Young people: From homelessness to citizenship? An evaluation of the Foyer approach.

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YOUNG PEOPLE: FROM HOMELESSNESS TO CITIZENSHIP? AN EVALUATION OF THE FOYER APPROACH

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D. of the
University of Wales

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SUMMARY OF THESIS

This thesis is intended to test both a theory concerning the causes of youth homelessness and the validity of one approach to overcoming this social problem, that is the approach adopted by the British Foyer Movement. I argue that youth homelessness is the result of denied citizenship in the absence of family membership and through a lack of economic independence from both the family and the state. British social policy restricts the welfare entitlements of young people under the age of 25 years. For government, social security and other advantages of citizenship must be 'earned' through the fulfilment of certain obligations such as work and the making of tax contributions. My thesis provides evidence to show how environmental and structural disadvantages prevent many young people from meeting these obligations, thus rendering them vulnerable to homelessness.

Evidence gathered through an in-depth study at one British Foyer is used to test the explanation of youth homelessness offered above through an investigation of the process of homelessness as it was experienced by the 33 young people who took part in the study. The experiences of and outcomes for study participants are also used to assess the validity of the Foyer approach to youth homelessness. It is suggested that the Foyer approach is unable to meet the stated aims of the British Foyer Federation in empowering young people to become socially and economically active citizens as it fails to recognise the prior needs of young people who have often experienced social exclusion. It is argued that the Foyer approach to tackling youth homelessness is based on individual rehabilitation and the conditional provision of services and as such is ineffective in overcoming the structural causes of youth homelessness for those who are most vulnerable to this social problem.

Dedicated to the memory of my grandmother
Louise Clutton
who had a big heart

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This thesis is in many ways a testimony to the faith of others for it is only my reluctance to disappoint those who believed I could complete this work that convinced me that it could and must be completed. First, I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr Robert Drake. His diligence, attention to detail and considerable patience have all served to provide invaluable guidance and support. I am also grateful to my mentors, colleagues and friends in the School of Social Sciences and International Development and the National Centre for Public Policy for the part they have played in my academic development and for their support. In particular I owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Michael Sullivan. He has inspired me and many other students like me and has become a valued mentor and friend.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIGINS AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

> "There are a number of young people who choose voluntarily to leave home. I do not think we can be expected, no matter how many they are, to provide units for them...those people already have a home to live in, belonging to their parents."
>
> Thatcher (1988).

If young people really are 'choosing' homelessness then the Campaign for the Homeless and Roofless (CHAR) estimated that at least 246,000 had made that choice in 1995 (Evans 1996). Although there is no official measure of youth homelessness, if we accept the estimate offered by CHAR reason suggests that there must be a number of predisposing factors which lead to youth homelessness. The claim that such a volume of young people are choosing housing need rather than being pushed into it by one or more of these factors must, therefore, be questioned and evidence rejecting such a claim is not difficult to find (see for example: Anderson 1993 et al, Burrows and Walentowicz 1992, Burrows et al 1997, Carlen 1996, Coles 1995, Hendessi 1992, Hutson and Liddiard 1994, Newman 1989, Shelter 1994, Thornton 1990). This thesis, then, is intended first to test a theory concerning the causes of youth homelessness and second, to assess the validity of the Foyer approach (see below) as a means of overcoming this social problem.

Mullins (1998) points out that what is notable by its absence from discussions of housing is the notion of the social rights of citizenship. Whatever may be the reasons for young people leaving the parental home why should they not be afforded the right to claim shelter? Consider, for example, our attitudes towards other major elements of welfare. It has long been accepted that education should be compulsory, and

although the social security system is undergoing vast changes in terms of entitlement (see chapter 2) the state still provides a subsistence income for the unemployed and incapacitated. Housing has always been treated differently, and has occupied a marginalised position in terms of social rights (Mullins 1998) and as the rules of citizenship are rewritten (Lister 1990a), secure shelter becomes a prize of inclusion and full citizenship a status that must be earned (see chapter 3). Legislation directly aimed at combating homelessness such as that contained in the Part V11 of the Housing Act 1996 (see Shelter 1997) defines homelessness in such a way that:

> "single people are not recognised as having housing rights. In a sense, therefore, homelessness among young people has not so much proved resistant to policy, as policy to combat it has been non-existent. In fact, policy has arguably exacerbated the problem".
> (Lee 1998:72).

Both as a person and as a student of social policy I have been frustrated by my failure to comprehend or come to terms with the existence of youth homelessness. The research embarked upon for this thesis was undertaken as much to answer my own questions about human nature as it was to further my academic development. At the end of the process I find myself to have been naïve, for to borrow some lines from Paul Weller (1995), "The more I see, the more I know, the more I know, the less I understand".

My interest in the Foyer Movement stems from the fact, first, that it claims to represent a new approach to youth homelessness and second, that it has attracted the support of the New Labour Government. The Foyer Federation is an umbrella organisation which seeks to tackle youth homelessness by equipping young people with the tools of active citizenship. In practice this means that operating on a principle of 'helping people to help themselves', individual Foyers provide temporary

accommodation and support in finding employment, a base from which to make the transition into adulthood. Access to Foyers is limited to those young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years who can demonstrate a housing need and in most cases a condition of tenancy is that tenants agree to undertake training to prepare them for employment. My initial reaction was to question this approach based, as it was, on individual rehabilitation. It seemed at first sight to fail to take account important structural factors (such as high levels of youth unemployment). However, the reader will see that I have tried hard to set aside any scepticism in order, fairly and objectively, to assess the effectiveness of the Foyer Movement's pragmatic approach.

At a time when youth homelessness is a growing social problem and both youth policy and a comprehensive strategy for dealing with homelessness remain at the fringes of the political agenda there is a clear need for further empirical research. The personal circumstances of the researcher meant that there have been limitations as to the scale of the research undertaken. However this was not the primary factor in my decision to base the main body of the thesis on one in-depth qualitative study. The nature of the research I proposed to undertake posed particular ethical questions and required that I question young people about sensitive issues. In view of this it was imperative that I was able to achieve sufficient contact with individuals in order that I might be able to develop the kind of trusting relationships which produce valuable data. This thesis then, is confined to the investigation of housing need among young people who were tenants at one British Foyer during an eighteen-month period and my study is supplemented by a postal survey of other operational British Foyers.

First, evidence is provided to support the claim that all young people are faced with structural disadvantage when seeking independent accommodation. 'Youth' is then established as a period during which the transition to full citizenship occurs. A theory of youth homelessness is introduced which claims that for young people the rights of citizenship can only be achieved through family membership or full economic independence from both the family and the state following the withdrawal by the state of the safety net of social citizenship for young people. This happens at a time in the life course when individuals are particularly vulnerable because of the structural disadvantage of high youth unemployment and low youth wage levels and the problems of availability and access to housing. It is reasonable to anticipate that those young people who are most vulnerable to homelessness will prove to be those who must face this structural disadvantage without the safety net of family membership.

Second, the thesis argues that the approach offered by the Foyer Movement is problematic in that it is built on the principle of individual rehabilitation and can not therefore eradicate structural disadvantage. Nevertheless, it also true that in practice the organisations of the Foyer Movement may be able to furnish at least some young people with the personal resources needed to claim full citizenship and housing through economic independence.

To recap, then, the purpose of the study is first, to establish as far as is possible an explanation of youth homelessness. In so doing, I test the theory that youth homelessness is the result of denied citizenship in the absence of both family membership and a lack of economic independence from both the family and the state. Secondly, I test the validity of the Foyer approach as a means of overcoming the

problem of youth homelessness. The work provides some of the first empirical data concerning the efficacy of the approach offered by the Foyer Movement. This thesis is divided into eight chapters and the next section describes in brief the contents of these chapters and the structure of the thesis.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The two chapters that immediately follow this introduction provide evidence necessary for the theoretical grounding of the research. Chapter two considers the social policy context of youth homelessness in terms of the structural disadvantage experienced by youth as a social group. The third chapter provides a theoretical account of the relationship between youth and citizenship and contends that full participatory citizenship is the key to access to independent and secure housing.

The Social Policy Context.

In seeking to explain the existence of a phenomenon such as youth homelessness it is clearly necessary to consider the social and political environment in which such a problem has arisen. Therefore chapter 2 considers the way in which a number of social policies, when experienced in the context of economic restructuring have resulted, directly and indirectly, in the relative disadvantage of young people as a social group within the housing market. The chapter considers a number of factors including housing policy, homelessness legislation, the Children Act 1989, the youth labour market, social security policy and the complex interrelationship between each area of policy. The chapter establishes that social policy and practice serve to disadvantage all young people seeking independent accommodation and provides a structural explanation of youth homelessness.

Establishing a Theory of Youth Homelessness.

Chapter two establishes that all young people are potentially subject to disadvantage through the structural causes of homelessness. However it is equally clear that although the number of young people who experience homelessness is growing, the majority of young people in Britain are not homeless. Chapter three therefore is intended to establish those defining factors that may make certain individuals more vulnerable than their peers to housing need. This chapter moves beyond structural explanations of youth homelessness and presents the theoretical basis of the thesis. The chapter includes a detailed discussion of citizenship, youth as a period in the life course of the individual and the relationship between the two. Youth is established as a period of transition into citizenship during which citizenship must be claimed 'by proxy' through family membership (Jones and Wallace 1992). Therefore the individuals who are most vulnerable to homelessness are likely to be those who are unable to claim the rights of citizenship through family membership or to enjoy the support of a family in their journey to economic independence. The chapter considers the complex and multi-faceted relationship between policy as informed by political ideology and the life experiences of individuals and more specifically the way in which these factors, in conjunction, may result in youth homelessness.

