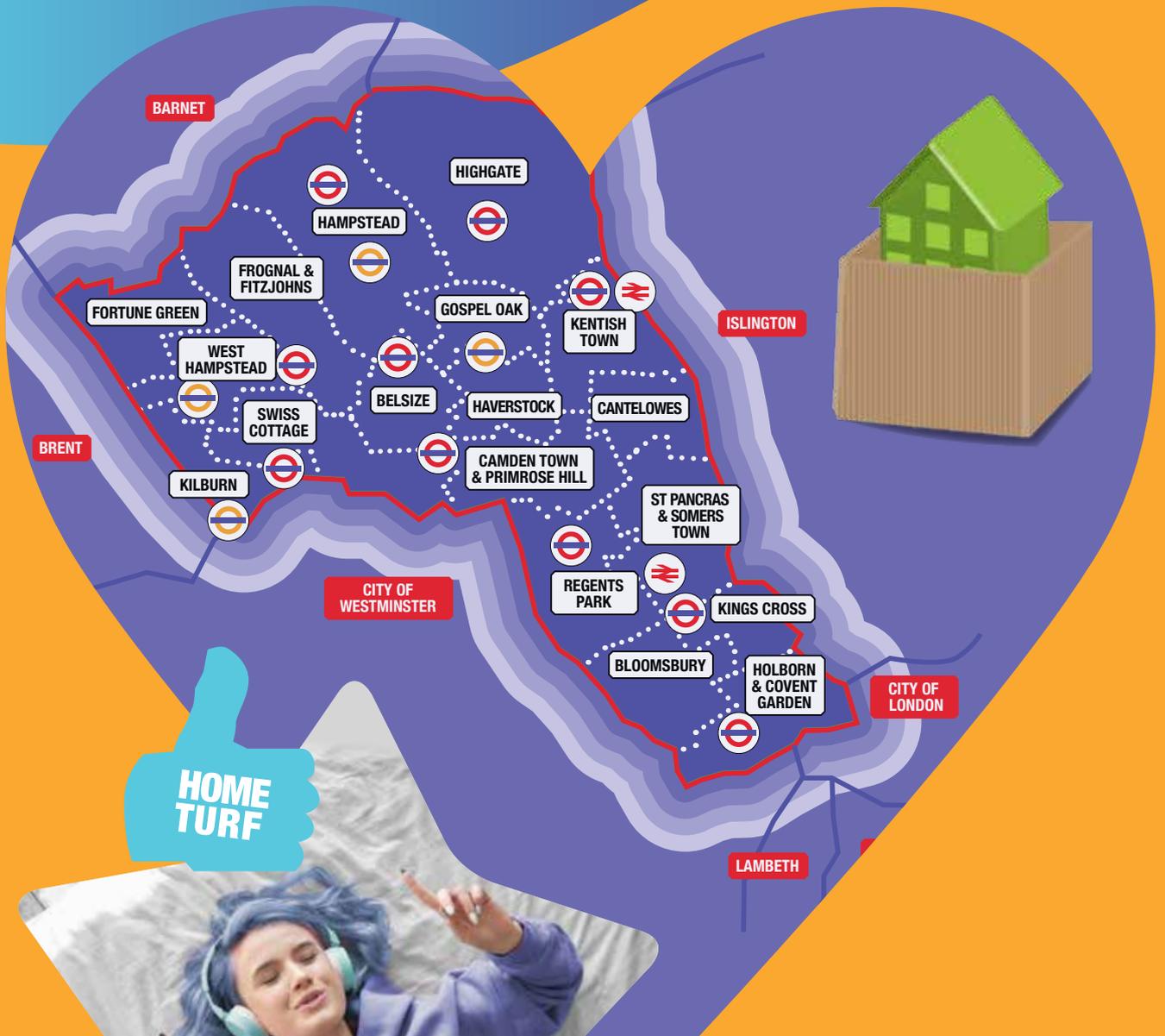


# Young Inspectors' REPORT

Camden Young People's Pathway 2021





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# Camden Young People's Pathway Report on support services

## 1. Who are the Young Inspectors?

Every year, a team of Young Inspectors undertake research into the views of other service users and professionals about the services provided by partner agencies responsible for safeguarding children.

