

Children & Young People: What housing does: Communication & Engagement – Good Practice Briefing

Introduction

Welcome to the Northern Housing Consortium's (NHC) first briefing for members aimed to raise the profile of 'what housing does' and the work and different interventions carried out by NHC members with local children and young people, this series of briefings will focus on and raise awareness of the different approaches adopted by housing providers on various themes when working with children and young people. These will include:

- Communication & Engagement
- Housing and accommodation support
- Education
- Training, skills, enterprise and employment
- Health and Wellbeing

This first briefing will focus on the theme of communication and engagement and will showcase a number of case studies setting out the different ways housing providers are communicating and engaging with the local children and young people, giving them an opportunity to get involved, have a say, shape local services and help them build their confidence and reach their potential.

The aim of these briefings is not only to share with members the great work that is being done across the North by the housing sector and to share learning, but also to make a plea to members to share this with your wider partners from different sectors, to raise the awareness and profile of this work and how housing is making a real difference to the lives of children and young people.

There is a common saying that 'children are our future', for the housing sector this is very much the case, with the changing external environment and the role of housing providers changing at a very fast pace due to a number of factors and the focus shifting to offering wider neighbourhood and community support and services. More and more young people are being priced out of the housing market, and as a result they may turn to the social housing sector, it is imperative that housing providers are involved with young people from the earliest stages of their lives, help and shape homes and neighbourhoods where the young people want to live and nurture them to develop their skills and knowledge.

Why communicate and engage with children and young people?

There are many reasons why social housing providers should and wish to engage and communicate with children and young people who are either their existing tenants, the children of their tenants or residents in the local neighbourhoods where they have property. These include:

- To hear their views around what makes an area a desirable place to live and somewhere that families and individuals want to stay
- To ensure that their needs both present and future are met
- Providing positive activities that may help combat antisocial behaviour
- Raising the profile of the social housing sector among the local children and young people, not only as landlord but also the wider services that they are involved in

- Raising the skills level, self-confidence and self-esteem of young people
- Help them reach their potential and provide them with wider opportunities around advice, support, education, training and employment
- Helping to ensure community cohesion and social inclusion by making young people feel they have a stake in their neighbourhood, and giving them a voice around the things that matter to them

Good communication is central to working with children, young people, families and carers. It helps build trust, and encourages them to seek advice and use services. It is key to establishing and maintaining relationships, and is an active process that involves listening, questioning, understanding and responding accordingly. It is important to engage with young people using methods that they enjoy and feel comfortable using.

Benefits of children and young people participation:

- Better service delivery to meet need and improved value for money;
- Opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills;
- Better communication between staff, tenants and wider community
- Better links between the community and landlords;
- Informed and knowledgeable tenants/members of the community who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions;
- Staff, tenants and the wider community being more aware of each other's perspectives and organisational and financial limitations;
- Breaking down misunderstandings, helping to remove any mistrust between landlord and tenants/community, and building mutual respect and understanding;
- Increased tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood;
- Increased job satisfaction for staff.

It's important that organisations use different methods to communicate with children and young people, to ensure a wider reach. With the growth of smart phones many residents and young people are now accessing social network sites through their phones. It's important for organisations not to neglect a particular form of communication whether it's through social media or the more traditional face to face/focus group methods.

Different ways to engage and communicate with Children and Young People include:

- Different social media platforms including twitter, facebook, instagram etc – not just for news, a great way to reach out and engage with a different audience.
- Text messaging
- Face to face
- Working closely with local schools and further education establishments, ensuring that any events and/or news is communicated to them
- Linking into local youth groups and other activities children and young people are engaged with
- Working with youth and support workers
- Setting up youth panels/forums/cabinet
- Promoting your services and latest news as widely as possible

- Working in partnership with various local partners across different sectors
- Embed into your communications policy and ensure all staff are made aware of the organisations approach
- Develop a Children and Young People's Strategy
- Events
- Focus groups

Housing providers play a vital role in engaging with young people, empowering and enabling them to make a positive contribution through listening and responding, to ensure housing and wider services are more effective and appropriate.