Background to the Study.

Chapter four provides a background to the main study and an overview of the British Foyer Movement. This chapter includes an account of the development of the movement and a discussion of its principles and stated objectives.

The chapter also includes findings of the postal questionnaire which highlight the diverse ways in which the Foyer principle is operationalised in Britain. The chapter concludes with a description of the Foyer which was the location for the main study, I review the Foyer's stated aims and objectives and explore its identity as an organisation.

Methodology

Chapter five provides an outline and discussion of the methods used in the study. As well as an extensive literature review the thesis draws on original data gathered through the use of a number of methods. Quantitative data are available from a postal questionnaire of operational British Foyers and from a survey conducted in one Foyer. Qualitative data were collected during an eighteen-month long field study at one Foyer. Data were collected through participant observation, the analysis of documentary evidence, interviews and a survey.

The Findings of the Study.

Chapters six and seven describe and discuss the findings of the study. Both chapters draw primarily upon the data obtained at one Foyer during an eighteen-month period. Qualitative and quantitative data are used to test the theory of youth homelessness presented in chapter three and to test the validity of the Foyer approach.

Chapter six is concerned with the factors identified as the precipitating causes of housing need both by tenants themselves and through the analysis of available data. Drawing heavily on the accounts of the young people involved in the research the chapter describes the journeys taken by young people before beginning their tenancies

at the Foyer. This is intended to establish from their own perspectives the reasons why these young people experienced extreme housing need. Documentary analysis and the results of a survey are used to establish any commonalities of life experience among tenants. These findings are used to test the strength of the theory of youth homelessness presented in chapter three, that family membership or support is a significant, and perhaps, vital element in the successful acquisition of housing.

Chapter seven has two aims. First, to evaluate the Foyer in terms of policy and practice. Second, to evaluate the Foyer in terms of outcomes. Primary data are used to establish the principles and objectives of the Foyer as they are understood by tenants and staff.

Data from all my sources are used to evaluate the Foyer approach in terms of outcomes. Here we must focus on the number of young people securing permanent independent accommodation and/or employment. But, there is also a discussion of 'soft' outcomes. By 'soft' outcomes I mean the value and meaning ascribed to participation in the Foyer system by young people. The analysis draws on interview data, survey results and participant observation to ascertain whether young people feel that they have been able to develop the personal resources needed for independent living during their tenancy.

These chapters, then, deal with the research question which asks whether an approach built on the principle of individual rehabilitation can help young people to overcome the structural causes of homelessness. Also, they explore the questions as to whether, in the absence of adequate family support, the Foyer can provide an environment

within which young people can develop the skills necessary to gain economic independence and from which they can lay claim to the status of citizenship with all its incumbent responsibilities and rights.

Conclusions

Chapter eight sets out the main conclusions of the study. Here I include a review of the main findings and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the research. I draw upon evidence contained in chapters six and seven to deal with the questions posed in the thesis, concerning both an investigation of the causes of youth homelessness and the effectiveness of the Foyer approach. The chapter outlines the implications of the study for the operation of Foyers and for social policy more generally. This work answers one set of questions but it poses yet more. There is a continuing need to address the social problem of youth homelessness both through further research and more importantly through action. Ultimately the contribution of this piece of research lies in its support for an explanation of youth homelessness that sees its amelioration in the rewriting of a flawed ideology and the introduction of a more pro-active and comprehensive policy agenda.

DEFINITIONS

Social concepts such as homelessness, youth and citizenship are complex, problematic and subject to interpretation. Accordingly it is appropriate here to include a brief preliminary discussion of each of these terms as they are understood and meant within the context of this thesis.

Homelessness

Homelessness is a difficult term to pin down. Definitions in common use cover a spectrum of conditions from actual rooflessness to the endurance of intolerable housing conditions (Johnson et al 1991). Indeed the lack of an agreed definition causes difficulties in quantifying the extent of the problem. The current official definition of homelessness as contained in the Housing Act 1996 often serves to exclude young single people without dependants from assistance unless they can meet the criteria of being 'vulnerable' and in 'priority need' (Shelter 1997). However, few local authorities accept young people as 'vulnerable' by virtue of their age alone (Kay, 1994). This thesis rejects such narrow definitions of youth homelessness and it supports the definition offered by CHAR (Evans 1996:21), that defines youth homelessness as:

> "A single person, without dependants, between the ages of 16 and 25 years who is in one of the following housing situations:
>
> 1. without accommodation- for example, sleeping rough or with no accommodation to go to;
> 2. in temporary accommodation such as a hostel, bed and breakfast hotel, squat;
> 3. staying temporarily with friends or relatives, who are unable/unwilling to accommodate them in the longer term"

This definition allows us to consider the full extent of a growing social problem and highlights the fact that government action such as the 'Rough Sleepers Initiative' is targeted at that part of the problem that is both visible and immediate in its urgency.

Youth

The young people in this study were all between 16 and 25 years old, however, the term 'youth' is complex and any definition will reflect the historical, social, economic and political context in which it is situated (Osgerby 1998). A full

discussion of the difficulties of defining this concept is therefore included in chapter three, however it is pertinent to state here that this thesis adopts the definition provided by Jones and Wallace (1992:13), which argues that youth comprises a series of processes of transition;

> "Youth can be seen as the period during which the transition to citizenship, that is, to full participation in society occurs"

The problem with this definition is that it means little unless we can provide a definition of citizenship.

Citizenship.

The concept of citizenship is complex and could easily form the basis of a doctoral thesis in its own right. A discussion of the term is offered in chapter three, however I endeavour to provide an initial definition here to help orientate the reader. Most discussions of citizenship refer to the classical definition provided by T.H.Marshall in 1950. Marshall claimed that:

> "Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respects to the rights and duties with which the status is bestowed".
>
> (Marshall and Bottomore 1992:18).

Citizenship as defined by Marshall has three elements, the civil, the political and the social. This thesis is concerned in the main with the social element of citizenship defined as

> "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share in the full social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society".
>
> (Marshall 1950:74).

However Lister (1990b) claims that in the terms as set out by Marshall full participation in society is dependent on economic resources and position in the

prevailing social hierarchy. Marshall's failure to consider the dimensions of gender, race or age as a basis of differential access to the rights of citizenship is therefore criticised by Lister (1990b). The concept of differential participation is central to this thesis. The prevailing political understanding of citizenship serves in practice to exclude youth from such a status (Jones and Wallace 1992). This is crucial because any adequate representation of citizenship necessitates the inclusion of all as members of society. Without citizenship, individuals can neither fulfil their responsibilities nor, when necessary, claim the protection of the state.

Summary

This chapter has set out the structure of the thesis, and provided the reader with a summary of the format and purpose of the research. The theoretical basis of the research has been introduced together with a discussion of the context in which it is situated. The issue of youth homelessness and the fundamental principles of the Foyer Movement have been explained.

The chapter concluded with a brief discussion of the difficulties in seeking to define the pivotal concepts of homelessness, youth and citizenship. The next chapter provides a detailed analysis of the social policy context of the study and offers a structural explanation of youth homelessness.

CHAPTER TWO

POLICY AND PRACTICE; THE BIGGER PICTURE.

The causes of youth homelessness are complex; every homeless young person has a different story to tell. There are however certain shared experiences and common hurdles to be overcome by them all.

Explanations of youth homelessness take two main forms. Individual explanations of homelessness concentrate on the biography or life experiences of individuals. This chapter is more concerned with the second form: structural explanations of homelessness. Here my focus is on the way in which the policies and practices of the state affect levels of homelessness. It will become clear that these polices are, directly or indirectly, disadvantageous to all young people seeking independent accommodation. However the degree to which young people are able to overcome these disadvantages is highly dependent on their life experiences and this argument is developed in the next chapter. This thesis assumes that we should not rely on one explanation of homelessness to the exclusion of others, but rather, that it is the complex interplay of structural and individual factors which have led to the contemporary problem of youth homelessness. I contend that the social and economic influences I discuss in this chapter have 'disproportionately affected the most vulnerable in society' (Burrows et al 1997:2).

In sum, then, this chapter considers the way in which a number of social policies, when experienced in the context of economic restructuring, have resulted, directly and indirectly, in the relative disadvantage of young people as a social group within the housing market.

I begin with a review of contemporary housing policy. Owner occupation has been the preferred tenure of government policy, a policy that has not benefited the majority of young people who cannot command the resources needed to buy into this form of tenure. The 1988 Housing Act was intended to revive a shrinking private rented sector but it will become clear that this attempt was unsuccessful. At the same time, Housing Associations have been unable to fill the gap left in social housing by the sale of local authority stock under the 1980 'Right to Buy' legislation. The result of government housing policy has been the growth of owner occupation at the sacrifice of other housing tenures.

