Foyer Health Programme: Toolkit

Improving the health and well-being of young people through the Foyer Health Programme

The FOYER Federation

LOTTERY FUNDED
Foyers offer services that enable young people to understand and connect the disparate worlds of health, education, employment, housing and citizenship into a coherent offer that they want to sign up to and commit to.

Jane Slowey, Chief Executive, Foyer Federation

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working together</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving young people</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life coaching</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards of service</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What next?</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Foyer Federation is a charity that helps young people unlock their full potential.

From radical beginnings in 1992, when we controversially integrated education and housing services for the first time, the Foyer Federation has grown into a national movement.

Our policy and campaign work influences the lives of the 2.8 million young people in this country who are experiencing difficulties in making the transition to adulthood.

Much of our knowledge is channelled through a network of integrated learning and accommodation centres known as Foyers.

There are around 140 Foyers operating in urban and rural communities across the UK, providing safe and secure housing, support and training for over 10,000 young people a year aged 16-25.

The Foyer concept is built around the idea that people get ‘something for something’ – in exchange for services tailored to their needs, anyone entering a Foyer is expected to actively engage in their own development and make a positive contribution to their local community.

The nature of this exchange depends very much on the individual, where they have come from, the barriers they are facing and their aspirations for the future. This can mean picking up the threads of education, developing skills for independent adulthood and encouraging greater resilience to overcome barriers. It can also mean rebuilding family relationships, overcoming mental health issues or developing stronger self-confidence and belief.

Supported by a network of partners including housing associations, training and development providers, charitable trusts, research organisations, employers and social entrepreneurs; we produce ground-breaking research and campaigns relating to new approaches for working with young people.

Our programmes and campaigns fill gaps in community services and inspire policy and decision makers to make more effective investments in young people. Successful examples include MediaWorks, a scheme supported by Virgin Unite to engage young people in media techniques such as film making, podcasting and photography; and MyNav, an online platform bringing together new media technology and informal learning opportunities to deliver a personalised package of support to young people.

In order to support commissioners and deliverers of services to young people and ensure they provide high quality provision, we also run membership, training, quality assurance and consultancy packages. This allows services to learn from our research and philosophies and adopt our successful approaches.

The worrying growth in youth unemployment, fuelled by the current economic downturn, means that a new generation of young people face an uncertain future. Poor health and well-being, as well as crime and anti-social behaviour, unemployment and benefit dependency, teenage pregnancy, low educational achievement, rising debt and declining social mobility are all as much of a concern for young adults today as street homelessness was in the 1990s, when the UK Foyer movement was begun by Sheila McKechnie, with support from Shelter and Grand Metropolitan.

Foyers were a radical development. They offered a new and often controversial approach, a different way of doing things. The Foyer movement was a product of challenging times. We grew out of a recession rather like the one we are experiencing today, because the services available to young people at the time were not adequate. Over the past 18 years we have done a lot to improve our position, creating hubs of learning and development rooted in local communities, delivering services directly and in partnership with others, funded from a range of sources that attempt to address all of the issues facing every young person, treating them as a whole person rather than as a series of problems to be solved.

Foyers offer services that enable young people to understand and connect the disparate worlds of health, education, employment, housing and citizenship into a coherent offer that they want to sign up to and commit to, and people that can broker access to skills, resources and opportunities that enable young people to shape their own route to independent adulthood. Working with young people to find their own solutions has been at the core of the Foyer Health Programme, as you will see, and it is the single most important factor in the programme’s success.

This toolkit gathers together the best of the knowledge we have gained over the three years of the programme. Behind it lays the efforts of hundreds of Foyer staff and thousands of young people that took part in the programme. My thanks go to them, to the Big Lottery, who made the programme possible with their investment, and to the staff of the Foyer Federation who have made every effort to ensure the programme’s success.

We hope you’ll help to continue this good work long into the future.

Jane Slowey
Chief Executive
Foyer Federation
The Foyer approach

Our work is innovative and often goes against the grain of current thinking. We believe that young people should be viewed in terms of what they can do, rather than what they can’t.

Our asset-based approach focuses on the capabilities young people have and their potential for development. With the right skills or asset base the transition into independent adulthood is relatively smooth. However, for young people without a secure foundation it often becomes much harder to navigate that journey.

We focus on what young people have to offer their communities and what communities can offer to young people. We encourage a two-way ‘something for something’ understanding, where the young person commits to investing in their future and community, whilst the community invests in young people to enable them to reach their potential and become engaged citizens. How Foyers help develop the terms of this relationship lies at the heart of what the Foyer Federation is all about.

We want to encourage young people’s services to be more than just average or good, we want them to be thriving services that enable the young people they work with to be thriving individuals.

The Thriving Ladder

The Thriving Ladder is a gauge that can be applied to young people or young people’s services. It has four rungs, each of which define different levels of dependence and independence, to help you evaluate the sustainability and effectiveness of the activities you’re delivering.

Thriving

A young person can be considered to be thriving if they are living autonomously and have control over their health and well-being. Thriving services are innovative, enterprising and have strong links into their community. They demonstrate visionary leadership and provide health activities that are sustainable over the long-term.

Building

Young people at the building stage live semi-autonomously and are making choices over their health and well-being. Building services try new approaches, are willing to take risks, develop partnerships and future strategies and offer health activities that can be sustained in the mid-term.

Coping

Young people who are coping are still semi-dependent on others and have little choice and control over their health and well-being. Coping services are inward focused, reactive and only offer health activities that are sustainable over the short-term.

Surviving

Young people who are surviving are dependent on others for their health and well-being and don’t demonstrate any choice or control over these areas. A surviving service is caught up in crisis management and considers sustainability on a day-to-day basis.
**The back story**

Health has a long history of importance in the Foyer Federation. From the Foyers and Health Services Working Together report in 2001 to this toolkit, we have invested a lot of time, money and effort into better understanding the health requirements of young people.

Over the years we have tried to improve the Foyer network’s approach to health. In 2002 Foyers began partnering with local health authorities and three years later an innovative approach to the issue of health was targeted in our Strategic Plan.

However, our own research and that carried out by other organisations consistently highlighted inadequacies in Foyers’ approaches to health.

Between 2003 and 2006 we ran the Strong Minded mental health research project in five English regions. The aim was to employ five mental health professionals who would work with Foyers to provide clinical support to young people, training and supervision for staff and liaison with statutory agencies. The University of Leicester produced a comprehensive evaluation of the work that highlighted the scale, nature and extent of mental health problems in Foyers and the gaps in service provision.

The report, Evaluation of Strong Minded, showed that of those young people with mental health needs, 75 per cent had taken illegal drugs, 28 per cent had taken an overdose, 48 per cent had self-harmed, and 30 per cent had attempted suicide. All had experienced some level of abuse. Many had measurable mental well-being issues such as depression, suicidal ideas, self-harm, panic attacks, problems with drugs or alcohol, anger, social withdrawal and anti-social behaviour. This data exemplified the complex health needs of Foyer residents and highlighted a growing trend towards higher support groups.

The 2006 Housing Corporation’s Launch Pad for Life study demonstrated that young people in Foyers showed ‘a continuing trend towards higher support requirements’. Central to this was an understanding that some young people faced increasing physical, mental, sexual and emotional health barriers to achieving positive steps forward.

Many Foyer staff try to support and encourage young people to eat healthily, exercise regularly and think about their health and well-being. However, the Launch Pad for Life study drew attention to a lack of consistency of the approach to health across the Foyer network. This meant that the quality of local provision and opportunity was sometimes compromised because of the lack of an overarching national framework.

Findings from the Housing Corporation Study were supported by rigorous evaluations from the Foyer Federation, which included annual Foyer reviews and direct consultation with young people. Reports suggested that, while individual Foyers developed initiatives that promoted the health and well-being of residents, practice was not embedded across the network in a sustainable way.

Finally, What Happened Next, a study on previous Foyer residents with the Centre for Housing and Community Research, Cities Institute and London Metropolitan University – published in 2006 – provided further evidence of a need for a change in approach. The study noted that before coming to a Foyer, 27 per cent of young people had attempted suicide or self-harmed, a further 20 per cent had attacks of anxiety and depression, and another 4 per cent who had reported neither of these conditions suffered eating disorders or learning difficulties.

The study established an important link between negative well-being experiences at the Foyers and the needs of young people coming to terms with sexual identity. It also identified isolation as a key concern among young people who had left a Foyer, emphasising a need to focus on supporting young people to develop stronger community networks.

Common findings from the research and reports done prior to the Foyer Health Programme, showed that most young people living in Foyers experienced significant barriers to health and well-being including:

- a history of poor health (specifically malnourishment), high incidence of smoking, alcohol and drug use and lack of physical activity
- difficulties in accessing support either because it was only available in a crisis or because past negative experiences got in the way
- an inability to access services that were appropriate to or fully met their needs

It therefore became clear that to adequately tackle the issue of health, Foyers needed a cohesive approach to deal with low-level issues like the spreading of colds as well as much higher support requirements.

We responded by developing a Healthy Transitions strategy, which sets out how as an organisation we should tackle the issues flagged up by the reports.

**The Foyer Health Programme**

After securing funding from the Big Lottery Fund’s Well-being Programme, we have been able to test out the ideas of the Healthy Transitions strategy with the Foyer Health Programme.

The £2.3 million programme ran for three years from 2007 and was designed to increase the skills, resources and opportunities of young people within our network and ensure that:

1. young people eat more healthily, secure positive well-being and are more physically active in their daily lives and communities
2. Foyers provide healthy living, learning and work environments for young people, their staff and the wider community
3. the Foyer Federation’s network create a better youth offer by adapting the preventative and supportive well-being packages that services provide
The Foyer Health Programme has been immensely successful. It has raised the bar in how we work with agencies, raised our profile positively in the community and enthused our staff and our residents. We have several sustainable programmes going forward, in particular our Gardening in the Community project, whose remit seems to grow by the week.

Jim Hudson, Foyer Manager, Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Humber Region YMCA

From changes in what is sold in vending machines in a Foyer to a different focus on health in support planning, the Foyer Health Programme has introduced changes in the environment of Foyers. Many of these changes are permanent and require no further funding to maintain. Foyers have also reported improvements in the sorts of information offered to residents through leaflets and notice boards, with a marked increase in the amount of information and advice on health and well-being issues reported. These adaptations to Foyers have clear impacts on the engagement and outcomes for young people.

Life coaching, a major strand of activity in the Foyer Health Programme which we cover in chapter four, has introduced some radical changes in the way that young people are supported in Foyers.

By implementing the tools and techniques that they learned through life coaching, Foyer staff have reported that they are much more effective at supporting residents. The chief reasons reported for this are as follows:

- increased confidence in their own ability
- adopting a less prescriptive, more creative approach
- knowing when to use silence and active listening skills to enable young people to reach their own goals and conclusions
- understanding the impact of body language during support planning sessions
- better understanding of how to set and monitor SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets with young people

Other major changes that the Foyer Health Programme has brought about include the introduction of a health and well-being section in the business plans of Foyers, a more collaborative approach in building and delivering the Foyer offer and an increased use of external agencies.

The Foyer Health Programme in numbers

Almost 7,000 young people have set goals for improving their health and well-being through one-to-one support from a member of Foyer staff.

Over 15,000 people from wider communities have benefited from engaging in activities across the programme through taster sessions on healthy eating, physical activity and mental and emotional well-being.

Over 3,000 young people set specialist health goals through the healthy eating, physical activity and mental and emotional well-being programmes developed in Foyers.

Over £850,000 of additional funding was generated by Foyers nationally through the Foyer Health Programme.

Over 100 Foyers in England have participated in the programme and have worked towards accreditation standards making significant steps towards ensuring that every Foyer is a healthy place to live, work and learn.

Introduction

This toolkit is all about how you can promote health and well-being in your work with young people. But what is health? As well as meaning “the absence of illness”, health can also be said to relate to the ways in which we treat our bodies and minds to create and sustain a state of physical and emotional well-being.

The Foyer Federation Healthy Transitions strategy and the Foyer Health Programme are public health and health promotion programmes, rather than clinical programmes which attempt to cure ill health. When we are talking about health in this toolkit, we are talking about the promotion of healthy choices and healthy lifestyles. In particular, the Foyer Health Programme focuses on three aspects of health and well-being:

- healthy eating
- physical activity
- emotional and mental well-being

The Foyer Health Programme has been delivered using a variety of methods including forging partnerships with relevant individuals or organisations, involving young people and life coaching.

Health taster sessions have been used to excite and empower young people to explore healthy eating, physical activity and mental and emotional well-being.

We’ll go into much more detail in the following chapters but to summarise briefly the key elements of the programme are:

- empowering young people to change and achieve
- creating supportive environments for health and well-being
- developing coaching models to support young people’s healthy living goals
- developing partnerships to maximise quality of service and ensure sustainability
- demonstrating creativity and innovation when engaging young people on health issues
- learning together through a national health network that can provide a means for Foyers and other services to obtain advice, support and guidance on health issues
- developing an evidence base to help with our on-going campaign and policy work

The success stories

The Foyer Health Programme has confirmed the thinking behind our Healthy Transitions strategy. That is, that supporting young people to make positive choices towards health and well-being has a significant impact on the other outcomes in their lives.

Foyers involved in the programme have reported that the rate of planned move-on from the Foyer to independent accommodation has increased as part of the programme, because of improvements in the support planning process. Foyers have also reported that the level of engagement with young people has improved due to the larger range of activities, sessions, workshops and programmes they have been able to offer.

