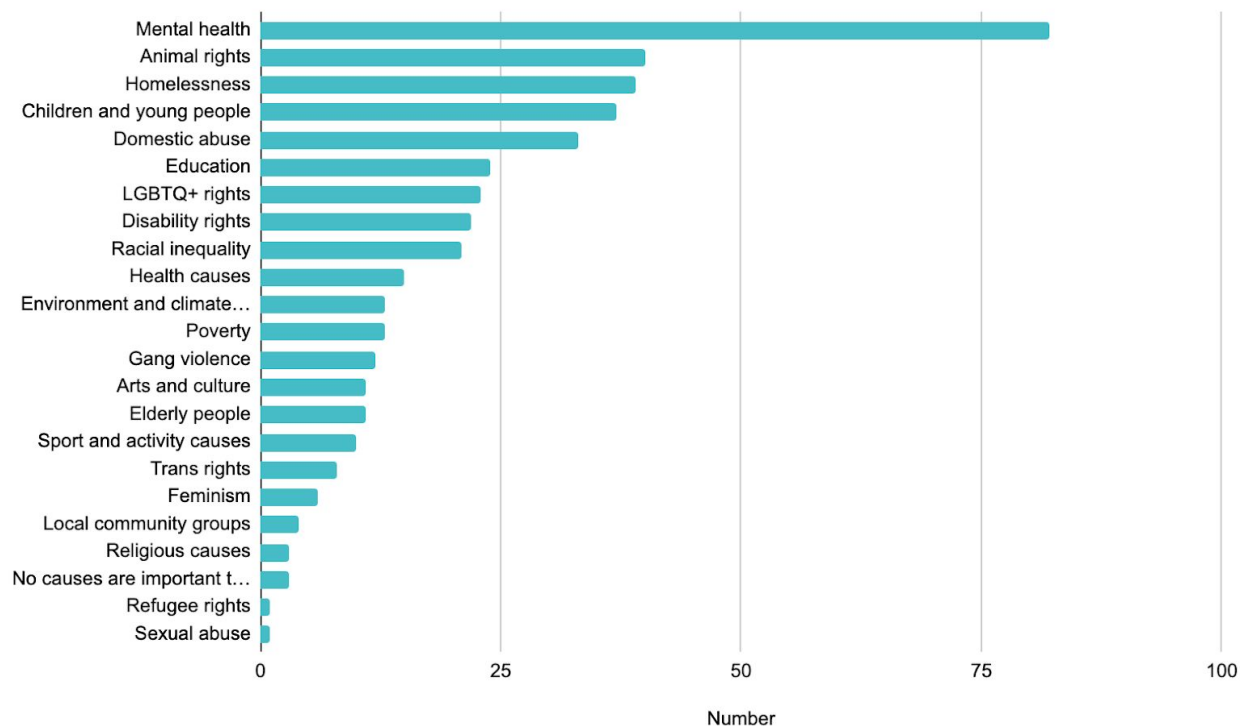


The Big Questions survey responses – The Foyer Federation

The Big Questions is the Foyer Federation's bi-annual survey on young people living in our member Foyers/supported accommodation services. We received 124 responses from 22 Foyers: Aberdeen, Blackburn, Bodmin, Braintree, Bridge, Carn Brea, Coops, Crewe YMCA, ESYM, Heather Court, Isle of Wight, Liskeard, Monarch Court, Newhaven, Plymouth, Ravenhead, Swan House, Torbay, Verve Place, Wiltshire, YMCA Derbyshire and YMCA Milton Keynes.

What's Important to You

1. We want to ensure the voices of young people in Foyers are heard on the issues they care about most. Which **THREE** causes are most important to you?



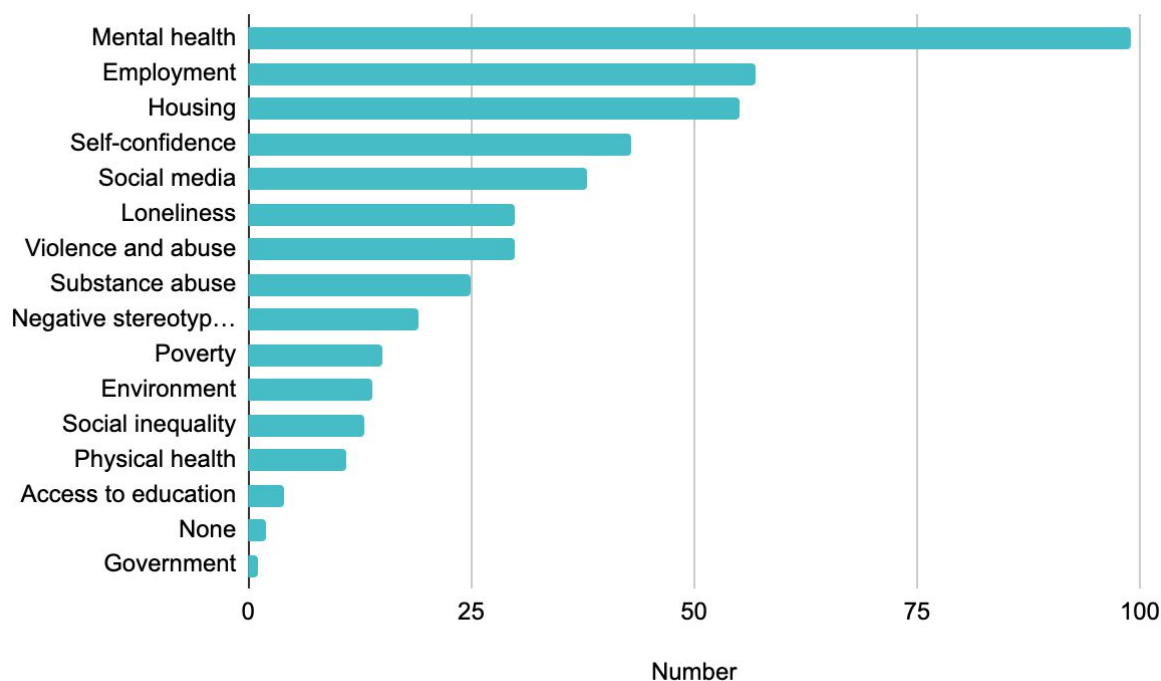
The three most important causes for young people experiencing homelessness are mental health (66%), animal rights (32%) and homelessness (31.5%).

