



Wolverhampton House Project

Information for Young People

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What is the House Project?

The Wolverhampton House Project – a partnership between the council, The National House Project, Wolverhampton Homes, and commercial partner Reconomy, is designed to help you through one of the most difficult periods in your lives and to give you the skills and confidence to build a life for yourselves when leaving care. Moving to independence from 16 and living alone from 18 as a care leaver is daunting. Doing this without the support of close family and at a much earlier age than the general population (average age of leaving home is 24) does not work for many young people. Care leavers often describe the loneliness and fear they feel.

The House Project is co-designed with young people from the start and works on cooperative principles through which adults and young people in, and leaving care, work together to refurbish properties that become their homes, developing a long-term community of support.

The process focuses on maximising your ownership of all aspects of the project, so you can feel proud of what you have developed and have confidence in yourself and your future.



Aim of the Project

The House Project aim is to ensure that you have a secure education, training, and employment offer as part of the project pathway. Some continue with their pre-House Project plans and work part time on the House Project, for other young people not already in Education, Employment or Training the House Project is able to serve as a springboard to return to education, to gain more formal qualifications, or as proof of their skills and commitment to a future employee.

Referral Process

A House Project works with approximatively ten young people aged 16 to 18. A discussion takes place with you and your social worker. If after this, you are happy to proceed with joining the House Project your social worker will complete a referral form. Once selected to join a cohort, you will follow an induction and then apply to be a House Project member by completing your own application form.

House Project programme

The ethos of the House Project is around promoting a sense of community and working in a group is instrumental in this. There is a requirement for you to complete a House Project programme, which constitutes the completion of 13 sections, all of which will develop the skills needed for you to progress into independence.

This is what you do on the HPP

- You will help make the rules, your base, and your identity as a House Project team – you decide how you will work together, make a base (an office) and something that says who you are as a team – a T-Shirt, a logo, a mug etc
- You write your learning plan – you explore your interests and passions. You create your own ambition for what you might do or become in the future – your job and career. You follow these plans and adapt them as you go along
- You write a safety plan – you discuss your own safety and how, as a group, you can keep each other safe
- You cook and share a meal with the group - everyone contributes a recipe, tips and pictures of their cook and eat event
- You plan and go on a residential
- You do something creative to express yours or your team's ideas - photographs, a film, artwork, writing, a song for example
- You develop independence – how to look after yourself, your home, and your budget
- You highlight success, raise challenges, suggest innovations, and develop policies as part of your Local House Project, and have the opportunity to do this in the Care Leavers National Movement and the National House Project

- You work with your team to write a business plan and pitch for money and support to do something that matters to you
- You get support for your House Project – by running a network event for businesses, trainers, and others
- You help run an event for other people to benefit your community
- You graduate with recognition for what you have learned and achieved

You will get access to a web-based programme where you can upload pictures, documents, videos, notes, and reflections throughout your time on the House Project. This enables you to showcase your achievements and capture your journey as well as providing the opportunity for you to find out what you are good at and build upon your existing strengths and interests.

As well as enhancing your development and preparing you for interdependence, if you successfully complete each section of the programme, you will achieve accreditation under the AQA Unit Award Scheme (UAS) and receive certificates.





ORCHIDS framework

You will focus on an ORCHIDS framework, this offers a supportive safe base to you to explore your world and build a positive future to enable you to: take ownership of your decisions, take responsibility for keeping yourself safe, build a community of support, have your own home, gain independence skills, gain a sense of developmental direction, and have a positive sense of wellbeing.



Training Flat stay

You will be able to experience a stay in the training flat which will be arranged later on in your House Project journey when you are nearing completion of the portfolio work. The stay will offer you an opportunity to experience independence and be supported in acquiring the skills needed to live independently. For some young people, living more independently offers them freedom, privacy, and control, but they are often unprepared for the responsibility, loneliness, and isolation this entails. A stay in the supported accommodation training flat will support you in identifying strategies to cope with loneliness.



Tenancy / Move in Process

Once all portfolio sections are complete and everyone agrees that you are ready to move into your own flat, you will be given an empty Wolverhampton Homes property which you could refurbish and then move into. Working with each other and specialists, you develop the skills needed to make any improvements required.

You will identify 3 areas in Wolverhampton you would like to live in, and Wolverhampton homes will do their best to accommodate in one of the chosen areas.

You with support from House Project facilitator will then complete a Homes in the City application and 'are you ready' workshop online.

Once a property has been identified by Wolverhampton homes, you will be able to view the flat and sign for it. Your keys to your own flat are given on this day.

Below is a general overview of timescales for the move on process (timescales may alter depending on work needing to be completed in flat)

Week 1 – You are given your keys

- gas and electric accounts will be put into your name
- you will book a test and commission for the gas in your flat
- set up water account in your name and apply for a water discount
- you will get carpet quotes / measurements
- order white goods
- order bed / wardrobes
- painting / decorating
- buy curtains / curtain pole

Week 2

- shopping for essentials
- carpet fitted
- assemble furniture

Weeks 3/4

- cleaning
- potential move in week

When you have refurbished your property, you move into your home, initially on an introductory tenancy, with a view to you having a long-term tenancy within 6 – 12 months. As excellent tenants, when you 'graduate' from the House Project, you retain the property that you have made into a home. You continue to be a member of the House Project community for as long as you wish.

Oasis Hub

Each House Project has a base, somewhere you can go and spend time with your group (other young people and staff), either working on your project or chatting and having a brew.

When you join the project, you work with other young people who are leaving care. You get to know them, support each other, and work together as a team. This makes leaving care less scary. The people in your project are people that are there for you.



The Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM)

There are House Projects all around the UK. Each House Project has at least one representative on the Care Leavers National Movement. The CLNM group meets to look at issues that affect young people and ways to improve the project.

The CLNM makes sure that the House Project is working for young people and that it sticks to its core values, which are that young people have Ownership, Responsibility, Community, Homes, Independence, Direction and a Sense of well-being (ORCHIDS).

Once a young person has joined the Wolverhampton House Project, they will have the opportunity to apply to become a Wolverhampton rep for CLNM.

Complaints

If you wish to make an informal or formal complaint in relation to the service provided by the Wolverhampton House Project, you may discuss this with the Supported Accommodation Manager. The complaints leaflet shall be made available on request. Thereafter, the Supported Accommodation Manager may carry out any investigation if deems necessary.



Advocacy

The Children's Society Black Country Advocacy Service is an independent, confidential service in Sandwell, Wolverhampton, and Walsall. It's for children and young people who are in care, leaving care, or who have a social worker.

An advocate is a person who can help you say if you don't like something or if you don't agree with a decision that affects your life. Advocates are independent and confidential – they don't work for the council or children's services, and they will not tell anyone what you say to them without your agreement (unless there is something that might cause harm to you or someone else)

For referrals to the BCA service

email: **BCA.referral@childrenssociety.org.uk**

Tel: **0808 169 9954**

<https://forms.office.com/r/Ts4KV9T2qD>

Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you...

**Interested in joining the
Wolverhampton House Project
and finding out more information?**

Please speak to your social worker/Young person's
advisor/Independent reviewing officer /carer/adult you trust or
email us: **WolverhamptonHouseProject@wolverhampton.gov.uk**

For more information about the Project, you can visit
<https://wolverhampton.thehouseproject.org>

We'd love for you to apply

You can get this information in large print,
braille, audio or in another language
by calling 01902 551155 or emailing
translations@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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