Housing providers are involved in and/or leading on a number of interventions in supporting children and local people in their locality, many are working with a wide range of local partners. The following case studies showcase a number of examples of the different interventions NHC members are using to communicate and engage with their local children and young people.

Junior Board – South Liverpool Homes (SLH)

South Liverpool Homes (SLH) is a registered provider currently managing around 3700 homes, predominantly in the Speke and Garston areas of South Liverpool. According to the indices of multiple deprivation, the Speke and Garston ward area shows a high level of deprivation. The area's population is a youthful one, with a higher proportion of 0-15 year olds (22.3%) than the city average and also has the highest number of children living in poverty.

This information is vital when considering ways of communicating with residents. SLH believes engaging with and supporting young people both as community members and potential future tenants is key to developing resilience within communities.

Junior Board was created in 2003 following consultation with local young people in the Speke and Garston area. The group was set up to give young people more involvement in the decision making process in SLH, as well as taking an active role in Speke and Garston, helping to make it a better place to live and work.

Junior Board is split in to two groups; Junior Board is for young people between the ages of 16-24 and the Youth Committee who pull together diversionary activities and community projects, and is aimed at young people between the ages of 8-15. The group is split due to a difference in interests based on age. By doing this SLH aims to improve satisfaction with our services amongst these groups.

Junior Board helps SLH to communicate with young tenants and residents successfully. SLH is able to identify the issues affecting young people first hand, and can work with the group to address these issues. A member of the Junior Board also sits on the main SLH board and relays information between the two groups. By developing this kind of youth involvement SLH is able to work with and build the capacity of young people as well as identifying the issues affecting young people. SLH also use this as a way of demonstrating our continued commitment to building meaningful involvement of young people.

SLH also has a dedicated area within their website for younger residents

www.southliverpoolhomes.co.uk/young-people/

As well as Junior Board SLH communicates with younger residents through articles tenant's magazine, 'The Bulletin'. A page in the magazine is dedicated to the Junior Board and it is their responsibility to provide articles and insights for this page. They use this as a way of communicating their thoughts and opinions on a variety of subjects and to share any information with our residents that they feel is important.

SLH uses social media extensively as a means of communicating with customers and tenants. It is felt within the organisation that social media is particularly important in terms of communicating with younger tenants and residents as it enables SLH to interact with young people on a platform that they are familiar with and feel comfortable using.

Another method of communicating successfully is through theatre performances such as projects that have been carried out by Junior Board including 'A loan in Liverpool' and 'Bulletproof'. These were very successful and were performed to over 200 people within the local community.

SLH keeps things interesting and topical by ensuring that social media sites are regularly updated, we can communicate important messages across more channels by doing this, and stimulate effective and positive engagement with a wider audience.

Through diversionary activities carried out across the local area, young people are given the opportunity to get involved in free activities. These have been developed by working with the Junior Board and partners in the area, including local schools and youth organisations. By participating in these kinds of activities young residents are given the opportunity to give ideas and suggestions about what kind of activities they would like to see in the future, shaping the services that we provide and ensuring that activities are well attended by listening to ideas that they may have, and putting these in place in future events. Children taking part often recognise through this that they are developing positive opportunities for themselves and the community in which they live in.

As a result of The STAR survey carried out by SLH, it was identified that 18% of young tenants were dissatisfied with the overall services provided by SLH. This led to a project being developed to research engagement with young customers by understanding their perceptions of services, their lifestyle and the neighbourhood that they live in. As a result of this piece of work the services provided by SLH have been changed through a number of different recommendations, including the introduction of the first time tenancy workshop.

SLH recognise the importance of working with local schools in the area. Schools provide an important focus for the neighbourhood and by developing strong links with these SLH can develop relationships with the young people living within the area.

Through Junior Board young people have a voice and an opportunity to shape the services that are delivered by SLH. By giving the group an opportunity to be included and involved, and by seeking their views and listening to them benefits the organisation in the long term. They are able to communicate through teams within the company and influence the services that they provide. Junior Board meets twice a month in the SLH office, supported by the Neighbourhood Engagement Officer for Youth.