This has in turn led to young people achieving wider outcomes such as connecting with education, training and employment. Staff have also seen a marked reduction in anti-social behaviour and an increase in self-esteem and motivation, thanks to the opportunity the programme has provided to recognise and celebrate small and large achievements.
We have lots of local partnerships in relation to health through the Foyer Health Programme. Over the next three years we will continue to create a portfolio of specialist services, activities and opportunities that can hand young people the power to navigate their transition into sustainable adulthood.

We will do this by utilising our existing network and forging new partnerships with like-minded organisations, which we hope will attract new forms of investment and allow us to initiate our plans to create deep and lasting change. It should be the same at service level. Working with partners such as Foyers, youth and health services, professionals, corporates and other organisations is important in the current economic climate because it can help you raise awareness, money and the standard of service through staff sharing, volunteering, and collaboration.

Partner organisations may be able to offer consultation and advice, information, resources or mentoring in areas where your organisation needs development or specialist input. There may be opportunities to increase the scale of projects and achieve better outcomes for young people by working together with other like-minded groups and organisations that have similar aims. Working in partnership can also help increase your influence over key decision and policy-makers both locally and nationally, as the voice of a number of organisations working together can be more persuasive than one.

Over the last three years Foyers have raised around £850,000 in cash and in-kind benefits by working with partners through the Foyer Health Programme. At the end of this chapter we have provided a table with some suggestions of the types of organisations you might want to partner up with.

When we launched the Foyer Health Programme we were able to secure great links with the council’s Healthy Communities Partnership Project. Five Foyer residents were chosen to feature in the promotional material for the council’s Re:Fresh fitness scheme, with their pictures featured on billboards, posters and leaflets across the borough. When young people sign up to the Re:Fresh scheme they receive a card that gives them free access to council owned gyms and swimming pools. There is a £10 payment needed for gym inductions but due to the work we did with the Healthy Communities Team, this fee was waived for Foyer residents.

Karen Venables, Foyer Manager, Doncaster Foyer

Gareth McGrall, Health Champion, Blackburn with Darwen Foyer

Health Network

In order to support Foyers to learn and share good practice in health the Foyer Federation established a Health Network as part of the Foyer Health Programme. Many Foyers involved in the Health Network had nominated two Health Champions in each Foyer from their staff team, whose job was to share information and offer guidance to help improve the overall quality of the service. If the good work of the programme is to continue it is vital that Foyers carry on sharing information and working together to improve their offer and our knowledge as a network. It also helps to create a more cohesive and strategic approach to health.

Professional Ambassadors

During the first three years of the Foyer Health Programme the Foyer Federation selected a number of experts to work with Foyers as Professional Ambassadors. Professionals from the fields of diet, nutrition and healthy eating, health and fitness and mental and emotional well-being became Professional Ambassadors within the Health Network, offering inspiring and innovative approaches to raise the profile of their specialist area amongst residents.

The role of the Professional Ambassadors was to:

- assess the current health and well-being of residents and identify key areas for improvement
- offer advice and guidance to Foyers through the network of Health Champions
- establish innovative approaches to improving health and well-being, including the identification of creative partnerships from outside the sector
- work with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth to identify issues and generate initiatives to address them

Local partnerships

Working with organisations in your town or city allows you to connect better with your community and raise your profile locally. This helps more people understand what you do which can stimulate the donation of money and resources.

Corporate partnerships

Creating partnerships with corporate organisations can provide benefits including donations, volunteers, match funding and additional promotion.

Many have recognised the value of creating these partnerships for the future to build on the Big Lottery investment. Nearly all household name corporations have Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes that Voluntary Sector organisations can benefit from. Why not contact them to see if they can help you?

The Foyer Federation also partners with a number of national and corporate organisations that you may be able to benefit from directly. For more information about our current partnerships and how they might benefit you please contact us using the details at the back of this toolkit.

How to form partnerships

Developing a partnership can be as simple as picking up the phone and calling another service provider. At the other end of the spectrum it could involve a jointly funded piece of work that may require a service level agreement or memorandum of understanding, which frequently figure as part of formal financial contracts.

Many of the partnerships developed through the Foyer Health Programme, which ranged from establishing a football tournament with young people outside of the Foyer to delivering counselling sessions, were born out of networking.

Attending relevant events can be a great way of meeting people who can help deliver services, resources or raise awareness for your Foyer, but before agreeing to any form of partnership it’s worth remembering that each one requires a different level of development and maintenance in order to work.
Approaching the right organisations

Many organisations develop relationships with others on an ad hoc basis or through personal contacts and existing links with other agencies. However, it may be better to adopt a more strategic approach to identifying potential partners for your service. Try carrying out a partner mapping exercise to establish which organisations are working in similar areas. You should also look into policy and commissioning structures for young people’s health services in your local authority area.

Identifying the most appropriate organisation or organisations to work with will depend on the context or the aims of particular projects, but there are some common factors that it could be helpful to consider:

- skills, knowledge and experience that will complement your work
- contacts and relationships with other organisations and decision-makers
- access to relevant information, research and resources
- track record in the area of interest
- sound management and structures
- financial sustainability and reliability
- experienced and stable staff team with experience of managing projects and mobilising resources
- the costs and benefits of working with a particular organisation
- the risks of working with a particular organisation, including any conflicts of interest

Partnerships work best when each party has something invested in them and identifying the benefits to both organisations at the start helps.

Making partnerships work

The key issues when it comes to making partnerships work include:

- having a good match - working with people who think like you and are working towards a similar vision
- developing some boundaries early in the relationship
- defining a clear vision and objectives so that everyone involved has a clear understanding of the purpose of the partnership and is working in the same direction
- mapping the resources that each group can bring to the partnership including non-cash resources such as people, relationships, knowledge and infrastructure
- agreeing the roles and responsibilities of each member of the partnership and the activities that they are individually and jointly responsible for
- establishing arrangements so that it is clear how decisions will be made within the partnership and how joint projects and programmes will be managed

You may wish to draft a partnership agreement setting out how the partnership intends to address these issues so that all parties are informed of what has been agreed.

Once you have established a partnership, it is important to put in the effort necessary to maintain and sustain the partnership. Key factors to consider in your approach to working with partners include:

- maintaining good relationships and respecting the contribution of all those involved
- mechanisms to ensure that the relationship is not overly dependent on one organisation
- regular and effective communication at all levels between the partners
- dealing with issues that need addressing and resolving them
- sharing experiences and learning from each other
- transparency and commitment in order to build trust between partners
- focusing on what the partnership is trying to achieve (outcomes) rather than what it produces (outputs)

Partnerships check-list – before launching into a partnership with anyone make sure you:

- understand the vision, mission and motivations of partners
- have determined what you would like to gain from the partnership
- tried to evaluate partners against your own groups’ aims and activities - you need to make sure that you will be working toward common goals
- made sure that by working with a partner you will achieve more effective outcomes than if you were working in isolation
- made an assessment as to the potential partners interest in partnering with you
- agreed the terms, limitations and expectations of your relationship
- established and maintained good communication with partner organisations
- are willing to share information you have – partnerships can only work if groups are willing to, on some levels, share

The Foyer Health Programme has been such a success because of the many positive partners we worked with. The investment and support from the Big Lottery meant that we were able to adapt, grow the programme and target resources as we learned what worked best. It is fantastic to have a funder that is so supportive of our aim to tailor the programme to the goals of young people.

Jane Slowey, Chief Executive, Foyer Federation

“ It’s all about networking – you need to get out there and go to events. Not everything will be relevant so you need to look into it and see what will be most beneficial to you. ”

Jillian Hartland, Service Manager, CHADD Foyer
Interview: the more support you have the better

Bath Foyer’s Service Manager Anita Holden explains how working in partnership has benefitted her residents

“You’ve been able to give your residents some great experiences by working in partnerships haven’t you?”

“Yes. The funding we received from the Foyer Health Programme allowed us to participate in an art exhibition arranged by the Homeless Initiative partnership to educate the local community about homelessness.

“We bought canvasses, paint and paid for printing and materials so the residents could create their works of art. A local art student from Bath University came to our project to assist in the workshops for the exhibition and the results were stunning. The artwork was shown in Bath Abbey for a week and the vicar bought one of the pictures.”

What benefits did the exhibition give your residents?

“During the time at the Abbey the residents were interviewed by our local MP and this was broadcast on our local news. They loved being filmed for TV and to be part of an event that was so widely known. Our residents find the perception of people in Foyers quite difficult and this was a great opportunity for them to meet people from the community. It was a great experience for everyone in that sense and helped break down some barriers and a lot of misconceptions.

Have you established partnerships with any other people or organisations?

“We established a partnership with the Bath and North East Somerset Council Community Officer, who supplied us with bicycles that had been abandoned or not claimed. After buying repair-kits and essentials with our funding we formed a bike workshop, where residents created fully functioning bikes that they could use to get around in a green friendly way and also get some physical exercise.

“We also have an ongoing partnership with Clean Slate Training and Employment, who find work opportunities for people who are experiencing or have experienced housing issues. They’ve worked closely with residents at the Foyer to create a leaflet, which is being distributed to secondary schools in the area. The leaflet is to help young people understand the decision they are making about choosing to leave home and to promote mediation in order for families to stay together where possible.”

Do you involve young people a lot in the work at the Foyer?

“They’re involved in everything. We’ve developed a Client Involvement panel which the residents have named Re-Shape. New working practices, policies, procedures and plans for the future are taken through this panel to ensure that residents agree that they’re in the residents’ interests.

“The panel meets every two months and should a decision need to be made in-between meetings we have project champions who can speak on their behalf. We’ve found that a less formal approach to meetings creates an environment where residents feel able to voice opinions and contribute.

“Residents have also recently decided that senior management will only be present when specific items need discussing and then they’ll be invited to present these topics for discussion. The young people have responded well and really taken ownership of these meetings and are making positive and constructive decisions about the future of our projects and organisation.”

Finally, what advice would you give to others on how to secure partnerships for their own Foyers?

“Get out and about and do some networking. All the staff from our Foyers and sister projects get together with members from similar organisations. It might just be for a catch-up or it might be to do a presentation or seek feedback but partnership working can never hurt because the more support you have the better.”
### Partnerships and resource list

Looking for ideas on potential partners or for resources in health? Try some of the suggestions in the table below.

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<td>The Dairy Council <a href="http://www.milk.co.uk">www.milk.co.uk</a></td>
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### Emotional and mental well-being | General

| Royal College of Psychiatrists [www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk) | YMCA [www.ymca.org.uk](http://www.ymca.org.uk) |
| Mental Health Foundation [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) | Venture Trust [www.venture-trust.org.uk](http://www.venture-trust.org.uk) |
| The Site [www.thesite.org/healthandwellbeing](http://www.thesite.org/healthandwellbeing) | |
| Samaritans [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) | |
| Changing Minds Centre [www.changingmindscentre.co.uk](http://www.changingmindscentre.co.uk) | Sustain [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org) |
| Centre for Mental Health [www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk) | Connexions Direct [www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com) |
| Bully UK [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk) | Child and Maternal Health Observatory [www.chimat.org.uk](http://www.chimat.org.uk) |
| Kidscape [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk) | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services [www.camhscares.nhs.uk](http://www.camhscares.nhs.uk) |
| Anti-Bullying Alliance [www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk) | Royal Society for Public Health [www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk) |
| | Frank [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com) |
| | Addaction [www.addaction.org.uk](http://www.addaction.org.uk) |
| | Turning Point [www.turning-point.co.uk](http://www.turning-point.co.uk) |
| | CRI [www.cri.org.uk](http://www.cri.org.uk) |
Key partners in health

One key partnership that has had a major influence on local provision for young people is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). These bring together the key partners in a local community including the council, police and NHS alongside representatives from the voluntary, community and business sectors.

Some Foyer representatives have played a role on the board of their LSP or participated in the numerous sub groups that meet to construct the local strategy.

Away from LSPs, simply approaching like-minded people is a great way of generating an informal partnership. The health promotion team, children’s partnership boards and YMCA are all examples of organisations that may make great partners for your service.

There are many ways to find out about them and other potential partners. Get a list of local voluntary organisations providing health and well-being activities in your area. Request to be put on the email list of your local volunteers bureau, or sit on a children’s partnership board.

Other types of partnership are more formalised and developed when making joint applications for funding, developing new services or responding to local policy consultations.

However you find your prospective partners, the important thing is to get in touch and find out if there are any ways in which you can work together. Exploratory phone calls or emails have been known to yield surprising and immediate results.

Chapter summary

- Partnerships are vital to the long-term success of the Foyer Health Programme.
- Creating a partnership can be as easy as picking up the phone and contacting a similar service to your own.
- The Foyer Federation has some national partnerships that may be able to help you.
- Local partnerships can help raise money, awareness and improve the standard of service you offer.
- Corporate partners can provide benefits through donations, volunteers, match funding and additional promotion.
- LSPs are a great way of finding local partners, as is getting yourself or a Foyer representative onto boards and email circulars.
- Once you’ve found a prospective partner make sure you get in contact with them, the results are often startling.
- For more information or advice on partnerships or to find out how you could work with the Foyer Federation, please use our contact details at the back of this toolkit.
Involving young people

The involvement of young people in developing health strategies is not just a desirable addition to the way in which health promotion work with young people can be done: it is rapidly becoming as essential component of all work in the health field. Personalisation, or the involvement of young people in making decisions about their own health and well-being, is increasingly prevalent in the health arena.

Co-production – the joint decision-making about the scope, range and type of provision for particular groups being done in collaboration with those groups, is a model that is widely used. The involvement of young people in decisions about the best way to engage them in making healthy choices, will increasingly become an expectation when public health services for young people are being commissioned and delivered. This chapter looks at some of the models for personalisation and co-production that have been used in the Foyer Health Programme.