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and the legislation, which has replaced it, were developed in response to the problem of homelessness. It may therefore appear contradictory to include a policy designed to *reduce* homelessness within a chapter which examines the factors *contributing* to homelessness. However, on closer examination it is apparent that legislation has been developed in a way which only seeks to accommodate particular social groups and that both in theory and practice the legislation actually serves to exclude young people from eligibility for assistance. The chapter considers both the legislation itself and the way in which it is enforced and interpreted by local authorities.

Young people who have been in local authority care are overrepresented among the homeless population. The Children Act 1989 contains provisions for social service departments, working in partnership with local authority housing departments, to offer special assistance to young people who are homeless, in particular those who have been in care. The chapter outlines the relevant provisions as contained in the Act and

presents evidence, which suggests that at this time these provisions are failing to tackle the problem of youth homelessness.

Access to independent accommodation is dependent on the ability to pay for that accommodation. The economic position of young people is a crucial factor in understanding the causes of youth homelessness. Therefore I analyse the youth labour market and the way in which economic restructuring has resulted in young people experiencing low wages and high unemployment.

Those who are unemployed must rely on the social security system. In view of this the chapter examines social security policy, in particular the Social Security Act 1986 and considers the ways in which changes in the rules of entitlement have increasingly meant that unemployed young people are in a position of economic disadvantage. Sixteen to eighteen year olds have been excluded from the social security system and young people aged 18 to 25 years have suffered cuts in benefit levels. These policy changes have made it difficult for young people to sustain an independent lifestyle and in so doing contributed to homelessness.

Social security changes have been accompanied by changes in the way in which housing benefit payments are calculated and paid. These changes and their effects on levels of youth homelessness are discussed within the chapter.

For the sake of clarity it has been necessary to discuss each relevant area of social policy separately. However, it is only by considering the complex interplay of all

these policies that we can reach an understanding of the obstacles faced by young people as they attempt to achieve independence and enter adulthood.

HOUSING POLICY

I begin with housing policy because to be homeless is in essence to be without a home. The housing experience of young people must be understood in the context of their economic position as discussed later in the chapter. The emphasis in contemporary British housing policy has been to encourage owner occupation at the expense of other housing tenures. The growth of owner occupation in Britain has been accompanied by the reduction of available dwellings in the public and private rented sectors. Government efforts to stimulate the private rented sector and to increase the number of housing associations units have failed to make up for the shortfall caused by the demise of large scale public housing (Balchin 1995). Over the period 1981 to 1994 patterns of tenure in Britain changed significantly. Owner occupied dwellings have increased from approximately twelve and a half million to nearly seventeen million. Homes rented from local authorities have declined from six and a half million to under five million. Those rented from housing associations, privately or with a job or business has increased by less than half a million (ONS: Social Trends 1997: Table 10.1).

The weak economic position of the majority of young people mean that they have failed to benefit from policies which promote owner occupation (Malpass 1984). Legislation and benefit changes mean that many young people have been rationed out of public sector housing and priced out of the owner occupied market. In the private rented sector young people face several problems, rents which are higher than housing

benefit levels, the demands of bonds or key money and the limited availability of accommodation available for private rent (Hutson and Liddiard 1994,). A rise in the number of single person households combined with a slower growth in the national dwelling stock has resulted in a housing shortage. So that access to housing is:

> " increasingly determined by the ability of potential new households to pay market prices for owner-occupied housing. As a consequence, demand was often suppressed, and when released contributed to the late eighties boom in housing prices. Many more young households were priced out of the market. With a shrinking pool of rented alternatives they either had to remain in the parental home or risk homelessness"
>
> (Newton 1991:13).

Figures for age by head of household for 1995-96 show that only 29 per cent of those under 25 are owner occupiers (ONS: Social Trends 1997: Table 10.3).

Those who are priced out of the owner occupied market have the 'choice' of three alternative forms of housing tenure. The private rented sector, Housing Association units and local authority housing, the chapter examines each of these housing options in turn.

The Private Rented Sector

Households renting from private landlords decreased from 90 per cent in 1914 to only 7 per cent in 1990 (Kemp 1992:110). One of the key factors in this change was the post war introduction of large-scale public housing. Another factor has been the decrease of the private rented sector, the constant refinement of controls on rent levels and the restricted ability of landlords to evict tenants. As early as 1957, a Rent Act sought to tackle this problem through the deregulation of some 5 million private rented dwellings in the hope that the sector would flourish under free market

conditions. Instead the legislation resulted in a situation in which many tenants were unable to meet rising rent demands, landlords sold their properties into the owner occupied market resulting in an even greater loss of private rented accommodation (Balchin 1995). The Rent Act of 1965 was a further attempt to stimulate the sector through the introduction of a system in which rent officers assessed and registered fair rents. Rent regulation was intended to introduce a market that would respond to supply and demand; however rents often remained below the market average and landlords continued to abandon the sector. The residualisation of public housing following the 1980 Housing Act has meant that many more people who are unable to become owner-occupiers must rely on the private rented sector.

The Conservative Government of 1988 believed that the key to revitalising this housing tenure was further deregulation and the 1988 Housing Act introduced legislation that reflected this belief. From January 1989 all new lettings were either assured tenancies or assured shorthold tenancies. Briefly, assured shorthold tenancies rely on a six month contract of tenancy and landlords can charge market rents. Tenants are able to apply for the rent to be determined during the initial period of the tenancy. Assured tenancies offer greater security but rents are negotiated between landlord and tenant and are at market levels. Those tenants with existing regulated rents continued to be protected by the Rent Acts. The legislation was highly criticised by housing charities because:

"Under shorthold arrangements, tenants would have less protection than before whilst assured tenants would have to pay exorbitant rents for dilapidated and unsafe housing. Even regulated tenancies would be under threat since the right of succession at fair rent would be terminated-inflicting upon those 'inheriting' the tenure the option of market rents or eviction, whilst local authorities would lose the right for a fair rent to be registered - to the detriment of many existing tenants"

(Balchin 1995:115).

The 1990 Private Renters Survey showed that the number of tenancies initially declined from 1.634 million in England in 1988 to 1.602 million in 1990 (OPCS, 1991). Regulated tenancies with a registered rent declined, as did those without a registered rent. This was accompanied by a large increase in new assured shorthold and shorthold tenancies after the 1988 Housing Act (Best et al, 1992).

"This more than compensates for the decline in regulated tenancies although it does not greatly exceed the previous approximate rate of creation of about 300,000 tenancies per year"

(Best et al, 1992:35).

The deregulation of the private sector has instead led to tenant insecurity and the creation of a poverty trap in which high rents force people to opt out of work in order to claim housing benefit (Balchin 1995).

Many of the people who compete for the limited stock of private rented accommodation are unemployed people and single people (Rhodes 1993, Bevan and Rhodes 1996). Finding accommodation for rent is only the first hurdle, for those on housing benefit there are number of other difficulties in securing private accommodation:

> "Finding a landlord who will accept people who are on housing benefit or unemployed; being able to pay deposits or rent in advance or, failing that, finding a landlord who will accept tenants without these up-front payments; taking on a tenancy without knowing whether or not the local authority will restrict rent, and therefore whether or not they will in the end be able to afford the rent; and having to wait for weeks-and in some cases months - while their housing benefit is processed"
>
> (Kemp and McLaverty 1995: Housing Research 144).

Many landlords in the private rented sector demand 'key money', deposits, bonds and /or rent in advance. This makes it particularly difficult for financially weak young people to gain access to private rented accommodation. In response to this problem central government encouraged the setting up of voluntarily run schemes which can attract government funds and which offer accommodation registers, deposit guarantee and rent in advance. One study found that these schemes are effective in helping people into private rented accommodation and that, according to clients, help with deposits is the most important assistance that can be given to someone in housing need (Rugg 1996). However a study by the same author found that the restrictions in housing benefit introduced in 1996 were, in the view of those running such schemes, likely to make securing accommodation for the under 25s difficult (see below). Schemes were already finding it difficult to secure housing for this age group and a lack of shared accommodation together with landlords' reluctance to accept reduced housing benefit payments was likely to exacerbate these difficulties (Rugg 1997). The private rented sector is growing, very slowly, but this growth is not in line with increased demand.

Housing Associations

It has been established that the private rented sector is restricted in size and access, I will now examine whether Housing Association accommodation can offer young

people a viable alternative. Since 1964 registered associations have been eligible for funds from the Housing Corporation. Housing Associations have traditionally offered accommodation to groups of people in need; especially those who may have failed to qualify for local authority housing. Housing Associations were not excluded from the Conservative government's drive for increased owner occupation, The Housing Act 1980 granted tenants the right to buy. Subsequent government policy which controlled grants and subsidies to Housing Associations was intended to, and succeeded in, increasing the use of private sector finance. This is apparent in the Housing Act 1988, which replaced part of the publicly funded system with loans from the private sector. In order to make this proposition attractive, fair rents were replaced with those reflecting market levels (Balchin 1995). The Conservative Government saw a clear role for housing associations as the main providers of social housing following the reduction of local authority housing (Department of Environment 1987). However, increased reliance on private finance has changed the practices of housing associations. Traditionally housing associations concentrated on the rehabilitation of old property but since the late 1980s the emphasis has been on cheaper new-build units, which has sacrificed quality to cost. Since the Housing Act of 1988 there has been decline in the number of new start approvals and the standard of units has declined while average rents for new tenancies have risen (Walentowicz 1992). The Housing Act 1985 gives housing associations a duty to assist local authorities in meeting their statutory housing obligations. In practice some arrangements allow local authorities to nominate homeless people for housing association accommodation. In 1988 the Housing Act sought to change the remit of local authorities from providers to enablers in housing provision. Housing Association units accounted for only 4% of total tenure in the United Kingdom in 1995-96 (ONS: Social

Trends 1997). The relatively small scale of housing association provision, rising rents and the fact that many single young homeless people are unlikely to qualify as a local authority nominee means that this housing tenure is not in a position to offer a solution to the problem of limited housing access for this group. Local authorities have traditionally been the main providers of social housing, however it will become clear that this is an area in which the state has been 'rolled back', it has been demonstrated that, at this time, Housing Associations are not in a position to fill the growing void in social housing to which I now turn.

