

# Youth Power Fund

## Impact Report







## Fund background and objectives

In 2021, the Blagrave Trust partnered with the Foyer Federation to offer local Foyers the opportunity to access pots of funding to support innovation and creativity around youth leadership and empowerment.

We wanted to champion new thinking, long-term change and youth-led approaches that challenge existing power structures and provide a catalyst for young people to lead in their local community and beyond.

In the supported housing sector, youth leadership and involvement, despite best intentions, is often underfunded and overlooked resulting in approaches becoming tokenistic, inconsistent and short term.

By providing this funding, we aimed to create some space and time for services to innovate, try new approaches, and implement sustainable youth leadership systems.



## Programme impact report

This report captures the impact shared by young people and staff members reflecting back on the three years of the fund.

**Impact paints a compelling picture of what happens when Foyers receive long-term, flexible investment that allows them to experiment, take risks and be genuinely driven by the ideas and aspirations of young people.**

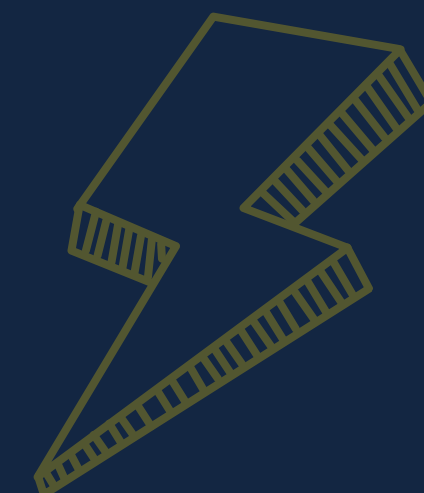
Inspired by this impact, we are determined to learn from the effectiveness of this programme and embed new principles into our future work, influencing **more Foyers** to normalise youth leadership and put genuine power sharing at the heart of how their Foyers operate as places of power and purpose.

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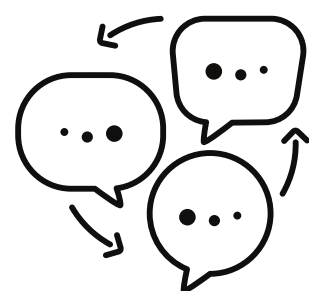


# Measuring Impact for the Youth Power Fund

Recognising the less quantifiable and more relational nature of the Youth Power Fund, we did not put pressure on Foyers to report regularly on rigid outputs and numbers. When it came to impact measurement we used a mix of methods:



Once a year, we asked staff members and young people from Foyers involved to tell us how many young people were participating in various forms of leadership and what kind of level of participation was occurring.



In ongoing conversations and reports, we asked Foyers and young people to capture their learnings and reflections and share their achievements and activities. From these reports and conversations, common patterns and themes were identified around what Youth Power Fund impact looked like.



***The outcomes [of the programme] are not largely driven by numbers. It's about outcomes like stories, the narrative, and you don't get that with all kinds of funding.***

*YMCA Cheshire*



# Impact Snapshot

Overall, young people's involvement and leadership increased across all areas.



## 125%

**increase in the number of young people directly involved in leadership and taking on power across all engaged Foyers.**

## Increases in youth involvement and leadership in different areas



**83%**  
**Individual**

Eg, setting goals, making positive progress, being able to identify their own strengths.



**304%**  
**Foyer**

Eg, leading a session, being a resident rep, gathering and representing the views of others.



**100%**  
**Community**

Eg, speaking to the local authority, volunteering at a local organisation.



**214%**  
**National**

Eg, speaking at a conference, being part of a Foyer Federation panel, taking part in a campaign.



# Impact Snapshot

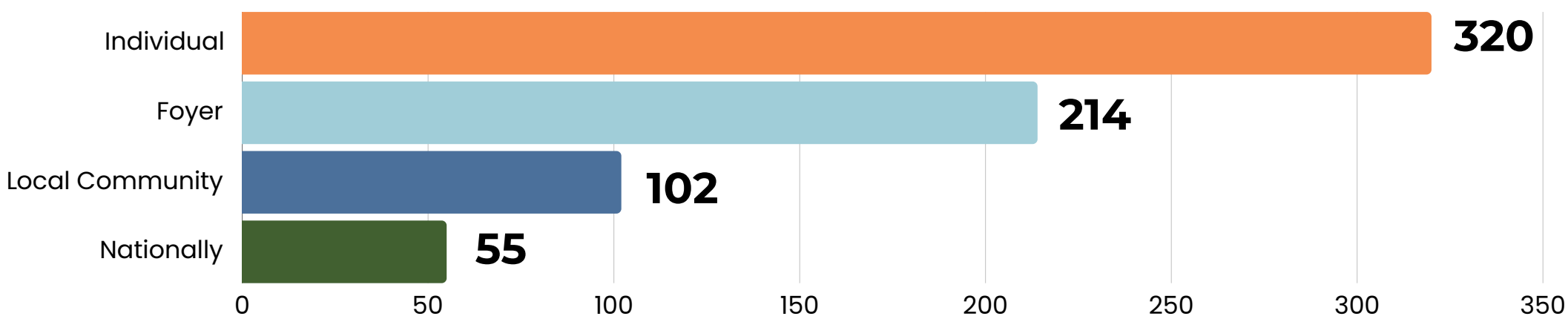
## Individual Foyer Community National

**We asked:** both staff and young people to report on the level of youth involvement and leadership at an individual, Foyer, community and national level.

**Data shows:** the suggested Youth Power Fund approach recommended that Foyers start with a focus on the individual and confidence before expanding into the Foyer, local community and nationally. The data reflects this, in many cases building impact in these areas provided a strong foundation from which to develop opportunities in the local community and beyond.

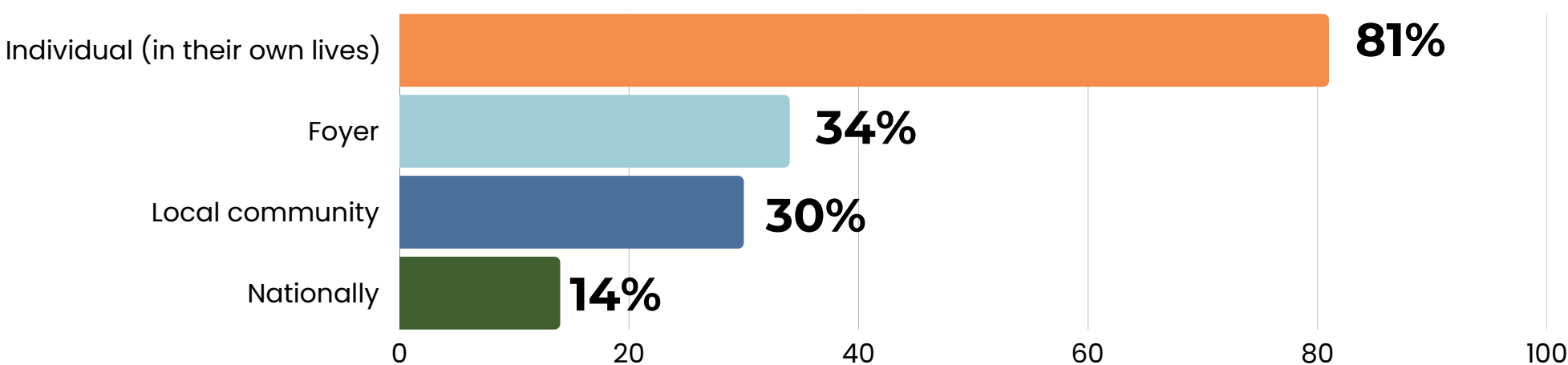
### Reported by staff

Total **number** of young people involved in leadership **across the three years** of the Youth Power Fund.



### Reported by young people

**Percentage** of young people in your supported housing service(s) that could identify a tangible experience of power at **the end of year three**.







Before the Youth Power project, I would spend all day in my flat. I didn't communicate with the people I lived with, and I wouldn't get involved with the activities hosted by the Foyer. Now, two years later, I have the confidence to speak up about issues that affect me. I speak to my peers and encourage them to be a part of the groups that I'm involved in. I've truly found myself and I'm now comfortable with others.

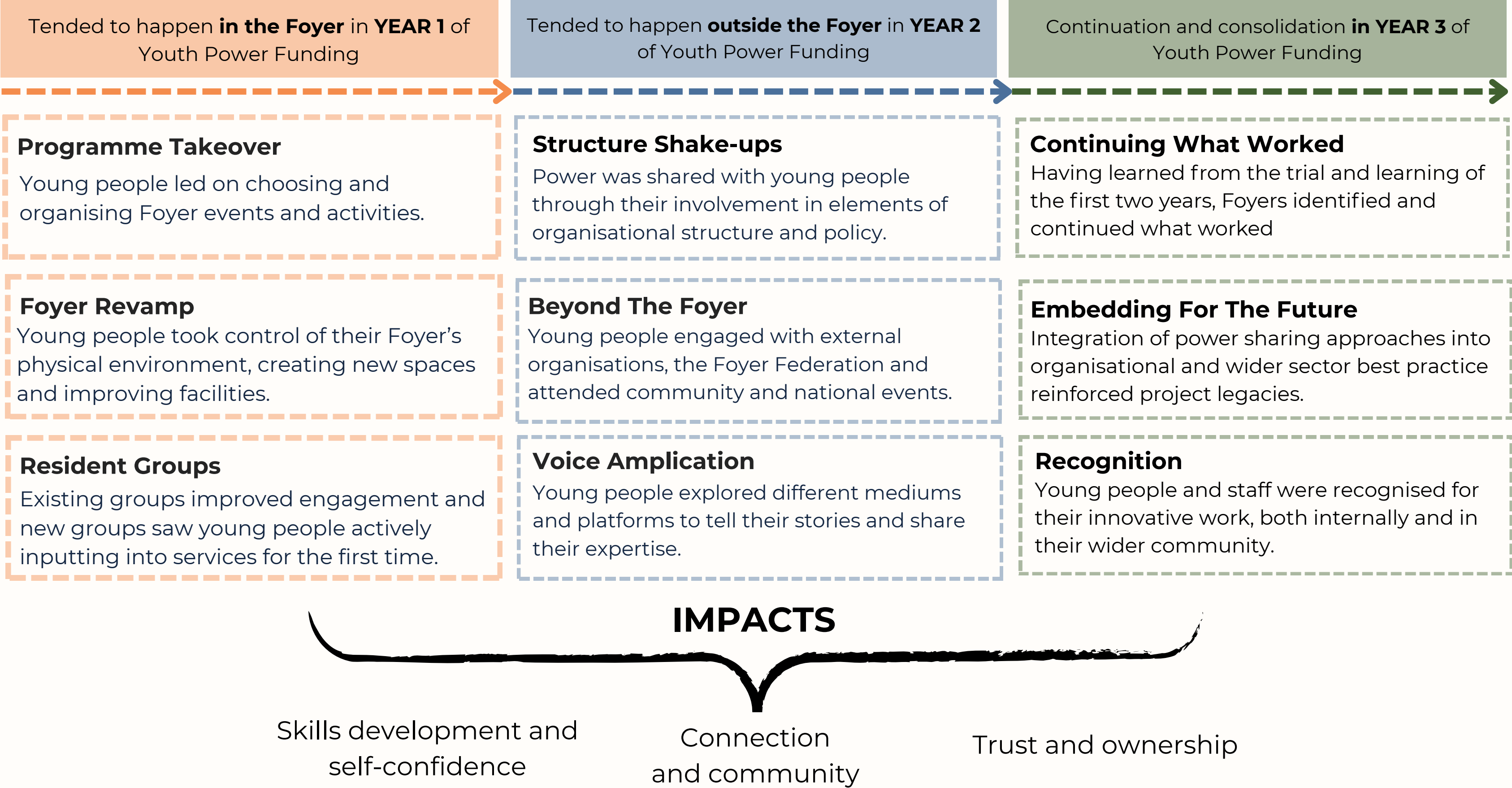
**Young Leader**

# Activities and Impact





The flexibility of the Youth Power Fund meant that every Foyer undertook their own unique approach. However, across Foyers we can identify some of the common types of activities, when and where they tended to happen, and their impacts.