By arriving at their own conclusions people take ownership of the successes and failures of their choices. In Foyers where young people have designed and delivered activities as part of the Foyer Health Programme, residents have enjoyed better services, health and well-being and employment prospects due to an increase in their skill sets.

Other benefits to involving young people in designing and delivering health activities include:
- greater interaction between residents and staff
- increased confidence, well-being, autonomy and independence for young people
- informal learning opportunities
- increased feeling of belonging
- better services for young people

In this chapter you’ll find different ways to involve young people in developing their health and well-being, so you can continue to reap the benefits of this approach.

Background

Young people are at the heart of everything we do. Since 1992 the Foyer Federation has been turning young people’s experiences into solutions that support their transition into independent adulthood.

We have involved young people in the way we develop programmes, accredit their quality and promote their influence to others. We also expect those who we work with to ensure young people play an active part in the services we work through, based on the two-way ‘something for something’ deal at the heart of the Foyer ethos.

The Foyer Health Programme has helped us to look at Foyers’ service offers and challenge whether they and other service providers give young people what they need to reach the goals they set themselves. This ties in with our ongoing work to improve service provision for young people in and outside of Foyers.

The following diagram shows the difference between HATS in surviving, coping, building or thriving environments:

- **Thriving**: HATS are firmly established as part of the service, young people share responsibility for most decisions and take the lead on driving through activities. They consult their peers on the service offer.
- **Building**: Regular meetings with young people to gauge opinions, young people plan and execute some activities.
- **Coping**: Sporadic consultation with young people, who are occasionally involved in planning and delivering activities.
- **Surviving**: Still operating a staff driven approach, where staff control all decisions on what happens. Young people have little or no voice in these environments.

A key success of the Foyer Health Programme is that residents have been able to plan the activities around what they want to do. They feed their ideas into the residents committee and an activity plan is then put in place for a year, giving them an opportunity to research, plan and implement activities.

Henry Lasikiewicz, Foyer Manager, Halton YMCA Foyer

Health Action Teams

One of the best ways to stimulate the involvement of young people in your Foyer’s decision-making process is to set up formal or informal groups where they can take a leading role.

Foyers participating on the Foyer Health Programme were given the opportunity to establish Health Action Teams (HATs), which had a minimum of two residents, a member of staff who acted as a Health Champion for the Foyer and a manager or board member.

Not all Foyers on the programme created HATs because many already had pre-existing residents’ groups, which subsequently assumed the same role as the HATs by incorporating a health focus.

The HATs ensured that young people were directly involved with every stage of the programme and were the key drivers for creating and leading on healthy activities. Instead of encouraging young people to merely take part in activities, thriving HATs enabled individuals to voice their opinions and work with their peers and Foyer staff to make clear decisions and put plans into action.

With the help of Big Lottery funding, young people have helped to drive the Foyer Health Programme and shape the overall service offer. They’ve also had opportunities to gain confidence and new skills like leadership, team building and experience in programme development, design and delivery.

During the first three years of the project successful HATS, in partnership with Foyer residents, achieved the following:
- mapped health needs in their Foyer and identified which areas required improvement
- generated and developed ideas of what activities young people in the Foyer were most interested in and likely to engage with
- identified people, partnerships, funds and community resources to strengthen and diversify taster sessions and the Foyer Health Programme
- planned and ran a range of taster sessions in and outside of the Foyers
- sourced and created publicity and community awareness of the programme
- measured the overall impact of health and well-being initiatives in the Foyer

If you don’t have one already, you should think about setting up a HAT or something similar as part of your service, so that young people can drive the programme forward and help improve the service.
Involving young people

Foyer Federation – pyramid of involvement

At the Foyer Federation we want to involve young people as much as possible in every level of our work. The diagram below illustrates the different areas in which young people can work with us.

As a general rule of thumb the higher up the pyramid you are, the more involved the young people you work with are, which gives them and you a better chance of thriving. Thriving services involve young people at all levels of their work. If you are surviving or coping you will not always prioritise involving young people and may assume that it is additional effort when resources already seem stretched. However, by including young people in the development of your service it can increase resources and make the service thrive. Both staff and young people will find the experience much more rewarding.

Foyer Federation advisory group(s)

At an advisory level young people help influence and direct the Foyer Federation’s use of health as a key component in learning and employability programmes and strategies for young offenders, teenage parents and care leavers. They also assist in the quality assurance of services and participate in a range of national forums influencing key policy and decision makers to focus on young people’s health needs.

Foyer Federation and Foyer innovation projects

Here on the pyramid, young people act as co-producers of health solutions through active involvement in our range of other national projects as well as projects at Foyer level – examples include MyNav, MediaWorks and Open Talent. The increasing focus on life coaching for young people allows them to take control of their transition to adulthood through the identification and achievement of their own positive health goals.

Foyer community and Foyer Federation network

On a basic level, the Foyer Health Programme can enable young people to get more involved in their service and surrounding community as active participants and promoters of positive health messages. They can also share their experiences and form part of a growing UK network of Ambassadors to promote the Foyer Federation’s health and well-being campaign.

Young people at any level could become a Young Ambassador for the Foyer Federation. This gives them opportunities to influence key policy and decision makers with their ideas and experiences of youth services whilst developing their own skills and understanding in the process. To find out more about our Young Ambassador network please contact us using the details at the back of this toolkit.
Interview: it’s all about teamwork

Salford Foyer’s Health and Well-being Co-ordinator Rahela Khan explains how young people are taking the lead in health and well-being in their Foyer.

How did you go about involving young people in designing and delivering health activities at your Foyer?

“We started running cookery courses, which got the young people really enthusiastic about the Foyer Health Programme. They then began coming up with lots of other ideas for things they’d like to do but we couldn’t finance them all out of the Foyer budget. So, to help them apply for their own funding and have more control over the activities, we set them up as a constituted group called the Health Action Team (Salford Foyer), which we shorten to HATeam.

What do the HATeam do?

“They are the representatives of the young people in the Foyer. They do all sorts from helping prepare and serve the buffet on open days to hosting meetings to bidding for funding. They also gave feedback to the Primary Care Trust (PCT)’s health improvement team during recent consultations, providing a voice for local young people of the community.”

What sorts of activities do they organise?

“They’ve organised taster sessions for physical activities like yoga, tai chi and street dance. They’ve run a breakfast club and they’re looking into doing theme nights. For instance, on Chinese New Year they plan to put on Chinese food and a tai chi demonstration. They’re currently looking into funding from the Big Lottery to help celebrate 15 years of Salford Foyer in 2011.”

How has the HATeam been funded so far?

“Salford Foyer gave around £400 to help with initial costs. Since then they have been awarded £600 for ingredients for the cookery sessions through the active minds and bodies fund, which is overseen by the local council and supported by the PCT. They also won £1,000 from a Dragons’ Den-style pitch held by the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), which they used to fund three community awareness and involvement events.”

What have the benefits been to the young people involved?

“The obvious benefit is that it gives them more of a say in how things at the Foyer are done, but being part of the HATeam gives them so much more than that. Successfully putting on and taking part in activities gives people a real sense of achievement, which helps build their confidence. They’re also learning about budgeting, how to interact better with other people their own age and gaining skills they can put on their CVs. Another big thing is that they come into contact with professional people on an equal footing, which changes their perceptions. Many young people have been talked down to but being part of the HATeam has helped them deal with professional people in a positive way.”

What are the positives of involving young people in designing and delivering activities are immense.”

How does the HATeam work?

“The HATeam has five regular officers – chair, treasurer, secretary, media and publicity officer and fundraising officer – all of whom are voted in by young people at the Foyer. They have an open meeting once a month, where residents and ex-residents can come and give their ideas about what they’d like to see happening at the Foyer.”

What are the benefits of the HATeam to the Foyer itself?

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Young Ambassadors

Young people are often best at inspiring other young people. At Ravenhead Foyer, for example, participation in gym training sessions increased by 400 per cent when previous resident Kostadin ‘Koko’ Toychev became involved.

Koko was one of the Young Ambassadors used by the Foyer Federation to inspire young people on the Foyer Health Programme.

With guidance and training from the Foyer Federation these Young Ambassadors – not to be confused with the Professional Ambassadors mentioned in chapter two – consulted young people in Foyers in order to create physical activity sessions tailored to meet their needs.

The Young Ambassadors we worked with throughout the programme were mainly previous Foyer residents but any inspirational young person could make a huge difference to participation and engagement in health activities for your service.

During the programme our Young Ambassadors enabled the development of a strong set of skills, resources, and opportunities for themselves and the young people they helped. The system also demonstrated that investing in one strand of health often leads to positive changes in other areas of health and well-being. Eating well, for example, gives people more energy to take part in physical activity, which can make them feel happier and more confident.

“Before I started some of the boys didn’t have jobs,” says Amani Brooklyn, a Young Ambassador who worked as a football coach at several Foyers during the programme.

“One of them is now working for Barnardos, one has gone to university and is doing a part-time job and one of the girls has gone on to work at a hostel.

“The fitness work changes your mindset. It acts as a wake-up call and it’s not just about employment. Some of the people I coached have given up alcohol. Others are eating healthily. All that helps boost people’s mental well-being. It’s really nice to see the change in people and I’m really proud of them.”

“Absolutely. There are some things to be wary of – you need to establish ground rules and make sure nobody gets off on the wrong foot. You must let everybody give an opinion and don’t let anybody be mocked for what they say. Never say no, always give options and let them be explored. The whole thing is about mutual respect and if you can get that right, the positives of involving young people in designing and delivering activities are immense.”
Interview: gym class hero

Young Ambassador Nathan Howes tells us about his experience of working with residents at Braintree Foyer.

How did you become a Young Ambassador on the Foyer Health Programme?

“Once the Foyer Federation staff came down to an open day at Braintree Foyer, where I was working as a voluntary gym instructor. She told me about what was then called the Residents’ Ambassador Programme. It sounded good so I applied, got an interview and was offered the position. I did a day’s training through the Foyer Federation on how to run classes and then I was ready to start.”

So what sessions do you do with residents at the Foyer?

“I do one-to-one sessions to make sure the young people hit their targets. I also run boys and girls only sessions and core classes that focus on your stomach. I manage the gym and make sure that people know what they’re doing so they don’t hurt themselves. If people have a bad experience first time they won’t come back again, so I ask them what they want to do, use life coaching to help them set goals for themselves and tell them how long those goals will take to achieve. Once I’ve told them the rules of the gym and shown them some exercises, I can help them as much or as little as they like.”

How important is physical fitness to young people in Foyers?

“It’s very important because a lot of people’s mental wellbeing isn’t what it should be. They might be depressed or have low self-esteem but going to the gym can really help with that. A workout releases endorphins that make you feel happier. If you learn how to exercise properly it gives you confidence and if you come to the gym regularly, you’ll go to bed earlier, get up earlier and have more energy. Then you can start to move forward and do more positive things in your life including getting a job.”

Has going to the gym made a positive impact on any of the residents at Braintree Foyer?

“Definitely. The one that stands out is a boy who came in saying he wanted to join the marines. The problem was he drank crates of alcohol a day and smoked heavily. I wrote a training programme for him and told him he’d have to cut down on the smoking and drinking. He came in for a while and played around without really getting anywhere but then he began to come around to the idea of the programme and started to take it seriously.

“After a few weeks, he realised the drinking was making him feel unhealthy so stopped doing it every day and now only drinks once a month. He’s cut down on the smoking and found himself a girlfriend, who was so impressed with the change in him she’s started coming to the gym too. Instead of getting drunk they cook healthy meals together in the evenings and I think that within the next three months, he’ll be ready to join the marines.”

What about you – what did you get out of being a Young Ambassador?

“I really enjoyed it and it’s helped me become a lot more confident. I didn’t used to think I was capable of doing anything but helping other people at the gym has given me a real sense of achievement. I’m doing a college course now that will help me go on to university. I want to do a sports science degree, so I can become a fitness professional and perhaps one day become a fire fighter. Being a Young Ambassador has really helped me move on.”

How do you motivate people to keep turning up?

“People notice the changes on their body before anyone else does. If they can see that they’re losing weight or gaining muscle they want to carry on and do more. We offer prizes for things like outstanding achievement and member of the month and we also set out challenges. We recently did one where we worked out the distance between the four Salvation Army Housing Association Foyers. People then dropped in and did kilometres on the bike or treadmill until the whole distance had been covered. The person who did the most kilometres got a prize.”

How do you involve young people in the sessions?

“I ask everyone what they want to achieve and come up with individual training programmes for them. On a wider level we have a gym committee made up of residents and friends. They initially decided what they wanted in the gym and now pick the prizes we offer as incentives.”

Do you think that because you lived in a Foyer yourself, the residents listen to you more?

“It depends on the individual as everyone is different. Some people say they can speak to me more because I’m similar to them so they relate to me better. Some say they’d prefer someone older because they feel they’re more experienced and some people can just be really difficult to engage with. When they’re like that I say, ‘I might not have been through what you have, but I’ve been through similar things. I know where you’re coming from.' Once they realise you understand them, most of the time they let you into what they’re thinking and what they want.”

“I didn’t used to think I was capable of doing anything but helping other people at the gym has given me a real sense of achievement.”

Chapter summary

- Involving young people in the design and delivery of health activities is crucial to the success of health initiatives in Foyers and has many benefits.
- Health Action Teams (HATs) or young people-lead groups are a great way to get young people involved in making decisions.
- Young Ambassadors show the value of the peer approach and can help engage young people in healthy activity.
Life coaching

Life coaching is a technique staff can use to enable young people to take control of their own decisions. For young people to sustain long-term health and well-being, it is vital that they arrive at their own conclusions about the issues affecting their lives.