Causes that are important in ensuring a happy family life and healthy home environment also hold a high level of importance for young people in Foyers, such as children and young people (30%) and domestic abuse (26.5%).

In the previous survey, summer 2020, the three most important causes were mental health (58%), domestic abuse (58%) and homelessness (53%) – fairly consistent with the winter 2021 results. The increase in the number of young people naming mental health as most important likely links to an increase in poor mental health as the pandemic continues to affect social connections and other coping mechanisms.

2. We want to influence decision makers to improve the systems that affect young people. What are the THREE biggest challenges facing young people today?

Young people living in Foyers believe that the three biggest challenges facing young people today are mental health (80%), employment (46%) and housing (44%). This closely mirrors the results of the summer 2021 survey, in which young people said mental health (82%), employment (59%) and housing (58%) were the three biggest challenges. Self-confidence and social media both remain high on the list of challenges too.



3. What do you think is exciting for young people right now?

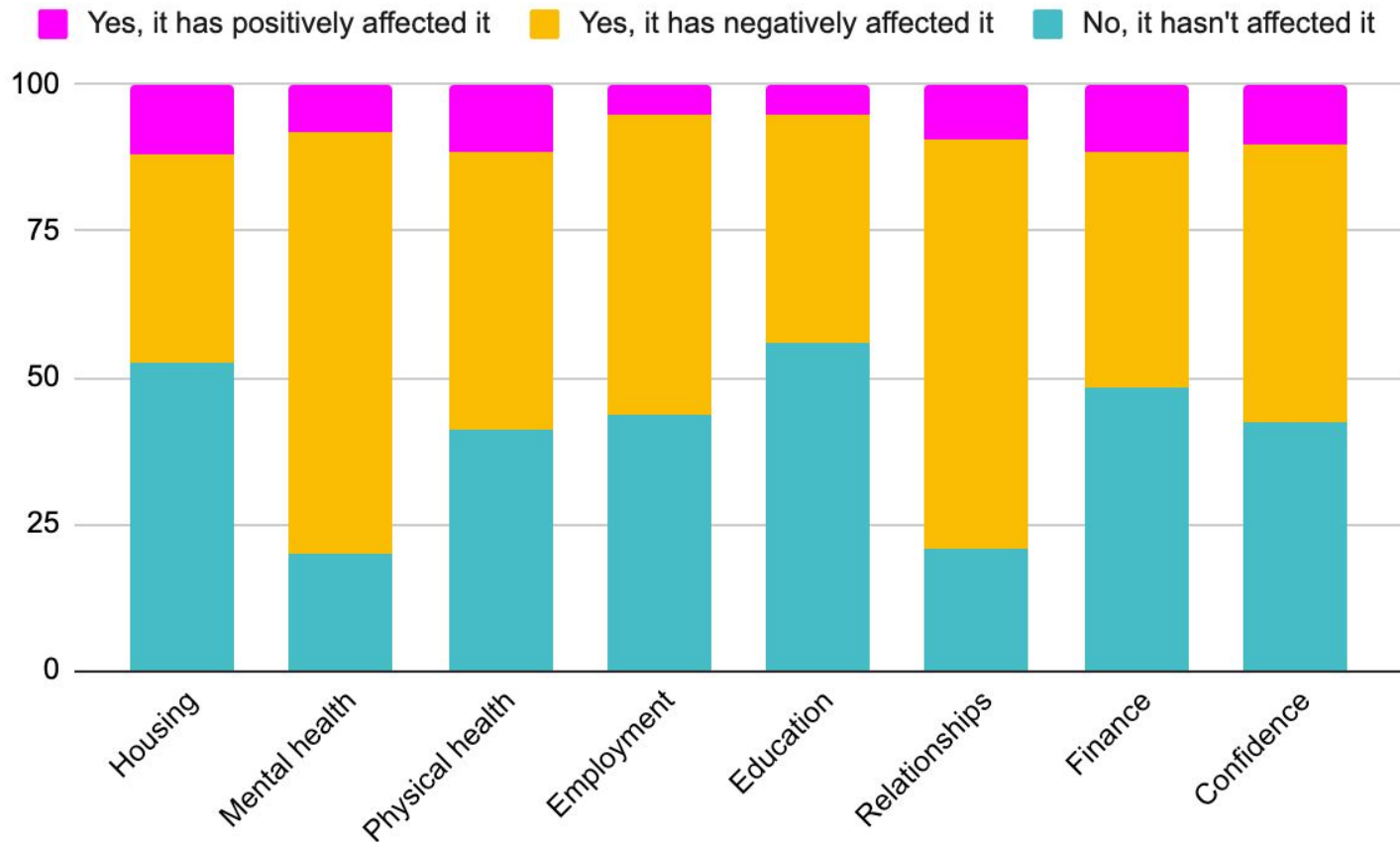
The main themes were the end of lockdown/things going back to normal (21%) and nothing (21%). From this, it's clear that a lot of young people feel the pandemic has put their lives on pause in some important ways, but that there's some light now being seen at the end of the tunnel.