# Impacts

## Skills development and self-confidence

- By organising and running outings and events, young people **gained practical skills** like budgeting, communication and group decision making, **boosting their self-confidence**.
- As Youth Power Fund activities encouraged young people to take on roles where they were handed control, they became **more confident in voicing their wants and needs** relating to service improvement within and beyond the Foyer, including to senior leadership and trustees.
- In many cases youth-led organising within the Foyer built a foundation from which **young people gained the skills and confidence** to grow projects beyond the Foyer into the local community.



“You can really see the difference in how the funding has empowered them – their voice is heard, they're listened to, it's given them so much more independence and life skills.”

**Foyer Staff Member**

“I’ve grown so much—not just as a leader, but as a person. I’ve learned how to plan events, work as part of a team, and most importantly, how to use my voice to help create something powerful for our community.”

**Young Leader**

“The role has taught me how to behave in a professional setting, how to present ideas to my senior members of staff and how to connect the bridge between residents and staff. .”

**Young Leader**



# Impacts

## Connection and community

- Through working together on projects, support and leading each other, Youth Power Fund activities **increased the opportunities for connections** and an **overall sense of community** between residents and staff members.
- Young people reported meeting people in their building they didn't really interact with before and often these **new connections led to the formation of further projects.**
- As projects progressed, young people looked to lead initiatives beyond the Foyer, building **connections with their wider local communities.**



“Our Foyer has improved aesthetically but it is much more of a community. Our residents are proud to live at the Foyer and staff are proud to work there.”

**Foyer Staff Member**

“This gives young people the opportunity to discuss and voice their ideas, build healthy relationships and help them to feel part of the community at the Foyer, Alliance and wider community..”

**Foyer Staff Member**

“Thanks to the guidance and funding, we've been able to bring together a community of young people who all want to act and make a change in the area that they live and work in.”

**Young Leader**



# Impacts

## Trust and ownership

- Getting involved in the practical upkeep of the Foyer building – through painting, gardening and creating new spaces – **increased a sense of ownership** and a feeling that the building and the service belonged to young people.
- Physically changing parts of the Foyer and dictating activities proved to be a **trust-building** exercise between many staff and young people, encouraging staff to stretch their own boundaries and **hand over more control** to young people.
- Dynamics shifted in project planning and resident meetings from young people being consulted by staff to **young people setting the agenda and taking ownership of tasks.**



“[The Youth Power Fund] fosters trust and empowers the youth to take the lead in their own lives.”

### Young Leader

“When we first set up the group there was lively discussions and consultation but as most of the work was undertaken by staff, there was a sense that at that stage the group were valuable contributors but not the driving force. That changed as young people in the group took more and more responsibility and ownership of the project. The group of young people are firmly in control of their project and staff are there to provide support when needed, which is less and less as time goes on..”

### Foyer Staff Member

“Trusting them to do something massively helps a young person with making sure their voice is heard and being independent.”

### Foyer Staff Member





“It takes a lot of time  
and a lot of effort. You  
will feel like you are  
going nowhere. But it  
is all worth it.”

**Young Leader**

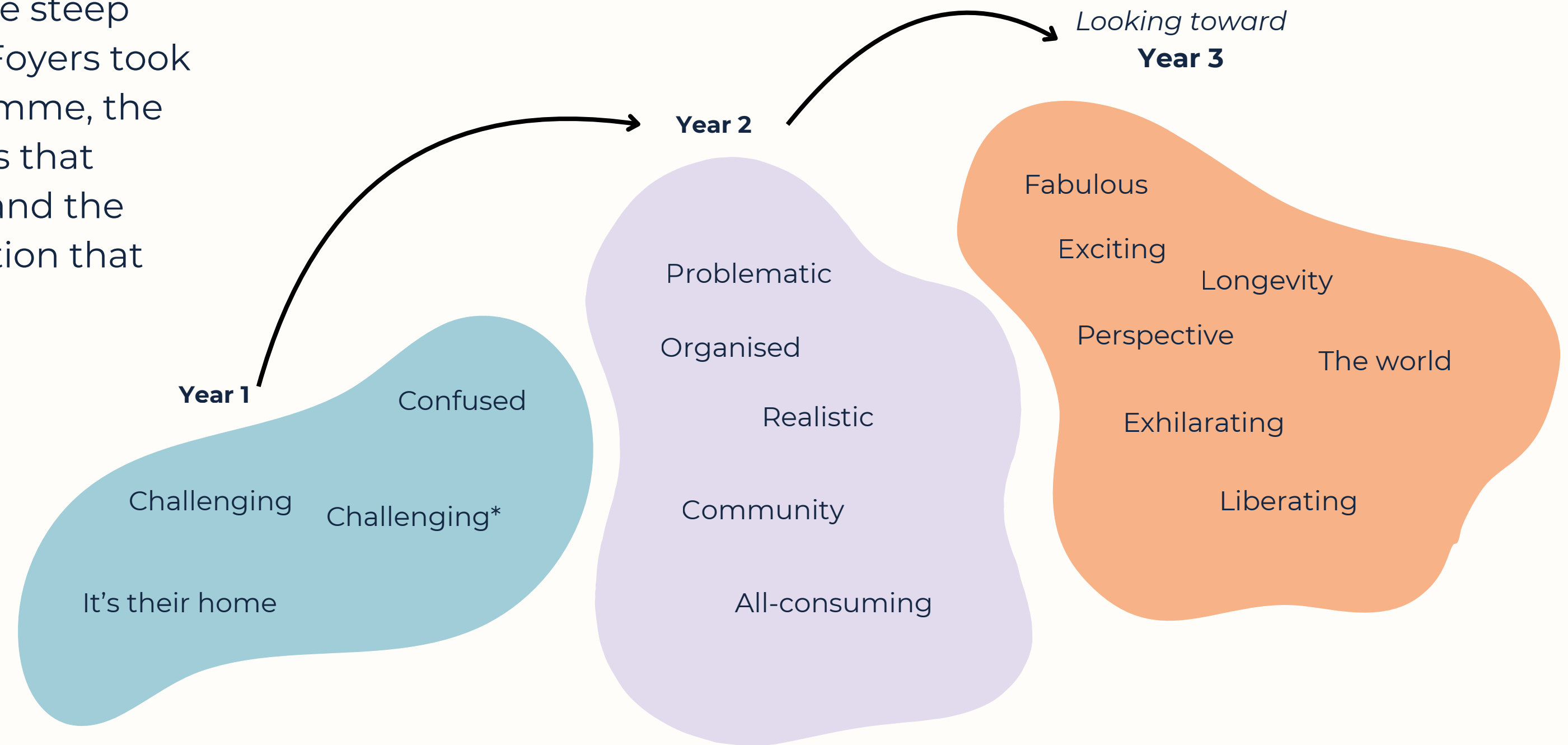
A photograph of a diverse group of young people sitting at round tables with white tablecloths outdoors at night. They are all smiling and clapping, suggesting a celebratory event. The background shows a brick building with large windows and a doorway.

# Journeys



# The Youth Power Fund Journey in words

These words reflect the steep learning curve many Foyers took early on in the programme, the mobilisation and focus that emerged in year two and the excitement and ambition that framed year three.

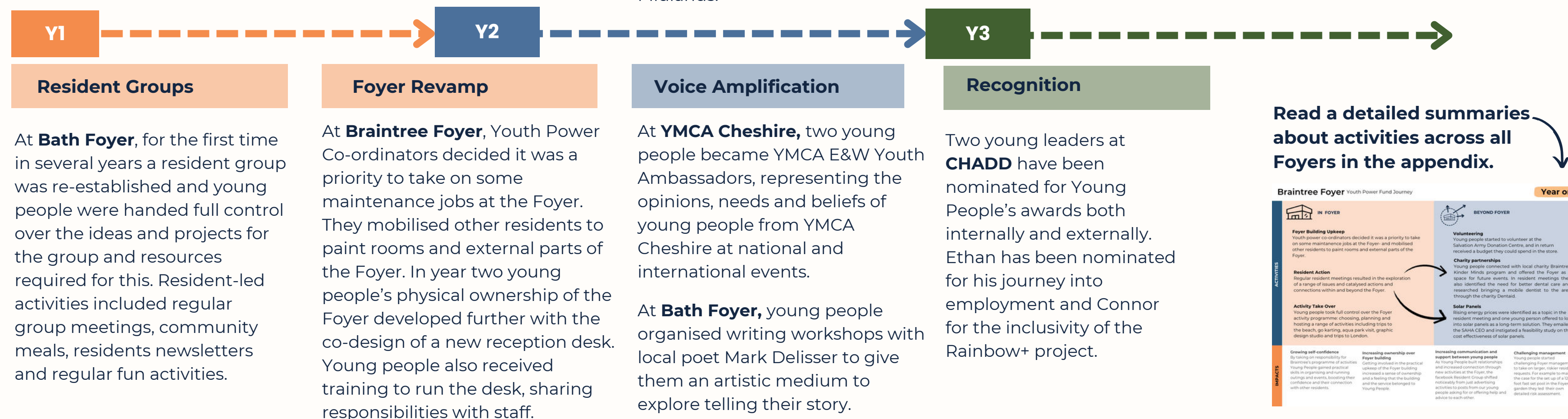


\*the word 'challenging' was shared by two different staff members.

# Activity Examples Across Foyers

This visual provides specific examples of the kinds of activities Foyers undertook

Programme Takeover	Structure Shake-ups	Beyond the Foyer	Continuing what worked	Embedding Approaches
At <b>Enfield Foyer</b> , residents led the introduction of a weekly activities like ‘cooking on a budget’ (where residents have a set budget to cook a meal to feed as many residents as possible), ‘Come Dine With Me’ week and movie nights. Residents took turns taking responsibility for the organisation of residents, food options, film choice and managing an overall budget.	Challenging the historical policies set in place by their wider housing association, <b>Swan Housing’s Foyers</b> started exploring young people’s involvement in their recruitment processes. Young people reviewed role descriptions, joined an interview panel for staff and contributed to the final candidate decision.	At <b>CHADD</b> , the young people’s Rise Ambassador group developed ‘CHADD Fest’: an all-day community event for young people featuring music, food and activities. More widely, young people from their Your Voice group were involved with work around National Housing Standards in both Dudley and more widely across the West Midlands.	At <b>Braintree Foyer</b> , after a successful first Braintree Pride in 2024, the organising committee reflected on what had gone well and where there was room for improvement. They started planning the 2025 Pride, including setting the date and deciding the theme; ‘Stand with T’.	In a collaboration with Bath Spa University, <b>Bath Foyer</b> have shared their youth power approach on a wider scale. The research project explores factors that facilitate and hinder young persons’ civic engagement, with evolving research topics related to youth leadership planned in the coming years .



**Braintree Foyer Youth Power Fund Journey**

	IN Foyer	BEYOND Foyer
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<p><b>Foyer Building Upkeep</b> Youth power co-ordinators decided it was a priority to take on some maintenance jobs at the Foyer and mobilised other residents to paint rooms and external parts of the Foyer.</p> <p><b>Resident Action</b> Regular resident meetings resulted in the exploration of a range of issues and catalysed actions and connections within and beyond the Foyer.</p> <p><b>Activity Take Over</b> Young people took full control over the Foyer activity programme: choosing, planning and hosting a range of activities including trips to the beach, go-karting, aqua park visit, graphic design studio and trips to London.</p>	<p><b>Volunteering</b> Young people started to volunteer at the Salvation Army Donation Centre, and in return received a budget they could spend in the store.</p> <p><b>Charity partnerships</b> Young people connected with local charity Braintree Kinder Minds program and offered the Foyer as a space for future events. In resident meetings they also identified the need for better dental care and researched, bringing a mobile dentist to the area through the charity Dentaid.</p> <p><b>Solar Panels</b> Rising energy prices were identified as a topic in the resident meeting and one young person offered to look into solar panels as a long-term solution. They emailed the SAHA CEO and instigated a feasibility study on the cost effectiveness of solar panels.</p>
<b>IMPACTS</b>	<p><b>Growing self-confidence</b> By taking on responsibility for Braintree's programme of activities Young People gained practical skills in organising and running outings and events, boosting their confidence and their connection with other residents.</p> <p><b>Increasing ownership over Foyer building</b> Getting involved in the practical upkeep of the Foyer building increased a sense of ownership and a feeling that the building and the service belonged to Young People.</p>	<p><b>Increasing communication and support between young people</b> As Young People built relationships and increased connection through new activities at the Foyer, the Facebook Resident Group shifted noticeably from just advertising activities to posts from our young people asking for or offering help and advice to each other.</p> <p><b>Challenging management</b> Young people started challenging Foyer management to take on larger, riskier resident requests. For example to make the case for the set up of a 12 foot fast set pool in the Foyer garden they led their own detailed risk assessment.</p>

Year one



# Common Challenges

Challenges are an inevitable part of trying and testing approaches. As part of their journey, Foyers and young people shared many challenges and learnings.