Through intelligent coaching young people can be empowered to set their own goals and take responsibility for their actions. Confidence grows as people achieve the goals they’ve set themselves and begin to unlock their true potential, allowing them to start building a positive future. In this chapter you’ll learn how to use coaching to help young people move up the Thriving Ladder.

Life coaching in numbers

We asked staff from the 105 Foyers that worked on the Foyer Health Programme for their opinions on life coaching. Their support was unequivocal:

- **80%** indicated that life coaching had enhanced their ability to motivate residents and measure health and well-being outcomes
- **83%** felt that life coaching had resulted in some form of improvement to their own health and well-being
- **85%** reported that it had led to improvements being made in their support planning documents
- **95%** would recommend that other staff undertake life coaching training

Background

Between 2002 and 2005 the Government introduced a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF – please see chapter six, Standards of service, for more details of the QAF) for supported housing management services. That meant that in order to receive funding via a Supporting People grant, providers had to meet certain requirements laid down by the QAF.

The QAF support planning structure was inadequate in our view because it focused on what people weren’t good at, was slanted towards adults and generally reinforced existing practices that were not helpful to young people progressing towards adulthood.

During the QAF years we used the Foyer Independence Support Home (FISH) tool to evaluate the effectiveness of our support facilities. The process involved interviewing staff, young people and auditing support plan documents and the results were staggering: 55 per cent of Foyers were found not to be training staff to meet the health needs of young people.

The QAF had over-complicated and formalised the relationship between staff and Foyer residents, exacerbating inherent flaws in the training and professional development that Registered Social Landlords were providing for their Foyer employees.

It was clear that a new way of working was required and having considered a range of options, we decided that life coaching offered the best way forward because it focuses on people’s strengths, motivates them to unlock their potential and empowers them to take responsibility for their own decisions.

However, before implementing the idea across the Foyer network we wanted to test how the approach worked in practice so, with the aid Dixons Group International’s Switched On Communities scheme and support from the Department for Schools and Families, we launched a pilot initiative at Foyers in Exeter, Chichester, Chatham and Hereford.

The scheme was later expanded to include Foyers in Worcester, Weston-Super-Mare, Ludlow, Chester, Wigan, and St Helens. In the end 377 young people from 21 Foyers received life coaching and 30 staff trained as coaching skills trainers.

Life coaching and you

Now we’ve established the value of life coaching in the Foyer Health Programme, we are able to share some practical tips on how to introduce it to young people that you work with.

The first thing to consider is what you’re trying to achieve. The goals of life coaching are to help young people:

- take ownership of their health and well-being
- design goals that are meaningful and significant to them
- stretch their future aspirations
- develop healthier social networks
- develop skills to make positive life decisions
- progress towards independence

We use life coaching as an approach to all our support planning with the residents in the Foyer. It enables us to foster a good rapport with the young people and support them in achieving their goals. Highlights of this approach have included many positive move-ons to independent accommodation, residents achieving at college and acquiring paid and voluntary work, including one resident joining a project in Kenya.

Barney Harker, Foyer Manager, SHYPP Foyer in Leominster
There are four main elements to life coaching

Responsibility

Coaching moves away from the idea that a support worker should be responsible for fixing a young person’s problems. If a young person relies on you, as a staff member, to supply them with correct answers it can lead to problems if things don’t turn out the way they wanted. An important part of the transition to adulthood is about an individual recognising that they are responsible for their own actions. Through life coaching you can put that responsibility into the hands of the young person, so they own the success or failure of their choices. However, in this sense failure is not a negative, it’s a positive means of a young person learning from the consequences of their actions. You often learn more from your mistakes than you do from the things you’ve done right.

Belief and commitment

A coach needs to truly believe that their coachee is capable of improving and succeeding in their life. A young person may not think they have it in them but your job as a coach is to make them believe they can move up the Thriving Ladder, even if they feel the odds are stacked against them.

Empowerment

The tools for coaching are questioning, listening, observation and reflection. Through a skilful mixture of these tools you can enable any young person to come up with their own solutions to their problems. Even if the solution is screamingly obvious to you, this may not be suitable or appropriate for the young person. He or she will need to understand their own reality before selecting the option that is most suitable for them at any point in time.

Equality

Equality is one of the key principles of life coaching, so using it in Foyers can be challenging due to the nature of staff-resident relationships.

"The life coaching sessions helped me to recognise the small blocks towards achieving my ultimate goal and understand what I needed to focus on first.”

Samantha Jeffs, Weston Foyer resident

"Some staff at Doncaster Foyer attended the coaching training and use life coaching techniques in key working sessions. It’s given them more confidence in dealing with young people.

Karen Venables, Foyer Manager, Doncaster Foyer

"I think life coaching really does help. It helps you know what you are aiming for. It has helped me increase my confidence to get involved.”

Gemma Rawlins, Weston Foyer resident

Four of our staff did life coaching training as part of the Foyer Health Programme. They now use it to help young people set goals for themselves and it has become an automatic part of our support structure.

Jillian Hartland, Service Manager, CHADD Foyer

A coach needs to truly believe that their coachee is capable of improving and succeeding in their life. A young person may not think they have it in them but your job as a coach is to make them believe they can move up the Thriving Ladder, even if they feel the odds are stacked against them.

You might be dealing with a young person who has shown no real desire for improving their health but everyone has potential, it just needs to be unlocked. Showing disapproval or being inconsistent in your words and actions may effect the trust of the young person and hinder progress.

It’s also worth remembering that improvement and success is relative to the individual – a young person who has attended a session where they may have not done the previous three times is showing that they are more committed than before. This is why it is so important that the goals come from what the young person wants, not what you think they should do, however right it may seem.
**Interview: the staff member**

Project Worker Barbara Higgs explains how life coaching has helped residents at Braintree Foyer.  

How did you come to be involved in life coaching?  

“Our Manager Mark was approached by the Foyer Federation to see if any of our staff wanted to go on a training course about life coaching. As a Project Worker I work with residents on support planning and I’ve always been interested in trying new approaches, so I happily agreed to go on the course.”

What training did you receive?  

“I had four days training through the Foyer Federation. There were staff members from many other Foyers there, which was great because we shared ideas about various things to do with the Foyer Health Programme. After two days we spent some time practicing our coaching skills on each other over the phone. Once we’d completed the two final days we started using the skills we’d learned in our own Foyers.”

So how do you use coaching at your Foyer?  

“We use coaching to help residents set achievable goals that improve their well-being. We joined the Foyer Health Programme in year three and life coaching was part of a wider package that included things like taster sessions. All the residents got involved and it’s had a noticeable impact on their health and well-being.”

How successful would you say life coaching has been at your Foyer?  

“I’d say it’s been really successful. Some have responded to it better than others. And it isn’t appropriate in all situations, for instance if you’re talking to a resident about what welfare benefits they’re entitled to. But for young people who are struggling with emotional or health issues it’s been extremely helpful.

“We had a young woman who was very depressed. She felt the whole world was against her and she didn’t mix well. She kept telling me that everyone hated her and I kept putting it back to her by asking her if this was true. It’s been a slow process and I’m still working closely with her but she’s definitely making progress. She’s joined the street dance class, a local youth group and is mixing much better with other residents.”

Finally, what advice would you give to other staff interested in using life coaching at their Foyer?  

“Just try it. By using coaching you can transfer responsibility back to the resident and help them set and reach goals for themselves. When they achieve them it’s a massive confidence booster and makes you feel really good about yourself.”

**Interview: the young person**

20 year old Barking and Dagenham Foyer resident Lorna Davey explains how life coaching has helped her.

When did you get your first taste of life coaching?  

“When I first moved into the Foyer I had a session with a support worker where I wrote down my goals for the next six months. I was always tired and didn’t really do anything for myself, so I said I wanted to lose weight, eat more healthily and get a place at college.”

What happened next?  

“I had another meeting with my support worker some weeks later to discuss how I was getting on. We met every three to four weeks to review my progress and set new short-term goals. After six months we had a look back at how I’d got on. I put scores next to the goals I’d set at the start, so I could see how much I’d improved and what I still had to work on.”

How did you get on with achieving your goals?  

“I managed to achieve my target weight. I eat three home-cooked meals a day instead of takeaway, and I’m doing a beauty therapy course at Barking College.”

So you’ve found life coaching helpful?  

“Yes, it helps you look back, which is good because I’ve got a terrible memory. When you see how much you’ve achieved it’s a massive confidence booster and makes you feel really good about yourself. The whole thing is about what you want to do. You’re in charge. Nobody tells you what to do and there’s no negativity involved.”

**“By using coaching you can transfer responsibility back to the resident and help them set and reach goals for themselves.”**
Life coaching in practice

The GROW model is the backbone of all coaching practice and can be used as the basis for how you work.

The model revolves around four areas – Goal, Reality, Options and Will.

Many staff have used this as a way to help learn coaching processes more effectively and to embed the questions in their mind.

Coaching questions and approaches are not just for health sessions - they can be used at anytime to get to the bottom of an issue or to move a young person on from a negative to a positive outlook.

Goal

A coaching session should ideally begin with you trying to find out what a young person’s big goal in life is.

This goal will not usually be in the young person’s control and may take many years to get to. This is the time to explore the goal with the young person using careful questioning, to check what they really want and whether the goal is realistic.

You may also be able to establish some smaller, more achievable short-term goals that will help your subject towards reaching their big goal.

Some typical Goal questions include:

- What is it you want to achieve and when do you want to achieve it by?
- What is the subject matter or the issue that you would like to work on?
- When you achieve your goal what will it look or feel like?
- When you achieve this, what will it mean to you?

Goal exercise

‘The most significant time for me’ is an exercise that can help you to think about and appreciate when you have experienced certain feelings. It gives you a point of reference for the future to feel that experience again. This helps you envisage what it will feel like to reach goals that you set yourself. This can easily be explored to help a young person to set their goals that are meaningful to them.

Try to go through the list below.

The most significant time for me that I did something that I really didn’t want to do, but did it anyway, was:

The most significant time for me I felt truly happy was:

The most significant time for me I felt truly at peace was:

The most significant time for me I felt really proud of myself was:

The most significant time for me that I developed a new skill was:

The most significant time for me that I felt totally focused was:

Reality

Once the big goal has been decided it is important to understand and clarify the person’s current situation. Reality is about that individual’s life at the present – what is going on, what that means to them and what is real to them.

The coach must ask searching open questions that require descriptive, factual answers so avoid asking ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions.

Exploring a person’s reality may take a long time and several sessions for something that seems straightforward to you. However, it is important to let the young person lead as this will help you both to assess whether the goals they want will happen or indeed is what they really want.

Some typical Reality questions include:

- What is happening at the moment?
- What is the present situation in more detail?
- What is good about the present situation?
- What else do I need to know to get the full picture?
- What would you do if you could start all over again?

Reality exercise

To help you start thinking about reality you should explore your own reality. Think about one of your own goals – in your present situation is this goal realistic or achievable? If not, what would need to happen in order to make it so?

Options

The Options stage is where you should offer solutions to the young person’s problems.

You should put forward as many solutions as you can because what you think of as the right option is not always best for the young person.

Once a selection of options has been identified, you and the young person can go through each one and assess the pros and cons. It may be that they need to make a few mistakes before selecting the option that is right for them.

Some typical Options questions include:

- What are the different options you have to resolve this situation?
- What resources (support from staff, friends, family, money, clothing or equipment, opportunities to learn or experience, skills) do you need to achieve your goal?
- What would you do differently if you had a clean sheet to start again?
- What would be the best way to achieve the best result?
- What will happen if you do nothing?
- Which option or options do you choose?

Options exercise

To help get you thinking about Options, try this simple exercise: think of 20 ways to get to the top of a tree. It should get you thinking outside the box and realising how many options there are in most instances.
Will

The final stage of the coaching process is to identify the most appropriate course of action. This stage will need to really pin someone down to a course of action and is best achieved by being as specific as possible. Actions planned as a result of an agreement with a young person will be implemented if they are broken down into small easily actionable points. These goals are sometimes described as SMART (Specific, Measurable Achievable Realistic and Time-bound) steps.

Some typical Will questions include:

- On a scale of one to ten how likely are you to carry out this idea?
- What is the first step you need to take?
- When will you do this by?

Will exercise

To help you thinking about Will, think about how good you are at doing things you say you will do. Rate yourself one to ten and discuss your score with a colleague.

Chapter summary

- Life coaching is a key component of the Foyer Health Programme.
- As a result of being coached young people demonstrate greater independence and are making more positive choices about their lives.
- There are four main elements to life coaching – responsibility, belief and commitment, empowerment and equality.
- The GROW model should form the basis of any life coaching you do at a Foyer.
- Staff who’ve used life coaching techniques in Foyers are more confident and have used coaching skills to transfer major responsibilities in a positive way from themselves to the young people they’ve coached.
- For more details about the life coaching approach please contact us using the details at the back of the toolkit.

Many of the ideas in this chapter have been derived and modified from *The Coaching Manual: the Definitive Guide to the Process, Principles and Skills of Personal Coaching,* by Julie Starr and goalsettingforsuccess.com.
Best practice

Over 100 Foyers took part in the first three years of the Foyer Health Programme. Irrespective of funding and without exception, the best results have come from those that demonstrated innovation, originality or have involved young people significantly in the design and delivery of activities.

In this chapter you’ll find out how to emulate their successes and help make sure that as it moves forward, the Foyer Health Programme delivers the best service possible to young people.

Background

At the beginning of the Foyer Health Programme all Foyers provided a basic focus on a young person’s health. If a young person had previously slept rough, sofa surfed or were displaced from their home it was common for them to stop accessing basic health services such as a doctor, dentist or optician. Support staff would provide a basic assessment of these factors and signpost young people onto local services.