Socialising (11%) and education (9%) were the next highest groups of responses.

4. What do you think is worrying for young people right now?

COVID-19 and the lockdown was by the far the greatest worry (26%), followed by mental health (12%) and employment (11%). 10% of responses referred to worry about the unknown, whether this was about their own futures or the after effects of the pandemic and/or Brexit.

5. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your progress in any of the following areas?



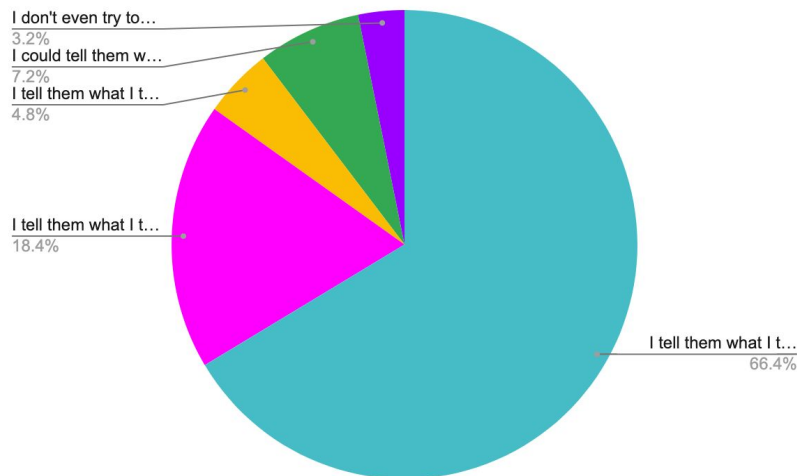
The most stable areas for young people during the pandemic are education and housing, with 56% and 52.5% respectively seeing no change overall.

Many young people have seen the pandemic positively affect areas of their life, reporting boosts to their housing (12%), finances (11.5%) and physical health (11.5%) in particular.

However, the negative impact of the pandemic in these key areas are the most striking. The majority of young people suffered negative effects on their mental health (72%), relationships (69.5%) and employment (51.5%). Confidence (47.5%) and physical health (47.5%) have also been negatively affected for many.

Leadership and Influence

6. How well does your Foyer listen to what you think?

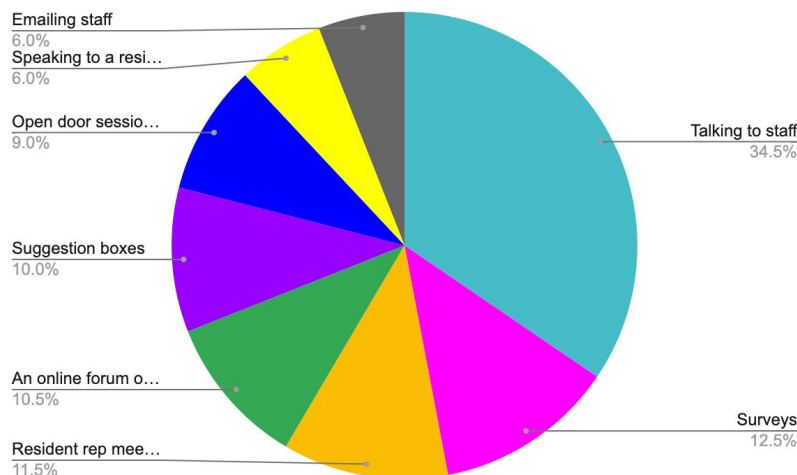


I tell them what I think and things happen as a result – 66.4%
I tell them what I think but it takes a long time for things to change or I'm not kept up to date – 18.4%
I tell them what I think but it's very rare that anything changes as a result – 4.8%
I could tell them what I think but I don't because I doubt they would do anything – 7.2%
I don't even try to tell them what I think because they don't want to listen – 3.2%

A really positive result! 89.5% of young people feel confident enough to share their thoughts within their Foyer and know how to make their voices heard, and about 85% see things change as a result of that feedback.

This is a fantastic place to keep growing from. One way to push this further is putting a process in place to make sure staff are always closing the feedback loop to ensure that young people always know the result, even if nothing happens.