Through getting involved with Junior Board and engaging with SLH, a number of young people have benefited positively. Many young people through completing work experience, training events and community projects have fed back to the organisation that these kinds of involvement initiatives have led to employment and further education opportunities. By increasing the young people involved confidence and giving them experience in different areas; they felt that their chances of employment and in increasing and developing their skills through education or further training were enhanced. Young people also have the opportunity to further develop their skills through applying for sponsorship from SLH, where they can apply for funding that will help to support with further education and training to improve their employability, help to develop and support a new business idea or improve the area where SLH has homes.

SLH is keen to listen to the viewpoints of the young people who make up Junior Board, and use the experiences and skills that they have gained through being involved to encourage young people through promoting their experiences. One member of Junior Board has been involved for 5 years and feels that she has improved her skills and experiences significantly over the years she has been involved.

“I was given the opportunity to come to the SLH offices for work experience when I was 15. Taking part in this work experience made me want to really learn more and get further involved with the organisation. I had the chance to work with the different teams and it really helped me to learn what working in an office environment would be like.

I learnt about the Junior Board because of this, and the kind of projects and work that they got involved with. It was something that I was keen to learn more about. I decided to join Junior Board after realising what a good opportunity that it would be for me to make a difference in the area that I live in. Through being on junior board I have learnt so many new skills, I have also gained valuable training through our meetings, by us each having the opportunity to chair meetings, and learning new skills such as minute taking, writing word documents IT and presentation skills. We have been able to learn things that we feel will benefit us in our everyday life both in education and employment, and also things that will benefit us all as Junior Board members.

I am so glad that I got involved with the Junior Board; I feel that it has given me skills that have helped me to gain employment, and is a valuable addition to my C.V. Through this experience and gaining confidence within a working environment I am now in a job that I really enjoy and have recently been promoted which feels like a great achievement. I have also benefitted personally, by making a number of new friends over the years and through feeling like I am making a difference within the local community and seeing the way that the opportunities can benefit young people in the area I live in.”

Junior Board works with different teams within SLH, a member of Junior Board feedback his views as a young person at Equality Analysis session led by Sharon Marsh, the Community Safety Manager at SLH, as part of the review of the ASB Policy in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 . Sharon said about his involvement:

“He represented the voice of young people. He was able to give me some really good feedback from a young person prospective. It is always refreshing to gain young people’s views, they are the future leaders within our communities and as a Junior Board Member he takes his responsibilities very seriously.”

The Community Safety Team consulted with the Junior Board in relation to reviewing the Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) and the process of reviewing the ABC. The young people entered into a good debate and gave ideas which were implemented into the new process. Since getting involved in the review of the ABC process Junior Board have also begun to work on an ‘ABC pack’ which will be given to every young person receiving this order. By having this written by young people SLH believe that this will make the offender more likely to listen and take notice.

By getting involved with young people early in their lives and maintaining a commitment to them as they grow and develop, SLH is supporting residents to create neighbourhoods where people want to stay , as well as nurturing tenants to ensure that they make the most of the community in which they live. As an organisation SLH has a business imperative to develop many ways to get young people involved with the work that the organisation carries out. The aim is to develop approaches that are attractive to everyone including young people and young families. This involvement has led to improved services for young people.

For further information please contact Laura Murphy Youth Neighbourhood Engagement Officer, Laura.murphy@slh.co.uk Tel:0151 285 560



Foundations in Housing Project

A partnership project – Foundations in Housing between Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and housing associations, aims to promote apprenticeships as a desirable career path and help create more apprentice opportunities across the region. It is government funded through the Employer Ownership of Skills pilot run by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Pupils from Abraham Moss Community school in Crumpsall, North Manchester were guests of a national housing provider Guinness Northern Counties back in March 2014, they were invited to attend a 'Foundations in Housing' workshop at the head office of Guinness Northern Counties in Oldham.

A total of 28 teenagers from Year 10 were invited to attend the apprentice and internship workshop where housing professionals and apprentices demonstrated the opportunities available to young people within the social housing sector.