Local Authority Housing

Local authority social housing may appear to be an obvious avenue for homeless young people to explore in their search for independent accommodation. However evidence suggests that young people are being 'rationed' out of a declining stock of public housing. The decrease in available local authority housing stock, which has followed the 1980 Housing Act, has caused local authorities to prioritise applicants more rigorously in order to meet their legal obligations in the face of limited resources. Chapter One of the Housing Act 1980 introduced a statutory right to buy for the majority of secure tenants with three years tenancy applicable to all council dwellings, except certain properties designed specifically for use by elderly or disabled people. Public sector housing was sold at discounts of up to 50%; subsequent legislation introduced extended discounts and the eligibility to buy. The capital generated by the sale of 1,460,075 local authority units was not used to build replacements and this meant that local authority stock was reduced by 1,468,000 homes in the period 1980 to 1991 (Balchin 1995). Furthermore the units which were sold tended to be the best quality stock. High density, poor quality stock was left in

the hands of local authorities. This process lead to the residualisation of public housing (Balchin 1995, Forrest and Murie 1991, Power 1993). Instead of providing good quality housing at reasonable rents to a wide social mix of people, local authorities could now offer no more than a safety net of poor quality housing to those most in need. However, single young people often failed to qualify as being in need under the stringent criteria of local authority allocation procedures. This safety net is one which many single young people with no dependants are likely to fall through.

EXCLUDING YOUTH: HOMELESSNESS LEGISLATION, AND ACCESS TO LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

Access to local authority housing for young homeless people is controlled by their eligibility for such housing as defined within homelessness legislation and interpreted by those who enforce that legislation. This part of the chapter examines the way in which both the legislation and the way it is enforced serve, in the main, to exclude young people from local authority housing.

The introduction of homelessness legislation in the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, (as amended within the 1996 Housing Act), can be seen as a decisive moment in establishing the rights of the homeless. What is apparent however is that this legislation was intended to and does, operate within the confines of certain conditions, which essentially serve to exclude particular groups from entitlement. The rights afforded to homeless persons after 1977 followed an outcry which focused on the homelessness of families with dependent children. In consequence (and in the light of local authority resistance to their burgeoning responsibilities) the legislation targeted

families with dependent children, pregnant women and those who were vulnerable through old age or disability.

It seems that society was ready to accept that families with children and people who might be considered vulnerable had a social right to housing which was being denied to them. However, single, able-bodied people continued to fulfil the criterion of an ancient stereotype in the minds of the public, that of the feckless individual who has chosen to opt out of society and must endure the consequences of such action. This led to the inclusion of definitions within the legislation which served to separate the undeserving from the deserving and to provide only for the latter. This has obvious implications for young people who are unable or unwilling to remain in the parental home and for those young people who abscond from, or are discharged from, local authority care.

Despite local authority resistance and a certain amount of political complacency 1977 witnessed the birth of an Act which established certain statutory obligations towards homeless people. The conception of this Act can be interpreted "as a result of lobbying carried out in the afterglow of the 1960's" (Drake 1988:183). In 1974 five pressure groups came together to form the Joint Charities Group, this group was responsible for the first draft of what was to become the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977.

When Harold Wilson failed to fulfil a Labour promise to include homelessness legislation in the 1976/77 session of Parliament, the charities encouraged a Liberal MP, Stephen Ross to submit a private member's Bill. In a sudden flood of consensus

the government, the Liberals and the Conservatives all offered their support to the Homeless Persons Bill. The Bill was rushed through that session of Parliament and became law at the end of 1977 as the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. The Bill did not however survive unscathed, the hostile reaction of local authorities who claimed that the undeserving would abuse the proposed legislation, led to the inclusion of a number of changes, such as the condition of "local connection" and the "intentional homeless" clause which is discussed later (Johnson et al, 1991).

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 , Part III of the Housing Act 1985

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 was later consolidated in Part III of the Housing Act 1985. The legislation placed primary responsibility for homeless persons with housing authorities rather than social service authorities and was intended to put an end to the injustices of homeless persons being shipped back and forth between authorities. The legislation established that local authorities have a duty to ensure that suitable accommodation is made available to any persons who are homeless, in priority need of accommodation, who did not become homeless intentionally, and who have a local connection. There are then, a number of conditions which must be met before a local authority is obliged to provide accommodation for a person presenting themselves as homeless.

However local authorities are still obliged to provide advice, assistance and under some circumstances temporary accommodation to those who do not meet these conditions. This includes those who are in priority need but are intentionally homeless, those who do not have a priority need and those who do not have a local connection, and those who are threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days.

The statutory definition of homelessness:

Section 58 (1) of Part III states that a person is homeless if s/he has no accommodation in England, Wales or Scotland. However this is subject to the criteria which must be met in claiming that one has "no accommodation". A person has no accommodation if s/he together with any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with her/him, has no accommodation which they can occupy by virtue of an interest, estate or contract. A person is also homeless if they have been locked out of accommodation, or have had to leave because of domestic violence.

In 1986 the definition was extended to include those who enjoy rights of occupation but occupy accommodation in such poor condition that it would not be reasonable for them to remain in occupation. Local authorities have discretion when assessing what is and is not reasonable accommodation, with regard to the general housing condition in a given area.

Priority need:

The primary duty of local authorities is towards those who are defined as in priority need. Those defined as in priority need are; adults with dependent children, pregnant women or a person with whom a pregnant women resides or might reasonably be expected to reside with. Those who are or might normally be expected to reside with someone who is homeless as a result of an emergency and those who are or might normally be expected to reside with someone who is vulnerable. Persons may be considered vulnerable by reason of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason. The majority of cases accepted as in "priority need"

of accommodation are households with dependent children (Hutson and Liddiard 1994).

The position of young people in relation to the legislation is made clear in this passage from the 1991 Homelessness Code of Guidance:

> "Young people (16 or over) should not automatically be treated as vulnerable on the basis of age alone. Young people could be "at risk" in a variety of ways. Risks could arise from violence or sexual abuse at home, the likelihood of drug or alcohol abuse or prostitution. Some groups of young people will be less able to fend for themselves than others, particularly for example: those leaving care; juvenile offenders (including those discharged from young offenders institutions); those with learning difficulties and those who have been subjects of statements of special educational need. These examples are not meant to constitute a complete list. For young people who have not been in care, authorities should always consider the possibility of reconciliation between the applicant and his/her family"
>
> Department of Environment (1991,21).

It not clear how local authorities are to establish these facts. A survey of local authorities in 1993 found that 60 per cent of them required written evidence of risk from a professional such as social worker or doctor (Kay 1994). The resources which would be required to decide which individuals are likely to be at risk of drug or alcohol abuse or prostitution and which are not, is bound to make the business of assessing which young people should be helped under the Code of Guidance all the more difficult. Even where the risks can be established, one survey of local housing authorities in England and Wales found that some 35 per cent would not accept as vulnerable young people "at risk of sexual or financial exploitation" (Thornton 1990:50-57). The fact that a young person is not considered vulnerable in some areas, even under such extreme circumstances, points to a stringent targeting of resources to

statutory defined priority groups. Furthermore the Code of Guidance relies on the presumption that conciliation is possible, and implies that young people leave home through choice rather than necessity.

Intentionally homeless:

Fears that people would attempt to abuse the provisions of the proposed 1977 Act led to the inclusion of a clause of "intentionally homeless", which effectively freed local authorities of their obligations under the Act, where a person was deemed to have become homeless intentionally. Section 60(1) of the Housing Act 1985 Part III states that:

> "A person becomes homeless intentionally if he deliberately does or fails to do anything in consequence of which he ceases to occupy accommodation which is available for his occupation and which it would have been reasonable for him to continue to occupy"

Here again we must question the way in which it is possible to assess the facts correctly. For example is it reasonable for a young person to remain in the parental home if they are suffering emotional abuse from a family member? The Act only refers to the physical condition of the actual accommodation in relation to the general housing conditions of the area. Here again the legislation can be employed to the exclusion of single people:

> "The intentionally homeless clause has been abused to enable local authorities to avoid helping legitimately homeless people"
>
> Drake (1988:184).

This is made possible because:

> "the Act does not say that they (housing authorities) must have "proof" of the issues"
>
> Department of Environment (1991:23).

In 1996 a new Housing Act replaced the Housing Act of 1985. Many of the new provisions were re-enactments. The basic definitions of homelessness, priority need, local connection and intentionally homeless were unchanged however amendments have been made to some conditions.