Some issues were tackled creatively, especially when problems were shared with the group – giving young people equal roles and providing experience for them to learn about the complexities of decision making in the real world. *Read more about creative problem solving on page 37.*

While there wasn't a clear 'fix' for every issue Foyers and young people found it helpful to see that they shared similar experiences.

Here are three of the most common challenge areas that arose during the Youth Power Fund.

## Engagement and turnover with young people

**Turnover** of young people moving on from the Foyer into independent living often slowed momentum and required projects to shift direction and pace as new young people were recruited and grew into leadership roles. **Conflict** between young people or groups sometimes halted progress on activities and projects.

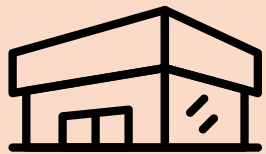
## Shifting entrenched cultures and behaviours

Wider supported housing services can find it particularly challenging to move beyond a top-down approach. Staff members had to work hard to challenge **entrenched attitudes toward risk taking and gatekeeping** over activities and projects.

## Organisational barriers and changes

**Finding and sustaining staff members** to champion Youth Power Fund activities was crucial and an ongoing challenge. Many projects were disrupted by **significant changes and cuts to staffing**. **Slow bureaucratic processes** from wider housing associations created barriers for some Foyers in accessing essential project finances and items like phones. **Significant organisational changes** like mergers and building works presented challenges that were beyond Foyers' control.

ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

Foyer Building Upkeep

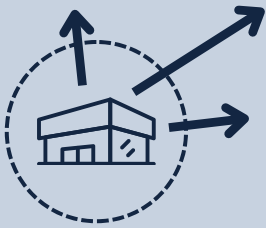
Youth Power Co-ordinators decided it was a priority to take on some maintainence jobs at the Foyer and mobilised other residents to paint rooms and external parts of the Foyer.

Resident Action

Regular resident meetings resulted in the exploration of a range of issues and catalysed actions and connections within and beyond the Foyer.

Activity Takeover

Young people took full control over the Foyer activity programme, choosing, planning and hosting a range of activities including trips to the beach, go karting, aqua park visit, graphic design studio and trips to London.



BEYOND FOYER

Volunteering

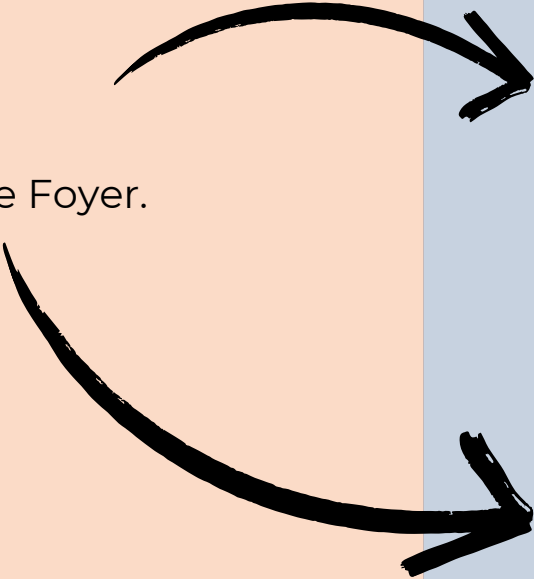
Young people started to volunteer at the Salvation Army Donation Centre, and in return received a budget they could spend in the store.

Charity partnerships

Young people connected with local charity Braintree Kinder Minds program and offered the Foyer as a space for future events. In resident meetings they also identified the need for better dental care and researched bringing a mobile dentist to the area through the charity Dentaaid.

Solar Panels

Rising energy prices were identified as a topic in the resident meeting and one young person offered to look into solar panels as a long-term solution. They emailed the SAHA CEO and instigated a feasibility study on the cost effectiveness of solar panels.



IMPACTS

**Growing self-confidence:** By taking on responsibility for Braintree’s programme of activities, young people gained practical skills in organising and running outings and events, boosting their confidence and their connection with other residents.

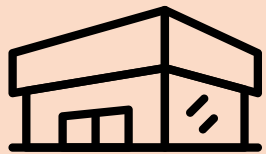
**Increased ownership over Foyer building:** Getting involved in the practical upkeep of the Foyer building increased a sense of ownership and a feeling that the building and the service belonged to young people.

**Increased communication and support between young people:** As young people built relationships and increased connection through new activities at the Foyer, the Facebook Resident Group shifted noticeably from just advertising activities to posts from young people asking for or offering help and advice to each other.

**Challenging management:** Young people started challenging Foyer management to take on larger, riskier resident requests. For example, to make the case for the set-up of a 12-foot fast set pool in the Foyer garden they led their own detailed risk assessment.



ACTIVITIES

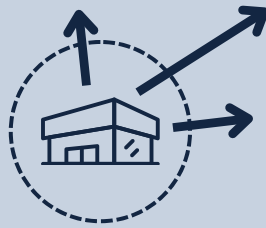


IN FOYER

**A new co-designed reception desk:** Braintree is in the process of rebuilding its reception desk so that young people can take turns in with Foyer staff in covering reception duties and acting as first point of contact with the service. This has been a co-design project with residents and staff working together to design the desk and deliver the AQA training required before working on reception.

**Youth Power Group, LGBTQ+ Support Group and Braintree Pride:** Young people in Braintree’s Youth Power Fund group set up an LGBTQ+ support group based at Braintree Foyer and inspired by a visit to Brighton Pride started thinking about what similar events could look like in Braintree.

**Fishing group:**What started as a small project run by dedicated young people within the Foyer, is now growing quickly as an independent organisation outside the Foyer with an established constitution to use fishing as a way to improve mental health.



BEYOND FOYER

**LGBTQ+ Support Group and Braintree Pride**  
The group secured its own external funding and is working towards hosting the first ever Pride event in Braintree. They have organised a range of activities and are now opening the group up to the wider community. While the group gets some support from Foyer staff, it is led by residents and ex-residents. They have set the date for the Pride event and have submitted an event plan to the council.

**Fishing Group:** Young people took steps to establish the group beyond just the Foyer: writing a constitution, electing officers, completing detailed risk assessments and appealing to the community for donations of fishing equipment. They also applied to the council for funding and were successful, enabling them to take an additional 25 people fishing from supported housing projects across Braintree district.

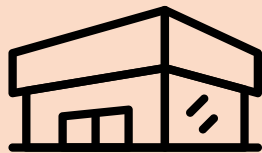
IMPACTS

**Increased community:** There was an overall increase in the sense of community felt in the Foyer. Staff and young people felt proud to work and live in the Foyer space.

**Young people as equal partners:** Braintree reported that young people had become much more proactive partners in delivering the Foyer’s services and using their ability to speak up and change ways of doing things.

**Building social entrepreneurship:** Starting small within their Foyer, young people working on Braintree Pride and the Fishing Group built their skills and confidence, which enabled them to then grow these initiatives beyond the Foyer to positively impact others in their communities. This also resulted in building and improving relations with community members and local businesses, amplifying the reputation of the Foyer and its young residents.

ACTIVITIES



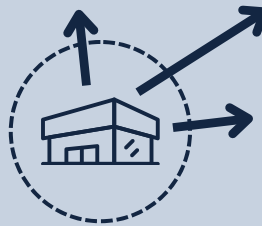
IN FOYER

**Foyer revamp and upkeep:** Young people and staff ‘work parties’ continued in year three, giving young people a sense of ownership of the service.

**Youth-led residential:** Young people organised community and skill building residentials for residents, including to climb Helvellyn in the Lake district and to Italy.

**LGBTQ+ Support Group and Braintree Pride:** The group held its first AGM in which it adopted an amended constitution. This was an important moment for the group as there was a smooth transition with several postholders including the chair standing down to be replaced by new group members.

**Fishing group:** Members of the group wrote a funding application and were successful in securing 30 fishing licences.



BEYOND FOYER

**LGBTQ+ Support Group and Braintree Pride:** The first ever Braintree Pride was held in August 2024, organised and delivered by young leaders and staff from Braintree Foyer with over 1000 people attending. The day had more than 30 community stalls, fun fair rides and a full programme of entertainment including singers, dancers, drag artists and circus performers. After reflecting on the successes and potential improvements from their first event, the group set a date for the second Braintree Pride in August 2025 and began planning. Young people in the Braintree Pride Group have built partnerships with community groups across the district and region, working actively with groups from Colchester Pride, Harlow Pride and Essex Pride.

Young Leaders from the LGBTQ+ group supported with Salvation Army Homes (SAH) submission to the House Proud Pledge, as well as working with Head of Supported Housing and Stonewall to create a bespoke LGBTQ+ training course for all SAH staff members.

**AQA Units on co-production:** Two young leaders wrote a co-production unit and resident’s guide for Salvation Army Homes wider AQA programme to be used across the organisation.

IMPACTS

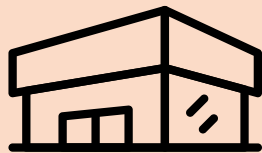
**Increased ownership:** When the LGBTQ+ support group was originally established there was a sense that young people were valuable contributors but not the driving force. This has changed as confidence and skills have developed and now young people are firmly in control of their project, with staff there to provide support only when needed.

**Improvements to wellbeing:** Braintree reported that as a result of projects young people saw improvements in their mental health and wellbeing, through community and relationship building, to having opportunities to be outside and visit new places.

**Influence and embedding learning:** Year three saw opportunities where best practice from Braintree’s Youth Power Fund initiatives were embedded and young people’s insights influenced the wider organisation. The project reported that it created a healthy tension at times between the group and SAH, as young people made choices that were right for them but at times were uncomfortable for the organisation.

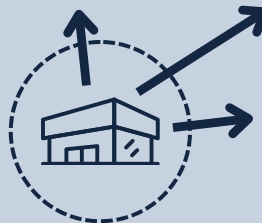


ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

- Board Advisory Panel Establishment:** This Panel was comprised of current residents, ex-residents, staff members, and a Trustee. It was designed to enable its members to meaningfully advise on decisions that align with the wider organisation’s new Strategic Plan. For example, advising on the purchasing of housing stock and the specific use and type of properties. All panel experts are paid for their time.
- Christmas Pantomime:** Young people expressed the desire to put on a pantomime at Christmas. A Housing Coach with expertise provided costumes and direction to grow young people’s confidence in performing however the performance and its content was led and decided by Young people who ultimately created something they were proud of. They recorded the pantomime, and performed it to staff and residents in December.
- Power of Us group:** a new resident group that met weekly and engaged 10 people. The group quickly evolved into a safe space for young people to discuss topics important to them such as drugs, LGBTQ+ issues and relationships.
- Financial supporter group:** Young people set up a financial ‘supporter group’, to organise fundraising events and choose how that money is spent.
- Guest speakers:** Outside speakers invited into the Foyer to directly related to requests from young people on topics they wanted to learn more about.