This year, the Young Inspectors were care leavers aged 18 - 25. They were selected by interview and were involved in designing and conducting each inspection. The strength of the Young Inspectors was that they could apply their own experiences and knowledge of Pathway services to the inspection.

## 2. What is Camden Young People's Pathway?

The Young People's Pathway provides a range of supported accommodation for looked after children and care leavers (aged 16 to 25 years), homeless young people (aged 16 and 17) and young parents. The young people are a very diverse group including some with very complex needs.

The Pathway Model provides a staged approach of Assessment, Progress and Move Through services. Their ultimate aim is to prepare the young people for living in independent accommodation.

There are eleven commissioned services providing a total of 230 beds across Camden, including young parent services and a specialist mental health and complex needs service. The services aim to ensure that young people have suitable, safe and secure accommodation that meets their needs, while also providing support to develop their independent living skills ahead of embarking on adult life. The journey through the Young People's Pathway is needs-led, based on an individual young person's specific needs.

## 3. What was the aim of the inspection of Pathway services?

The aim of the Young Inspector's inspection was to find out about young people's experiences of the support services provided by the Pathway and to identify what changes and improvements they would like to recommend for the service. We also invited staff from the Pathway, Camden social workers and personal advisors to give their feedback about the support services for young people. The main aim of the Young Inspector's inspection was:

- To find out about the experience care leavers have had of the service

- To develop ideas for improvements, based on suggestions from young people and CSSW and Pathway staff
- To inform the commissioning strategy to ensure that Pathway services continue to meet the needs of Camden's young people
- To set up a Young People's Pathway Board as an advisory group to review and plan the development of Pathway services, to inform commissioning and to be part of the procurement process.

## 4. How did the Young Inspectors collect the feedback and information?

The process of gathering information included the following:

- **Obtaining feedback to questionnaires** from care leavers, Pathway staff, Camden personal advisors and social workers
- **Online interviewing** of professionals including: CAMHS, the deputy head of the Virtual School for looked after children and care leavers, the head of children's care provision, the Pathway strategy and commissioning manager and Pathway providers
- **Online focus groups with young people who are in Pathway accommodation**
- **Desktop research** of the publications and videos relating to accommodation for looked after children and care leavers aged 16 to 25. The research included:
  - *Introducing national standards for independent and semi-independent provision for looked after children and care leavers aged 16-17 (May 2021) Department for Education Consultation*
  - *Supporting Care Leavers' successful transition to independent living (2012) National Children's Bureau Research Centre*
  - *Looked After Children in independent or semi-independent placements (February 2020) Department for Education*
  - *Children in care living in semi-independent accommodation (September 2020). Children's Commissioner for England*
  - *Camden Young People's Pathway - Information and Guidance for Camden Staff and Pathway providers (2021) Camden*
  - *Being a care leaver website: [www.becomecharity.org](http://www.becomecharity.org)*
  - *Camden's local offer for care leavers and Pocket PA app (April 2019) Camden.*

# Key findings

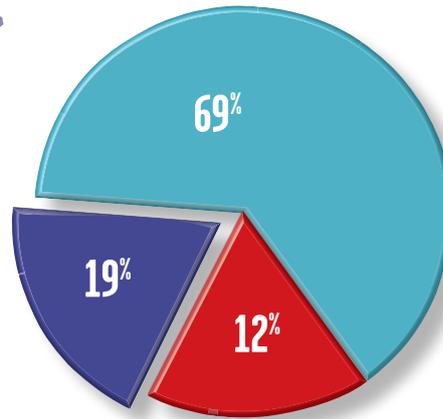
## 1. What is your age?

16 – 17 years old

22 – 23 years old

18 – 21 years old

24 – 25 years old



## 2. What type of accommodation do you live in now?

### ‘Staying put’ with foster or kinship carer

‘Staying put’ is an option for young people to continue living with foster/kinship carer up to the age of 21.

#### The Assessment stage

This stage is for those young people, who are new to the Pathway, where the young person’s support needs are assessed. In this type of accommodation, there is 24-hour staff cover to support young people.

