

THE BIG QUESTIONS

What you told us
about what matters

June/July 2022



THE BIG QUESTIONS is our bi-annual survey of young people living in Foyers and supported accommodation services around the country.

Thank you to everyone who answered the survey and shared their thoughts. 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.

Now we want to tell you what we learned from what you said, and what we're going to do with the information.

If you have any feedback or comments, let us know by emailing kate@foyer.net or texting 07904 662 046.



YOU SAID: "We need better support with our mental health."

Mental health has always been reported as a big concern for young people who live in Foyers. This time was no different.

62% said mental health is the cause that's most important to them

#2 Mental health is the second greatest worry for young people today

77% of young people say the mental health is one of the three biggest challenges they face

45% reported that the pandemic is still negatively affecting their mental health

For the first time, a significant number of people responding to the survey mentioned specific global events as causes of anxiety, such as the threat of war, the current political climate in the UK, and restrictions on human rights.

OUR RESPONSE:

Ever since the first Big Questions survey in mid-2020, we have been seeking funding opportunities for programmes relating to mental health. The Connecting Minds programme ran in a small number of Foyers and had positive responses.

Now, we're thrilled to have won funding for a network-wide programme to help give Foyer staff the skills, knowledge and experience to better support young people with their mental health. This programme will be co-designed with young people and with staff in Foyers so we can make sure it's as effective as possible.

We will continue to learn about what's needed in terms of mental health support. We'll also use the responses from this survey to keep showing funders how important mental health support is.



YOU SAID: "We're really worried about the rising cost of living."

For the first time since the Big Questions survey started in 2020, mental health is not the number one worry young people told us about. This time, 44.4% of people who responded said the cost of living was their biggest worry – a big increase from 8.5% in November 2021.

The cost of living has been a big worry for lots of people, so it's no surprise that young people living in Foyers are feeling the impact. It's also a big cause of anxiety and can negatively affect mental health – something you've already told us is a challenge.

It's difficult to thrive and build a positive future when there isn't money to travel to job interviews or college, when nutritious healthy food is too expensive, and when you can't afford heating or electricity. This is a strong call to action for Foyers and other organisations working with young people to continue listening and to find ways to step in and offer support.

OUR RESPONSE:

The strength of worry about the cost of living is affecting people all over the country. Combined with the removal of the £20 Universal Credit uplift in October 2021, people are having to afford more with less money.

The Foyer Federation strongly believes in making direct payments to young people to spend on growing talents or developing skills. We call these talent bonds and we try to offer them to a number of young people twice a year. Keep checking our website to find out when we're next offering them and to apply.

We are also exploring other ways to offer funding directly for young people.

YOU SAID: "We feel like Foyers are listening and we want to be involved in making change."

In November's Big Questions survey, 38% of respondents said that either nothing changes or it takes too long for things to change when they speak up in the Foyer. This time, only 24% of young people felt that way and 68% of people said they see things change in their Foyer quickly as a result of them speaking up. That's a really positive thing!

This shows that Foyers are taking youth involvement and power seriously and that they're working hard to make sure your voices are at the centre of the decisions they make.

76.2% of people who responded to the survey said they want to be involved in making change happen in their Foyer – and 40.4% would even like to be involved in leadership. That's a big number of young people who could channel their energy into making positive things happen in their community and beyond.

OUR RESPONSE:

We are really pleased to see that the number of young people who know their views are being acted on is getting higher. This is the surest sign we have that Foyers are REALLY listening to young people and achieving what they intend to.

If you're someone who has spoken up and offered to be involved in leadership or change in the Foyer, you're part of a really positive movement to increase the power young people have. If you haven't yet but would like to, speak to a member of staff or to a resident rep about ways to share your views.

The Foyer Federation often offers programmes and other opportunities to get involved. You can always get in touch (see the next page). By responding to the Big Questions survey, you're already telling us what you think and giving us an idea of what we should focus on.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

We want young people's voices and experiences to influence everything we do at the Foyer Federation. Responding to our surveys is one way you can do that. We share the results (anonymously) with our Trustees, and with the managers and staff in your services so they can respond where you live.

The staff in your Foyer will be able to tell you all the ways you can currently get involved and make your voice heard in the Foyer. If you want to suggest something but don't know how, they can let you know. If you want to get involved in leading change, ask the staff how you might be able to do this.

You can find out about ways to get involved with the Foyer Federation by visiting our website, www.foyer.net, and looking at our programmes. Share your ideas with us or ask questions by emailing Kate at kate@foyer.net or texting her at 07904 662 046.