Foyers would usually offer basic health awareness on typical issues such as health and safety, drugs and alcohol and simple cooking, cleaning and money management as part of their life skills programme. Foyers with better resources also delivered some healthy leisure and social and cultural well-being sessions to promote better welfare of their environment.

Generally there was little consultation with residents on what they wanted or how they wanted to achieve it.

Model of involvement

The Foyer Health Programme was designed so young people would be central to the planning, design and participation of health activities.

The most successful Foyers during the first three years of the programme structured that involvement via existing residents’ forums or Health Action Teams.

An action planning team of Foyer Health Champions was required to oversee and manage the implementation of the programme at each Foyer.

A holistic approach to health

The Foyer Health Programme has enabled Foyers to develop specialist projects in the areas of healthy eating, physical activity and mental and emotional well-being. Although these projects focused on these different areas of health, it’s clear that in practice that each area is interconnected – a person who eats well will have more energy to do exercise, which will mean they sleep better and feel happier. Achieving positive health and well-being can also go on to improve other aspects of a young person’s life, such as re-building family relationships and feeling more confident about re-connecting with education, training or employment.

The three areas of the Foyer Health Programme overlap and are bound together as demonstrated in the following diagram:

Building a healthy environment

Creating a healthy physical, social and cultural environment is vital if young people and Foyers are to progress up the Thriving Ladder.

Young people must feel sufficiently confident to speak openly about their health and well-being in a safe, secure and respectful environment. There is a stigma surrounding health issues that can only be combated by focusing on a young person’s goals, and allowing them to speak freely without fear of being mocked.

You also need to think about how a healthy environment for a young person should look. No one is going to feel good living in a dingy place with paint peeling off the walls. Throughout the Foyer Health Programme young people have been involved in designing and creating garden areas, renovating communal lounges and gyms and using art to decorate Foyers which has helped them to be creative, feel valued and take pride and ownership of their environment.

Qualifications and courses

Activities and taster sessions should not be thought of as the only type of health work for young people.

Young people that show particular interest or enthusiasm in an area should be encouraged to do courses and, if appropriate, seek qualifications externally. This can help enormously with employability when they come to move on.

The Blackburn with Darwen Foyer runs a Learning Power Award (LPA), which is available to all residents who are not in employment, education or training. The LPA is a modular personal development programme developed to meet the needs of those working towards making the transition to independent living. Many of the physical activities that have taken place in the Foyer Health Programme have been used as inclusion in Foyer residents’ portfolios and helped them to successfully achieve the qualification.

There are already lots of healthy eating courses and qualifications available. Young people from several Foyers have gained their Basic Food Hygiene certificate, whilst others have gone on to do shop, cook and eat courses and achieve OCN (Open College Network) Level 1 in Healthy Cooking.

Achieving accreditation can have an enormous impact on emotional and mental well-being, giving young people a real confidence and self-esteem boost.

Ideas to steal

During the first three years of the programme Foyers came up with some fantastic ways to engage young people in the areas of physical activity, mental and emotional well-being and healthy eating.

As already suggested, sessions aimed at one area of the programme are likely to give benefits in the other two.

In addition, some activities have wider impacts such as improved perception of young people in the community, greater employability and more interaction amongst staff and residents in Foyers.

In the next few pages you will find a selection of the best sessions and activities from the programme here to inspire you in your own work. Please feel free to steal them or use them as a basis to come up with your own ideas.

For me the really inspiring thing about the Foyer Health Programme was that it didn’t just deliver healthy eating, stop smoking or drug education resources or training. Rather, the different elements came together so that the greatest outcomes were how staff and young people learned and grew together, how links were made with the wider community, young people were listened to and defined the challenges they faced by suggesting and implementing solutions.

Eric Carlin, Consultant Researcher and Professional Ambassador
**Foyer Health Programme**

**Physical activity**

**Working with a local partner and the community**

Step By Step Foyer developed an informal partnership with the local police and played 5-a-side football matches against local schools, volunteers and businesses. The games were organised by an ex-resident and a supportive neighbourhood police sergeant. “We are proud that our partnership with the police was successful,” a staff member said. “We were able to build community relationships and change young people’s perceptions of the police. It worked because it used the platform of sport.”

**Gym**

Gym memberships were obtained by working with Stafford Borough council. They helped us greatly by allowing a different use of the membership and by letting us use the leisure centre to host the Foyer Health Programme launch party. The support from the gym staff has been fantastic and they have given us great feedback.

**Yoga**

Hornsey Foyer has been running a successful yoga programme that has helped residents improve their general health and emotional and mental well-being. The Foyer is now seeking funding to accommodate further sessions, which help residents stay fit, relax and enjoy psychological benefits like concentration, mood and enhancing memory.

**Tai chi**

Tai chi is a traditional Chinese mind-body relaxation exercise. Gateway Foyer engaged instructor and Professional Ambassador Andy Salt to do a live demonstration of the art using wooden swords. The attendees were amazed and fascinated by Andy’s skill, discipline and precision. It was an effective way to learn, as the residents began to recognise some of the simple movements that they had done in previous tai chi sessions being executed with the swords.

**Circus skills**

Blackburn with Darwen and Manchester Foyers joined together and ran circus skills classes and built links with the SkyLight performing arts centre in Rochdale, where residents had the opportunity to learn the trapeze and globe walking. Several residents became good enough at still walking to do it during an open day, which proved to be very popular with visiting guests.

**Running group**

A group of young people and staff from Sunderland Foyer regularly train together and have taken part in the Bupa Great North Run. Other Foyers have trained together to do charity fun runs such as Race for Life. This helps them increase their fitness levels whilst doing something positive for their community.

**Bike scheme**

Lots of Foyers reported enormous benefits from regular bike rides, some of which were used to raise funds by the Foyer for charity. Bath Foyer also set up a bike workshop, where the residents turn parts into fully functioning bikes.

“We established a partnership with the Bath and North East Somerset Council Community Officer, who supplied us with bicycles that had been abandoned or not claimed,” said the Foyer’s Service Manager Anita Holden. “After buying repair-kits and essentials with our funding we formed a bike workshop, where residents created fully functioning bikes that they could use to get around in a green friendly way and also get some physical exercise.”

**Babysitting circle**

Young mums at Project John Foyer wanted to feel better about their bodies after giving birth, but felt because of child care commitments they didn’t have the time to exercise and eat healthily. Together they decided to organise a babysitting circle, where they took turns to look after each other’s children. They also asked a staff member to run an exercise session specifically to work on the areas of the body that needed strengthening after giving birth, which enabled them to feel better about their bodies and increase their self-esteem.

**Other ideas**

Other successful ideas to come out of Foyers include Wii Fit sessions, street dance classes, rock climbing, mountain biking, abseiling, orienteering, canoeing, paintball, table tennis, fishing, ice-skating and martial arts.

**Interview: sporting legends**

**Doncaster Foyer manager Karen Venables explains how an ex-basketball player helped get young people at her Foyer into exercise.**

**How have you promoted physical activities during the Foyer Health Programme?**

“We use a holistic approach to health and have promoted healthy eating and physical activities such as bike rides, street dance and gym sessions to help improve our residents’ emotional and mental well-being. One of the most successful projects we conducted during the Foyer Health Programme was a six week basketball programme run by Look Up To Yourself.”

**What was that about?**

“We hired a local sports hall and ex-basketball professional Carl Miller came in and delivered the sessions. Having an inspirational figure like Carl on board really added to the success of the programme, as he helped the young people break down their barriers to physical exercise. Everyone who took part received a basketball strip and participated in producing a healthy meal at the end of each session. They ended up feeling happier and more confident about life.”

**How have you involved young people in the design and delivery of physical activities?**

“Resident consultation is embedded within our service provision. For instance, when we were developing the onsite gym we asked the young people what equipment they wanted, what time the gym should open and what the rules and guidelines should be. We conduct regular residents’ surveys – the bike project was a result of that consultation – and we’re involving them heavily in developing a health strategy for the future.”

**What are the benefits of involving young people in this way?**

“It gives them more ownership of what’s going on in the Foyer, if they come up with an idea they respect more, use it more and promote it more to new residents. The Foyer is a happier place because the Foyer Health Programme has put health on the agenda and given young people the confidence to get involved in planning activities.”

**Have you used life coaching at all in your physical exercise work?**

“Some staff at Doncaster Foyer attended the coaching training and use life coaching techniques in key working sessions. It’s given them more confidence in dealing with young people.”

**What tips would you give to others looking to introduce physical activities into their service?**

“The key to success is involving residents and working in partnerships. There are lots of organisations out there that will come in and deliver sessions. There’s plenty of goodwill for what we do, you just need to tap into it.”

**Finally, what work will you do on physical activity now that the Foyer Health Programme has finished?**

“We’re still running the bike rides and have the onsite gym. We’ll hopefully get involved in the Homeless World Cup when that comes around and we would like to deliver Look Up To Yourself again, as health has become a really important part of what we do.”
Healthy eating

Involving partners in events
Salford Foyer launched healthy eating sessions with their Good Community Involvement Day at Virgin Media. Young people met Sir Richard Branson and were challenged by Virgin Media staff to construct a kitchen sculpture from items they had donated.

Learning about foods of the world
Bath Foyer promoted world foods during the World Cup, using ingredients from their own garden. All staff spent less formal time with the residents, which allowed better relationships to develop.

Meanwhile, Salford Foyer brought in a Thai chef to give cooking demonstrations and prepare a buffet. Goodie bags with spices were given to all who attended.

Adapting TV shows
Young people at many Foyers adapted ideas from popular TV shows like How Clean Is Your House, Dragons Den and Who Wants To Be A Millionaire to create innovative health sessions.

Residents at SHYPP Foyer at Ross wrote the guidelines for a Come Dine With Me based activity. Their competition focused on how dressing up, having nice table and room decorations, preparing hand made invitations and decorations, entertaining your guests and cooking good food could lead to increased confidence and a sense of relationships to develop. Elsewhere Quay Foyer put on a Ready Steady Cook-style event where residents paired off and cooked healthy meals as part of a competition. “It was very well received and attended,” a staff member said. “The competition enabled them to have fun, socialise and realise how enjoyable cooking can be.”

Linking food and mood
As a result of the Foyer Health Programme Cangle Foyer has delivered a nutrition course called Food and Mood and three cooking courses, two of which are accredited. They found that by eating more healthily some residents were able to engage in job hunting and interviewing as they had more concentration.

Good Food Show
Young people at SHYPP Foyer at Hereford were able to watch celebrity chefs and try new foods at the Good Food Show. They also enjoyed a trip to London to see the Bodyworlds exhibition, which helped them learn about health by understanding the human body.

Chelsea Flower Show
Nine residents from SHYPP Foyer at Ross attended the preparation for Chelsea Flower Show, a session looking at the health properties of plants. Seeing a garden designed with toxic and health benefiting plants helped them understand the link between what you eat and your health.

Exploring cooking on a budget
SHYPP Foyer in Leominster runs a ‘credit crunch’ competitions to inspire healthy eating and lifestyle as well as budgeting skills, whilst SHYPP Foyer in Hereford regularly runs budget-related cooking activities, for instance, residents challenged each other to cook healthy food for themselves for just £10 a week.

Breakfast club
“Breakfast club has enabled contact with those young people attending work or college so we can assess their well-being, achievements and difficulties. The majority used to jump out of bed and rush off. There has also been an increase in the number of young people who are not in work or college getting up and coming to Breakfast Club, rather than lying in bed most of the day.”

Staff member, Bridgewater Foyer

Cooking your own takeaway food
Residents at SHYPP Foyer in Ross cooked healthy versions of food they had eaten previously from takeaway restaurants. This enabled them to compare the cost and nutritional value of home cooked healthy meals against fried and processed food.

Social enterprise
The Residents’ Association at Braintree Foyer set up a scheme where the profits from the healthy vending machines, which they run as a social enterprise, are available as a hardship fund so people in financial difficulty can apply for supermarket vouchers to buy food and essential toiletries.

Foraging skills
Ludlow Foyer facilitated a session on bush craft, where residents learned how to recognise food that grows in the wild. They also learned how to grow organic fruit and vegetables.

Other ideas
Other successful ideas reported by Foyers include pick your own fruit sessions, healthy living quizzes and demonstrations from a local butcher to learn how meat is prepared.

Interview: the right ingredients
Project Worker and Health Champion Lakshmi Patel explains how food put a smile on the face of residents at Bedford Foyer.

How have you promoted healthy eating during the Foyer Health Programme?
“Every Monday we run healthy eating classes where we teach young people how to cook affordable meals from scratch. A course lasts seven weeks and each session focuses on something different. We’ve learned to cook vegetables, fruit, soup, banana bread and even healthy burgers. We always have a cook-off on the final night and everyone on the course gets a certificate and folder containing recipes and information on healthy eating. Food is a big part of this Foyer and we do cookery courses on other nights that also promote healthy eating. We’ve created a recipe book from all the meals we’ve learned during the Foyer Health Programme, which is on sale in our café.”

How have you involved young people in the design and delivery of healthy eating activities?
“Everything we do on the cookery and healthy eating courses is decided by the young people. They choose what they want to cook and some of them help out with the shopping, which helps them understand budgets. If we only have £40 to feed eight people that’s all they can spend.”

What other benefits have you noticed?
“You don’t get anyone saying ‘I didn’t want that’ because they’ve decided together what they’ll cook. Successfully following a recipe gives people a real confidence boost and because we have such a laugh, the classes are great for making friends. Lots of people have a real problem with eating in front of others but after we’ve cooked, we all sit down to eat and people don’t want to miss out so they get involved. Overall the Foyer is a happier place as there is more social interaction.”