#### The Progress stage

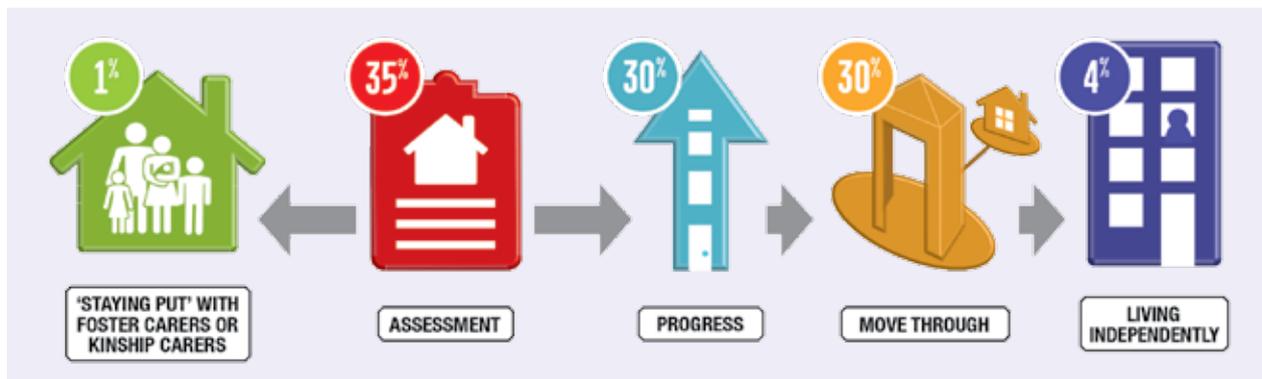
The function of the progress (or specialist) stage is to provide a young person with a safe and secure environment to develop their independent living skills, engage in or continue education, training or employment and develop positive relationships. In this type of accommodation, there is 24-hour staff cover to support young people.

#### The Move Through stage

The accommodation at the Move Through stage is to provide a young person with the opportunity to test their ability to live independently and develop an understanding of all the responsibilities of holding a tenancy. There are no staff on site.

#### Living independently

At this stage the young person has their own tenancy and lives independently.



### 3. What information did young people get when they first moved into the accommodation?



\* One person responded that the move was last-minute and not much information was provided at the beginning.

#### Other information provided for young people includes:

- house rules
- money management
- benefits
- local places of interest
- support organisations
- Citymapper app
- tenancy agreement, policies and procedures.

## Key findings

### 4. What other information would be useful when you arrive at your Pathway place?

#### Young people's responses

Most of the responses from young people to this question highlighted the need for more explanation and information at the beginning of moving into Pathway accommodation such as:

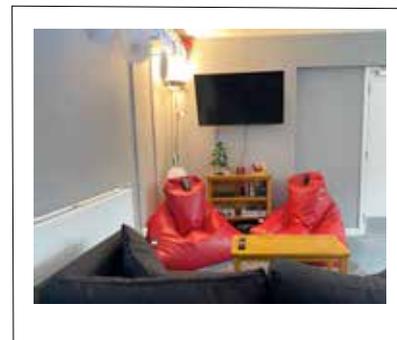
- Local area, local transport, leisure opportunities and local places of interest to young people
- Completing AQAs (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) and steps leading to independence
- Support available with emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Pathway Assessment and Moving Through stages.

#### Staff responses (personal advisors, social workers and key workers)

- Guidance explaining the process of moving through the pathway service and completing AQAs
- Support and opportunities with education, training and employment
- Support with responsibilities around tenancy and rent payments
- Make information available in other languages as needed
- Support with mental health
- Mediation service.

#### The following information could also be included, if appropriate for the service:

- Information on managing Covid-19 and vaccinations
- Voting and registration for the over 18s
- Training and education opportunities
- Help with alcohol, drugs and smoking
- Activities programme
- Community links
- Newsletters
- Summer camps
- Advocacy services
- Equality and diversity
- Information on local sports clubs
- Advice on moving on to independent living accommodation.