The pupils attending were either currently enrolled on a citizenship module or were nominated by a class teacher to attend the day. The 28 were split into smaller groups for talks by various employees of Guinness Northern Counties and their repairs and maintenance contractor City Response Ltd.

Apprentices through to Directors of the organisation took part, sharing their own experiences of working in the housing sector and informing the soon-to-be school leavers on the best routes to a career in housing.

Other departments taking part in the day included staff from Guinness Northern Counties' award winning customer service centre and Upturn Enterprises, a social enterprise that works closely with the housing provider on their apprenticeship schemes.

After the workshops the pupils took part in a quiz designed to get them thinking about what they had learned during the day, with one lucky pupil winning an iPod Nano, courtesy of contractor, Camilla Carpets.

The event took place at Guinness Northern Counties' Bower House premises in Oldham. There are currently nine apprentices working from the Bower House premises and 22 working throughout Guinness

Case studies

Maxine Muldowney, Guinness Northern Counties' Customer Accounts Team Leader who led some of the workshops on the day, said:

"It was such a fantastic day having the pupils with us and we have had some really great feedback from them. It's so important to make young people aware of the opportunities available to them once they leave school."

"We have an excellent apprenticeship programme so we wanted to make the students aware of what we can offer along with Upturn and City Response."

Lucy Tasker, teacher at Abraham Moss said:

"We were welcomed with smiles, warmth and chocolate by professionals who had volunteered to attend from several departments at Guinness Northern Counties. Pupils then went on a carousel of learning around each area of the business. They took notes, asked questions and engaged in activities to find out more about each aspect of the work, encouraged by the promise of a quiz and prize! The experiences of the leaders were beneficial in terms of communicating employability skills and inspiring the students, opening their eyes to the many different facets and opportunities in the work of a housing provider."

"All of the students had a positive and fun experience of a local and caring business."

Northern Counties, learning skills such as business administration, horticulture and print and design.

For more information on Foundations in Housing contact Liz Bohler on 0161 331 2381

/ lizabeth.bohler@newcharter.co.uk or Ivy Hughes on 0161 605 7750 / Ivy.Hughes@citywest.org.uk

Community Ambassador Programme – Affinity Sutton

The community ambassador programme was launched in 2013 by Affinity Sutton to find young people on their estates who wanted to be a part of positive social action in their communities.

The programme offers young people opportunities through accredited training and volunteering opportunities; while providing them with a 'voice' in their organisation as the action is led by the young people themselves.

Outcomes to date:

- 60 Community Ambassadors recruited in estates from Plymouth to South Shields
- Over 2500 volunteer hours completed by young people in their communities
- 40% improvement in confidence through completing programme
- 8 Community events
- 5 new youth spaces

South Shields Community Ambassadors receiving an award from their CEO Keith Exford.

Social action projects have included:

- Identifying need for a youth space and refurbishing a disused estate office to become a 'youth hub' for the estate
- Creating films to educate local community about being a Good neighbour and the dangers of loan sharks
- Applying for and receiving grants to set up an IT hub for those who do not have access to computers at home
- Providing fire awareness training to the elderly in their homes
- Building up relationships with a 'working man's club' which was strictly no children to the point where they donated two rooms to the group to use.

National Ambassadors

2012 saw the first team of young people recruited by Affinity Sutton to advise on their services. The team advised staff on the website and resident involvement strategy; presented at 3 national conferences and created a research film on youth unemployment which featured in Guardian Society.

Their success led to the National Ambassador team becoming part of the Resident Involvement structure which feeds directly into the governance of Affinity Sutton.

The team are all 16-25yr old residents and represent our five geographical regions. They have been recruited based on their current involvement with our services and due to their passion to make a change.

The programme was awarded Winner of Charity Times Big Society for 2014!

