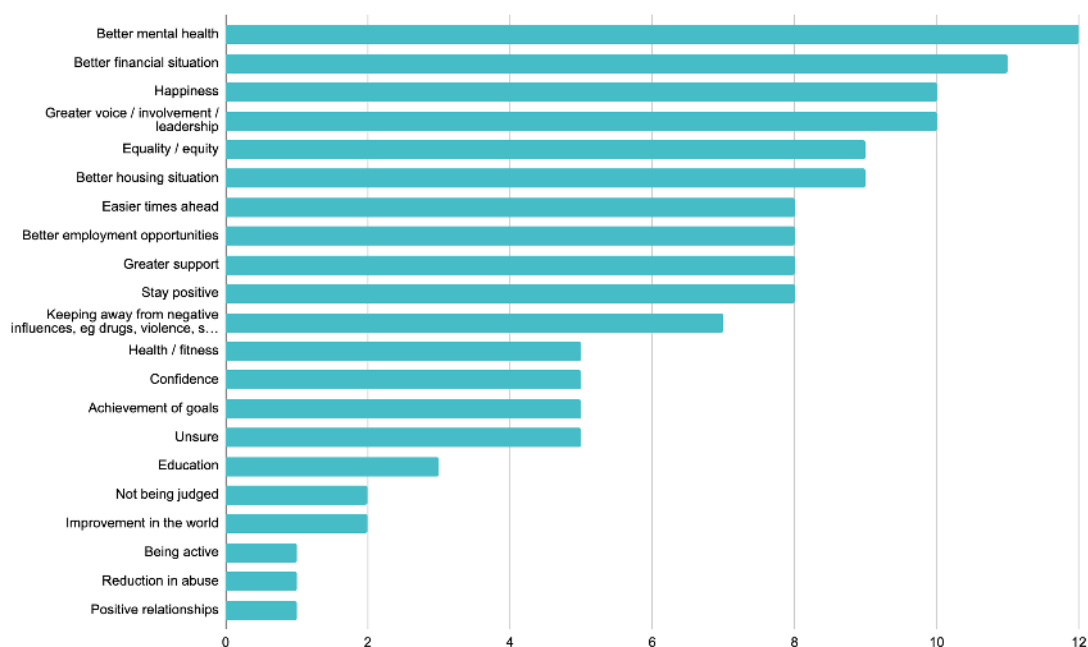
Of the 126 young people that submitted the survey, 115 (91.2%) wrote at least one positive skill or quality they possess. Two young people wrote that they have none, and the remaining nine left the question blank. Overall, it is very positive that this majority of respondents were able to pick out specific things about themselves that they identify as positive – with many writing more than the suggested three.

The responses varied a great deal and included specific skills, such as playing a sport, speaking a language and being able to cook, as well as softer skills like being kind, being honest and having a good sense of humour. Many focused on their positive qualities in relation to other people, such as being a good listener, a good parent, friend or partner, seeing the good in others, giving people second chances, and helping people. Some also drew strengths from challenging experiences they have had, including being adaptable, being able to handle difficult situations respectfully and rationally, being resilient enough to have survived those challenging experiences, and turning negative feelings into positive action.

### 13. How likely do you think it is that you will achieve your ambitions in life?

On average, young people rated this likelihood as 6.7/10. This has continued to decline, down from 6.9 in November 2021 and 7.6 in February 2021. This reflects the worry and uncertainty captured in the earlier questions, particularly around the recession and opportunities for work.

### 14. What is your wish for young people in the next year?



The most common wish young people had for each other for the coming year is better mental health, including better support and training for services. This is consistent with the results from November 2021. 'Happiness' was the third greatest wish. Over the coming years, the Foyer Federation will help staff to improve their mental health knowledge, skills and confidence to offer better support for young people through our new ReRooted programme, funded by UK Youth and CHK. We will share more information about this soon.

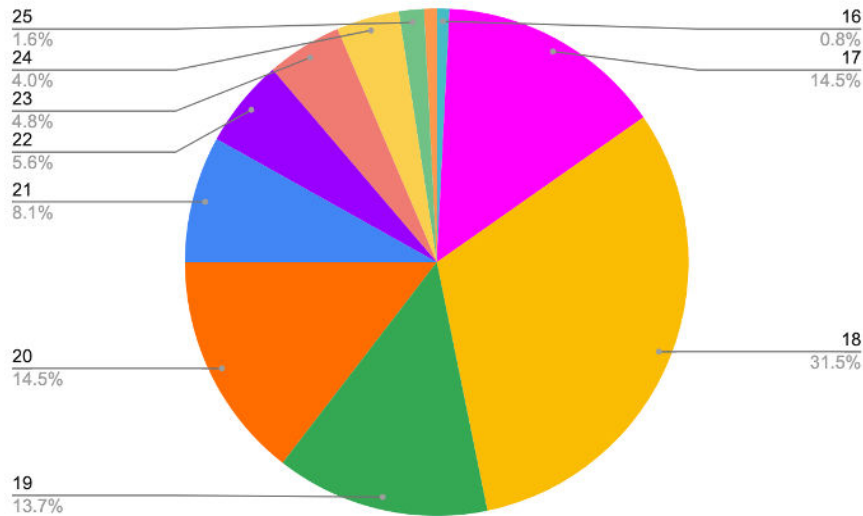
Young people also wished for a better financial situation, further highlighting the theme of the responses to other questions.



In November, just 5% of young people wished to have more of a say. This time, 7.9% wished for voice, involvement and/or leadership, and 7.1% wished for young people to have equality/equity. This is a really positive trend towards young people not only having greater awareness of their ability to have a voice and make change happen, but of their drive and desire to have more power within the services they interact with.

## Demographic information

Almost all of the responses to these questions were free text boxes, allowing people to self-describe their identities. Everyone also had the option not to share this information with us. We use this information to assess whether we're reaching a diverse group of young people and discover any gaps.



### Age

The most common age for respondents is 18 (31.5%). 15.3% of respondents are 16-17. 74.1% of respondents are in the age range 17-20, but we have a good range between 16 to 26+.

### Ethnicity

85.3% of the respondents describe themselves as white. The next largest group describe themselves as Black (8.1%) or mixed (4%). Arab, Afghanistani and Asian are also mentioned with just one respondent each. We do not believe that this is representative of the young people in our network and we would welcome feedback about how to reach a more diverse audience.

### Nationality

91.9% of young people who responded are British nationals. Two young people each reported being nationals of Sudan, Eritrea and Poland, and one each nationals of Bahrain, Afghanistan and Nigeria. One young person has dual nationality of Nigeria and Britain.

### Sexual orientation

65% of young people responding consider themselves to be heterosexual, and 21.4% are LGBTQ+ with identities mentioned including bisexual, pansexual, homosexual and asexual. Two young people were unsure or did not find a label that fit them. 11.1% chose not to respond.

One self-described as a "bisexual menace to society".

**Gender**

49.6% of responders are female, 45.6% are male, and 3.2% are non-binary. Two young people declined to share their gender identity. One young person self-described as being transgender.

**Religion or belief**

57.2% of young people say they have no religion or belief, 3.2% are agnostic, and 11.2% preferred not to say. Of the 28.2% of young people who hold some belief or faith, 12.9% are Christian, 6.4% are Muslim, 4% are Catholic, 2.4% are spiritual, 1.6% are Satanists, and 0.8% are Buddhist.

**Disability**

37.3% of responders consider themselves to have a disability, with 13.4% having more than one. 29.4% consider themselves to have a mental health disability, 17.5% a learning disability, and 4.8% a physical disability.