Part V11 of the Housing Act 1996, replaced Part 111 of the 1985 Act and introduced a new definition of homelessness. A person is homeless if there is no accommodation available to them in the United Kingdom or elsewhere. A person is not eligible for assistance if s/he is a person from abroad who is subject to immigration control including asylum seekers unless the Secretary of State prescribes otherwise.

Other changes introduced by the Act include a duty to provide advisory services and an extension of those defined as 'intentionally homeless', and the duty to provide temporary accommodation. Every local authority has to ensure that advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is available free of charge to any person in their the district. They can also provide practical assistance. Intentionality is extended to anyone who:

> "enters an arrangement under which s/he is required to cease to occupy and the purpose of the arrangement is to enable him to become entitled to assistance under this part"
>
> (Section 191 (3)).

This provision caused particular problems for young people leaving the parental home. The burden of proof of eviction from the parental home will be left with the young homeless person. For example, one female Foyer tenant who took part in the research experienced great difficulties in persuading the benefits office that she had been evicted from the parental home and was therefore eligible for income support,

despite having been accepted as homeless by the Foyer. Although on this occasion she was not dealing with a housing authority, the example highlights the difficulties faced by young people who do not have a landlord's eviction notice in black and white as evidence of eviction. As well as the many young people who are forced out of the parental home there are a number who leave against the wishes of their parents because of intolerable living conditions which might range from relationship breakdown to sexual abuse. A Report by CHAR found that nationally 40 per cent of young women become homeless, do so as a result of sexual abuse (Hendessi 1992).

Under the provisions of the Housing Act 1996, local authorities are under a duty to provide temporary accommodation for a minimum of two years, but have the power to extend the period beyond two years following a review of circumstances at the appropriate time. This duty ceases if a person ceases to meet the eligibility criteria or accepts permanent accommodation under the allocation system. The duty to provide temporary accommodation also ends where a person becomes intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation, voluntarily leaves temporary accommodation or turns down an offer of suitable accommodation.

The change to a duty to provide only temporary accommodation for a period of up to two years is significant. People who find themselves in temporary accommodation without support may find it even more difficult to establish the kind of stability in their lives that is necessary to sustain independent living. The inclusion of various opt out clauses for local authorities means that those young people who are accepted as vulnerable and eligible for assistance may be faced with the option of accepting temporary accommodation, which they themselves may not consider to be suitable

and enduring such accommodation for up to two years, or losing their eligibility for accommodation completely.

Part V1 Allocation of Housing Accommodation

The Act requires that every local authority maintains a single housing register of 'qualifying persons'. All local authority tenancies and nominations to other landlords are allocated on the basis of this register with the exception of transfers, exchanges, mobility schemes, succession, assignment and property adjustment. The register directly excludes asylum seekers and persons from abroad who do not qualify for benefit entitlement.

Local authorities have the right to exclude persons from the register on the basis of such criteria as age, previous debt and anti-social behaviour. Young people will already face particular difficulties in being accepted as a qualifying person; in addition the grounds for exclusion from the register may prove to be especially detrimental for this group.

Some local authorities exclude 16 and 17 year olds from their registers on the basis of age. This policy means that many young people are likely to be disqualified from local authority assistance at a time in their lives when they are particularly vulnerable. The exclusion of 16 and 17 year olds in some local authorities also conflicts with authorities responsibilities under the Children Act 1989 (see below).

The lack of economic security experienced by many people between the ages of 16 and 25 is discussed in detail elsewhere. However, the short fall between housing

benefit levels and actual rents in the private rented sectors increases the occurrence of rent arrears among young people. When we consider the fact that young people may also be inexperienced in managing a budget and may lack the support required to develop such skills, it is clear that this group may be particularly vulnerable to exclusion on the basis of previous debts.

Drug and alcohol abuse has been identified as a common problem among young people (Hendry et. al.1995, Holmes 1990, McCoy et. al. 1996). Those young people who are unable to enjoy the support needed to resolve these problems might demonstrate the kind of chaotic behaviour that may be considered anti-social. This is likely to make some young people more vulnerable to eviction and/or disqualification from the register, which can only serve to perpetuate their problems.

Another provision of the Act, which may discriminate against young people, is section 167. This section lists people and households who must be given reasonable preference in the allocation of accommodation. These are:

a) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
b) people occupying housing accommodation which is temporary or occupied on insecure terms;
c) families with dependent children;
d) households consisting of or including someone who is expecting a child;
e) households consisting of or including someone with a particular need for settled accommodation on medical and welfare grounds; and
f) households whose social or economic circumstances are such that they have difficulty in securing settled accommodation.

With the exception of criteria c) and d), many of the circumstances listed should result in the eligibility of many homeless young people for reasonable preference in the allocation of accommodation. However on closer inspection definition e) is intended

to assist those vulnerable because of old age, physical or mental illness, and/or because of a learning or physical disability.

The other definitions will be open to local authority interpretation. Local authorities are inclined to exclude certain groups either directly or indirectly, in a way that meets with their legal responsibilities under circumstances of reduced resources. Penny Lidstone (1994) considers formal and informal methods of rationing housing to the homeless applicant and finds that:

> "Rationing occurs in the local authority response to homelessness and it is both formal and informal in type. The development of informal rationing processes is inevitable in situations of scarcity and will occur despite the best intentions of housing staff towards their clients,..."
>
> Lidstone (1994:470).

It is evident that homelessness legislation is aimed primarily at providing for those with dependent children and those considered vulnerable within the remit of the Act. This excludes of the majority of single people and childless couples. Essentially:

> "The statutory definition of homelessness in Britain is both a definition and a rationing device. Its current and future form will reflect resource considerations and judgements about merit and priority"
>
> Johnson et al (1991:3).

Local authorities had to try to balance their legal obligations under the 1996 Housing Act against the shrinking resources they had to fulfil them. The reason that local authorities are able to operate within the bounds of the legislation in this way reflects both the ambiguous nature of the definitions within the Act and the continuous stream of legal judgements which have been made since 1977 (See Arden 1988).

Carlen (1994) argues that many young single people who are homeless are deterred from approaching their local authority for a number of reasons. First, they are deterred by the stigma of "priority need" which implies that to be genuinely homeless is to suffer from some form of socially or medically defined inadequacy. Second, many are aware of the fact that they are likely to either have their application rejected or to be offered unsuitable short-stay accommodation. Third, the numerous ways in which local authorities are able to deny and deter single young people helps to keep youth homelessness hidden and official homelessness figures under control.

In sum, homelessness legislation serves to exclude the majority of single young people, so that local authorities are able to fulfil their statuary obligations without offering suitable accommodation to the majority of single homeless people. The Housing Act 1996 continues to allow local authorities to use legislation as a rationing device, which targets specific groups for assistance. At the same time changes in housing benefit payments serve to exclude young people from the private rented sector.

The public has been reluctant to accept that families with children, people with special needs or older people should be denied access to shelter. Growing intolerance of such a situation in the 1960s led to the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977. However the young and single did not gain the social right to housing that was afforded other defined 'priority groups'. The reasons for this are complex and include the position of youth in relation to citizenship rights (see Chapter 3). The exclusion of this group from housing access also reflects a public psyche, which continues to ask why young people "choose" to leave home and why they should then expect to be provided with

access to independent accommodation. This point of view is summed up in the quote with which I opened this thesis, from the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in June 1988:

> "There are a number of young people who choose voluntarily to leave home. I do not think we can be expected, no matter how many there are, to provide units for them.....those young people already have a home to live in, belonging to their parents."
>
> Quoted in Kay (1994:5).

This outlook on youth homelessness persists today despite the overwhelming amount of evidence which demonstrates that there is all too little choice in the matter for those young people who do leave the parental home or local authority care (Carlen 1996, Evans 1996, Coles 1995, Hutson and Liddiard 1994, Hoffman 1996, Kay 1994).

This position is unlikely to change in the near future. Policies such as the 'Rough Sleepers Initiative' set up in 1990 which allocated £96 million over a three year period, did target single people who miss out under local authority housing policies. However, this initiative was aimed specifically at those who were roofless rather than at establishing a long-term strategy to deal with the problem of youth homelessness.

THE CHILDREN ACT 1989: A SAFETY NET FOR THE YOUNG AND HOMELESS?

Young people who have been in local authority care are over represented in the homeless population. Although less than one per cent of young people are ever taken into care in the United Kingdom, one study found that 22 per cent of their sample of homeless young people had a care background (Hutson and Liddiard 1994). O'Mahony (1988), estimates that as many as 30 to 40 per cent of young people using homeless services in London have been in local authority care at some stage. Around

one quarter of young people leaving care say they have had no support from any source (Evans 1996).

The Children Act 1989 places a duty upon social service departments to meet the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds and of certain young people up to the age of 21. All 16 and 17-year-olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are entitled to an assessment to ascertain whether they are a 'child in need' under the provisions of the Act. Section 17 (10) defines a 'child in need as:

> "a) he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining , a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority under this part; b)his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired, without the provision for him of such service; or c) he is disabled".

The duty to accommodate is contained in Section 20(3) of the Children Act:

> "Every local authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need in their area who has reached the age of 16 and whose welfare the authority judges is likely to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide him with accommodation"

The Act places a duty on social services departments to provide 'advice, assistance and befriending' to people under the age of 21 who have previously been looked after by a local authority.