Have you used life coaching at all in your healthy eating work?
“We always used life coaching as part of the personal action plans we do with residents. When anyone comes into the Foyer they complete a support questionnaire that has a section on health. We use that to help them set health goals like losing or putting on weight – we’ve had lots of boys recently who have been underweight and needed to put on a few pounds. Life coaching has helped them towards that.”

Have you formed partnerships with any external organisations or people to help you deliver healthy eating activities?
*“Young people from other projects come to our healthy eating courses. We send out notifications in our emails and newsletters. It’s good because it gets rid of the stigma about other projects and widens our residents’ social circle.”

“Overall the Foyer is a happier place and there is more social interaction.”

Have you found that healthy eating has positive impacts on physical activity and emotional and mental well-being?
“Of course. If you eat good food you’ll feel happier. We have one young man who has given up smoking cannabis and started playing football since doing the healthy eating course because he feels happier and fitter. Another lad was not confident because he felt he was tall and ungainly. Since learning about carbohydrates and proteins on the healthy eating course he’s started doing weight lifting and is much happier within himself.”

What tips would you give to others looking to introduce healthy eating initiatives in their service?
“Put the ball in the young people’s court, don’t dictate what’s going to happen. Make it fun. Have breaks – there’s nothing wrong than having a group of young people standing around for hours at a time. Don’t have too many people in the group. Work them in teams and give the sessions a competitive edge.”

Finally, what work will you do on healthy eating to build on the Foyer Health Programme?
“We’ve done well with the budgeting and still have some money left from the programme that will allow us to carry on for a while. We’re already looking into how we can find more funding after that because we won’t ever be able to stop doing the sessions – the young people enjoy them too much.”
Emotional and mental well-being

In-house counselling and drugs programme

West London YMCA Foyer has an in-house counselling service where young people are encouraged to address issues they have been avoiding in the comfort of familiar surroundings. The Foyer has also developed a programme to support young people with addiction problems to maintain their tenancies. If a young person faces eviction for drug use they can opt for four to six sessions to reflect on how drugs can affect behaviour and what the consequences are. If they engage and make an effort to change their lifestyle the Foyer are happy to suspend the eviction.

Boxing

One tenant at Batley Foyer had a history of becoming violent and aggressive when under stress, shouting or lashing out and damaging her flat. After being introduced to the Foyer Health Programme she began to see the link between exercising and the release of negative energy, and used boxing to get rid of aggression and gain clarity and perspective.

Clothes workshop

A local designer ran a customising clothes workshop at Newark Foyer, where young people learned how to transform plain clothes into unique shirts, scarves and hats. This provided them with the ability to improve the way they felt about how they present themselves, which helped with their overall well-being. “We always notice that residents who live on a tight budget have low self-esteem because they can’t afford expensive clothes,” said a staff member. “The residents sustained these improvements because they have continued to customise their clothes.”

Art, CBT and massage

Loughborough Foyer used professional graphic art and graffiti instructors to help young people create attractive artwork to decorate communal areas in the Foyer. This inspired residents to approach B&Q for donations to help them achieve a new look. The Foyer has also established a joint working partnership with FutureMinds to deliver cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and employs holistic therapy practitioners to deliver Reiki, hand and foot reflexology and Indian head massage within the Foyer.

LGBT project and alternative therapy

Young people have and continue to be involved in organising and leading on health activities at our Foyer. For example a young person organised, led and ran a group of young people on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Out project. They have attracted funding and support for the project from the Primary Care Trust, Worthing Borough Council, Supporting People and local businesses.

Residents have also benefited from holistic alternative therapies to help alleviate sleep disorders, stress and anxiety. One young male resident with severe Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder was at risk of being evicted on several occasions. Through the use of Shiatsu and healthy eating he became more motivated to channel his energies into his physical health. He took the lead role in running the group and now works in the local gym.

Staff member, Worthing Foyer

Gender groups

New Haven Foyer runs gender groups led by residents to discuss topics not addressed by external support agencies, like how men can positively express emotion.

The Foyer also runs in-house counselling sessions in association with the University of Brighton. The sessions have helped people who had previously been prone to anti-social behaviour, self-harm and depression get help more quickly, as GP counselling referrals had been known to take weeks or even months to come through.

Gardening

Young people at Batley Foyer were involved in the planting and growing in the Places of Change Garden as part of the Chelsea Flower Show. The Garden, which was developed by over 300 people who have experienced or are experiencing housing issues, is the biggest ever Show Garden for the Chelsea Flower Show and was awarded a Silver Flora Medal. Since the Show, residents at Batley Foyer have worked with a gardening contractor to build the decking and surrounding area in the Foyer garden, providing work experience and a reference for their CVs. Some of them decided to pursue formal qualifications around gardening at OCN level.

“Foyer Health Programme funding has helped us to pay for a gym instructor and through his hard work our gym is much more than a room full of equipment, it’s a thriving community of young people working together to improve the way they look and feel.”

Mark Watson, Foyer Manager, Braintree Foyer
Young people have realised that mental well-being is dependent on many factors such as eating sensibly, getting a good night's sleep and getting plenty of exercise. They have to look at the whole before they can cure the part.

Amanda Boateng, Senior Housing Support Officer, West London YMCA Foyer

Cultural trip

A cultural trip to Liverpool Albert Dock enabled 18 residents from Morecambe Foyer to visit the Beatles Museum, Tate Liverpool and Maritime Museum. These trips are fantastic for well-being because they can be inspiring and raise aspirations.

Theatre trip and community involvement

Residents from Halton YMCA Foyer went to watch a theatre show about the effects of drugs and alcohol and took part in a group discussion after the event. They also helped clean up the local community centre and used cameras to document their day-to-day lives, which formed the basis of a discussion with members of the community about the impacts of drugs and alcohol.

Interview: a healthy state of mind

Service Manager Jillian Hartland explains how residents at CHADD Foyer have helped deliver a set of sustainable emotional and mental well-being activities.

How have you promoted emotional and mental well-being during the Foyer Health Programme?

“We started off giving tasting sessions on confidence, relaxation, massage and aromatherapy through the mental health charity Mind. Because the sessions were expensive I asked them to focus on self-relaxation techniques, so we’d be able to continue with the work once the Foyer Health Programme funding ran out.”

“The people from Mind were brilliant – they provided a toolkit and some introductory sessions and by the time they stopped coming, our young people came together to turn rubbish into fashion. They raised over £900 for cancer research via bucket collections and the local paper, which raised the profile of the scheme.

Trashion show and My Life display

Young people at Verve Place Foyer developed links with Ryfields retirement village to host a Trashion show event. Verve Place funded four Trashion workshops where young people came together to turn rubbish into fashion.

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“How have you involved young people in the design and delivery of emotional and mental well-being activities?”

“We have resident involvement meetings every month and project meetings every other week where young people can give us their ideas. They all have different interests so instead of one residents’ group we have action groups in different areas. For example, if someone comes up with an idea for emotional and mental well-being, they can join the health action group and they can work on the idea and see if it is feasible. If there isn’t an action group already for that area of interest we’ll set one up.”

How has involving young people benefited the Foyer?

“The Foyer also worked in partnership with Warrington Collegiate over the summer break to put together a ‘My life’ display for the local community and partner agencies. The Foyer also worked in partnership with Warrington Collegiate over the summer break to put together a ‘My life’ display for the local community and partner agencies. It involved young people sharing elements of their life or history through photographs, art, music, dance and drama.

How has life coaching benefited the residents?

“When young people first come to us they are usually in a state of crisis. Their short-term goals are to sort out benefits and get a roof over their heads. We use life coaching along side the Foyer support plan tool to look at their long-term goals and aspirations, which is really important in terms of emotional and mental well-being. If you don’t have any aspirations what have you got to look forward to?

“Through coaching we’ve been able to get residents and staff to look at things in a different way and break down the stigma attached to the words ‘mental health.’ Staff realise now that if a young person can’t sleep, it doesn’t necessarily mean they are depressed. When residents ask for support via a GP for sleeping tablets they’re steered towards aromatherapy classes or asked to look at what they eat, because we know that if you eat chips every day you’re not going to feel good.”

Have you used life coaching at all in your emotional and mental well-being work?

“Four of our staff did life coaching training as part of the Foyer Health Programme. They now use it to help young people set goals for themselves and it has become an automatic part of our support structure. It’s great for problem solving and works along side the advice and guidance model. It gives staff another perspective on things and it’ll be promoting for those who’ve done their training to cascade their knowledge down to the others, so everyone has the ability to offer coaching where appropriate.”

What tips would you give to others looking to introduce emotional and mental well-being initiatives in their own service?

“Get the young people together and find out what they want. Listen to what they have to say, be honest and make sure you include feasible options in activities and resident involvement business plans. Also, bear in mind that groups change. You should review things every three months or when there is a drop in attendance or you risk losing the young people’s interest.”

Finally, what work will you do on emotional and mental well-being now that the Big Lottery funding for the Foyer Health Programme has finished?

“We’ve worked hard to make sure most of the ideas we’ve introduced are sustainable. The holistic, fitness and art therapy night sessions will continue and we’ve bought a flat screen TV, DVD player and lots of DVDs so people can do their own sessions on things like yoga, aerobics and dance. We’ve also bought a Wii Fit, a smoother maker and equipment, but the main thing is we’ve got the enthusiasm and commitment to carry on what we’ve started.”
Foyer Health Programme

51

Foyer hubs to develop MyNav. Computer Centre, the Foyer Federation worked with five Fund and expert support from the University of London Innovation and Skills' Learning Revolution Transformation With initial funding from the Department for Business, learning opportunities, a social networking space and an be MyNav, an online platform that gives users tailored information across the network. Some Foyers have also been great at informing residents of opportunities to participate in health activities using leaflets, booklets and even key rings with USB attachments.

As the programme moves forward we feel that the most important communications tool for any Foyer will be MyNav, an online platform that gives users tailored learning opportunities, a social networking space and an online personal learning plan.

With initial funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills’ Learning Revolution Transformation Fund and expert support from the University of London Computer Centre, the Foyer Federation worked with five Foyer hubs to develop MyNav.

MyNav: the way forwards

Communication is vital to the continued success of the Foyer Health Programme. During the first three years of the project Foyer staff have been excellent at sharing information across the network. Some Foyers have also been great at informing residents of opportunities to participate in health activities using leaflets, booklets and even key rings with USB attachments.

As the programme moves forward we feel that the most important communications tool for any Foyer will be MyNav, an online platform that gives users tailored learning opportunities, a social networking space and an online personal learning plan.

With initial funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills’ Learning Revolution Transformation Fund and expert support from the University of London Computer Centre, the Foyer Federation worked with five Foyer hubs to develop MyNav.

Over 200 young people engaged in the trial project, recording an average of 145 MyNav hits per day. Young people felt they had been given greater control of their learning journey, gaining new skills and knowledge while enhancing their abilities to track housing, education and employment goals including progression from custody and other challenging backgrounds. Most of all, young people felt MyNav had improved their confidence to participate in and contribute to group work and valued highly the experiences of participating in learning and networking through the technology.

MyNav also delivered wider benefits including increased participation in health activities and participants reporting improved physical or emotional and mental well-being. Amongst the most popular activities were sessions on cookery, healthy eating and nutrition, sport and physical health, self-esteem and well-being, drugs and alcohol awareness and sexual health advice.

Below are examples of how the Foyers involved in MyNav have developed and embedded informal learning opportunities with a positive impact on health.

Foyers in Devon and Cornwall created a directory of health services around their local areas, explaining to residents the services on offer, when the best times would be to access them and how to get there. These ranged from Sure Start centres to sexual health advice centres and clinics, mental health services and opportunities to engage in sporting activities.

At Halton YMCA Foyer, residents developed a great outdoors forum on MyNav, where residents could promote outdoor activities such as walking and cycling and use the online space to share interests, experiences and opportunities for others to take advantage of. One resident uploaded pictures taken on a thirty-mile hike, another young person shared guides on walks around their county, while others have posted videos on the portal to inspire upcoming outdoor activities.

Peterborough Foyer worked closely with its local drugs services drop-in, making them a strong presence on MyNav to complement their face-to-face work at the Foyer. While using MyNav to alert residents of the drop-in sessions at the Foyer occurring at specific times in the week, a forum was also set up so that residents could seek support from an advisor who regularly logged on offer information and advice.

Inspired by the Channel 4 cooking programme Come Dine With Me, some Foyers exploited the communication tools of MyNav to organise visits and trips to other Foyers. They also put on events where residents could take turns cooking for one another. Participant feedback, photographs, and recipes were often shared on MyNav so that all residents could benefit and at Scarborough Foyer, one resident blogged about his experiences throughout the process.

Weston Foyer developed podcast cooking sessions, with learners using a variety of media and technology to develop and learn new skills and recipes. Developing capacity for laptops, wireless internet and portable video devices allowed for a more fluid approach to learning vital life skills such as cooking, with residents able to access opportunities when they found it most appropriate.

The MyNav project will continue and become more widely used as a tool for engagement and communication within the Foyer network. It will be promoted more as an instrument to help young people navigate their individual and transitional life challenges, exploring the impact of the portal on particular groups of young people, such as those with a history of offending. For more information about MyNav please get in touch with the Foyer Federation by using our contact details at the back of the toolkit.

Chapter summary: what makes a thriving health activity?

Involve young people in the design and delivery of activities.

Understand the vision, mission and motivations of partners.

Allow young people to engage with the wider community.

Adapt health activities into a format young people could relate easily to like popular TV shows.

Use Professional or Young Ambassadors to inspire participation.

Take young people out to alternative and inspiring environments like museums.