The team have met and created an action plan for their 2014-15 priorities:

- Safer and accessible spaces
- Tailored services for young people

- Communication to and about young people

Case Studies:

Amiee, 17 Community Ambassador in Bradford

“A few years ago I was always naughty at school and didn’t pass any of my GCSEs. The youth workers that Affinity Sutton funded believed in me and gave me the time and attention to help me turn things around. I am now in my second year of sixth form working towards my A levels because I want to be a youth worker so I can help other young people and to give something back to my community”.

Amy was 14 when she first participated on an Affinity Sutton funded programme and was ‘being influenced by the wrong crowds’. The programme involved working with a creative arts company to create a film about what it is like to live on our estate. Amy found it hard to concentrate and often disrupted settings, due to boredom.

Through this project and the funding of the local youth provision on her estate, Amy had a sense of belonging and grew to learn about people’s differences, how to focus her energy and be a part of a team. For the past year, Amy has been a Community Ambassador on our Bradford estate, acting as a role model to her peers and organising community events.

The latest event attracted over 90 residents and encouraged 20 community volunteers. Amy is now completing Level 2 Intro to youth work qualification [as well as her A levels] and she leads some sessions on the estate so as to discourage young people from taking the 'wrong paths'!

The Bradford Community Ambassador programme has reached 10 young people; 5 accredited in Intro to youth work; over 500 volunteer hours; a youth dance group set up & run by a young leader; a youth football session set up & run by a young leader; two community events with over 90 residents each participating and 3 local press releases.

Ria Gregory, 20, National Ambassador programme 2012

“Without a doubt it was the support of the National Ambassador programme that got me my job working for Boris Johnson at City Hall. I had no ‘real’ experience to talk about before as I had only been at school, being a National Ambassador gave me examples in team work, influencing and presenting to large audiences, all of which they were looking for in the role. The National Ambassador programme changed my life.”

Background

Ria was always focused on making a change and being influential in society, but wasn't sure how to achieve it. At 17 Ria was at college re-sitting her A levels due to being off from school over a year with illness and volunteering on our Credit Union project, where she first heard about our National Ambassador Programme.

Ria was attracted to the role so as she could start making that change. Ria was a fantastic advocate for young people always speaking eloquently in meetings and being our 'critical friend' to help us improve our website; designing youth posters and commenting on the Resident Involvement structure.

Ria really proved herself as a role model when shadowing our CEO Keith Exford for a day and running a workshop at the NRC with fellow ambassadors, which was voted the best by our residents. Ria participated in teambuilding, public speaking and influence skills training through being a National Ambassador which she says helped her to secure her apprenticeship in City Hall working as Press Relations officer for Mayor of London.

Ria has now been offered a full time permanent role as Public relations Officer and being sponsored to do her degree in History. Through the experience of the National Ambassador programme Ria gained the relevant employability skills to achieve her dream job.

For further information please contact Joanne Rich, Youth Engagement Manager, joanne.rich@affinitysutton.com

Bernicia - Newbiggin Learning Hive

Bernicia's Newbiggin Learning Hive provides access to learning and employability opportunities for adults living on an estate in Northumberland that has high levels of unemployment and low levels of skills.

The Hive provides one to one and small group support in English, Maths, ICT, Family Learning and employability.

The community in which the Learning Hive is based has been affected by the closure of the coal industry in the 1980's, with households experiencing second and third generation unemployment. Aspirations within the community are low with adults experiencing difficulty in finding employment. This is compounded with adults believing that even with qualifications they will not be able to secure employment. They no longer value education and this potentially impacts on the aspiration and motivation of children and young people living in the community.

The Learning Hive aims to improve the confidence and skills of adults so that they are able to turn around the negative image them and others from outside the community have on their circumstances.

By encouraging adults who access the Learning Hive to change their attitudes towards learning and education the Hive is directly impacting on the potential of children and young people. Whilst not directly working with children and young people, they impact on their development and aspirations as follows:

Family Learning

Research has identified that children from disadvantaged background lack the social and emotional skills that ensure a positive start in education from early years onwards. They are unable to catch up with their peers and move further and further behind.