## Key findings

5. What's good about where you live? The following comments were fairly common responses from young people.



**I LIVE IN A SELF-CONTAINED FLAT AND THE GOOD THING IS THAT I AM ALLOWED TO HAVE VISITORS. STAFF ARE VERY FRIENDLY AND TREAT ME LIKE AN ADULT.**

**THE PLACE IS SECURE AND I FEEL SAFE.**

**GOOD COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF AND GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY WORKERS.**

**IT IS A CALM AND QUIET PLACE.**

**I HAVE GREAT SUPPORT FROM STAFF.**

**THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE TO GIVE ADVICE AND SUPPORT.**



**IT IS IN A GOOD LOCATION CLOSE TO LOCAL TRANSPORT AND SHOPS.**

**THE HOUSE IS CLEAN AND TIDY AND FEELS HOMELY.**



**I HAVE A BIG GARDEN AT THIS PLACE.**

**THE PEOPLE I LIVE WITH ARE LIKE MY FAMILY.**



# Key findings

## 6. Degree of satisfaction with six key aspects of the Pathway service as experienced by young people and professionals.

The following six statements were proposed to young people and staff to gain an insight into their level of satisfaction with six key aspects of their experience of the Pathway service. The respondents were invited to express their level of agreement, on a scale of 1 to 5 with each of the six statements.

1. STRONGLY DISAGREE	2. DISAGREE	3. NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	4. AGREE	5. STRONGLY AGREE
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The weighted scores of the responses were arrived at for each of the six statements as follows:

	STATEMENT	WEIGHTED SCORE OF LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT	
		BY YOUNG PEOPLE	BY PROFESSIONALS
	IT IS A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE	4.4	4.1
	I GET SUPPORT WITH EDUCATION	3.9	3.7
	I GET SUPPORT WITH TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT	4.0	3.6
	I AM SUPPORTED WITH MY HEALTH NEEDS INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH	3.7	3.5
	I GET SUPPORTED WITH DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT SKILLS	4.2	3.7
	THERE ARE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES I CAN DO AND GET INVOLVED IN	4.2	3.7

# Key findings

## Examples of comments made by young people regarding other opportunities:

- I had the opportunity to do horse therapy, which helped me with my mental health
- I am working towards completing a plumbing course before I look for work
- My Pathway had group recreational activities such as go-karting and paintballing
- Staff regularly inform me about job prospects and job interviews
- I get support from the Drive Forward Foundation with lots of new opportunities
- I went to Iceland twice with Catch22
- I have guitar lessons at the college
- I do sports and enjoy cycling
- I can join clubs at my university
- I have joined dance classes
- I have discount from social services to go to the gym
- I have run the London Marathon for the past two years.