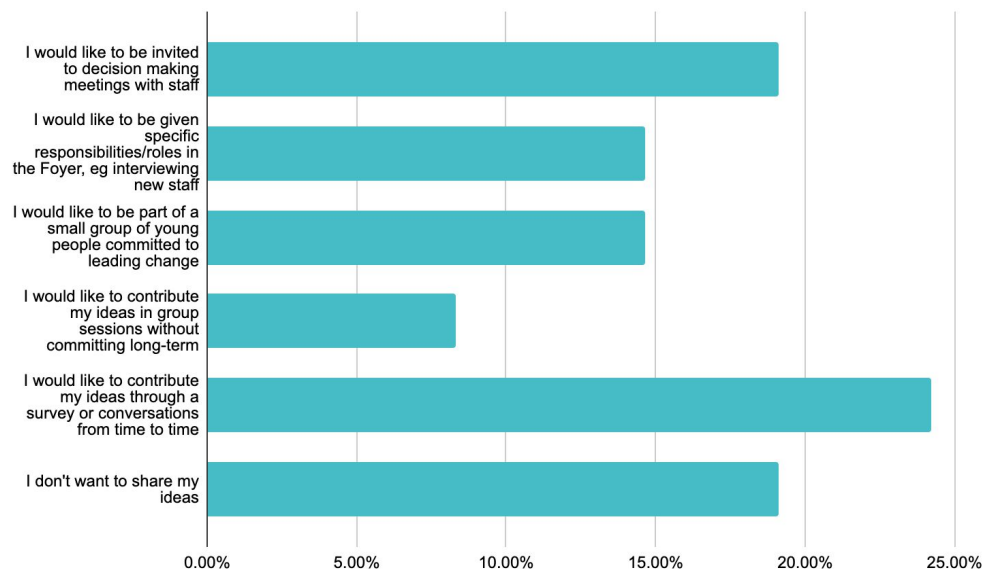
7. How would you most like to make your voice heard or offer help in your Foyer?



Talking to staff – 34.5%
Surveys – 12.5%
Resident rep meetings – 11.5%
An online forum or app – 10.5%
Suggestion boxes – 10%
Open door sessions by managers – 9%
Speaking to a resident rep – 6%
Emailing staff – 6%

There are four main types of communication here: speaking one-to-one with staff (the most popular, which shows the importance of strong relationships), speaking as part of a group, remote communication methods, and speaking to a young person who can advocate on their behalf. Having at least one method for each of these is important to make sure every voice can be heard.

8. How much would you like to be involved in leadership in your Foyer?



It is encouraging to see that 81% of young people are interested in contributing to leadership in some way within their service, and especially that around 48% would be keen to be involved in decision making, take on a specific responsibility or work together with a leadership group of young people.

As part of the Foyer Federation's strategy for 2021-25, we plan to work together with staff and young people to help to further develop this area and build on this enthusiasm and drive. This will include avenues for all young people to be heard, and however they prefer to be involved, and will be steered by those young people who are motivated to take the lead.

The Future

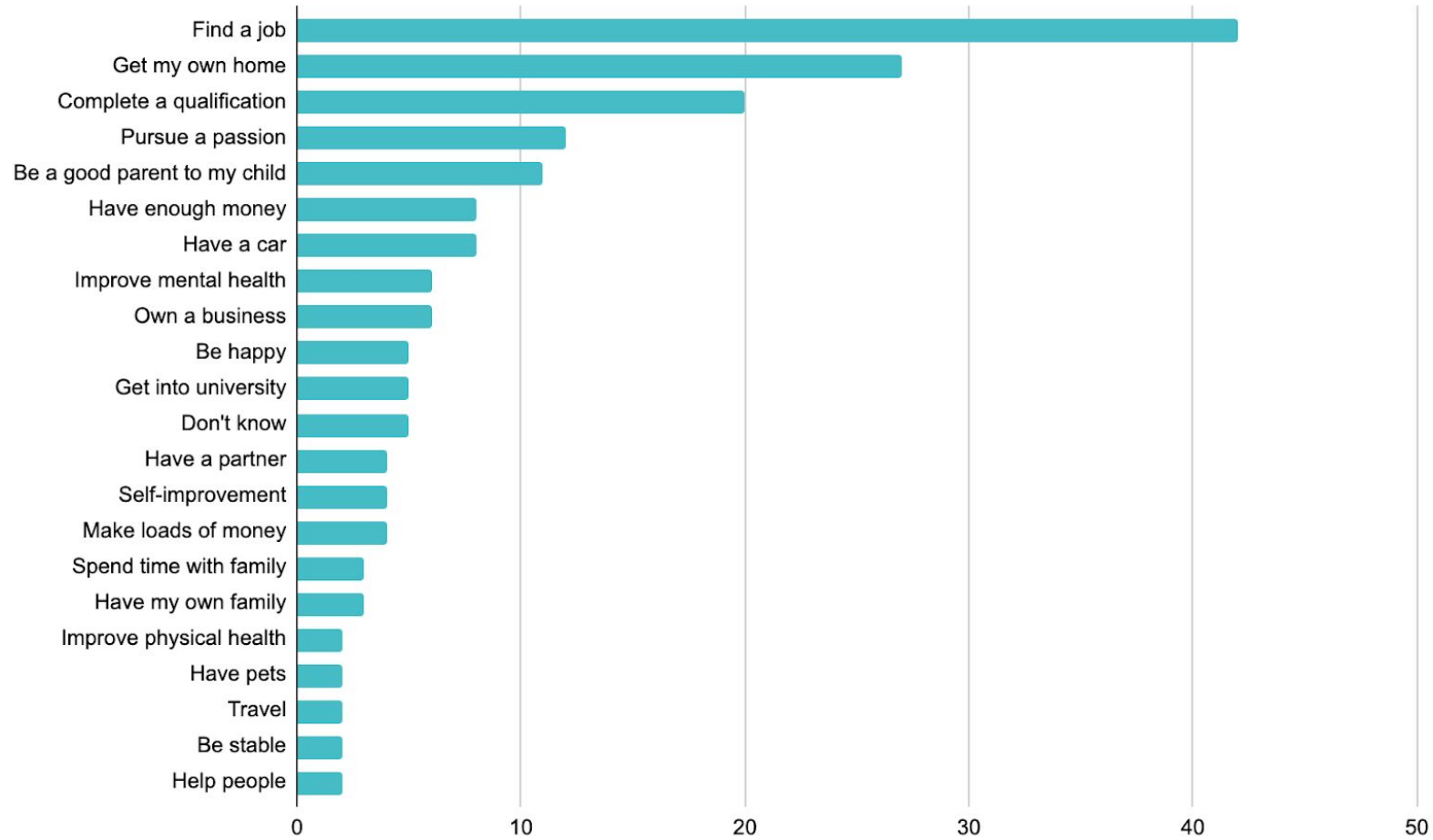
9. How positive do you feel about the future?