Their informal engagement activities are fun and easy to participate in. Using storytelling and arts and crafts they are able to introduce parents and carers to how they can easily become an active part of their child's development. The estate on which the Learning Hive is based has many adults who have low levels of literacy and numeracy. This prevents them from sharing enjoyable activities such as reading stories with their children. This has a knock on effect with children as they miss out on having books in the house which can lead to an enjoyment of reading that supports learning in schools.

The Hive offers a range of engagement activities and short programmes that increase the confidence and skills of parents and carers (e.g. grandparents) to be able to support and communicate more effectively with their children.

Following on from their short engagement activities parents can join in our longer Family Learning programmes. These provide the opportunity for parents of young children to continue to develop the skills to help them support their child's language and literacy development through the use of simple and affordable activities. They teach the parents skills and improve their confidence in working with their child to develop language and literacy through fun and enjoyable activities. Making their own books and activities introduces young children to the joy of reading and leads to parents joining the local library, or establishing a book library in the Learning Hive where books can be shared or swapped leading to affordable access to new material.

Working closely with the local Children's Centre has given the Hive the opportunity to work with teenage and young parents. They are able to provide Parenting programmes that help prepare young parents for the birth of their baby, but also providing post natal programmes that help them to explore how they care for their baby and also think about their own future.

Adult Learning

Many of the adults that are accessing the Learning Hive have low English and maths skills and have not engaged with learning for a range of reasons. These include poor learning experiences, lack of access to learning, lack of motivation or reason to learn.

They know that in households where parents have low skills it is more likely that children and young people disengage with mainstream education, leading to young people becoming NEET (Not in employment, education and Training)

They have found that those adults who are participating in learning, particularly English and maths, have become more involved with their children's learning and are inspiring and encouraging their children by becoming positive role models.

Youth work

The Learning Hive has developed relationships with the local high school and has encouraged sixth form students to come to the hive as volunteers. This has been as part of their enrichment activities and helped those individuals develop confidence and communication skills. They have many skills that they can offer to others in the community e.g. understanding ICT, and these volunteering opportunities have broken down the negative perceptions that adults have of young people.

They are also working closely with Lookwide UK, a regional charity, who provide personal and social development activities for young people. They are providing a weekly youth club which has a weekly attendance of up to 10 young people. Some of the young people attending have poor school attendance and have little opportunities to engage socially with their peers.

They have also found that the young people's behaviour mirrors the apathy, low confidence and aspiration of their parents, leading to a negative attitude towards engaging in activities. Lookwide UK are supporting those young people to build their self esteem and confidence so that they can cope with school life and also feel part of their local community <http://www.lookwide.org.uk/programmes/newbiggin>

The case study below focuses on 'Sharon' one of the service users and her experience of the programme.

By working alongside each other with the parents and children the Hive are working towards a shift in the culture that is inherent in the community.

For further information please contact Jeannie McMillan, Director of Neighbourhood Services, jeannie.mcmillan@bernicia.com

Making a difference...

Dan was an outcast at school with low self-esteem and poor confidence; he had a noticeable stutter that reflected his nervousness. During his time with LookwideUK his relationship and involvement with the group improved greatly.

To complete the John Muir Award Dan was required to stand up in front of 20 of his peer group as part of a presentation.



Dan nearly pulled out, but the trusting relationship that he had developed with Stew, one of our Development Tutors, allowed him to overcome his fears; he spoke confidently, expanded fluently on the written piece he had prepared, and didn't stammer throughout.

"First of all I would like to say that my favourite trip was the shelter building because I like being independent... I like being in the forest. Getting that fire lit for the first time felt great! A further point is that I liked having the opportunity to choose my own activities and design our own menu, and the trust to be a grownup. It's steps toward being a grown up."

- William, Walbottle Campus



Sharon was a 9 year old persistent truanter being moved into a Pupil Referral Unit because her behaviour and temper made her unmanageable in a mainstream classroom. She struggled to control herself and got frustrated easily, lashing out at others and demanding a lot of attention.

Sharon attended a programme of summer activities and enjoyed it so much she asked if we would keep going back to her estate to deliver a weekly youth club. We couldn't resist! Sharon has now received two 100% attendance certificates

from us, completed a John Muir Environmental Award and is helping to plan the programme of activities for her and her friends on the estate.