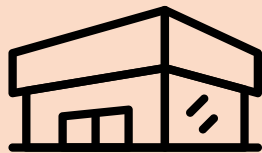
BEYOND FOYER

- Conference invitation:** invited to speak about Board Advisory Panel at a national conference in 2023.
- Conference attendance:** Two young people attended the National House project’s (Care Leavers National Movement) annual conference and
- Room for Young People Awards:** Two young people attended these awards and one of them performed on the night and was shortlisted for an award.
- Foyer Federation events and training:** one young person attended Power Up Youth training, two helped interview a new staff member at the Foyer Federation.
- National**
- Local**
- Local Youth Fed:** They held their first fundraising event, running a bouncy castle at a local Youth Fed event, and raised £41.
- ‘Big Conversation’ Conference:** a guest speaker discussion on crime fed into the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire ‘Big Conversation’ Conference.
- Local MP work experience:** One young person completed a week’s work experience at the local MP’s office working directly with them before starting university.
- Annual Care Leaver Offer Review:** Two young people attended this annual meeting in which the Director of Children’s Social Care and two councillors from Cheshire East Council were in attendance.

IMPACTS

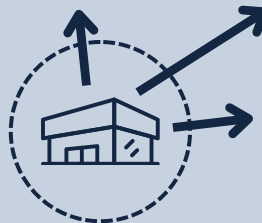
- Increased community and connections:** The Power of Us group encouraged new connections and friendships to emerge between young people and this spilled over into other projects outside the group like the pantomime. These experiences also increased young people’s skills in collaborating together and supporting each other.
- Increased choice and control over financial resources:** By setting up their financial ‘supporter group’, young people gained direct decision making power over how money was to be spent.
- Increased skills and confidence building:** Setting up the board advisory panel provided young people with a safe space to build their confidence and skills in decision making and influencing in this context.

ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

- Young people-led events and initiatives:** Young people organised and led events for Children's Rights Month and World Mental Health Day.
- Ongoing Board Advisory Group Meetings:** The Board Advisory Group continues to meet bi-monthly to discuss strategic items, contributing to the agenda for the Board of Trustees. A Trustee attended a session on finance and budgeting, and gave positive feedback.
- Young Trustee Movement Champion training:** Half of the Trustees completed this training, increasing capacity for a young Trustee with lived experience to join the board permanently.
- Continuation of Weekly Power of Us Sessions:** The Power of Us group continued to meet weekly, covering important topics such as stigma, gender equality, public speaking, CV writing, kindness, anger management, aspirations and motivations. Increasingly sessions were connected with organisations outside the Foyer to compliment topic areas and connect young people to opportunities outside the Foyer.



BEYOND FOYER

- YMCA E&W Youth Ambassadors:** Two young people became YMCA E&W Youth Ambassadors, representing the opinions, needs and beliefs of YMCA Cheshire young people nationally and internationally.
- YMCA England & Wales Youth Matters Award:** Three young persons represented YMCA Cheshire at the YMCA England & Wales Youth Matters Award and won the Training & Education Project of the Year.
- National**
- Local**
- Collaboration with other organisations:** Power of Us sessions started to be held in collaboration with external organisations such as OnSide Youth Zone, Acorn Training, Equans UK, Cheshire Police, Lyceum Theatre, and Cheshire East Youth Council, providing diverse opportunities for learning and job prospects for young people.
- Foyer Federation events and training:** Young people attended the Youth Power Fund and the Foyer Federation Rerooted Residential. One young person presented the learning cohort held in London and shared video feedback on his experience.
- Collaboration with other YMCAs and Foyers:** Visited YMCA North Staffordshire Youth Governance Group and Enfield Foyer visited YMCA Cheshire to share experiences and insights, on how to enhance engagement with young people.

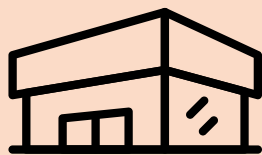
IMPACTS

**Steps forward in Trustee engagement:** A Trustee that attended the most recent meeting about finance and budgets said “Thank you for the opportunity to come along. I found it really helpful, informative and illuminating. It’s important we listen and take into account all that was said.” Staff members also noted a shift in Trustees beginning to take young people’s voices more seriously and involving their input in decision making processes.

**Increased amplification of young voices and engagement beyond the Foyer:** Increasingly young people participated in local and national events as well as connecting existing projects or new projects with external organisations. This opportunities provided a platform to share the knowledge and expertise they’d gained from their Youth Power Fund work and to continue sharing their voices and ideas about important issues to wider audiences.



ACTIVITIES



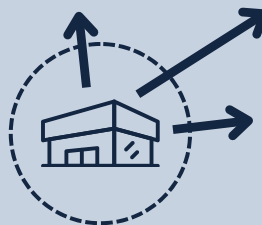
IN FOYER

**Continuation of Weekly Power of Us Sessions:** The group has covered a series of empowerment-focused topics, including self-confidence, communication skills and leadership. The project focused in the final year, on recruiting young women to the group who were previously underrepresented.

**Ongoing Board Advisory Group Meetings:** Members discussed key issues facing the service which were channelled to the Board of Trustees to act on. Key topics included finances, communication strategies, rent affordability and service improvements.

**Youth-led events and initiatives:** Young people led on a host of events and initiatives, developing positive relationships across the Foyer community, as well as the group’s planning and organisational skills. Events included a trip to Chester Zoo, a trip to London to visit Enfield Foyer to record a podcast, and an alumni mixer.

**Awareness-raising initiatives:** Events held across the year including registering to vote and the cost-of-living crisis, with the aim to develop young people’s knowledge about issues affecting their lives.



BEYOND FOYER

**Police and Crime Commissioners youth engagement panel (Cheshire Youth Commission)** Two young people joined the panel, giving their opinions on topics such as hate crime, relations with police and reducing youth offending.

**YMCA @ 180 event** : The event was co-designed with young people and included speeches, videos, a panel of former residents, mural exhibition and was attended by local community members, including the Mayor of Crewe.

**Local**  
-----  
**National**

**Youth Matters Awards:** Nominations for young leaders at the YMCA annual awards, including "Young Achiever of the Year" and "Young Volunteer of the Year".

**Partnership working to amplifying youth voice:** Building on work within the Foyer, the project worked with national organisations to amplify young people’s influence, including the think tank Common Vision to explore climate change and environmental sustainability.

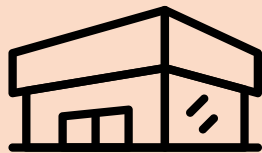
IMPACTS

**Recognition:** Achievements of young leaders are being consistently recognised on both a local and national level, showing the impact of the project on individuals but also for YMCA Cheshire, as their reputation for quality and innovation in youth leadership grows.

**Skills development and confidence:** Young people have reported that skills development especially in communications and leadership has been the most long lasting impact for them to take forward into the rest of their lives.

**Trust building:** Young people witnessing firsthand how their feedback and ideas are being implemented within the Foyer, has built trust in the service and a feeling that their voice matters.

ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

**Rise Ambassadors:** As the former Project Coordinator moved on, other young people started to take more of a lead. Together they nominated and booked all activities they wanted to do for the following months. Ambassadors also requested items like lanyards and clothing that can help them demonstrate they are part of this specific project.

**Recruitment involvement:** Members of Your Voice and Rise Ambassadors actively involved in the recruitment of five roles in 12 months

**Re-establishment of the Your Voice Committee at On Route Foyer:** This committee took on a core of focus for interested young people who gave their opinions on a range of matters concerning the Foyer and issues facing them away from the Foyer.

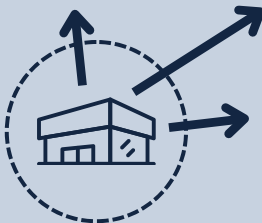
**Young people attendance at board meeting:** Two members of this committee attended a CHADD board meeting and requested a seat at that table when it comes to decisions made about On Route Foyer.

**Young People's Steering Group:** This group took time to get up and running but with five members, they started meeting, developing their skills and formulating where they want the group to go.



Building a plan to sustain YPF

CHADD applied for commissioned funding for some administrative paid roles to be made available to young people – partly to support the Youth Power Fund work. Money from Youth Power Fund was used for items like laptops and phones. As the role(s) are funded through the wider organisation, this was part of a strategy for developing projects beyond the Youth Power Fund.



BEYOND FOYER

**Foyer Federation activities:** Two young people were part of the first round of Power Pioneers and represented the Youth Power Fund projects at Foyer Federation meetings.

**Local project advocacy:** Awareness raised about the Youth Power Fund project across CHADD's links in Dudley, resulting in project connections emerging with other local projects in the borough.

Connecting with the creators of the 'Growing Up In Dudley' report, a paper which will feed into the council's 'Child-Friendly Dudley'.

Connection initiated with Dudley Young Health Champions to contribute to their projects and become members of their action group.

**Creation of residents subcommittee to the board:** Leading on from the attendance of young people at the board room, the CEO proposed the formation of a residents subcommittee linked and feeding back to the board.

IMPACTS

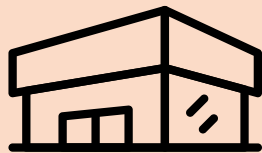
**Increased engagement through connections and convenience:** Hosting activities and meetings where and when the young people wanted increased the number of young people that stepped up into leadership roles. Group activities also built trust between young people, and grew links beyond the projects themselves.

**Increased involvement in recruitment processes:** Young people's involvement in recruitment processes evolved from taking part in a small 'role play' part of the interview to young people being on the interview panel, scoring the applicants and giving valuable insight into how the applicants performed.

**Increased leadership opportunities and funding:** When the Project Coordinator of the Rise Ambassadors left, it created an opportunity for young people to step into leadership roles and guide the group. This transition also freed up funding that was previously allocated to the coordinator.

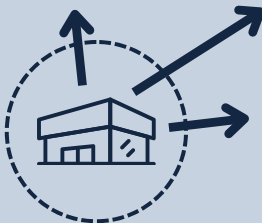


ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

- Paid Young Leader positions introduced:** After a selection process by the management and young people’s team, two young people were employed in the Youth Power Business Admin position. This process involved eight applicants who went through an interview process and all received detailed feedback.
- Standard and expectations meeting:** A meeting was held across all three resident groups to address approaches to conflict and disagreement, which had arisen during the development of these groups. Led by young people and supported by staff, a positive discussion was had about the structures and standards that needed to be in place to ensure that everyone could feel safe and aware of accountabilities in place.
- Your Voice leading Foyer changes:** Through regular meetings over 12 months, the group developed ideas for changes to the Foyer centered around the theme of increasing choice for young people. Two key outputs were consultation around having pets and being able to recycle.
- Rise Ambassadors:** This group’s focus was on delivering events for young people across Dudley.
- Alliance Steering Group:** Continued to develop and focus on the key issues they’d like to campaign on for young people in Dudley.



BEYOND FOYER

- Foyer Federation activities:** A young person created a blog about their experiences of the Youth Power Fund which was promoted widely. Others were involved in multiple planning processes with the Foyer Federation such as learning cohorts and selection processes for grant programmes.
- Blagrove Young People’s Event:** A young person took part in the Blagrove young people’s event, in which they shared their experiences and took away learnings and inspiration from others.
- Knowledge sharing with Live West Group:** A young person took part in a meeting with LiveWest Housing Association around the development of their young residents group.
- National Housing Standards:** Young people from Your Voice were involved with work around National Housing Standards in Dudley and more widely across the West Midlands.
- Rise Ambassadors developed ‘CHADD Fest’:** An all-day activity for young people featuring music, food and activities. Further funding has been obtained for this project.

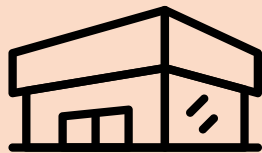


Building a plan to sustain YPF

To sustain the YPF beyond current funding, Youth Leadership training was developed – a programme that can be learnt and accessed by future versions of the resident groups CHADD currently have, as well as current members. Material is being developed with current young leaders and reviewed by members of the different resident groups.

IMPACTS

- Increased involvement in Foyer-based policies:** Young people increased their responsibility within the Foyer, asking for changes to policies around issues such as pets and recycling. Through consultation and drawing up agreements, both were moved forward.
- Increased group interactions:** Interactions between the three resident groups increased from participating in activities together to holding meetings to discuss standards across the groups. This resulted in positive learnings and reflections around ways of working and ultimately strengthened engagement and investment from the young people involved.
- Skills development in a detailed job application process:** The application process for the two paid roles engaged a total of eight young people. It was an opportunity to develop interviewing and application skills. All applicants received detailed feedback and the process grew their knowledge of the leadership opportunities and youth involvement work that had been developing.
- Increased amplification of young people’s voices outside the Foyer:** One observation from CHADD’s reflections on their second year was that the development of their activities had increased the amplification of young people’s voices not just within the Foyer but outside of their usual contact with Foyer staff as well.