# OPPORTUNITY

## Examples of comments made by staff regarding other opportunities:

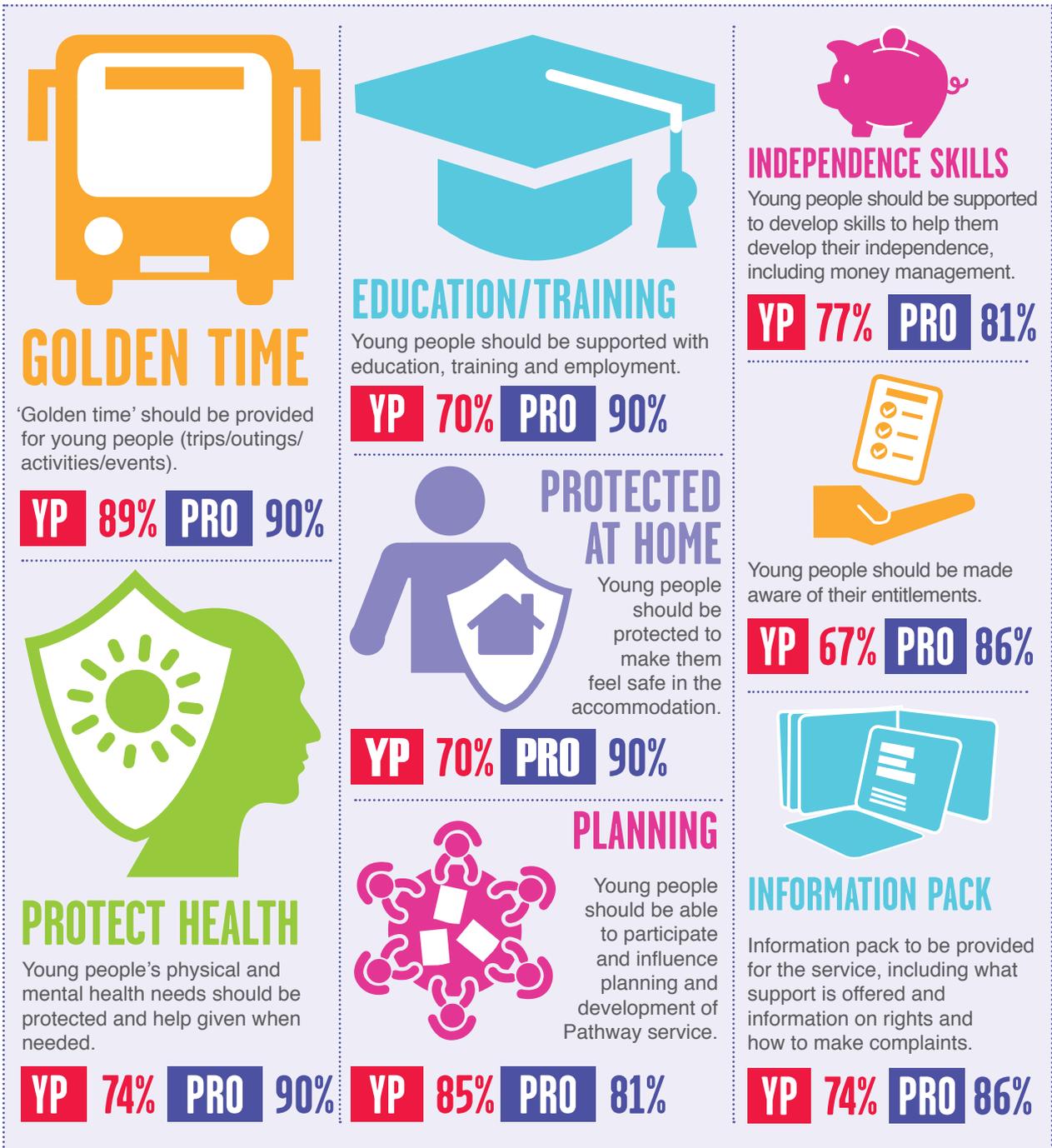
- Weekly email detailing different opportunities: workshops, baking, music lessons
- Support groups including groups for young people from different cultural backgrounds
- Linking young people with other organisations: the British Red Cross, Connexions, Drive Forward Foundation and local faith communities
- Support to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Support to access help with alcohol and drugs misuse
- Access to education and employment
- Training and volunteering
- Gym membership.



# Key findings

## 7. The Young Inspectors Team is going to recommend care leaver standards for the Pathway Which of the following do you think should be included in the standards recommendations?

Popularity of Pathway standards recommendations compared: **YP** Young People **PRO** Professionals



## Key findings

### 8. What makes a good personal advisor, social worker or key worker?



**MY PERSONAL ADVISOR AND KEY WORKER SUPPORT ME WITH ANYTHING THAT CONCERNS MY DEVELOPMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS.**

**MY PERSONAL ADVISOR ALWAYS CARES ABOUT ME AND HELPS ME EVERY TIME WHEN I NEED IT. I THINK THAT MAKES A PERFECT PERSONAL ADVISOR.**

# Key findings

## 9. What has helped you to have a good relationship with your personal advisor, key worker or a social worker?

**BEING HONEST AND TRUSTING MY PERSONAL ADVISOR.**

TALKING ABOUT MY PATHWAY GOALS, PLANS AND WHAT I WANT FROM LIFE.

**GOOD COMMUNICATION AND STAYING IN REGULAR CONTACT.**

TRUST AND TREAT YOUR PERSONAL ADVISOR AS YOUR FRIEND - BEING ON YOUR SIDE.



**GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER.**

BEING OPEN AND HONEST WITH EACH OTHER.

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT.



**THE KEY WORKER BEING FROM THE SAME COUNTRY AS ME.**

FEELING THAT I AM UNDERSTOOD AND HEARD.



**LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING MY NEEDS.**

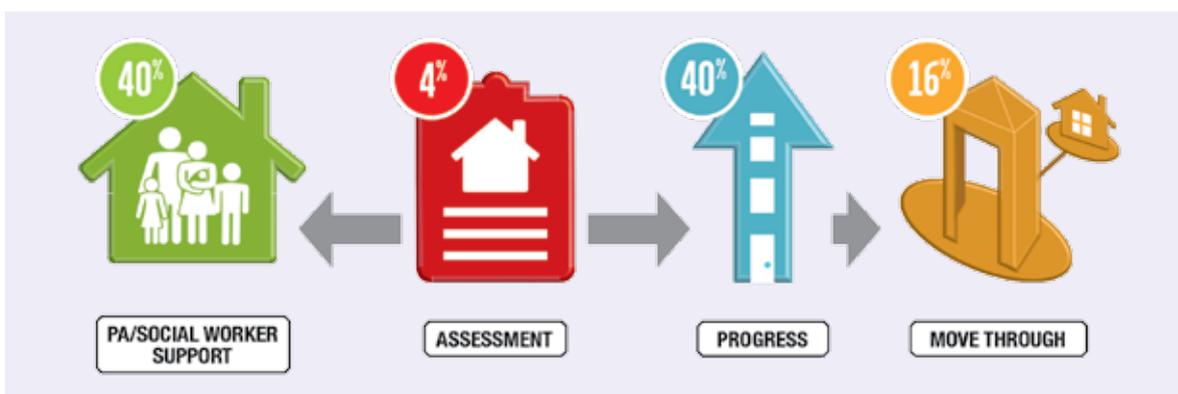
HAVING AN OPEN MIND.



# Key findings

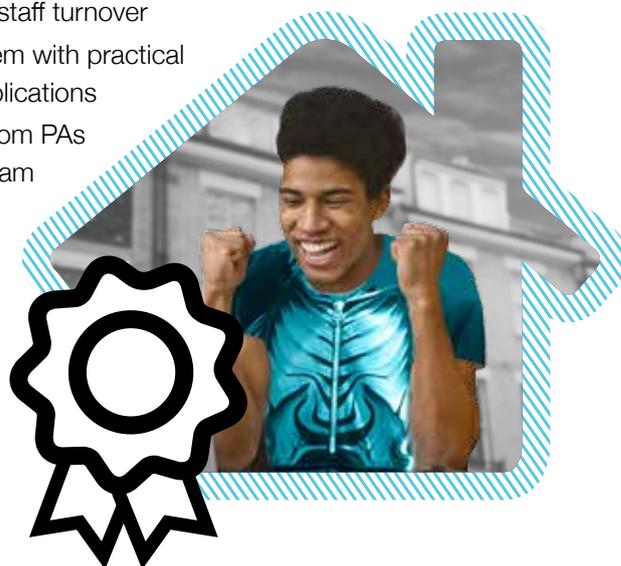
## Responses from staff involved in Pathway services: personal advisors, social workers and key workers

### 1. Which stage of the Pathway service do you represent?



### 2. In your view, what are the strengths of your service?

- We have the **skills, ability and the 'know-how'** to meet the needs of our young people, including young people with challenging behaviour and complex needs
- Having a good understanding of the Pathway model and structure to **support young people's development**
- We are **passionate about the service** we give to our young people and we will go the extra mile to see them succeed in their ambition, goals and future endeavours
- Consistency with support for young people, working very well together and **wealth of knowledge and experience** within the team
- Strong team and **consistency of staff** with not too high staff turnover
- Being an **advocate** for young people and supporting them with practical issues such as rent, benefits, housing and university applications
- The service is strengthened by the **long-term support** from PAs and social workers who continue to work in the same team
- We provide a **safe environment** for young people and support for their growth and progress
- **Partnership working** and sharing information
- **Building trusting relationships** with young people.



## Key findings

### 3. What do you find most challenging in your role?

#### Language barriers

In the case of the majority of young people in our accommodation, English is not their first language. The early days and weeks are challenging as both young people and staff struggle to understand each other, even with help from interpreters. In these situations, building trust between a young person and Pathway workers is a challenge.