"I found that the students gained valuable social skills... In my opinion the whole setup of the project and the activities worked well. I found that the students were willing to get involved in different and new tasks that they wouldn't normally have access to."

-Dan Brown, Learning Support Assistant

Neighbourhood Fund – Adactus Housing

Adactus Housing Group engages with young people in variety of manners using its Social Investment budgets.

As part of its approach to Social Investment the Group has an annual £200,000 Neighbourhood Fund which invites applicants to make funding bids. The outcome of these bids is determined by a panel of residents in each geographical area that the Group operates in.

In 2014/15 the Clitheroe Youth Forum's Positive Activities was supported through the Neighbourhood Fund. The project has enabled young people from Clitheroe to participate in activities that they would never normally get to experience. The participants had a range of backgrounds, and included those low on confidence, those with caring responsibilities, ADHD and learning difficulties.

The Positive Activities project involved activities such as pottery, quad biking, canoeing and fishing. The Neighbourhood Fund award allowed these young people to be away from their everyday routine, to experience new places and new people. Whilst at the same time allowing them to learn skills, build their confidence and develop their self esteem.

Clitheroe Youth Forum provided the following case study:

Paige is aged 14 and is a young carer. She looks after both her mum and brother. Aside from school Paige rarely went out. The Youth Forum were contacted by a family friend and following a meeting with Paige arranged for her to take part in some of their activities. Her mum was thrilled seeing Paige participate and took pleasure in looking at photos of her daughter having fun. Paige's involvement has seen her gain much more confidence, along with a host of certificates of achievement. Paige has been able to manage her time better between home, school, family and outside activities to the point that the Youth Forum were able to get her involved with the local Army cadets.

The Neighbourhood Fund has also supported other projects aimed at young people. In Chorley, a community interest company called Freestyle Soccer has been delivering a programme of activities at 2 community houses. The Urban Hub Clubs provide local young people aged between 8 and 13 with regular structured and supervised activities, such as football, cooking and trips out. The Hub Clubs help build young people's self esteem and help empower them to share their ideas. They also offer young people a safe, warm, friendly and non judgmental environment which in turn helps them to discover and develop their own abilities and skills. Since their inception the Hub Clubs have had over 2000 young people through their doors.

Freestyle Soccer has also received funding from the Group for another longer standing project. Friday Night Football, which involves an inflatable football pitch being erected at various locations where the Group has stock recently surpassed its 5000th participant.

As part of Adactus's approach to Social Investment, their Employment and Skills Manager works with young supported housing residents to improve their health, life skills and confidence so that they are in a position to move onto independent living.

They deliver a range of services to young people through their in-house 'Step Forward' programme. The objective is to provide participants with mentoring, skills development and job seeking support in order to move them towards sustainable employment. The offer to all participants includes an initial Careers, Education, and Information Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) counselling session with our qualified Careers Advisor and the development of personalised action plans.

They use a variety of methods to communicate and engage with young people like social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, but within their own supported housing schemes face to face interventions are usually the most effective. Their overall aim is always to move young people towards learning, training or employment and our approach is innovative and person centred.

Adactus also work very closely with local partners such as schools, colleges and youth services to support young people from both their own supported housing schemes and other young people living in our communities. They have forged good links with high schools in the areas where they operate and support careers fairs, employability events, work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships.

Adactus are founder patrons of the 'Wigan Youth Zone' offering financial and practical support to this service as well as assisting their Employability Team with work placements, work visits and apprenticeships.

A further case study has been provided by their Employment and Skills Manager. One of the Group's subsidiaries, Chorley Community Housing (CCH) has been working with a local high school, Holy Cross, for a number of years.

As a local employer, CCH has supported Holy Cross High School students with work experience placements in maintenance during the school term. These placements are ideal for those students that benefit from practical hands on experience.