IN FOYER

**Youth Power Admin Roles:** The project continued the paid employee role, recruiting two new young leaders in the final year of funding.

**Resident’s committee:** A goal from early on in the funding, the Youth Power Admins have been able to successfully set up a wider resident’s committee open to all CHADD residents and service users, feeding directly to the Board of Trustees.

**Youth-led activities:** Year three saw increases in young people taking the lead on the delivery and organisation of activities with the Foyer such as craft sessions and cooking.

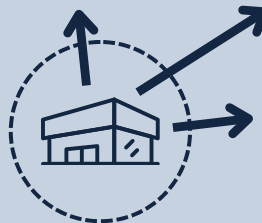
**Leadership Training:** A series of leadership training was delivered for young leaders, including professional boundaries, effective communication and code of conduct

**Baggeridge Challenge Academy:** A group of young leaders completed a 4-week skills development programme, including learning on building resilience, communication and relationship building.

**Foyer revamp:** Young people contributed to renovations at the Foyer, including choosing colour schemes, transforming the garden and creating motivational artwork for the walls.

**Policies and procedures:** Young people have led on changing the format of local service documents making them young person centred and more visually appealing.

**Your Voice group (resident meetings):** Now led solely by young people, with roles such as Chairperson(s) and admins, meaning more structure, action and accountability, with young people deciding the agenda and actions before feeding back to the staff.



BEYOND FOYER

**Rainbow+** Young people from the project applied and were successful in gaining funding for their idea of a LGBTQ+ support group/Youth Hub in the Dudley area, specifically for 18-25-year olds. Rainbow+ has been led by young people, from writing the bid, management of the funding to writing the policies and procedures and delivery of the project. To promote Rainbow+, young people had a stall at Dudley Pride, as well as delivering a launch event and calendar of regular sessions.

**RISE Ambassadors:** Securing funding through the Black Country Health Partnership, has enabled the RISE Ambassadors to continue to plan, arrange and deliver activities for young people across Dudley. These have included bowling, pool, football, gym sessions and arts and crafts.

**Peer Mentor Programme:** By securing additional funding, a young person and former resident was appointed as a peer mentor for CHADD’s young families scheme. Drawing on her own experience as a young mum, she runs weekly sensory play sessions for parents and babies.

**CHADD AGM Award:** One of the project’s Youth Power Admins won the Service User Recognition Award at CHADD’s AGM in recognition of not only her journey into independent living, but also all the work she has contributed to the Youth Power project.

**Youth-led social media content:** Two young people have set up social media accounts for the Foyer and are taking the lead on the content promoting the service.

**Lived experience employment pathways:** CHADD’s youth power approach has focused on developing young people’s skills, experiences and self confidence, for some resulting in paid employment. The service has created a number of new, innovative pathways for those with lived experience to gain meaningful work experience and paid roles within the organisation.

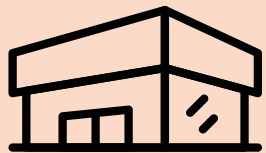
**Connection and community:** Development of new connections within the Youth Power Fund groups, has meant the increase in healthy relationships and a sense of community between young people.

**Development of Trust:** When young people had the chance to take responsibility, setting their own agenda and feeling heard, this created a safe space where rapport and trust has build.

**Sustainability in the wider sector:** The project has grown and expanded, following the enthusiasm and needs of the young people involved. This has nurtured a mindset of looking outwards for funding and partnership in the wider sector to sustain the aims of the Youth Power Fund beyond the original plan or timeframe.



ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

**Monthly Talent Development sessions:** these sessions were hosted as a space for young people to discuss how the Youth Power Fund project should be structured.

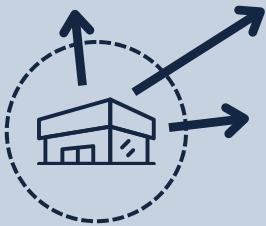
**Establishment of official Youth Power Fund:** The New Generation Leaders' first task was creating an application form so residents could apply for financial support.

Residents received music coaching and applied for a new Mac for the music lab to improve sound quality of the music they were creating.

Another young person applied to buy drums to improve their own practice and eventually coach others in the community.

**Resident-led activities:** Residents led the introduction of a weekly activity, 'cooking on a budget', where residents have a set budget to cook a meal to feed as many people as possible. Young people launched their own 'Come Dine With Me' week, competing for prizes. They also hosted movie night, taking turns to lead the organisation of residents, food options, film choice and managing an overall budget.

**New Generation Leader activities:** A New Generation Leader shadowed all of the departments within Christian Action Housing, participated in staff training workshops and attended key meetings such as staff meetings, managers meetings, Heads of Service meetings and Board meetings.



BEYOND FOYER

**External speakers for resident meetings:** Enfield Foyer invited multiple external organisations to the residents' house meetings, enabling a valuable exchange of information between young people and local services. Guest speakers included the Mayor of Enfield, Launch it – a business enterprise support service, Terence Higgins Trust (HIV awareness), an education and employment advisory service and mental health charity MIND.

**Foyer Federation events:** Enabled by the Youth Power Fund, a new Generation Leader attended a Foyer Federation event in Milton Keynes.

**Music coaching opportunities:** Young People engaged with the Music Coach within the Foyer and were offered external opportunities supporting her company in the surrounding community: providing singing and music production sessions with young people within Enfield Social Services, Probation, Youth Offending and Youth Centres.

IMPACTS

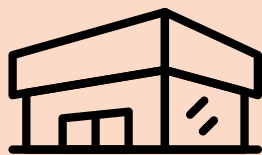
**Residents speak up:** Staff observed that when residents have been dissatisfied about anything they have started to proactively arrange their own meetings and provide feedback to staff.

**New Generation Leader employed:** Through their engagement with the wider organisation, Christian Action Housing, a new Generation Leader was offered employment as a Trainee Housing Officer

**Building skills and confidence:** Taking responsibility for Foyer-based events and activities helped residents build skills and overcome barriers: budgeting, getting feedback from other residents, communicating with other residents, and making decisions independently.

**Taking control over language used to describe young people's roles:** A key first decision made by young people in the talent development group was that they didn't want to be called 'Youth Ambassadors' because of negative connotations they had about being called youth in their lives. Instead 'New Generation Leaders' was proposed and established.

ACTIVITIES

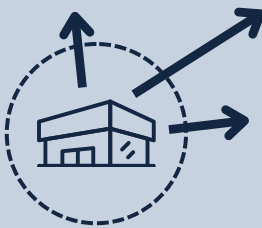


IN FOYER

**Participation in wider housing association** Residents involved in the shortlisting and interviewing of staff, offering their feedback to organisational questionnaires and surveys.

**Applications for Youth Power Funding:** Residents made application to the Youth Power Fund to support ventures beyond the Foyer.

**New Foyer spaces:** Led by the New Generation Leaders, a new podcast room and gym were designed and furnished. A garden project has also been started with the aim for the young person leading the initiative to providing training on construction and landscaping to other young people that get involved.



BEYOND FOYER

**Everybody Loves Music (ELM):** Young people have continued to work and build skills working for local music organisation ELM.

**Business ventures:** With support from the Youth Power Fund, two young people started their own nail technician and eye lash businesses outside the Foyer.

**ELM Showcase:** New Generation Leaders took part in an ELM talent showcase at the Millfield Theatre to the local community. The event was titled 'Be YOU' where those that engage with ELM had the opportunity to showcase their songwriting and performance skills. One of the Enfield Foyer's New Generation Leaders came second in the competition.

**Expanding podcast room to the public:** New Generation Leaders started working with the housing association to enable the podcast room to be available for booking from local services outside the Foyer.

**Collaborating with other Foyers:** Enfield will share their new podcast room with other young people from Crewe and CHADD Foyers. working on a project to voice their experiences during the Youth Power Fund on a podcast series.

IMPACTS

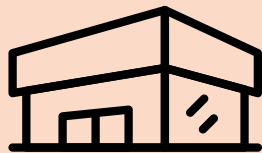
**Increased confidence to speak up:** At the end of Year 2, Enfield staff noted that residents were being more vocal about the services they were satisfied with and those that they were not. Residents started to proactively arrange meetings with staff to share their feedback.

**Increased leadership and responsibility:** The Youth Power Fund created opportunities for young People to make new decisions about their physical building and lead the way on transforming them.

**Increased connections:** Outings organised by young people and other Youth Power Fund activities increased opportunities for residents to connect and spend time with each other.



ACTIVITIES

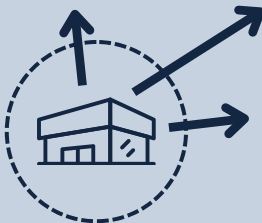


IN FOYER

**Youth led workshops and events:** Young people designed, planned and delivered events and activities within the Foyer and were paid for their work. Activities included a summer music, BBQ party for staff and young people from the wider housing association.

**Amplifying youth voice:** Residents voices are being consistently sought and utilised in report writing.

**Revamping Foyer spaces:** Led by the New Generation Leaders, a new podcast room, gardening project and gym refurbishments were completed in year three. The Foyer has been able to fund a qualified gym instructor as part of the project, creating a community space where young people can support their physical and mental health.



BEYOND FOYER

**Everybody Loves Music (ELM):** Young people have continued to work and build skills working for local music organisation ELM, including supporting on their annual showcase, demonstrating their growing skills.

**Leadership across the wider charity:** New Generation Leaders have had opportunities to share their insights across the wider organisation, including interviewing the CEO of Christian Action Housing Association in the new podcast room, attending the staff conference and bringing together staff from various departments to work on the Foyers gardening project.

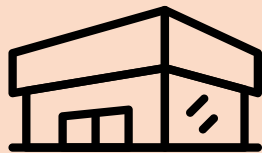
**Collaborating with other Foyers:** Young leaders collaborated with YMCA Cheshire on a podcast recording interviewing one another (in the new podcast room) about their experiences of supported accommodation in the different regions .

IMPACTS

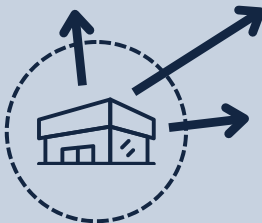
**Young People gaining employment:** As well as building skills and confidence, some gained paid employment as a result of their involvement with Everybody Loves Music (ELM) project.

**Creating an inclusive, collaborative environment:** The project noted their emphasis on actively listening to young people, showing that their voices were deeply valued was essential for the success of the project. This in turn created an inclusive environment where young people felt safe to share their ideas and collaborate on activities.

ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER



BEYOND FOYER

**Trust building:** Young People at Bath Foyer identified early on that there was a long-standing issue with trust between staff and residents and a feeling of “staff are in charge and what they say goes”.

**Owning spaces:** Part of building trust with staff first involved young people being granted more control and ownership of Foyer spaces, for example transforming unused office space into a better gym room and the old gym space into a wellbeing/office space for the new resident group.

**Establishment of new resident group, The Robin Hood Project:** For the first time in several years Bath re-established a resident group and young people were handed full control over the ideas and projects for the group and resources required for this. Resident-led activities included:

- Resident group meetings
- Involvement in staff recruitment
- Other Foyer visits
- Resident’s newsletter
- Regular fun activities

**Creative Twerton:** Young people connected with a local art project to discuss their involvement in future projects in the local community.

**Foyer Federation training event:** A young person was invited to deliver training at an event in Exeter with The Foyer Federation.

IMPACTS

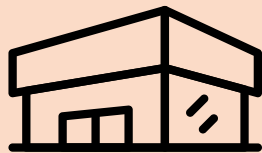
**Increased trust between staff and young people:** In a survey young people reported that their level of trust in the staff team had increased and on average level of trust in the staff team was rated at 8/10.

**From consultation to leadership:** By the end of Y1 Bath noticed a shift from one-way consultation to a new dynamic where most ideas for the Youth Power Fund and associated activities came from young people who had gained the confidence (and the trust of staff) to identify gaps and needs within their service and ask for changes and new opportunities to be explored.