வணக்கம்



#### Engaging young people in services

It can be challenging:

- Working with young people who are reluctant and / or resist seeking help with drug addiction
- Engaging young people in the service to be able to work together.



#### Managing good relationships

It is challenging sometimes to:

- Build good working relationships with the professional network when there are staff changes
- Maintaining a positive relationship with young people whilst having to issue warnings and rent arrears letters
- Dealing firmly with difficult issues and situations.

#### Managing expectations

Managing young people's expectations around housing and moving to independent accommodation.



## Key findings

### 4. What training and support do you need in your role?

- Training for Pathway staff on trauma informed practice
- Drop-in sessions for young people run by housing staff to explain the bidding process
- Understanding barriers to young people's progression in housing applications.

### 5. What changes or improvements would you recommend to the service?

- Regular house meetings / forum for the young people to have a say on how the services are run or what they need to make it a successful partnership
- More mental health services for care leavers over 18 and shorter waiting times
- Improve system around rent collection to avoid rent arrears
- More support for young people to practice independence skills.



## JENNY

**Young Inspectors' team leader**

Working with the team this year was really fun – everyone was focused and we communicated really well together. It made coming to the project fun and something I looked forward to and even made the work easier, because we talked everything through and made sure that there was nothing missing. So I would say that was most enjoyable for me.

The two major new skills I got out of this project were:

1. Researching skills – you really needed to be researching non-stop with this project
2. Moving the team forward constantly, while making sure we didn't miss anything.

Each year, this project teaches me something new but this year really went above and beyond with teaching me how the social service system works behind the scenes of everything. It was important for me to see that, because as someone who is still in the care system, it's important to know what opportunities are out there for me. I learnt that I need to go out and get what's out there.

**THIS PROJECT MADE ME REALISE THAT I AM IMPORTANT AND I CAN DO ANYTHING, I DON'T REALLY NEED OTHERS' OPINIONS OF ME.**

## KIANA

**Young Inspector**

This project has made me realise how much I care about the care system and how much can be done to make other young people's lives as good as they can be. I enjoyed finding out what goes on in the system and understanding why and when decisions are made for young people. In my view, it is a very good way of involving care leavers and getting them to help to shape the service.

**ONE OF THE SUGGESTIONS WE DISCUSSED WAS CREATING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INVOLVED IN DESIGNING THE SERVICE, BY HAVING A YOUNG PEOPLE'S PATHWAY ADVISORY BOARD.**





## KIERAN

### Young Inspector

The thing I found most enjoyable about the project was working alongside a team that, like myself, had either former or current experience of the Pathway.

It was interesting to hear the contrasting views and opinions of my fellow team members. I felt that everyone on the team was able to contribute and share their views and experiences of the Pathway. I also liked the fact that all the people we spoke to recognised how much the Pathway helps and benefits young people in Camden.

I have learnt a lot of new skills such as:

- fact-finding
- how to effectively build, structure and create a survey for managers, staff and young people
- how to extract and use the knowledge and experience of the people we interviewed to help us gain invaluable information for our young inspectors report.

I really enjoyed the research aspect to the project and gathering information.

I also really enjoyed learning about the various jobs and roles of the people we were interviewing, seeing how they work to achieve the same common goal – improving the lives of young people.

I have gained new skills and knowledge such as:

- Interviewing skills
- Data gathering and research
- Working as a team
- Knowledge on how to fact-find and use information to build a report
- Active listening and effective communication
- Knowledge of different types of survey questions
- Ability to participate and use my own initiative.

**I FEEL THAT THE PROJECT HAS SUPPORTED ME IN BEING ABLE TO COME OUTSIDE OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT THAT I HAVE NEVER DONE BEFORE. IT GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH A GREAT TEAM AND LEARN SOME INTERESTING THINGS THAT I CAN TAKE FORWARD WITH ME AS I ENDEAVOUR TO CONTINUE TO BECOME AN ASPIRING ENTREPRENEUR.**

One of the things that I found most valuable about the project was that I was able to get an insight into how the Pathway is currently working.