Work in partnership to enhance your health offer.
Like many of the best ideas in this toolkit, high standards of service within the Foyer Federation were driven by young people:


“This was resolved at a council meeting when we asked young Foyer residents to join the debate. They spoke with one voice: the Foyer was their future, they demanded the best possible service and that this be externally verified. Foyer accreditation was born. A lesson in the importance of empowering young people!”

Over the years three separate accreditation models have evolved, all of which now have a strong emphasis on health.

In this chapter you’ll find out how to use them to help you maintain the best standards of service at your Foyer.

Background to our accreditation products

The Foyer Federation was the first organisation in the UK to develop a quality assurance system that integrated housing and learning.

In 1997 we introduced three over-arching principles governing what it means to be a Foyer. These three tests – Focus, Approach and Relationship became the foundation for the introduction of the Foyer Accreditation Scheme in 1998.

Health indicators were first identified as an important addition to this accreditation process through our Strong Minded project in 2005. We built on research from the University of Lancaster’s Healthy Settings Development Unit to support and facilitate the holistic and integrated development of healthy work and living settings, which in turn influenced the Department of Health’s Healthy Schools Standards.

The latter showed how a focus on health could be embedded into the Foyer Federation’s accreditation indicators by ensuring that health is a primary consideration in management, training and service delivery processes. New indicators covering the specialist thematic strands of well-being, healthy eating and physical activity were also introduced.

These new indicators contextualised previous work from prison and school settings into Foyers, responded to chronic gaps in understanding around lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues by adopting practice from the Scottish LGBT Youth Charter of Rights, embodied the dynamic approach of our Healthy Transitions model and utilised features from the existing accreditation scheme.

The indicators stressed the importance of a common approach to health through innovation, empowerment, diversity and partnership and covered two main areas, which were core health standards and specialist healthy eating, physical activity and emotional and mental well-being standards.

Indicators from both areas were used to develop a clear set of policies, procedures and service expectations that integrated our three quality development and recognition tools Foyer Independence Support Home (FISH), Foyer Status Mark (FSM) and Transformational Innovation Mark (TIM).

Quality assurance and health

The Foyer Health Programme has demonstrated that an emphasis on health must be integrated into the way services are designed, developed, managed, staffed and quality assured. It is not a simple case of accessing more health services or providing more health life skills courses. Health needs to be at the heart of what you do and how you operate.

That is why our quality development and recognition products FISH, FSM and TIM have been recalibrated to utilise learning from the programme.

Each of the products now features a series of Healthy Transition indicators across the different policies, procedures and practices that define a thriving service.

As a result, they can help you sustain the different elements of the Foyer Health Programme by making them part of the process and culture through which you work with a young person. They can also enhance your own transition to being a thriving service by helping you to:

1. put in place a secure foundation of health aware policies and procedures through FISH
2. develop a health focus, approach and relationship to promote a thriving health offer for young people through the FSM
3. recognise and learn about the impact on health through innovation using the TIM

You can choose one or all of the quality development and recognition products as part of a quality assurance or consultancy package, offered by the Foyer Federation, to help you integrate health into your delivery model.
The FISH development tool

Both the FISH and TIM tools have allowed us to identify any evidence gaps in health provision at Eden. This has certainly helped us reduce health inequality and embed health into the Foyer way of life.

Sigrid Grierson, Support Worker, Eden Rural Foyer

FISH is a development tool that can help you put in place the policies and procedures that will make your service thrive. Beginning in the late 90s as an accreditation scheme based around the principles of Foyer, Independence, Support, Home; FISH was recognised by central Government and expanded in 2007 to include an optional health section.

Two years later it was transformed from a quality recognition tool into a development guide. Mapped against the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), which supports those implementing the monitoring requirements of Supporting People (the Government’s programme for funding, planning and monitoring housing-related support services), FISH can offer you a comprehensive list of policies and procedures and a process to assess and develop these with staff and young people.

As well as integrating health into the FISH matrix the guide looks at health-specific areas by which you can:

- demonstrate concern for the emotional and physical well-being of young people and foster healthy transitions during and after their programme
- establish links to community resources supporting the well-being, self-esteem and positive identity of diverse young people

FISH can be used as a stand-alone guide or together with consultancy support from the Foyer Federation to develop and assess policy and procedures.

The Foyer Status Mark

The FSM report will help raise the profile of the service and Supporting People projects in general in Dudley and protect funding through the difficult times ahead.

Jane Clarke, Chief Executive, CHADD

The FSM validation tool measures the quality of the health offer at a Foyer. It works by looking in depth at the impact your service has on the outcomes of young people, comparing performance with Local Authority national indicators in health and well-being.

To fulfil the criteria for accreditation, you will need to demonstrate to an independent Quality Council that you have established comprehensive systems of management control and quality assurance covering all aspects of your work. You’ll need to submit data to benchmark your performance on an ongoing basis and work towards peer assessment processes involving trained staff and young people.

Assessment is based around three tests that allow flexibility in how you shape and deliver your service offer according to local need.

**TEST 1**

Does your focus meet the development needs and goals of young people in transition?

**TEST 2**

Does your approach make a positive offer of integrated skills, resources and opportunities accessible to young people?

**TEST 3**

Are your relationships based on a formal commitment between the young person, the service, and the community, which is a condition of continued engagement?

Each of the three tests is assessed against benchmarks defined by the levels and contexts of a sustainable Foyer service. The results will determine the place of your service on the Thriving Ladder.

**Thriving**

Health focused work is sustainable and has significant impact, linking to wider health issues and involving young people at all levels. You have a confident service identity, a secure culture of achievement, are innovative and enterprising in your approach to health work, demonstrate visionary leadership and are able to shape your own future.

**Building**

Health is seen as important and programmes are being tried and tested involving young people and partnership working. You are demonstrating initiative, trying new approaches, willing to take risks, developing partnerships and future health strategies, have autonomous staff and demonstrate proactive leadership.

**Coping**

Health focused work happens but only links with internal structures. You are limited to working within current health opportunities rather than building future strategies, have responsive management but autonomy is limited among the staff team and are stable but internally focused and reactive.

**Surviving**

Health programmes rarely happen and when they do, they focus on immediate problems or need. You are constantly fire fighting and there is an absence of strong leadership or effective management.
The Transformational Innovation Mark

The TIM has been designed to recognise practice that enables young people to achieve a thriving level of independence. It is the principal means of evaluating how far a healthy transitions service, developed through the use of FISH and the FSM, has reached a transformational level. If you put yourself forward for a TIM, you will be assessed on the skills, resources and opportunities you provide, how you’ve included young people in designing and delivering services, how innovative you’ve been and what impact you have made in terms of achievements and results. If successful you would receive a TIM award from the Innovation Council and be promoted by the Foyer Federation at its Policy and Practice Events.

Support Worker Sigrid Grierson explains why Eden Rural Foyer did so well on the TIM assessment

You’ve done a lot during the first three years of the Foyer Health Programme. What do you think have been your key successes?

“I think I’m most proud of the fact that residents are more aware of their health and fitness now. They were quite negative initially – lots of people have had a bad time at school over health and fitness issues, but the Foyer Health Programme has helped them break down barriers.”

What partnerships have you formed during the Foyer Health Programme?

“We set up a great partnership with the University of Cumbria. Some of their students came down to help our residents turn the backyard of the Foyer into a lovely garden that had been designed by our young people. The produce is sold in our café, the profits are used to buy new seeds and equipment and the students come back to mentor our residents four times a year. So both the garden and the partnership are sustainable.”

Have you formed partnerships with any other organisations?

“We have a partnership with the local leisure centre. We’d been trying to link up with them for years and then one day we had some occupational therapists here on a placement. They heard what we wanted, set up a meeting with the leisure centre and took some of our residents along to talk about what we’d like to do. We bought some gym passes at reduced prices, the residents attended and started to build up their confidence. Now they can get into the centre at reduced prices.

“We also have a partnership with Age Concern, who have a residential home opposite us. When the Foyer first came here they were very negative about the idea but we’ve worked with them for a long time now. As part of the Foyer Health Programme some of their elderly residents came to visit us and our young people showed them how to use the Wi Fi. Things like that have totally changed their perception of the young people here and they look out for our residents now, rather than being afraid of them.”

How have you involved young people in the design and delivery of health activities?

“We’ve included them since the start of the Foyer Health Programme. We have meetings about what activities they’d like to do, talk about their ideas and think about if they’re feasible in terms of cost. This gives them more confidence, independence and social skills. The young people who’ve been involved in funding bids to enhance the programme have been able to put that on their CVs, which gives them greater employability and again boosts their self-esteem.”

What accreditation products have you used along the way?

“We attended the Foyer Health Programme meetings, which have been a great way to share experience and ideas with other Foyers. We’ve also used bits of the FISH, FSM and TIM tools because it’s really useful to be able to benchmark how you’re getting on. The TIM application process and life coaching training were invaluable tools all the way through the programme.

“They allowed us to clarify the unmet health needs of the young people in the very beginning and identify clear objectives. Health goals now naturally link to support planning and health is very much on the young people’s agenda. Both the FISH and TIM tools have allowed us to identify any evidence gaps in health provision at Eden. This has certainly helped us reduce health inequality and embed health into the Foyer way of life.”

What have you learned from being involved in the Foyer Health Programme?

“I would say that no goal is too small and there are no limits to what a young person can achieve. Being healthy gives people a much better chance of independent living. Never forget that young people are individuals and what works for one will not necessarily work for another.”

Finally, how do you intend to move forwards as a Foyer and keep up the good work you’ve started?

“Many of the activities that have come out of the programme like the garden project and partnerships with the University of Cumbria, Age Concern and the local leisure centre will carry on. In fact, the whole ethos of the programme is sustainable because it’s become embedded in the plans and processes we use. Health is a key part of our support plans now and will remain so into the future.”

56
Foyer Health Programme questionnaire

Name: [ ]

1. Do you have specialist policies on healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health and well-being, that do more than just look at cooking skills, gym access, and access to counselling?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
2. Are each of these health areas sufficiently detailed within assessment and support processes?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
3. Do each of these areas form a key part of the learning programme supported through the service?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
4. Does your learning programme enable young people to explore their health in creative and enterprising ways?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
5. Do you have a policy on alcohol and drugs that addresses personal support and development needs and not just your legal duties?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
6. Can you identify and support the health needs of young people with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identities?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
7. Can you identify the typical health needs of the key target groups that form part of the service community – for example, care leavers, young offenders, etc?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
8. Do you apply a coaching approach to supporting young people that looks more at goals than needs?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
9. Are staff trained and developed to use a coaching approach, including through their own line management?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
10. Does your resettlement assessment process look at what types of health skills, resources and opportunities a young person has developed that will enable them to build and thrive in the future?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
11. Do you involve young people in shaping their own solutions to health and supporting others?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
12. Are staff able to explore and develop their own health identities and expertise?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
13. Are your staff trained to support low-level mental health needs?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
14. Does the service environment stimulate positive well-being?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
15. Does the service environment promote positive health messages and encourage healthy lifestyles?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
16. Do you have partnerships that enable young people to access health provision in their local community – including with the local Primary Care Trust?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
17. Do you have a Health Champion in your staff team?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
18. Do you encourage young people to promote and support healthy lifestyles as peers, mentors and ambassadors?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
19. Do you identify, monitor and track health goals and outcomes?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
20. Do you know what impact your service has on the health needs of the local area?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

Next steps
We’ve explained why the Foyer Federation strives for such high levels of service and about the products that can help you reach or maintain these levels. But which one should you use?
The questionnaire opposite has been designed to help you identify the quality development and recognition product that can help develop your approach to health.
Try to answer the questions honestly yes or no – your score will reveal what you need to do next.

Health diagnosis
1 – 10 answered ‘yes’: you are in between surviving and coping – you should use FISH to begin reviewing health.
11 – 15 answered ‘yes’: you are between coping and building – you should work with the FSM to strengthen your health offer.
16 – 20 answered ‘yes’: you are between building and thriving – you should use the TIM to develop health innovation.

Chapter summary
Demand for high standards through the accreditation of Foyers was driven by residents.
The Foyer Federation has three quality development and recognition tools designed to help maintain high standards of innovation and delivery.
FISH is a tool to help develop the policies and procedures needed to provide effective thriving service for young people.
FSM is an accreditation mark which measures the focus, approach and relationships that define a quality service.
TIM is for awarding outstanding practice in transforming young people using innovative and involving methods.
You should use the questionnaire at the end of this chapter to determine which of the products is best suited to you.
Use our contact details at the back of the toolkit to ask us for details of your suggested product.
What we’ve learned from the Foyer Health Programme

The Foyer Health Programme has reached nearly 7,000 young people directly in Foyers and a further 15,000 people from local communities have benefited from initiatives that the programme has generated. This has provided the Foyer Federation with a robust evidence base with which to inform its responses to Government consultations on policy development in health and well-being.

Health Select Committee Enquiry into Health Inequalities 2008

Based on responses from around 30 Foyers participating in the first year of the Foyer Health Programme, we concluded that the NHS has an important role to play in tackling the health inequalities experienced by disadvantaged young people.

The NHS also has an important role in enabling organisations like Foyers to increase their impact on health through better information and partnership working. NHS services are, in some instances, implementing effective initiatives in partnership with Foyers in particular outreach health services.

However, the key message is that NHS organisations need to reach out to the voluntary sector more and have enough resources to undertake health improvement initiatives with disadvantaged groups and communities. Mental health is also a particular area that has had limited attention and investment in terms of health inequalities and young people’s access to mental health services is a major concern reported by Foyers.

While access to GPs and sexual health services was generally thought to be good, access to mental health services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was universally regarded as poor. Foyers reported that the transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services was frequently badly handled and ended up having a detrimental effect on the mental well-being of young people receiving this service.