On a scale of 1-10, young people responding to this survey reported an average of 6.5 on the positivity scale. This is an improvement from 5.8 in summer 2020, when we were still in the first lockdown. It's fantastic to see this number increasing and we hope to see it continue to rise as we move further from the worst of the pandemic.

10. What three words best describe your feelings about the future?



11. What are your ambitions for yourself?



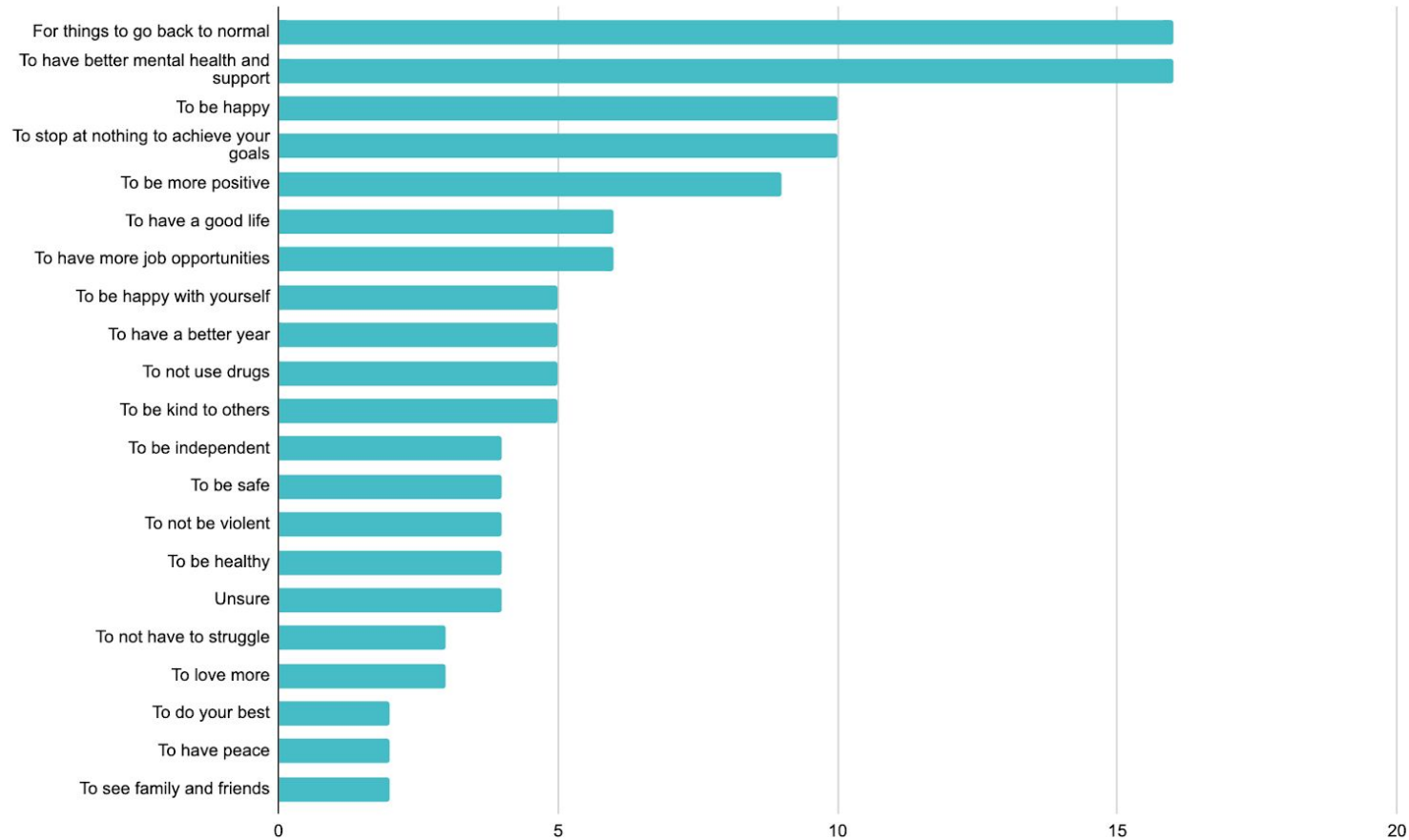
Overall, most young people have ambitions to build a thriving future by finding a job they like, making a home for themselves, pursuing education or completing a qualification, and building positive relationships with their children, friends, partners and families. Of course, these ambitions look and feel different for each young person, so we've included each response here to highlight their unique passions, goals and aspirations.

