

## Case study – Together Alliance

### *Background*

In 2019, Paul Bragman Community and Economic Regeneration Consultants Limited was part of a commission with Campbell Tickell to conduct research and drill deeper into issues of youth homelessness. This was in order to understand how to create better opportunities for young people to go into and stay in stable accommodation. The commission was from Together, an alliance of Albert Kennedy Trust, Clarion Housing, De Paul, HACT, Hyde Housing, Metropolitan Thames Valley, Network Homes, New Horizon Youth Centre, Peabody, Safer London. The research was also supported by Berkeley, Fusion, HAYN.



Frontline staff across the together organisations convening for a workshop on young people's experience of homelessness.

### *Work carried out*

The main work was around placing young people with lived experience at the centre of the research process. This is because people with lived experience know the situation better than anyone else so can really relate to peers and extract extra rich data. We helped to train peer researchers to carry out the research. Their training took place over two evenings and two refresher sessions; a total of eight hours training. During the training sessions young people developed a general understanding and practise around:

- Research methods and techniques,
- How to stay safe while carrying out research,
- Understanding body language techniques,
- Drafting research questions to make them appropriate and relevant to their peers.

The interviews were written up and then shared anonymously in two workshops with members of the alliance.

Young people were also members of an advisory panel and were trained on how to influence from their role on the panel. The panel convened twice at key stages of the research. The advisory group engaged some peer researchers as well as young people who were met along the way during the research. The advisory group considered ways that the research reflected their experience of homelessness in London and commented on the findings before they were presented at the Together alliance members workshop. This ensured emerging themes from the findings were consistent with young advisors' experiences. Once the findings were fed back to the Together workshop, the young advisors' had focus group discussions on possible projects that could be delivered to support young people into stable accommodation. They used their insight as well as the research to comment on how best these projects could be developed and delivered.

### *Outcome*

Supported by a research team from Campbell Tickell, six peer researchers carried out a total of 21 interviews with other young people who had or were experiencing homelessness. This provided the insight into 21 lives and realities of experiencing homelessness in London. These peer to peer exchanges opened up conversations between young people on services, the level of access, what support they needed most, and what organisations could improve on. This provided an authenticity and honesty where young people were at the heart of the project and could feel comfortable to share more because they were speaking to people who have lived through the same.

Amongst the findings, research found that breakdown in family relationships, mental health, substance abuse, leaving school without qualifications and affordability are some of the key factors that lead to homelessness in young people. The research also found that for support to work well, it needs to be flexible and personalised to the young person, be built on trust between the young person and staff, involve multiple agencies and needs to respond to wider issues facing young people including mental health and education.