**A significant shift in resident activity:** The Youth Power Fund and the subsequent re-establishment of a Resident Group after some time has had a significant impact on resident engagement at the Foyer. Whereas the 2021 Christmas meal was attended by two residents, 2022 saw 17 residents attend.



ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

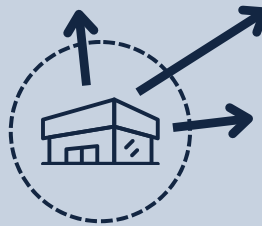
**Regular schedule of residents meetings:** A regular schedule of monthly Robin Hood Project Meetings which residents attend is put in place, each with a shared meal to encourage connection afterwards.

**Robin Hood Project learning activities:** Young People organised weekly revision sessions focused on topics such as driving theory, college courses and personal development.

**Team building event (Mobile Rage Room):** A creative event themed on 'letting stuff go' and 'making a mark' where staff and young people were able to throw plates and balloons filled with colouring to create a piece of art that was displayed in the Foyer afterwards.

**Paid involvement:** young people devised an agreement which outlined fair payment contributions for young people's involvement in Youth Power Fund activities.

**Paid team member:** Working toward recruiting a team leader to support Youth Power Fund work going forward.



BEYOND FOYER

**Local writing workshops:** Young people organised writing workshops with local poet Mark Delisser to give them an artistic medium to explore telling their story.

**Police advisory group:** Young people started to engage with an independent advisory group to the police in response to an escalating risk and concern felt by young people about knife crime in the area. The group provides a direct route to feed back to the local police, better understand their rights and have their voice heard by the police.

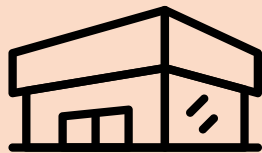
IMPACTS

**Payment and increased engagement:** Providing young people payment for their significant contributions to the Robin Hood project steeply increased engagement and decision making.

**You said we did – building accountability:** As young people had some space to feed back more on issues affecting them in the Foyer, seeing changes being made and their issues being proactively addressed further improved trust and relations with the staff team.

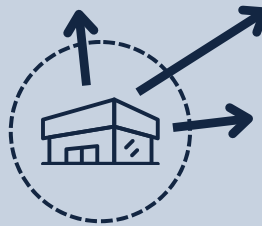
**Increased community and connection:** As Youth Power Fund activities increased, they provided opportunities for young residents to meet each other and interact more, increasing connections and the overall sense of community that existed in the Foyer.

ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

- Paid staff member recruited:** Using funding in year three a staff member was employed one day a week, which ensured the project was ‘taken more seriously’ by the wider organisation. The result of this dedicated staff time was a wider demographic of young people involved in the project and more of ‘residents’ ideas becoming reality’.
- Continuation of Robin Hood Group:** The Foyer’s youth-led resident group continued, with opportunities from paid consultations to involvement in recruiting new staff.
- Creative writing workshops:** A local poet ran writing workshops allowing young people to use their voice in empowering ways. The workshops developed young people’s confidence and skills to effectively portraying their message.
- Driving theory sessions:** An idea first raised at a Robin Hood Project meeting, young people collaborated with Workwise (a team within Curo) to create bespoke training which has been delivered with the first pilot group of residents.
- Commissioning young people’s artwork:** Inspired by various Robin Hood project agendas, the youth-created artworks have provided a sense of community within the Foyer
- Team building event and activities:** Residents have continued to organise community and relationship building activities, including clay pigeon shooting and a Foyer BBQ.



BEYOND FOYER

- Research project with Bath Spa University:** The research explored factors that facilitate and hinder young persons’ civic engagement, using Bath Foyer’s Youth Power Fund work as a key case study.
- Youth-led funding bid for Children in Need:** Young people and staff came together to write a funding bid to Children In Need for a new young person’s wellbeing project and continuation of youth power work.
- Life skills/Tenancy Readiness course:** North Somerset council asked Curo to created a course to offer to care leavers across the district. Five young people supported with the development of the resource, especially content on what young people need when they first move into their own property.
- Foyer team winning awards:** Foyer team won the “Dream Team- Collaboration and Growth” award from their wider organisation Curo, recognising their innovative approach to youth power and resident involvement.
- Gardening:** Initially delivered as an opportunity for young people to build positive relationships within the Foyer, its success led to the project securing funding from Travis Perkins and extending its reach.

IMPACTS

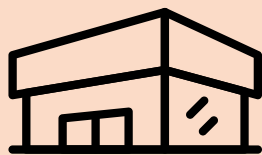
**Reputation within Curo:** The Foyer team’s recognition through an award, led to a closer working relationship with Curo’s resident engagement team and internal communications team. There have been service visits from directors and the executive team to understand what can be learnt from the Foyer’s approach for the wider organisation. .

**Embedding best practice and learning:** The project’s legacy and learning is being embedded not only within Curo, but the local council and on a more national stage via university research.

**Connection with the local community:** A community mindset shift has started to happen regarding the Foyer and its residents, through youth-led initiatives such as the gardening project. The project improved how the community viewed the Foyer and has provided networking opportunities with local organisations such as Bathscape. Residents want to continue focusing on challenging the service’s reputation in their future work.

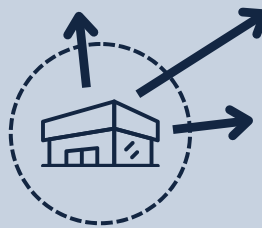


ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

- Personal power workshops:** Informed by direct feedback from residents, Swan partnered with charity Alpha Vesta to deliver a series of workshops and one-to-one sessions focused on growing personal power and releasing barriers caused by past trauma and abuse for young people in the Foyer.
- “Your Voice Matters” Initiative:** A new panel where young people identified key topics to be discussed such as repair services, service charges, upkeep of areas around their home and in the community.
- Creche facility trial:** Following feedback from young parents, creche facilities were trialled to ensure all young people had equity in their roles in YPF projects.
- Resident HUG (Help us get it right) group:** This resident group met bi-monthly and saw young reps from the Foyer challenge the wider Housing Association on rents and how the cost is a barrier to gaining paid work. Young people also contributed to reviews about the impact of damp and mould on residents.



BEYOND FOYER

- Additional funding for support:** The work with Alpha Vesta partly contributed to the successful funding of an award from the DWP and Essex Community Foundation, enabling the delivery of a one-to-one education and mentoring programme “Breaking the Cycle” (open to residents and other young people in the community).
- Right to Power outdoor programme:** 14 young people attended workshops focused on experiences of power, personal development and personality styles, self-worth and empowerment.
- Listening Post partnership:** Linked in with local charity the Listening Post to support young people with mental health support.
- Involvement in organisational policy and high-level decision making:** Young people attended meetings with senior managers and were directly involved in recruitment processes for new staff, reviewing role descriptions and participating in the interview panel for staff. This is was put under review at senior level in the wide housing association.

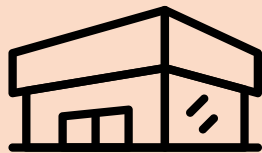
IMPACTS

**Increased confidence and personal resolutions:** The personal power workshops increased young people’s confidence and helped them increase their comfort with challenging the status quo. As an outcome of the support provided through workshops, one young person challenged their abuser and ultimately saw the perpetrator pleading guilty in court.

**Increased confidence to speak out:** Attending meetings with senior management built young people’s confidence to challenge and question decisions and proposals. Building the foundations for mental health support early on also helped young people speak out and take on larger roles of responsibility in the wider housing association context.

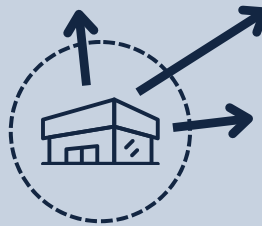
**Increased participation from young parents:** Trialling creche facilities significantly increased participation from young parents and provided evidence to request further funding from the Housing Association for future events to increase the inclusion of young parents.

ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

- Continuation of Resident meetings:** Resident leads continue to lead on resident meetings, consulting with the young people on the project and workshops and working with the management team to consult on Foyer processes.
- Leading on Foyer activities:** A number of young people stepped in to lead specific activities within the Foyer- organising and hosting a dessert taster session, cooking sessions and gaming evenings.
- Continued Challenge and consultation:** Residents increasingly question Foyer processes and suggest improvements. For example proposing and implementing a new system for the communal laundry room.
- Managers drop-in sessions:** Regular sessions for young people to voice their concerns and compliments to staff were introduced, fostering open communication and trust between staff and young people.
- AQA Leadership Units:** AQA units on leadership units introduced to support skill development.



BEYOND FOYER

- Challenging Local Council Housing Provider:** Young people engaged with the local council regarding delays in housing allocations, communicating directly with housing officers and the allocations team.
- Social action project in partnership with local charity:** In collaboration with Alpha Vesta, young people launched a campaign to raise awareness about domestic violence, including a photo shoot and podcast. This project has empowered participants to discuss personal relationships and domestic violence openly, building their confidence and advocacy skills.
- Workshops with Perry Blake from 21up Movement:** Perry Blake delivered empowerment workshops with young people increasing their confidence and positivity.
- Cirdan Trust Sailing Trip:** Young people participated in a three-day sailing trip aimed at developing leadership skills, taking on crew roles, navigating and managing the ship.
- This learning opportunity was also made available to young people from outside the Foyers.

IMPACTS

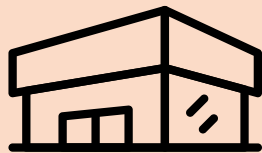
**Increased number of young people stepping into leadership roles:** In year two, more residents stepped into leadership roles – from running resident meetings to planning activities for the Foyer. Overall staff reported seeing young people speak up more and become confident asking for change to Foyer systems and policies.

**Increased collaboration and teamwork:** Collaborative activities like the social action project with Vesta and workshops with Perry Blake increased young people’s confidence within themselves and also in connecting and working as a team with others.

**Increased understanding around affecting decision making beyond Foyer:** Through engagement with the council young people learned how to take practical actions to hold public institutions accountable and address issues affecting their housing.

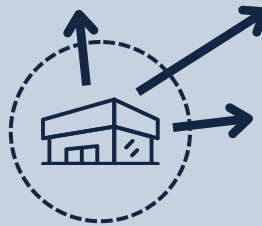


ACTIVITIES



IN FOYER

- Leading on Foyer activities:** In year 3, Swan Housing continued to note the upward trend in young people leading on initiatives and activities within the Foyer. These included arranging the summer BBQ, annual MacMillan coffee morning and other celebration and awareness days.
- Continuation of Resident leads role:** Resident Leads continued to lead on resident meetings, being involved in staff recruitment, plus supported with planning and implementing quality development plans as part of the Foyer’s accreditation.
- Successful residential:** The Foyer kicked off the final year with a relationship and community building residential for residents. The group also looked at how they were going to work towards the aims of the final year of funding.
- General election awareness raising:** Interactive activities were run at the Foyer to increase young people’s understanding on their rights to vote. These included ‘your voice’ workshops and an election night watch party.



BEYOND FOYER

- Alpha Vesta workshops continued:** The charity continued to deliver monthly ‘voice of young people’ youth hubs to support young people to build confidence and self-belief.
- Workshops with Perry Blake from 21up Movement:** Perry Blake continued to deliver empowerment workshops with young people increasing their confidence and positivity. This year some young people volunteered in co-leading sessions, including those with local councillors and business leaders.
- George Brown sessions:** The Foyer worked with George Brown to develop and deliver a series of sessions for young people on topics such as citizenship, social action and ‘ambition accelerator’.
- Young leaders working with The Foyer Federation:** A number of young people took up opportunities with The Foyer Federation as young consultants. Most notably this focused on the ATHub programme, with young people writing educational resources on a host of topics for others, sharing their insights and voice.

IMPACTS

- Increased confidence and skills, leading to greater engagement:** The Foyer’s continued emphasis on offering opportunities where young people could develop skills and confidence meant they saw an increase in wider engagement. This included far more young people attending the election night events than in previous years, as well as more youth lead activities being delivered.

- Amplifying youth voice:** The focus on confidence building and leadership skills saw young people step into opportunities to amplify their voice outside the Foyer.