"My relationship and spending time with my daughter and family" "To become a chef" "To become a lawyer, go to university, become involved in representing different people in my community making the dollars" "Marriage, money, enjoyment" "Get a job" "Having a good job, living comfortable and being able to do what interests me" "to have a job that i like doing but also pays well" "Get back into full fitness and start an finish a course by march also get some part time work and stable mental health" "world domination" "Find a much better job" "Don't know" "talk" "Go to university and then become a teacher" "Get a job and house" "I don't know. I guess just to live okay? I doubt I can accomplish actual aspirations" "Want to get qualifications so I can get a good job" "Get into university" "I am looking forward to starting my apprenticeship" "In my own place" "I am going to university this year to complete an animal behaviour degree. I hope to become a feline behaviourist" "Move into own flat" "To be happy" "Become a mechanic, get a car and eventually my own property" "Job, move out, get healthy" "Making sure I can be the best mum I can, learn to love myself more and to stop being so negative about life" "To have a stable life and to be happy, plus to write more music, maybe produce songs" "Start driving lessons" "Train to be a financial advisor and eventually have my own business doing this" "Move out and think about the future" "Genuine happiness" "My future child. My partner" "support myself financially" "To get a job" "Something creative and to have a nice home. A nice job and car" "To get my own space" "Hmmm idk sadly" "Move out" "I want to be a rap artist" "Go self employed" "move out and be homed for a long time" "Acting, studying psychology and possibly work in this field" "to be a millionaire and build my own property. What's the relevance of this question?" "learn to drive a car" "I don't know yet" "Improvement" "I hope to get my life back on track and keep myself on a good positive road, and I hope to get many opportunities to do great things and new experiences and built and grow as a person and hopefully maybe help people who have went through similar experiences or just people who have had bad experiences or a hard bad time of things. I would genuinely like to help and change lives" "Move into a new home" "Move into a stable housing place" "I want to develop my creative music skills" "get a job joinery" "To study at university to become a Forensic psychologist" "My new home" "To train to be a Social Worker" "Being a good mum" "Loads of money" "sing and be famous" "Would like to work in a kitchen serving older people. Had an interview on Tuesday waiting to hear back" "Move out of supported accommodation, get a job" "Travel the world, start a family, become a barber" "to get my own place" "Keep it simple, work smart and hard" "Boxing. Find employment and make money" "Hope to have a lovely house I can grow in and call home" "Get a job, sort my stuff out, get a dog" "Security work and helping my girlfriend for my son" "To feel whole in everything I do and everything I am" "Drive, work in a career" "Working on my relationship with my daughter and securing a future for us both" "To pass my driving test" "My ambitions are to be a qualified barber and open up and own a barber shop" "To be a vet nurse and be a full man" "Abseiling course! Get own window round" "Become a qualified hair stylist, work mobile earning over £35,000 a month, become a pub landlady and invest in other businesses in England" "Do a degree, become an actor" "to be a nursery nurse" "Enrol on PT course and find employment in that sector, going up the ladder to elite sports level" "Full time job, be able to afford things" "Five restaurants, 1st star by 28, set up wildlife sanctuary and tree protection" "Get a job in childcare, have a family one day" "i want to get back into work and get my own place" "Learn English and train to be an electrician" "Nothing. Just work jobs anyone can get" "Have some sense of responsibility and purpose that I am passionate about" "I want to live my life to the fullest in every aspect of my life. If I want to buy something then I will. If I want to write a book or make art then I'll do it. If I want to go explore the world's most haunted/abandoned places then I'll do it." "leave here, drive, get a job" "New home, get a job, get a car. In time see my sons again" "To complete my SIA for job opportunities, to move out and make my house a home and to provide a safe and loving environment for my son" "don't have any yet" "University" "Find a home of my own" "Get work experience" "Get into paramedicine and help people" "want a nice house and car" "To be able to do more art work" "Go to Amsterdam" "Continue to set my business up, move out of Foyer" "to be able to get a job and save and to be able to treat myself" "To be a good mother to my daughter" "Get employed and eventually own my own home" "Self-improvement" "To get a job in finance" "Move out of the foyer and hopefully get back into work all before my baby is born" "Single, no children, own flat, a job in catering" "Finding myself a Hobbie and a place to call my home" "To have my little baby boy back at home full time" "To become a paramedic, one day get married and be happy with someone. For my son to be comfortable and happy and well looked after" "To get my own place, have a dog, peruse a career in one of the following: Animal Sanctuary : Professional Cook, Professional Cuddler" "Become a primary school teacher" "Finish college, get a job in the industry I am interested in" "do an extra year at college on my sports course" "Get money" "Sort my life out and become less stressed" "Work with animals" "To see family back home again. To enjoy football, engineering qualifications, Maybe being in an office" "Have a healthy relationship with family, get a full-time job this year" "Have more self confidence and believe in myself more" "That I am financially stable" "get into university" "Become more independent in my own accommodation and to be a responsible adult" "Don't know" "go back to be being a normal family with my girls" "a job" "get a job that I'm happy with"

12. How likely do you think it is that you will achieve your ambitions?

On average, young people responded with 7.6 out of 10 – an increase from 7.05 six months ago. It's fantastic to see this boost in confidence.