What next?

Campaigning for better provision of services for young people is what the Foyer Federation is all about.

As our most recent flagship project, the Foyer Health Programme gives us lots of new material to work with.

In this chapter you’ll find out how your Foyer’s contributions will help shape policy and attitudes towards young people’s health across the UK.

Foyers and their role in public health policy

The key priority of the Foyer Federation’s Healthy Transitions strategy and Foyer Health Programme is to tackle the health issues faced by young people experiencing difficulties in making the transition to adult independence. As outlined at the beginning of this toolkit, that means low levels of nutrition, physical activity and emotional and mental well-being.

Many of the health goals set by young people through the Foyer Health Programme relate specifically to public health priorities such as healthy eating and stopping smoking. Indeed, some 70 per cent of goals relate to either of these two priorities.

Foyers themselves are physical environments that can be used to promote positive health messages and choices. Through the use of information, advice and guidance on health to the growing and preparation of healthy foods, hosting of health fairs and referral and signposting to specialist agencies; the environment of the Foyer is crucial to the development of healthy eating and lifestyles.

Outside of the work that Foyers do specifically on health, much of the support they provide addresses all that is known in public health parlance as the ‘wider determinants of health’. These include things like stable and secure tenancy and engagement with education and training.

Foyers themselves are physical environments that can be used to promote positive health messages and choices. Through the use of information, advice and guidance on health to the growing and preparation of healthy foods, hosting of health fairs and referral and signposting to specialist agencies; the environment of the Foyer is crucial to the development of healthy eating and lifestyles.

The Foyer Health Programme has generated evidence that poor levels of nutrition, physical activity and mental and emotional well-being have an effect on young people’s ability to gain access to and sustain employment. By working holistically with a young person and addressing their difficulties with relation to health and well-being in tandem with those relating to employment and training, Foyers have a greater impact on both.

The links between well-being, good mental health and outcomes in other spheres such as learning and employment are well established. According to the Department of Health, ‘poor mental health and well-being can have an impact on every area of a person’s life: physical health, education, employment, family, relationships, and the effects can last a lifetime. It plays an important part in contributing to and maintaining health and social inequalities’.

The Foyer Health Programme, by encouraging young people to take positive steps for their health and well-being, tackles directly these health inequalities, and in doing so produces impacts that are much broader than health alone.

As we have seen, another key feature of the Foyer Health Programme is the manner in which it has transformed Foyers themselves into environments that promote good physical and mental health. Indeed, as the Department of Health suggests, some of the future costs of supporting mental ill health can be offset by ‘greater focus on whole-population mental health promotion and prevention’ by:

• using a life-course approach to ensure a positive start in life and healthy adult and older years
• building strength, safety and resilience: address inequalities and ensure security and safety at individual, relationship, community and environmental levels
• developing sustainable, connected communities: creating socially inclusive communities that promote social networks and environmental engagement
• integrating physical and mental health, reducing health-risk behaviour and promoting physical activity
• promoting purpose and participation to enhance positive well-being through a balance of physical and mental activity, relaxation, generating a positive outlook, creativity and purposeful community activity.

The extent to which the Foyer Health Programme has enabled Foyers to engage in these activities is very striking, as we have seen throughout this toolkit.

What next?

CAHMS Review 2008

We surveyed 150 young people who had taken part in the Foyer Health Programme in order to inform our response to this review. Again, the response focused upon difficulties in accessing mental health services for the young adults who live in Foyers. Young people reported difficulty in accessing CAMHS services for depression and anxiety, substance misuse and other related mental health difficulties. They suggested that you had to be in crisis in order to be helped. This point of view was endorsed by the staff we interviewed as part of the response to the Health Inequalities Review above.

Young people also reported their dissatisfaction with the way their mental health was treated in a Primary Care context. They reported that there was a high incidence of GPs prescribing anti-depressants as a ‘quick fix’, rather than consider the possibility of longer-term counselling or therapies.

We stated in the review the importance of treating mental health difficulties holistically, in tandem with all the other factors influencing a young person’s life. In particular, young people felt that this would help to tackle some of the stigma attached to mental health difficulties. They appreciated the way in which Foyers were able to deal with low-level mental health difficulty in a ‘relaxed, informal manner’.

Marmot Review 2009

For this review we reported emerging evidence that a focus on the Foyer as a physical environment, and on health and well-being as a key feature of support planning, were having an impact on wider determinants of health. By that we meant the ability to sustain a tenancy and engagement with employment and learning. We called for young people in supported housing to be identified as a group in particular need of support as a consequence of higher levels of self-harm, eating disorders, anxiety and depression and suicide attempts than in the general population.

Marmot Review 2009
New Horizons consultation 2009
We surveyed 81 Foyers participating in the Foyer Health Programme in order to inform our response to this consultation. Our response focused on the following themes:

- levels of access, location and cost of service provision, particularly with respect to mental health
- greater access for non-specialist staff working with young people to training in supporting low-level mental health needs
- the models that the Foyer Health Programme has developed for supporting personalisation in health services, such as life coaching
- a call for a greater focus on preventative work and more partnership work with the Third Sector

Call for Evidence: Personalisation in health and well-being 2009
This response focused on the models developed through the Foyer Health Programme in the following areas:

- how the Third Sector can offer real choice to citizens – we cited how our Accreditation framework examines how local services are integrated at a local level, providing a seamless service to clients
- how the Third Sector can deliver personalised early interventions – we cited how coaching-based approaches, coupled with the taster sessions that form an integral part of the programme, can provide a range of resources that enable young people to take positive steps for their well-being and monitor their progress
- how the Third Sector can overcome organisational barriers to personalisation – we cited how the Foyer Health Programme can provide a framework for the development of a long-term strategy to sustain interventions
- how the Third Sector can improve outcomes through service-user participation – we cited the involvement of young people in Health Action Teams that had been set up through the Foyer Health Programme

we called for guidance to be issued by the Cabinet Office that would set out these parameters and provide examples of best practice for all commissioners and providers of health and social care, to help define what personalisation is and how to do it

Conclusion: Key emerging themes from all the responses
The process of gathering evidence for all of these responses has led us to identify a number of key lessons from the Foyer Health Programme that demonstrate the actual and potential role that service providers like Foyers can play in the public health agenda:

- Foyers work with a group of young people that are often the target of public health interventions
- Foyers can provide physical environments that promote health and well-being, acting as a preventative intervention that can lower the number of young people going on to develop long-term health difficulties
- Foyers are models of personalised and holistic support that can help fill some of the gaps in health services in local communities, whilst tackling barriers related to access and location experienced by many young people
- there is capacity to do more, but investment in facilities and staff development is required

Research and reports commissioned through the Foyer Health Programme
Two of the Professional Ambassadors for the third year of the programme, Julia Margo and Eric Carlin, were commissioned by us to conduct studies and write reports based on their findings. We asked Julia Margo to look at the relationship between work placements/internships and health and well-being, since we knew that many Foyer residents are distant from the labour market and that poor levels of emotional and mental well-being are a contributory reason for this.

We asked Eric Carlin to look at resilience, in particular the factors that build resilience in young people, and the impact that this would have on the Foyer as a physical environment. We did this because of the growing evidence base indicating that the possession of a measure of resilience is one of the key factors that makes the difference between young people who are able to make a successful transition to independent adulthood and those who are not. The full versions of both reports are available from the Foyer Federation. On the next page is a brief summary of their findings.

Access All Areas
This report by Julia Margo employs original analysis of the British Cohort Study to examine the impact of apprenticeships on well-being, capabilities and employment of young people aged 16-24. It explores the role that pre-work training can have in improving life chances for disadvantaged groups.

The analysis of the 1970 British Cohort Study revealed that individuals who had taken part in apprenticeships were more likely to feel that they were able to run their life the way they wanted, and were notably more confident in their ability to solve problems, learn new skills and work in a team. The majority of answers from those who had completed apprenticeships indicated that they were more confident, happier and more skilled than their counterparts who had not.

In particular, the research demonstrates that apprenticeships have the most impact on those who left school with no qualifications. The impact was more significant for men than for women.

The researchers also looked at the types and levels of qualification that produce the most significant return in respect of individual well-being. They found that in terms of vocational education significant returns were only found at the higher end – anything below Level 2 on the National Qualifications framework produced nothing of significance.

The report makes seven recommendations of how changes in policy can support the development of well-being through apprenticeships, work placements and internships:
- establish a code of best practice in apprenticeships and internships
- target support for offenders and care leavers
- provide incentives to employers to offer apprenticeships and internships
- establish a network for employers to share experiences and practice
- ensure voluntary and community sector organisations have the resources to support apprenticeship schemes
- fast track at-risk young people to specialist providers
- review availability of benefits, particularly Job Seeker’s Allowance, during work placements and apprenticeships

The full report is available for download from www.foyer.net.

Feeling Good: Supporting Resilience in young people in Foyers in England
This report is the result of a qualitative research study conducted by Eric Carlin in five Foyers in England.

The five Foyers were selected in order to be as representative as possible of the range of provision across the English Foyer network, in terms of urban and rural location, size and region. The report contains a literature review of recent research on resilience that has three main conclusions:

- what constitutes ‘resilience’ needs to be defined more precisely and consistently as it is sometimes used as being synonymous with well-being, where in fact it has a specific meaning relating to bouncing back or rebounding from trauma, which is important since a misunderstanding of the meaning of the word may affect the development of provision designed to foster or support resilience
- there is an overwhelming and imbalanced emphasis on individual agencies to act, rather than on social and structural factors that can influence the development of resilience in young people
- there is a questioning and exploration of what factors support resilience in young people

The report contains the following recommendations for Foyer practice to support resilience:
- the maintenance of safety and security should be prioritised at all times
- all staff working in Foyers should be trained and supported to understand the needs of residents and to be able to feel comfortable in offering informal advice and support at any time
- formal communications using notice boards, group and one-to-one meetings need to be run in an effective, efficient manner – here action is agreed in meetings, it needs to be followed up and reported
- attention needs to be paid to ensuring young people understand ‘the contract’ between them and the Foyer when they enter, that the Foyer is seen as a step and support into independent living, not as an end point or permanent accommodation
planning and review meetings with key workers should take place regularly and attention should be given to relationships between the young people, staff, peers, friends and families – active communication should ensure joint assessment of progress and reviewing of priorities.

staff team meetings need to be held regularly and creative ways need to be developed to ensure that all staff, including administrative, reception and night staff, are included in reviewing what is going on in the Foyer and planning accordingly.

strategies should be developed with young people for engaging with and improving relationships with the external community, including agencies such as the police and employment services and voluntary agencies.

the Foyers should have an ongoing programme of equal opportunities training, a well-publicised code of conduct and up to date information for staff and residents to ensure that young women, gay, lesbian and transgender, disabled and black and minority ethnic young people are supported to avoid direct or indirect discrimination by other residents or staff.

programmes of practical support and training should be reviewed and planned with young people through residents’ meetings and other meetings.

Foyers at local level and the Foyer Federation at national level should expand the opportunities that they have to improve opportunities and reduce stigma against young people with housing issues.

The full report is available to download from www.foyer.net.

**The future of health provision in Foyers**

The Foyer Health Programme has enabled Foyers to play a role in the delivery of local public health provision and understand how they may engage in future.

The recent Department of Health White Paper Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS contains wide reaching and radical proposals to reform the way that healthcare services are organised and commissioned. Central to the White Paper are the principles of localisation and personalisation, both of which potentially situate Foyers well in the landscape of public health provision.

The proposal to establish a public health service by April 2012, with responsibility for public health matters becoming that of the Director of Public Health situated in a local authority, is a very real opportunity for Foyers to engage locally with the public health agenda in a different way than under previous regimes.

Foyers’ experience in delivering holistic and personalised provision, and the fact that they can bring this experience to bear on the public health agenda, is potentially very significant. Furthermore, the proposed new role for GPs as commissioners of services represents an opportunity for young people in Foyers to have their voices heard at a much more localised level than was previously the case.

The Foyer Federation will continue to develop its already large evidence base around the role of Foyers in public health provision and will continue to support Foyers in the development of local relationships relating to the health agenda.

### What to do now

You’ve read the toolkit. You want to start implementing the ideas. Here’s a guide on how to start – use this page to fill in your target and completion dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the health needs of the young people you work with and how they relate to public health priorities, for instance, number of smokers, substance misuse, at risk of teenage pregnancy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use this chapter to help you assess how your project as a physical environment supports positive health messages and what improvements you might want to make.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider how the skills of your staff might be developed to better support health needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read the full reports commissioned by the Foyer Federation as part of the Foyer Health Programme, Access All Areas and Feeling Good: Supporting resilience in young people in Foyers in England.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider how improvements to your service could be made based on the evidence from these reports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write to your local Director of Public Health stating the profile of the young people you work with, how you are currently supporting them and what more you feel you could do with additional resources (including staff development).</td>
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<td>Invite local decision makers (including elected members in your local authority with responsibility for public health), children and young people to a surgery session with the young people you work with.</td>
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### What next?

You’ve read the toolkit. You want to start implementing the ideas. Here’s a guide on how to start – use this page to fill in your target and completion dates.
The Foyer Federation would like to thank the staff and residents from the 105 Foyers who contributed to the success of the Foyer Health Programme. We hope that this toolkit will highlight your achievements as well as be a guide and inspiration for others to build upon the fantastic work that has already been done.

We would like to also say a special thank you to the Big Lottery Fund for supporting our work and helping us to positively influence the lives of thousands of young people across England.

References:
1. Foyers and Health Services Working Together, Foyer Federation (2001)
8. LGBT Youth Charter of Rights, URL http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/charter.htm (no date)