There is a recognised overlap of the powers and duties of social service departments as included in the Children Act 1989 and those placed on local authority housing departments under Part V11 of the Housing Act 1996. The Code of Guidance, which accompanies the Children Act, allows social services to call upon the assistance of other agencies, significantly local housing authorities, to assist them in the discharge

of their duties under the Act, and also requires other agencies to comply with any such request. Co-operation between these two agencies should, in theory, provide a desperately needed safety net.

However, two Reports by the housing charity CHAR found that in practice this safety net had not been established by the 1989 Children Act. One report found that 25 per cent of social services did not have a policy of assessing young homeless people who approached them for help. There was also a failure to develop joint policies with housing departments in 29 per cent of cases. Many young homeless people were found to be victim to a 'shuttling' process between different departments (McCluskey 1994). A report on the reaction of local housing authorities found that only half of those surveyed had agreed to provide any accommodation for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds under the 1989 Children Act (Kay 1994) (see also Brody 1996).

In a rationing pattern which echoes that found in local authority housing departments 57 per cent of social services departments claimed that a lack of resources was the main reason why the Children Act 1989 was failing homeless young people (McClusky 1994), but Hoffman (1995), claims that its failure is not a simple case of lack of resources:

> "The Act has not been used to the full by social services departments nor advocates acting on behalf of young homeless people. This is reflected in the inconsistency of approach adopted by social services in different areas- which cannot be attributable to resource constraints alone- and the very fact that so little headway seems to have been made in expanding the housing and support options to young people in the three and half years since the Children Act came into force"
>
> (Hoffman 1995:21).

The failure of this safety net is especially worrying for young people leaving care. As the author of a 1998 study on the progress of the Children Act and its implications for care leavers, Broad (see Broad 1998) made it clear in an earlier statement:

> "When the state is the parent for children in care, the Government's emphasis on family, parental responsibility and self-sufficiency is a paradox which needs to be resolved."
>
> (Brindle, The Guardian 30/4/1997).

Tony Blair has pledged the Government to facilitate better parenting and the improvement of services to young people leaving care. It remains to be seen if the theory of the Children Act 1989 can, in the future, be put into practice in order to provide a sufficient safety net for young people leaving care.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

Current housing policy and practice severely restricts access to independent accommodation for young people. This is particularly true for young people whose parents are unable or unwilling to offer them additional financial support.

The present Labour Government has pledged itself to investigate the housing needs of young people and in particular the needs of those leaving local authority care. The government has indicated that it will release the housing receipts from the sale of local authority housing and some of this money may be used to help young homeless people. (Henke, Independent 3:2:1997). One approach which has been embraced by the Government is the subject of this research: the Foyer movement. Tony Blair stated in an interview before becoming Prime Minister that:

"we will levy the excess profits of the privatised utilities, put that into a dedicated fund and use that for working, training and education for using things like the foyers"

(Macdonald-Smith, The Big Issue Cymru, January 13-26,1997).

Furthermore the Chancellor has pledged:

"A foyer in every town within the lifespan of this government"

(Williams, Times Educational Supplement, 11:7:1997).

However Foyers provide only temporary accommodation for up to two years. There will need to be radical changes in housing policy and practice if the demand for affordable single person accommodation is to be met.

One of the most important factors in securing accommodation is the ability to pay for that accommodation. In attempting to understand explanations of homelessness, it is therefore necessary, to consider the economic position of young people and the way in which it can be claimed that this is a contributory factor to youth homelessness.

THE YOUTH LABOUR MARKET

Since the 1960s, there have been fundamental (structural) changes in the British economy and in the labour market (Novak 1988, Hart 1988, Ashton and Lowe 1991). These changes have led to an emphasis on part-time insecure employment instead of permanent full-time employment. Just as manufacturing industries replaced traditional heavy industries during the first half of the century, service industries have taken over from manufacturing as the key sources of employment in the period since the 1970s (Hickman 1997). New jobs are predominately low paid and part time. This reflects employers' attempts to cope with fluctuations in the market and international

competition and has been accompanied by the steady rise of female post-war labour participation (Novak 1988). Changes in the wider economy have resulted in the restructuring of the youth labour market.

Widespread unemployment was a symptom of the economic restructuring outlined above. The youth labour market suffered particularly, with rates of unemployment among those under 25 consistently higher than those in the general population (Rees and Atkinson 1982, Kirby et al 1987, Ashton et al 1990, ONS Social Trends 1997). Rates of youth unemployment are hard to measure as successive governments have altered the way in which unemployment is defined and measured in an attempt to control official levels of unemployment (Cole 1995). The international definition of unemployment refers to the number of people out of work and seeking employment, and according to this definition unemployment among those under 25 rose from 2.4 per cent in 1960 to 21.4 per cent in 1981 (Ashton 1986). Unemployment rates, using the International Labour Organisation definition, for 16-19 year old males in 1996 were 20.6 per cent, and for 20-24 year old males 16.2 per cent. Among females the unemployment rates in 1996 were 14.6% for the 16-19 age group and 8.9 per cent for the 20-24 age group (ONS, Social Trends 1997). Youth unemployment has gained a central position in the current policy agenda as illustrated in this quote from the then Employment Minister, Andrew Smith:

> "There are, for example, still 118,000 18-24 year olds who have been out of work for 6 months or more. In 1965 when David Blunkett was an 18-year-old, the number was 5,500. That is the measure of just how much young people's employment prospects deteriorated in recent decades and how much lost ground is still to be recovered"
>
> (Department for Education and Employment 1998a).

There are a number of explanations for high unemployment rates among the under 25s. General levels of unemployment mean that young people must compete with more experienced adults, including the growing number of married women entering the labour force, for fewer jobs (Kirby et al, 1987). More qualified young people are also being forced to 'trade down' into less skilled labour, which further limits access to employment for unskilled and semi-skilled youth (Hickman 1997). During recessions employers cut back on recruiting which adversely affects new entrants to the labour market such as school leavers, young people may also suffer from 'last in first out' redundancies (Hickman 1997). The restructuring of the labour market, as discussed above, has led to the loss of much traditional youth labour. In other words as Ashton et al (1990:201) state:

> "the structural changes taking place in the economy are increasing the demand for more highly-qualified labour and reducing that for unqualified school-leavers. The market for unskilled or poorly-skilled youth is shrinking. We have also argued that although school-leavers and youths remain excluded from large parts of the labour market, there are areas where they compete directly with adults and others where they have sheltered access. Because of this any change in the level of demand will have immediate effects on the recruitment of youths."

Unemployment does not affect all young people equally. As with adult unemployment levels there are wide variations in the levels of unemployment between different geographical areas within Britain (Ashton 1988). Unemployment among young people is also affected by factors relating to their home background (Bates and Riseborough 1993). Unemployed young people are far more likely to live in families where another member is unemployed (Roll 1988). Social origins or class background affect the level at which young people enter the labour market, so that the increase in skilled labour is particularly detrimental for young people from lower class backgrounds

(Ashton and Maguire 1987). This may help to explain the particularly high levels of unemployment among the research sample which are discussed in Chapter 6.

Policy responses to rising youth unemployment have taken a number of directions. The development of youth training schemes, the expansion of education and attempts to stop young people pricing themselves out of the labour market by avoiding the introduction of minimum wages and the improved working conditions (Banks 1992, Cole 1995). More recently the introduction of the Welfare to Work Programme with a New Deal for Young People at its centre, offers a combination of work experience with training, or continued education. This process has redirected young people out of unemployment and into education and training.

Conservative government policy was directed towards increasing the participation of post 16 year olds in full time education both through funding changes in the education system which make it beneficial for schools to retain pupils past age 16 (such as those embodied in the 1988 Educational Reform Act) and through the expansion of higher and further education. The period from the late 1980s to the early 1990s saw a steep rise in the proportion of 16 year olds in full-time education (Payne et al, 1998). Those who do stay on are less likely to be unemployed and tend to earn more, which suggests that this alternative to unemployment at age 16 is a positive one (Social Exclusion Unit 1999). However these advantages are not shared equally, and those young people from "backgrounds featuring a variety of kinds of social exclusion" are unlikely to have achieved the examination results needed to participate in full-time post-16 school education and more likely to attend college courses (Social Exclusion Unit 1999). Drop out rates for those entering full-time post-16 college courses are

between 30 per cent and 40 per cent (Audit Commission 1993). The 1999 White Paper 'Learning to Succeed: a New Framework for Post 16 Learning' builds on the policy objectives developed by the former Conservative administrations:

> "Our aspirations for young people post-16 are simple: to increase participation so that all young people can continue in education or training, including part-time study, until the age of 19. This will help them to make a good start on the ladder of life-long learning- it will begin to equip them with the skills the workforce of the future needs, and it will prepare them to play an active role as good citizens' (DfEE, Chapter 6, 6.5).

The implication here as in former policy rhetoric is that unemployment is the result of a skills deficit on the part of young people, that young people should be seen to be active in equipping themselves for the demands of the labour market and that employment is the key to fulfilling the obligations that go with the 'active role' of a 'good citizen'. The emphasis here is on increased participation in education for those who can and training for those who cannot.