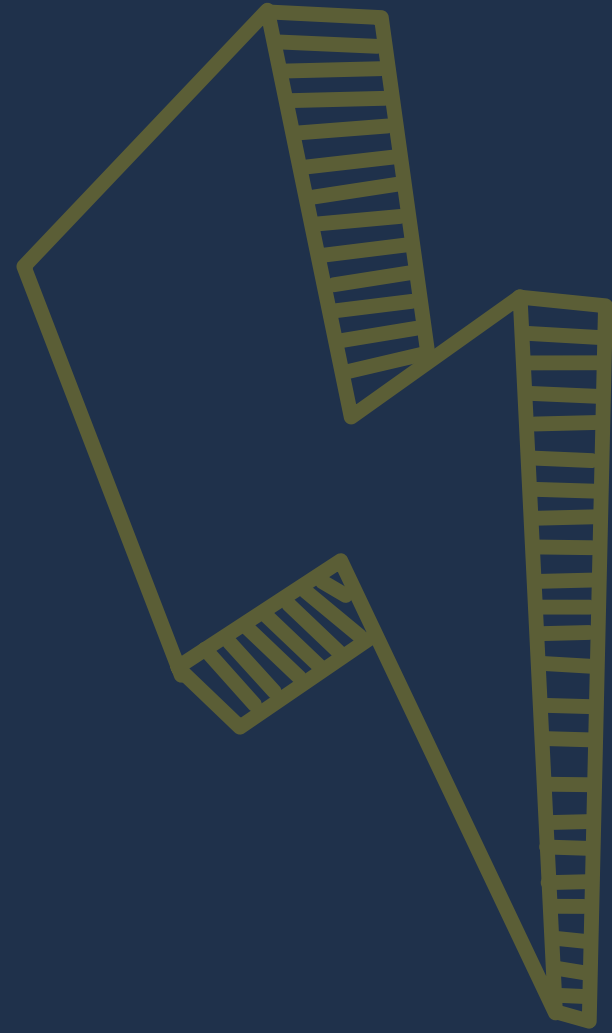
Do not underestimate  
the importance of  
smaller actions to  
build trust in the  
community and each  
other.

**Young Leader**



**Shift Moments**





# Shift moments

With something as abstract as power and culture change, it can be hard to nail down when and how change is happening. Small shifts in thought and actions can often make a big impact and show gradual change and a levelling of power over time.

Reflections from staff and young people have helped us capture some of these small but mighty shifts.

# Shift moments

**“Young people did not want to choose the cheapest options and we have respected that.”**

At one Foyer staff allowed young people to take control and make decisions over the budget for their residential without taking over. In one instance, this looked like allowing young people to choose more expensive accommodation options over camping. While staff were initially hesitant about this issue, they ultimately chose to uphold their commitment to handing over more control and decision-making power to young people in activity planning.

**“We have seen a big change in the way our Foyer Residents Facebook Group is used.”**

As young people built relationships and increased connection through new activities at the Foyer, their resident Facebook group shifted from just advertising activities to posts from young people asking for or offering each other help.

**“Now there are other residents coming in and seeing what resident leads do and saying, ‘well I don't want quite *that* responsibility but I want a voice in this.’”**

Staff reported noticing that residents who were very disengaged before had started taking interest in activities, even if not in a high level of commitment but by voicing their ideas and organising small Foyer events like BBQs.

**“Maybe for staff members it feels scary. Giving away some of your own power comes with risks when you are responsible for the Foyer. But this is actually where the power dynamic comes from.”**

This Foyer identified that trust between staff and residents was an area that needed work. Handing over control to young people to change the use of certain Foyer spaces was a crucial first step in shifting control and trust into young people's hands.

**“I think from the board, it's made them twig that actually some of the decisions they're making, they shouldn't be making without direct service input [from young people].”**

A staff member reflects on the impact that attending their young people's board advisory panel meeting had on a Trustee and the wider board. As more Trustees attended these meetings they saw a shift in senior leadership – taking young people's voices more seriously and involving their input in decision-making processes.

**“It had dawned on me that I have the largest team in the organisation as it is made up of eight staff members and 35 residents.”**

A staff member reflects a shift to seeing young people as active and equal participants in the management of their Foyer and its community.



# Sustainability

These 'shift moments' offer us examples of what ongoing sustainability of youth empowerment and involvement can look like.

While funding can be a vital catalyst to give Foyers and young people the opportunity and freedom to try things out and execute tangible projects, the mindset and culture shifts and learnings that emerge from these activities can live far beyond funding timelines.







“It does make a difference and does create change – though sometimes change takes time”

Young Leader



# Ingredients for Success



# Ingredients for success

Listening to the experiences of staff and young people reflecting on their Youth Power Fund journey, we heard many rich reflections and learnings.

From these, four key factors were identified that according to Foyers and young people, contributed significantly to the success of their Youth Power Fund work.

We have called these the 'ingredients for success'.



## **Building gradually**

Taking time to build the foundations needed to do youth power work, for example building relationships, trust and addressing mental health needs.



## **Following the young people**

This may seem obvious, but learning to listen and follow young people's direction required an ability to release fixed agendas and become comfortable with experimentation and changing direction. Doing this had big pay-offs.



## **Getting organisational buy-in**

Ensuring that the programme objective and direction is understood across the organisation, from top to bottom. Influencing investment from senior decision makers from the beginning where possible.



## **Turning challenge to triumph**

Approaching challenges creatively, working with young people to find a solution and reframing issues as a learning opportunities.

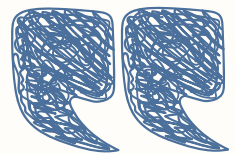


# Building gradually

*Ingredients for success*

## Summary

Questioning and challenging existing structures of power and accepted ways of doing things can be intimidating and hard – for both young people *and* Foyer staff. In line with the initial programme structure, multiple Foyers took time to build the specific foundations they needed to do this work. Broadly this involved spending time building trusting relationships, supporting young people to grow their confidence and mental wellbeing, and creating safe spaces where they could start to express themselves more and advocate for change.



*Start small if you're at the very beginning of this journey. A lot of what we have learned has been through trial and error and not knowing 100% what we were doing at the start!*

**Young Leader**

## Bath Foyer

Early on, young People at Bath Foyer identified a pressing need to address relations between staff and young people which was underpinned by a long-standing culture of staff being 'in charge' and having the ultimate say on issues. 'Building gradually' in their first year meant re-establishing a new residents group – the Robin Hood Project – and starting to push the boundaries of staff trust through decisions such as opening up communal spaces on a new schedule and handing over full control of ideas for activities, resident's newsletter, group meetings and involving young people in staff recruitment.

## YMCA Cheshire

One of YMCA Cheshire's long-term goals was for a young person with lived experience to join their Board of Trustees. They built toward this gradually by focusing their first year on growing a Board Advisory Group and using this as an exercise to support young people to build confidence and learn experientially to voice their views and aspirations to advocate for change on issues they cared about.

## Swan Housing

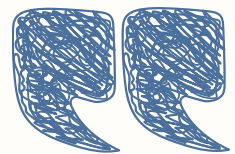
Early on Swan's Foyers identified the need for young people to feel power in themselves before being able to step into power in wider spaces. To build this foundation they partnered with a charity to run workshops focused on supporting young people to release barriers relating to previous trauma and abuse and discover confidence to challenge their personal status quo.

# Following the young people

*Ingredients for success*

## Summary

Many Foyers reflected on the importance and impact of being truly led by young people's voices throughout their Youth Power Fund journey. As usual this looked different across different Foyers, from practicalities like scheduling meetings in a time and place most suited to young people to allowing projects to evolve through the interests and ideas of young people – letting go of what something was 'meant' to be and allowing outcomes to emerge in a less controlled way.



*Understand the young person's capabilities and cater your support with the project accordingly. Some residents have shown great skill in organisation whereas others have been fiery with passion and ambition. Every resident needed different support in making their dreams for the project a reality.*

***Staff member***

## YMCA Cheshire

"Always remember to prioritise the interests and passions of the young people you are working with. Look for what excites them and harness that energy to drive your initiatives forward." This was a key learning shared by YMCA Cheshire. They note that by doing this they cultivated a genuine sense of ownership that young people felt over the projects pursued which ultimately contributed to their success.

## Braintree Foyer

Braintree's approach crucially recognised that different young people might want to engage in Youth Power Fund work at different levels and it upheld a strong acceptance of this. Staff learned the need to "start where your residents are at [instead of coming] in with a preconceived idea of what you want to do or where you want to go."

## Swan Housing

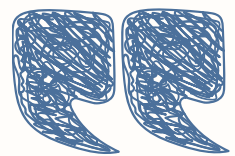
Swan's Foyers found that the simple practice of creating convenience for young people was a significant driver in engagement. For example when hosting workshops around sensitive topics like mental health and wellbeing – ensuring they were held in the Foyer where young people felt safe and comfortable was important. Ensuring their resident meetings were at a time and in a space requested by young people also supported engagement.

# Getting organisational buy-in

*Ingredients for success*

## Summary

Across the participating Foyers there were a range of organisational structures. Overall the engagement of senior leadership in the Youth Power Fund work proved to be a strengthener to the overall project. In some cases having senior leadership understand the aims of the work supported Foyers helped to involve young people in higher levels of decision making. Senior leadership buy-in also supported Foyer staff members to prioritise Youth Power Fund work, giving it the time and attention it needed.



*It was getting that kind of buy-in... from the CEO and the board and kind of having a Trustee that was willing to give up some additional time on that and really champion it.*  
**Staff member**

## YMCA Cheshire

From the beginning YMCA Cheshire communicated a clear vision of what the objectives of the Youth Power Fund was across their organisation from support staff members to the CEO and board Trustees. This helped when it came to asking for Trustee and CEO engagement as part of their youth advisory board work.

## CHADD

The involvement of CHADD's CEO and board members contributed to their Youth Power Fund activities and helped to grow initiatives, for example leading on from the attendance of young people at the board room, their CEO proposed the formation of a residents subcommittee which would enable a permanent feedback channel back to their board.

## Swan Housing

At Swan's Foyers, senior management was highly engaged, asking regularly about how the project was going and championing the different initiatives that emerged. This supported Foyer staff and young people to maintain momentum, access funds easily and uphold the importance of the project overall.



# Turning challenge to triumph

*Ingredients for success*

## Summary

With all experimental and risk-taking approaches, bumps along the road are part of the journey. During the Youth Power Fund many Foyers and young people turned challenges into opportunities to improve practice and in some cases increase opportunities for young people to step into leadership. Ultimately this ability to problem-solve creatively contributed to the overall successes and development of Youth Power Fund activities.



*What we found [after staff reduction] was that there was more youth leadership in young people being in charge of workshops and events... taking their ideas and then actually putting it into practice.*

**Staff member**

## CHADD Group conflicts

As CHADD's resident groups grew in the first year of the fund, one group in particular hit a challenging period due to conflict amongst group members. While difficult at the time, as result of the conflict, CHADD held a meeting led by young people and supported by staff where everyone could openly discuss their expectations around their role and involvement in the groups. This session was extremely positive and enabled young people to explain why they were involved in the projects and understand what they all needed together to make the groups a positive experience for everyone. As a result a new set of standards was agreed by everyone and was implemented across all future group meetings.

## ENFIELD Staff reduction and turnover

A recurring challenge for Foyers during the Youth Power Fund was managing the impact of staff turnover. Losing key engaged staff members could sometimes impact the momentum of activities and engagement of young people. Sometimes however such circumstances created the space and opportunity for young people to step more fully into positions of responsibility and leadership. At Enfield Foyer for example, when their engagement team left in year one, this prompted young people to step into roles of leadership in order to continue the programmes that the previous team had coordinated.

The Youth Power Fund gave Foyers and young people the space and freedom to creatively explore approaches to youth leadership and empowerment and that's exactly what they did.

# Models of success



# Models of Success

The diverse approaches taken across Foyers show us that there is no **‘one recipe’** for how to catalyse youth leadership and empowerment.

We did however identify some patterns across the participating Foyers which offer us **3 potential ‘models’** for how the Youth Power Fund was approached in different but equally powerful ways.