13. What is your wish for young people in 2021?

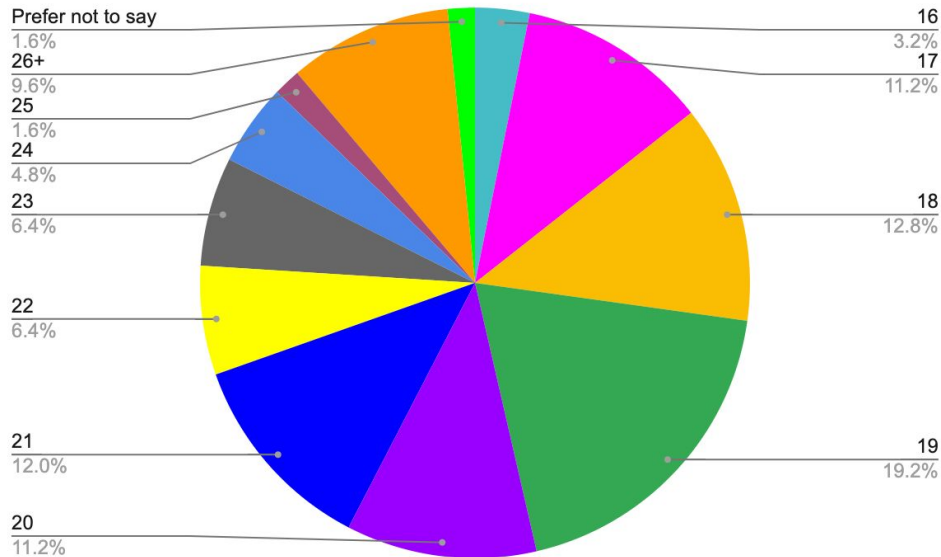


Overall, the wishes for young people focused on a few key areas: being happy, free and healthy in relation to the pandemic, building and maintaining positive relationships, and mental health – both getting access to the kind of support and interventions they might need, and taking steps personally to focus on positives and build self-belief. There were also a number of young people focusing on making positive choices and avoiding negative behaviours.

“Safety” “Happy and healthy” “Enjoy the summer and for things to return to normal” “To grow up” “See family” “We get out of covid” “jobs” “Never suffer in silence, just talk to someone whenever you feel down” “To be optimistic” “Speak up” “To know more life skills” “Better mental health services – not on a downward spiral” “To be brave and do your best” “Peace and love” “Stay positive and ask for help when you need it” “Be yourself” “To be happy” “To get employment” “to have a life” “Stop selling drugs” “Stay safe” “For everyone to be happy” “Back into education” “come out of lockdown” “stop using knives” “Improve mental health services” “Not to get emergency taxed!” “Be more friendly” “To cherish life because you only get 1” “To Be Happy You Got To Be Happy Letsgooooohooooo” “We can all move on from covid ie vaccinations and being able to see family and friends more frequently!” “Do not self harm but talk to people” “To live life and not to care about the haters” “To be happy and free, meaning covid to be gone” “Happiness, Healthy, stress free” “To be more responsible” “Choose the positive path – go forwards, not back” “To succeed in life, enjoy it but work hard! You only live once guys!” “To try and stay positive” “They get help with mental health” “Be happy” “for their mental health to improve through this hard time” “No longer living in struggle” “dunno” “don’t go down my path choose wisely” “Confident in what they do. Chase dreams. Treat others like you want to be treated. To be motivated. Good mental and physical health” “Healthiness” “I hope they understand that things will get difficult but they won’t always be that way. If they have ambitions then to stop at nothing to achieve them” “Given more opportunities rather pressure from Society” “I wish that they all ignore everyone else and only care about what they want for five seconds and then set at least one goal to get there” “Stop worrying about materialism, believe in themselves” “Things to get back to normal” “I don’t know” “Don’t let anyone hurt you always stick up for yourself and what you believe in” “Everybody is ok” “My wish would be for young people to open up and talk more about mental health” “That this year will get better and everyone keeps safe” “have hope and not give up” “To be able chase their dreams” “Just try and be positive” “For adults to take young people seriously!” “An improvement on their mental health and confidence” “I really hope and wish that they get back to their normal or better lives, education, experience, I hope that there is a difference in the lives of the youths and there are more supports in place to stop the spread of drugs, violence, breaking the law, and a general difference in the world of 21st century. I hope people see that there is more to life than these things” “I wish all young people could be given the opportunity into employment” “Easier lifestyle, not have to worry about money, easier to get jobs” “For everyone to be a Leeds United fan” “Live stress-free lives” “To do the best in life they can” “Get better help with mental health work and finding houses” “Happiness” “Positive mindset” “For job opportunities to open up, seek help for mental health and for covid to end” “Independence and pride” “To be able to go out. Back to normality” “The main is to love more, we need more love and less bitterness” “Not to use drugs, no violence and stay safe” “To come out of Covid-19 and feel better and be able to reflect on how much they have been through” “Life to get more back to normal. more job opportunities” “to get better with their mental health” “For normality to return and national fears to reduce” “to look after themselves” “For disabled people to be able to live independently with the help they need. Worries for when carer passes away – what happens? My wish is not to have to worry about this” “For life to return to normal and people can have a social circle they can go and see” “can do whatever they want” “Try not to worry, better days are coming” “to believe in themselves and not to worry” “Have a covid free nice summer” “stay happy” “Reduce stereotypes” “To be more positive” “To be positive about their future and work hard for their ambitions” “Emotional and financial Peace” “After all the restrictions of Covid, I would like them to have a good year” “To get through this” “To be able to reach out for help and actually get real, proper help” “Nothing. It’s good how it is” “For more support” “To come out of lockdown with a positive and happier mindsets” “My wish is to stop doubting themselves and achieve what they want in life” “To go back to normal” “For them to live their lives how they want” “be less violent and not turn to drugs” “For Covid to go and everyone to be healthy” “to get over themselves” “people to respect each other” “To stop all the hate in the world and taking all the drugs. I would like them to start respecting themselves as well as others” “improvement” “It’s ok not to be ok” “For everybody’s mental health to be OK” “More help with mental health” “To be happier in themselves” “To be helped and listened to” “Covid to be over” “To never give up as every positive day goes to success” “People can find something they enjoy, education wise” “be nice to each other” “Live life to the fullest”