One of these placements was for Ben who had been doing day release at CCH since 2013. At the point of leaving school CCH was able to award Ben a traineeship with their maintenance team. This traineeship is a pre-apprenticeship which will allow Ben to work and receive vocational training at college along with on the job training, support and mentorship. Ben's aim is for him to begin a full apprenticeship in 2015.

Please contact Samantha Hornsby for further details of any of these projects on 0300 1111 133 or email chris.richardson@adactushousing.co.uk

Young Parent's Photography Project – Places for People

Outcomes of the project and impact/difference it has made to young people

The aim of the project was to deliver a participatory photography project for socially excluded young parents. The project involved workshops for young parents where they were shown basic camera techniques. 1-1 support around photography was also provided where appropriate. Books on photography were provided for young parents to look at for ideas.

The young parents went on trips with their children where they were supported and encouraged to take creative shots representing their own relationship with their child. The young parents were then supported to upload their photos to an online design studio where they carried out post-production work and designed their photo books.

Each young parent completed the project with a photo book of their own shots representing their relationship with their child and a canvass print of an example of their work.

The outcome of the project was that young people developed skills to take photos of their families, often using the resources available to them (i.e. mobile phones). Some have rekindled or developed an interest in art and photography and fed back that the project was a fantastic way of them getting out and about with their children and sharing an enjoyable activity.

As well as the artistic merits of the project, it was found to be a highly effective way of engaging with young people who are often more challenging to involve. Young parents were brought together to work on a shared aim which helped them support each other and compare and discuss each other's work.

Young people's perspective around their experience and their before and after story - so quotes or a short paragraph written by one of the clients plans going forward

Some young people were reluctant to be involved and were concerned about the process of uploading photos and developing the books. However, all responded very well to encouragement and support around this and successfully completed their photo books.

Introduction

Places for People, The South Tyneside Churches Key Project and Depaul UK work as a coalition in South Tyneside to deliver services to young people at risk of homelessness. Working together as the South Tyneside Homelessness Consortium, all 3 organisations aim to provide better services to young people through an integrated pathway of support.

The project was called "Our Choice for Beautiful Futures" and included 8 young parents (6 female and 2 male) and their children. The young parents decided on the name for their project to reflect the choices they made to have a baby, and to accept support for the benefit of their child.

The young parents were aged 17 to 21 and the children were under 2. All of the young parents involved were disadvantaged and were on benefits or low incomes. Typically, they were unemployed and had experienced homelessness and social exclusion. Most were vulnerable and identified as suffering from low self-esteem and lack of confidence. The project focussed on exploring representations of parenthood and challenging stereotypes of young parents from low income backgrounds.

The project was funded with a £995 grant from the North East Fund for the Arts via the Community Foundation. Places for People also contributed a £150 grant towards transport costs and entrance fees for trips out.

Young people report that they have developed friendships after sharing the project with peers. They have also been very positive about using their skills in the future and encouraging their children to do the same.

Quotes include:

"I loved the photography project"

"I was always interested in photography. However, it has shown me how to use light and props to make my pictures better. I enjoyed that the course included having time with my little boy".

"I enjoyed doing a course that included time with my family as well as learning new things"

"I liked how it brought us all together as a group" (referring to other parents)

"It taught me how to take a decent picture and to improve the quality of my photos"

"I want to do photography at college"

"It's good to have a reason and opportunity to do stuff out of the house"

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The case studies in this briefing showcase some of the different approaches and initiatives adopted by NHC members around the work they are doing with children and young people, and how they communicate and engage with them, providing them with different opportunities, supporting them, identifying some of the key issues and challenges and increasing their confidence to name a few. There are so many more great examples of the different ways the housing sector across the North are working with children and young people.

The NHC would like to thank all the organisations who have submitted case studies for this briefing.

The second briefing in this series around *what housing does.....* will focus on Housing and accommodation, the NHC would like to hear from members around the different programmes of work and examples around:

- **Different types of support available around finding suitable accommodation for young people**
- **Support and advice in sustaining tenancies**
- **Capturing feedback and views from children and young people around their current accommodation and future needs and requirements**

Please contact satty.rai@northern-consortium.org.uk with any good practice examples and case studies.