Training was first used to respond to rising youth unemployment with the introduction in 1978 of the first of many vocational training schemes, a six month Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP). Youth Opportunities Programmes failed to attract many young people who regarded them as poorly paid and unlikely to improve their job prospects (Rees and Atkinson 1982). The Government responded by replacing YOP with a twelve month Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in 1983. The scheme was supposed to offer higher quality training and was extended to a two-year programme in 1985. The payments received by participants on these schemes remained below the average wage of young people and only marginally above benefit levels. This was a main criticism of the scheme expressed by young people along with the belief that participation would not lead to jobs (or at least good jobs). As with

labour markets the popularity and quality of schemes was affected by local variations (Banks 1992). Youth training schemes are built on the belief that youth unemployment is a result of a shortage of marketable skills among this group and that such schemes improve the position of young people in the market. However:

"the scheme failed to achieve the objectives for which it was supposedly established. There is a persistent shortage of YTS training in shortage skills and an excess of YTS places not in short supply. And despite the Government's declared hope of making YTS the norm for all young people, employed and unemployed, it has remained mostly a job creation scheme"

(Lee 1990:18).

Youth Training Schemes did not include formal qualifications so that those young people who completed training schemes still had to compete in the labour market with their better qualified contemporaries.

In 1991 YTS was replaced by Youth Training which offered formal qualifications in the form of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) along with vocational work experience. Youth Cohort studies found that although young people are, in the main, positive about the training and experience offered on Youth Training schemes, they continue to complain about the low pay which remains well below the average pay of a young person in employment (Courtney and McAleese 1993). However, government figures show that of those young people who completed their agreed training under the scheme, during the period June 1996 to May 1997, 77 per cent were in a job six months later (Department for Education and Employment 1998).

Two further schemes of government supported training have been introduced, namely Modern Apprenticeships and Training for Work. There is a continuing shift from Youth Training to Modern Apprenticeships, with an increase of 65 per cent in the

number of young people starting Modern Apprenticeships in the twelve months leading up to February 1998 (Department for Education and Employment 1998) and research by Coleman and Williams (1998) found that 86 per cent of Modern Apprentices were at least satisfied with their Apprenticeship. In contrast the numbers of young people entering Training for Work placements has fallen significantly. During 1994 there were 133,100 participants in England and Wales, by December 1997 this figure had fallen to 47,500 (Department for Education and Employment). However in terms of outcomes there has been an upward trend with the proportion of leavers with a job increasing from 31 per cent in 1991-92, to 45 per cent in 1996-97 (Department of Education and Employment 1998).

The former Conservative administration's other policy solution to youth unemployment was based on the belief that young people were pricing themselves out of the labour market and that the appropriate response was to encourage lower rates of pay. The Wages Act (1986) removed young people from the protection of wages councils which set minimum wages. Also between 1982 and 1988 subsidies were offered to employers who employed young workers at pay below the average for this age group (Hickman 1997). The result is that young people continued to experience levels of pay well below those for older workers. The introduction of the Minimum Wage in 1999 may have gone some way towards improving this situation, but once more age is a criteria for entitlement and young people aged 21 years and under qualify for a lower rate of minimum wage.

The outcome of the restructuring of the labour market and of Government directives aimed at diverting young people away from the unemployment statistics has created a

situation in which those who are in a position to stay on in education are likely to do so. For those who do not continue their education the picture is bleak:

> "Fewer young people are in work, and more are getting training allowances rather than wages. Those in work have little power to bargain for higher pay. The decline in the working conditions of young people is partly a consequence of the fact that they have no collective voice and their interests are easily ignored"
>
> (Jones and Wallace 1992:37).

Having considered the youth labour market and in view of the high levels of youth unemployment described above, it is now necessary to analyse the crucial role social security policy has in determining the economic position of many young people. The young people who took part in this study had particularly high levels of unemployment which in part can be explained through the additional difficulties that resulted from their past life experiences, these impacted on and further hindered their ability to cope with structural disadvantage in the labour market. As a result there was a high level of dependence on social security benefits (see Chapter 6 and 7).

YOUTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY POLICY

The rise of youth unemployment has been accompanied by Government social security policies, which have sought to make reliance on benefits, a 'hard' option for young people. These policies have been built on the belief that young people were choosing unemployment and that the 'Nanny State' was creating a dependency culture (Alcock 1985, Brown 1990, Dean and Taylor-Gooby 1992). This belief is summed up in a quote by Margaret Thatcher the then Prime Minister:

> " Unemployment should not be an option.... It's too easy for some of them, straight from school, to go straight on to social security at the age of 16. They like it, they have a lot of money, and some of them learn a way of life they should never have a chance to learn"
>
> (Cited Allbeson 1985:90).

Another key theme of the Conservative administrations of 1979 to 1997 was that of 'family responsibility'. Research has shown that families often do 'take the strain' of unemployment among young people (Hutson and Jenkins 1989). Many young people do not enjoy the security of a family who are able or willing to offer this level of support. The alternative is reliance on a benefit system which has labelled young people as members of the 'undeserving poor' and which because of this offers benefits at punitive subsistence levels. The right wing philosophy was one in which welfare dependency was the fault of individuals and led to a process of victim blaming, in which those who 'chose' unemployment were feckless 'scroungers' (Dominelli 1988; Spicker 1993). This ideology is the foundation of social security policies, which are intended to provide a work incentive for individual young people who are seen as the owners of their unemployment. In 1980 social security policy was subject to the first in a line of changes which stretched throughout the decade and which sought to restrict benefit levels and entitlement (Alcock 1990). The discussion here is restricted to those particular pieces of legislation which have been aimed specifically at restricting young people's reliance on the state.

Most significant were the changes legislated in the 1986 Social Security Act and implemented in 1988. The majority of young people who claim benefits have inadequate contribution records and do not qualify for unemployment benefit, they rely instead on means tested benefits. In April 1988 age replaced need as a criteria for

the way in which benefit levels were calculated. Income support replaced supplementary benefit and is paid at a lower rate to people under the age of 25, these changes were based on the presumption that they have a lower cost of living and receive parental support. In September 1988 16 and 17 year olds lost their entitlement to income support and were instead guaranteed a place on a youth training scheme. Some 16 and 17 year olds still qualify for Income Support in prescribed circumstances. These include those who are pregnant or have children, those who are disabled, those who have recently left school and have no choice but to live apart from their parents and those at risk of severe hardship (this is a discretionary power) (Rae 1996). Unemployed young people and in particular homeless young people were left in a very precarious financial position. Young people who did not enjoy parental support were left particularly vulnerable by these changes.

In October 1996 Income-based jobseeker's allowance JSA (IB) replaced income support for people who were required to be available for work (and contribution-based jobseeker's allowance – JSA (Cont) replaced unemployment benefit). This was intended to introduce more stringent eligibility criteria so that unemployed people had to demonstrate that they were actively seeking work and were not responsible for their own unemployment.

At the centre of the New Labour approach is the Green Paper 'A New Contract for Welfare (DSS 1998) which sets out to rebuild the welfare state around work through "a change of culture among benefits claimants, employers and public servants" and move away form the "old, passive benefit system" (1998:24). Young people under 25 were the first group to be targeted under this programme with the introduction of a

New Deal for Young People. The Green Paper makes it clear that young people will not be given the option of remaining on benefits and refusing 'offers of help' (DSS 1998:25). Under the scheme all people aged 18 to 24 years who have been unemployed for six months or more have to take up one of five options or lose entitlement to full benefits. The five options are the work option, the voluntary option, the environmental taskforce option, the education option, and self-employment (this option has been added more recently). Young people are allocated a personal advisor and given a four-month 'Gateway' course in which to decide the option that is most suitable for them. Foyers have been identified as possible providers for this Gateway programme:

> "We have said that the New Deal must be about local partnerships responding to local needs. David Blunkett has already asked the Employment Service to allow Foyers to bid for contracts to help particularly disadvantaged people during the Gateway period of the New Deal"
>
> (Andrew Smith, Department for Education and Employment 1998b).

Foyers will need to compete with other local organisations such as training agencies in order to become Gateway centres. Those Foyers who do not win local contracts to provide this service may face a similar dilemma to that identified by the staff of the Foyer, which is the subject of this research. The Foyer is situated in one of the twelve 'pathway' areas that were selected to start the New Deal programme in January 1998 (the programme went nation wide in April 1998). In this case the contract to provide the Gateway services was given to a local training agency. Staff fears are based on the likelihood that the Gateway programme will duplicate the training offered at the Foyer. This has obvious implications for participation rates in Foyer-run training sessions, this is significant because the Foyer must provide specified levels of training

in order to satisfy the criteria set out by their funding bodies, in particular the European Social Fund. The Government has claimed that the New Deal has been received positively and that:

> "There is a real buzz of enthusiasm in the pathfinder areas- among businesses, voluntary groups, and most importantly the young people themselves"
> (Andrew Smith, Department for Education and Employment 1998c).

The response from the tenants at the research Foyer has been mixed. One tenant participating in the New Deal is reported in a national newspaper as being:

> "critical of the lack of preparation among bureaucrats for their role in piloting the New Deal. No one knows precisely what kind of day-release training he will receive as part of his employment- a stipulation of the programme.
>
> Yet **** is grateful for the chance and believes that other young people in his position will benefit from it"
>
> (Clement, The Independent 6/2/98).