I was able to compare it with how it was when I was first in the Pathway. I feel that a lot of effort and improvement has been made, but that there is still room to make the service even better for young people.

**ON THE PROJECT, I WORKED WITH A YOUNG PERSON WHO, DESPITE BEING THE SAME AGE AS ME, HAD BEEN THROUGH A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE TO ME AND HAD OVERCOME IT. I HAD NEVER MET AN UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILD BEFORE, SO IT WAS A PROFOUNDLY LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE TO HEAR HIS PERSPECTIVE.**



## **PRINCESS**

### **Young Inspector**

The project gave me the opportunity to learn about the Pathway accommodation, the history behind the scheme, what the intention was behind it and how management works behind the scenes to bring the operation to life in a way that is sufficient for each and every young person. It was a good experience to speak to other young people who also live in the Pathway about their accommodation. Also speaking to management of the Pathway has highlighted the importance of communication between young people and management.

I have gained a lot of valuable information to do with the Pathway that I am currently a part of. It has given me a new level of respect and appreciation for the Pathway, as without it I would have struggled as a young person trying to manage a tenancy alone with a lack of knowledge, skills and finance. Now I am aware that this was the intention behind the scheme in the first place, I am very grateful knowing it has and will continue to save and prepare thousands of children just like me in the future, whether we realise it or not.

It was a thought-provoking conversation. I also realised, no matter how difficult the circumstances, you must always be grateful, as there are people who have struggled far more than I could ever imagine. If they can overcome these difficulties, then I have no excuse.

*Emerging themes*

AND

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**HOME  
FREE**



# Emerging THEMES

## Emerging Themes

The Young Inspectors team identified the following emerging themes:

- The content of the **information for care leavers** about the Pathway services varies, depending on the provider of the Pathway service
- **Mental health** support at Pathway (on site) has received very positive feedback and a recommendation has been made by young people to continue this support for care leavers
- Accessing information about **education, training and employment** varies and young inspectors are making a recommendation to develop a direct system of communication such as Google Classroom
- A highlight of the importance of the accommodation being of a **good standard** and providing a homely atmosphere, with a good level of **cleanliness and hygiene** in shared areas.
- The importance of having opportunities and information to join **recreational activities, outings and trips abroad** offered by Pathway and partner agencies
- Having a **good relationship and support** from the **personal advisor or key worker**
- **Feeling safe and protected** at Pathway accommodation is very important to young people
- The importance of having **support to develop skills for independence** and confidence to try new things
- The importance of young people having a clear understanding of the Pathway assessment process, AQAs and moving towards independence
- Staff and young people agree that young people should have more **opportunities to influence decisions** about **planning the service** and developing **programme of activities**
- **Pathway staff** value the **strong partnership** with **Camden services** including CSSW.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Key recommendations for support services post-lockdown arising from this inspection are:

- 1 To set up a **Young People's Pathway Advisory Board** and develop a programme of involving young people in influencing commissioning of Pathway providers, planning, development and review of Camden's Pathway service.
- 2 To provide a **consistent information / welcome pack** for young people explaining the process of moving through the Pathway, available support and the process of moving towards independence.
- 3 To develop a **direct system of communication** between the **Virtual School and young people** in order to help **young people** across all Pathways to have access to up-to-date information about education, training and employment opportunities.
- 4 To provide easy and flexible **access to mental health support on site** for **young people** in the Pathway up to the age of 25.
- 5 Pathway providers to offer '**golden time**' **activities** which are enriching and offer special experiences for young people.
- 6 To provide support for staff to enable them to **build relationships of trust** and understanding
- 7 To provide **training to staff** working in the **Pathway services on understanding trauma**, in particular in relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking children.





*Clean and tidy*

**THESE PROJECTS MADE ME  
REALISE THAT I AM IMPORTANT  
AND I CAN DO ANYTHING, I  
DON'T REALLY NEED OTHERS  
OPINION OF ME.**





*Quiet street*



*Congrats on your new*  
**HOMIE**



If you would like to be a **Young Inspector** or would like to know more about the project, please email [elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk](mailto:elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk) or contact us via [www.backchatonline.org.uk](http://www.backchatonline.org.uk)