Some Foyers used a combination of these models while some leaned more heavily into one.

1

**The Incubator**

2

**The Amplifier**

3

**The Structure Shifter**

# The Incubator

Experimental, Entrepreneurial, Champions self-growth

## What does an Incubator do?

- Cultivates youth-led projects to develop within the Foyer space, supporting young people to test ideas and develop relevant skills and confidence. When ready, 'Foyer-grown' projects are championed to expand into the local community and beyond.
- Will often take a 'try and test' approach – doing lots of different activities and giving young people the freedom and decision-making power to see what sticks and dictate direction.
- Takes on an entrepreneurial mindset where young people offer the Foyer's assets up as a resource to the outside world, inviting the wider community in.

## Foyers that pioneered this model

Braintree Foyer, Enfield Foyer, Bath Foyer

## What does power look like?

Youth power grows from the individual outwards. Young people are supported to grow confidence, leadership and other relevant skills at their own pace within the safe space the Foyer provides and then championed to expand these into initiatives and experiences beyond the Foyer.





# The Amplifier

Trailblazing, Influential, Connected

## What does an Amplifier do?

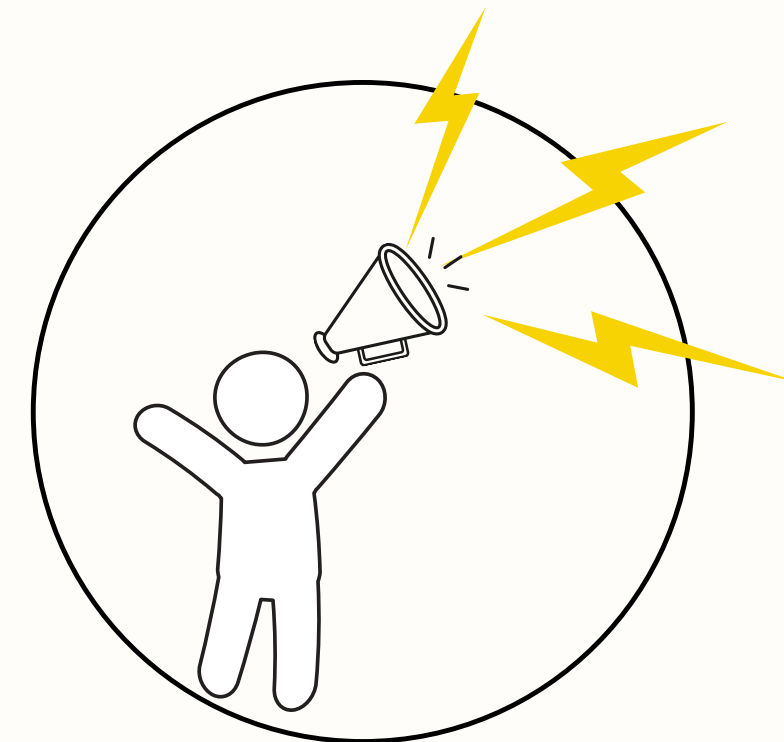
- Seeks out many opportunities outside the Foyer – both locally and nationally – for young people to get actively involved in spaces where they can amplify their voices and share their expertise and their leadership, such as conferences, youth awards, local political groups and involvement with the Foyer Federation.
- Creates activities that focus on amplifying young people's voices outside the Foyer and raising awareness/educating the public on issues important to young people.
- Starts to share their approaches and best practices toward youth leadership and empowerment with others beyond their Foyer, positioning themselves as thought leaders/sector influencers.

## Foyers that pioneered this model

YMCA Cheshire, CHADD

## What does power look like?

Youth power is grown through influence and amplification of young people's voices in spaces outside the Foyer.



# The Structure Shifter

Challenging, Strategic, Creative.

## What does a structure shifter do?

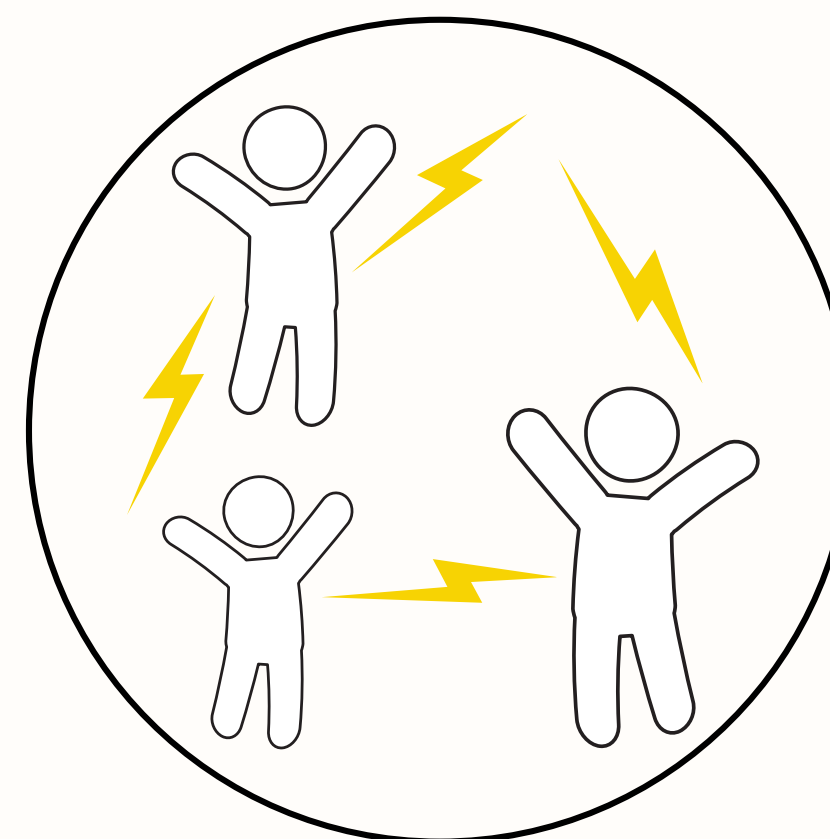
- Focuses many activities on shifting and sharing power within the existing structures of their Foyer and wider organisation.
- Finds ways to support and champion young people into spaces of influence and decision making within their wider organisation, connecting with Trustees and CEOs.
- Seeks out paid roles for young people and involves young people in recruitment processes and policy development.

## Foyers that pioneered this model

CHADD, Swan Housing Foyers, YMCA Cheshire, Bath Foyer

## What does power look like?

Youth power is grown from demanding the sharing of power from others and actions to shift structures that withhold power from young people.







It's definitely different to other funding, they make sure that a large percentage goes directly to the young people themselves.

**Foyer Staff Member**

There was no rigidity about what you were supposed to do... that made it a bit more of a creative process.

**Foyer Staff Member**

# Programme Design



# Programme Design Strengths

Reflecting on the successes of their Youth Power Fund work, Foyers and young people identified four elements of the programme's design that were particularly supportive.



## Length of funding

Having a full three years for the programme enabled Foyers and young people to take the time they needed upfront to build a foundation from which they could pursue more ambitious project goals. It enabled Foyers to build gradually, and get organisational buy in and credibility around their projects.



## Flexibility of criteria

Not having specific or rigid criteria around what they had to use the fund for provided space for young people and Foyers to try different things, make mistakes, problem-solve creatively and follow a direction that was genuinely led by the interests and ideas of young people.



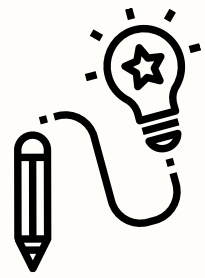
## Resources into young people's hands

The Youth Power Fund required a proportion of funding to go directly to young people to support them with Youth Power Fund activities. This challenged the way Foyers and young people thought about how to plan their project delivery and encouraged staff to relinquish a level of control of resources that was previously the norm.



## Relationship Building

The learning cohort model fostered a collaborative environment where Foyers could share insights, challenges, and best practices, knowing they were going through similar experiences to others. In addition the supportive relationship with The Foyer Federation, allowed a safe space to discuss concerns and find solutions.



# Programme Design Considerations

## Every Foyer starting their Youth Power Fund journey joined from their own unique context.

Whereas some Foyers already had some embedded practices around youth involvement and leadership, others were starting much earlier in their journey, establishing resident groups for the first time and rebuilding vital trusting relationships between staff and young people.

There were **three key areas** that were highlighted by staff members and young people when we asked how Youth Power Fund might be built on and improved in the future.

These areas are underlined by a need for bespoke support tailored to a detailed understanding of where different Foyers might be in their Youth Power Fund Journey.



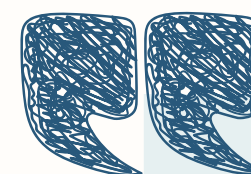
[It's] already an embedded practice... like asking for service user input on things.

**Foyer staff member**

# Design Considerations

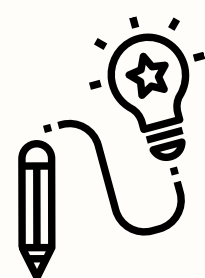
## Full freedom versus supportive structure

For Foyers that had less history of youth empowerment and engagement work, the initial freedom and flexibility of the fund could be overwhelming. Some suggested that some additional goal setting and structure could have been supportive.



It's lovely to have such a fluid project. But sometimes it's too fluid... if we had like clear goals of like, connect with the community, do something eco-friendly, do something that is personal to you...

**Young Leader**



### **How might** future programmes...?

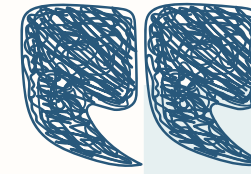
- Work with Foyers and young people who are 'newer' to youth empowerment and involvement work to develop more structured plans in the first year of the fund, while still encouraging permission to work flexibly and let new ideas and directions emerge from young people who are involved?
- Provide some Foyers with the option of centering their first year of work around themes that might guide their activities – for example, community, nature, self-growth?



# Design Considerations

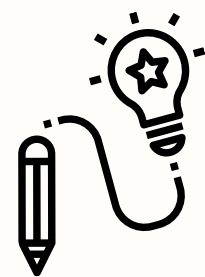
## Sharing connections and networking

Some Foyers had large existing networks with local governments/authorities, local and national charities and other organisations, which supported them in championing opportunities for young people to grow their engagement and leadership beyond the Foyer. Other Foyers were still in the process of establishing wider connections and may have benefitted from some support finding opportunities for external engagement.



Trying to get young people more involved in what happens in the local government... that's probably where some more support could come in.

**Foyer Staff Member**



### **How might** future programmes...?

- Introduce a more formal 'buddy system' from the outset, pairing Foyers together to share connections, networking opportunities and their ongoing learnings?
- Create more official opportunities (for example a launch event) at the beginning of the fund to encourage Foyer-to-Foyer connections and sharing?

# Design Considerations

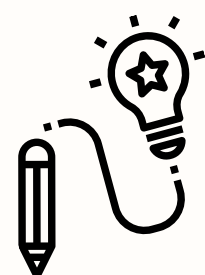
## Expanding definitions of power and participation

The diverse range of approaches to the Youth Power Fund, partly highlighted in the models of success, reflects the way youth power can show up in many different ways and be grown through a range of channels and activities. Many agreed that when it came to the ladder of participation, it wasn't necessarily about climbing from one end to other but about ensuring young people could move up and down the ladder with ease when they wanted to.



There needs to be a menu of participation offers, that kind of go across – and some young people are going to engage right from the top to the bottom, and some are just going to dip in at different levels.

**Foyer Staff Member**



### How might future programmes...?

- Facilitate more personalised thinking/training for each Foyer around what their definition of power is and what levels of participation they'd like to offer for young people at their Foyer?
- Make Power Up Youth training a more fixed part of Youth Power Fund grantees' journey?



We'd like to thank



for their generous support  
which made this work possible.

We're excited to see what's to  
come as Foyers and young  
people execute their plans for  
year three and beyond!



"I believe that other Foyers and young people should get involved with projects just like this one to make a difference in their communities and their homes. It's beautiful to see something this pure blossom and flourish. It's an amazing experience. From gaining self-confidence to having an impact on what matters to us – there's something for everyone and everyone would benefit from the

experience."

**Young Leader**