Demographic information

Almost all of the responses to these questions were free text boxes, allowing people to self-describe their identities. Everyone also had the option not to share this information with us. We use this information to assess whether we're reaching a diverse group of young people and discover any gaps.



Age

Most of the respondents (66.4%) are between 17-21, but we have a good range of ages from 16 to 26+. It is interesting to see that 9.6% of respondents are above the traditional Foyer age of 25, demonstrating that the Foyer approach is meaningful beyond the age at which someone is often not considered to be a 'young person'.

Ethnicity

Around 88% of the respondents to this survey described themselves as white, and the next largest group described themselves as Black (8%). We do not believe that this fully represents the racial demographic of young people within the Foyer network, and we welcome feedback on how we can reach a wider audience with this survey to ensure all views are heard.

Nationality

93% of respondents are from the United Kingdom. We also had two young people from Afghanistan, and one from each of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritius, the Netherlands and Poland.

Sexual orientation

Just under 70% of young people responding to the survey described themselves as 'heterosexual' or 'straight', with approximately 24% being on the LGBTQ+ spectrum including bisexual, pansexual, heterosexual and asexual.

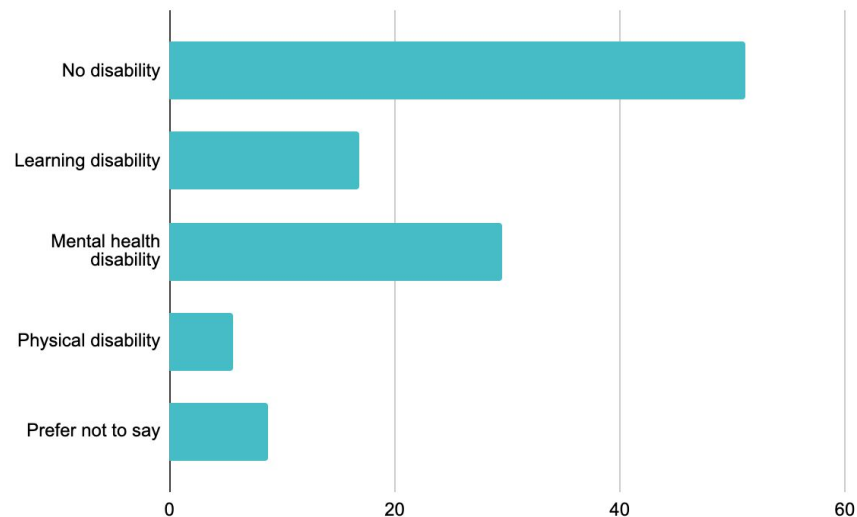
Gender

53% of respondents are male, 45% are female, and 2% declined to respond. Just three young people disclosed whether they were transgender or cisgender (two young people and one young person respectively), and one self-identified as a 'trash gremlin'.

Religion or belief

33.5% of respondents follow a religion or belief, with the largest group (9.5%) describing themselves as Christian. The other faiths mentioned are Catholicism, Islam, Christian Orthodox, Judaism, Buddhism, Church of England, Paganism and Spirituality. Around 65% do not follow a belief system.

Disability



Nearly 30% of respondents consider themselves to have a mental health disability, nearly 17% to have a learning disability and 7% to have a physical disability.

10% of respondents report having multiple disabilities.

The UK averages are:

- [17% of adults in the UK have a common mental health problem](#)
- [2.16% of adults in the UK have a learning disability](#)
- [16% of adults in the UK have a physical disability](#)