Other tenants have indicated that they view the New Deal as just another government training programme which will mean only an extra £15 a week on top of benefits which is "not worth getting out of bed for". Meanwhile the Government claims that "New Deal is a high quality programme, not a make work scheme" (David Blunkett, Department for Education and Employment 1998d). However as with other training options there was evidence that for respondents in this study there were difficulties with sustaining a place on the New Deal programme (see chapter 7). Early indications are that the New Deal can lead to employment. By November 1999, the New Deal had helped 179,000 18-24 year olds to find jobs (Atkinson, The Guardian 10/1/00). However research by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research found that, after the impact of a recent upturn in the economy is accounted for, only 30,000

young people who found work through the New Deal would still be unemployed without it (Atkinson, The Guardia 10/1/00).

One crucial factor for young people entering the New Deal programme is that they still qualify for housing benefit, a vital benefit for young people who are unemployed or on low wages and who seek to live independently. It is to this element of state subsidy, that we now turn.

The 1982 Social Security and Housing Benefit Act gave local authorities the responsibility for operating a new housing benefit system to help meet the housing costs of those on low incomes. Independent public officials entitled Rent Officers have the task of setting rents payable so that the housing benefit system is not open to abuse by landlords and tenants. The Housing Benefit (General) regulations of 1987 set out criteria for deciding what rent is reasonable for a particular accommodation which takes account of the size of accommodation, the needs of the claimant and the level of rent payable in alternative suitable accommodation. Local authorities had discretion to pay housing benefit above the level set by Rent Officers, however the 1988 Housing Act restricts this power through the introduction of financially punitive measures (see Hill 1990). In 1990/91 over a third of private tenants claiming housing benefit had rents which were judged to be above the market level or in accommodation which was of too large a size (Kemp and McLaverty 1992).

I have discussed the broader provisions of the 1988 Housing Act earlier in the chapter. What is relevant here however is that the Act was intended to deregulate the private rented sector and in doing so introduced the abolition of fair rents in most private

rented accommodation. This was not accompanied by the abolition of caps on the amount of housing benefit payable. The revival of the private rented sector may result in the very people who rely on it including young people on housing benefit being priced out of this sector:

> " If Rent Officers prove to be zealous restricters of rent and, as seems likely, local authorities are unwilling to bear the cost of over-riding such decisions, and if the supply of housing to low-income people in the areas of housing pressure does not increase, many people are likely to remain in accommodation only partly subsidised through the benefit scheme, drawing on their other resources to bridge the gap between their officially allowed rent and the actual rent they have to pay. We will have partial rent restriction by way of the housing benefit scheme, with many poor people paying premiums where excess demand prevented that from working satisfactorily."
>
> (Hill 1990:121).

More and more housing benefits claimants have to top up the rent element of their accommodation (see also private rented accommodation). The fact that people under 25 have lower benefit rates means that they find it particularly difficult to meet these added accommodation costs. The disparity between full accommodation costs and housing benefit means that young people are frequently being evicted from private rented accommodation (Hutson and Liddiard 1991).

Further curbs to housing benefit were introduced in 1995 and were specifically aimed at single people under the age of 25; this was extended in 1996 to cover single people under the age of 60. The cuts mean that single people under the age of 60 in private accommodation can only receive housing benefit equivalent to the average rent of a room in a shared house. This attempt to push single people into shared accommodation fails to take into consideration the fact that houses in multiple occupation account for a large proportion of Britain's worst housing stock, with 4 out

of 5 estimated to be in need of improvement (Randall, Brown and Piper 1993). All private tenants were limited to housing benefit to cover the average local rent for suitable size accommodation. Mr Lilley claimed that it was necessary to curb the growth of single occupancy dwellings and that:

> "Both changes will encourage people on benefit to take cost into account in deciding where to live, and they will have the choice of paying from their incomes for more expensive accommodation, or trying to negotiate their rent downwards, or moving to a home they and the taxpayer can afford"
>
> (Brindle, The Guardian 27:1:1996).

A stark 'choice' indeed when we consider the low incomes of those dependant on housing benefits, the powerless position of most tenants to negotiate any change in rent and the lack of affordable accommodation actually available.

From October 1996 all new claims of housing benefit were made payable in arrears only. This can only add to the incidence of landlord's advertisements of property to let which specify very clearly "No DSS". The amount of Housing benefit available to many young people with the exception of those leaving local authority care (until the age of 22 years) and those in Housing Association accommodation was also restricted (Macklin and Waters 1997). These changes are likely to further restrict the chances of successful independent living for many young people.

Another policy change, which has restricted the housing options of young people, has been the loss of Board and Lodging Payments. Board and Lodging payments covered the full accommodation costs including service costs (such as heating and cooking) of people in bed and breakfast hotels and lodgings. In April 1989 this payment was replaced with housing benefit and income support. Service costs now have to be met

out of the individuals' benefits and this severely restricts levels of disposable income. In October 1989 these changes were extended to apply to hostel residents. The changes were the result of a media moral panic, which claimed that young people were choosing to live it up in the British 'Costa Del Sol' rather than stay in the parental home or seek work. The result has been to restrict entry to another form of housing tenure, which has traditionally been utilised by single people (Hutson and Liddiard 1991).

Furthermore, before April 1988 people could claim single payments for one-off items of furniture, a deposit or rent in advance. The Social Fund introduced loans to replace such grants. These loans are repaid from benefit levels that are already low, so that this change threatens access to housing and living standards.

In sum, recent changes in housing benefit and the loss of board and lodging payments and grants, serve to indirectly exclude financially vulnerable young people from private rented accommodation, one of the few options available to them after they have been rationed out of local authority provision

CONCLUSION

Young people are marginalised in the labour and housing market. Housing policy and social security policy serve to restrict access to independent accommodation for young people. Policies have been directed at keeping them at home until they are economically active. Youth unemployment has been approached in a way which reflects a political ideology which frames the causes of unemployment in individual terms. Those young people who do enjoy some level of family support are forced to

remain in a position of dependence as they further their education, participate in training programmes or accept low-paid jobs. For those young people who lack family support, are particularly vulnerable to unemployment because of additional problems related to their backgrounds and past experiences, or who do participate on training programmes or accept low-paid jobs, the outcomes of Government policy and practice are often homelessness and destitution. Homelessness makes holding down a training place or work particularly difficult (Hutson and Liddiard 1994). In this way homelessness and unemployment form a vicious circle in which many young people find themselves trapped.

In this chapter I have sought to describe and analyse what may be termed the main structural causes of youth homelessness. That is, the way in which housing policy, the youth labour market and social security policy serve in practice to limit the options available to those young people who seek independent accommodation, and in so doing make them vulnerable to homelessness. The next chapter considers individual explanations of homelessness, and seeks to explain the factors, which determine why only certain groups of young people fall prey to the structural causes of homelessness.

CHAPTER THREE

CLAIMING CITIZENSHIP

The last chapter was concerned with structural explanations of homelessness. That is, the way in which the policies and practices of the state may, through the imposition of a variety of obstacles serve to disadvantage all (or potentially all) young people seeking independent accommodation. However it is clear that although the numbers of young people who experience homelessness are growing (Evans 1996), the majority of young people in Britain are not homeless. This being the case, are there defining factors that may render certain individuals vulnerable to homelessness? Can individual explanations of homelessness, which concentrate on the biography and life experiences of homeless individuals complete our understanding of the causes of homelessness?

Individual explanations of youth homelessness take a number of forms and Brandon (1980) refers to a number of different models. These include explanations that present individuals as either feckless social actors who 'choose' to be homeless, or alternatively as individuals who become homeless because of personal inadequacy or immaturity. The more common form of 'individual explanation', offered in more recent academic literature, presents individuals as the victims of personal circumstances that are beyond their control and which render them particularly vulnerable to the 'structural' causes of homelessness. These personal circumstances may include experience of local authority care, abuse in the parental home, relationship break down, and problems associated with mental health, drug or alcohol abuse (Carlen 1996, Evans 1996, Hendessi 1992, Hutson and Liddiard 1994, Newman

1989, Thornton 1990). Carlen (1996) refers to these factors as the 'precipitating causes' of youth homelessness:

> "The structural causes of homelessness.....exist independently of any individual's awareness of them; indeed, they frequently remain obscure to people even after they have become homeless. The precipitating causes, on the other hand, are those immediate and situational ones which young people readily recall when asked to account for their homeless situation, for instance a family row or discharge from an institution"
> (Carlen 1996:34).

I found many examples to concur with Carlen's proposition in the course of my fieldwork. Young people described the route to their current situation in terms of their past life experiences, such as the breakdown (or lack of) a relationship with parents or experience of local authority care. (see Chapter 6).

Perhaps, then, we can claim that both structural and individual factors form two halves of an equation. In particular, where current social policies (which disadvantage all young people seeking independent accommodation), collide with a certain pattern of life experience or biography, the individual is more vulnerable to homelessness. However, I would contend that the relationship between structural and individual factors is far more complex and interdependent.

This chapter investigates and explains the relationship between the structural and the individual causes of homelessness within the context of citizenship. In so doing, I frame my analysis using the model proposed by Jones and Wallace (1992) who interpret youth as "the period during which the transition to citizenship, that is, to full participation in society, occurs" (1992:18).

The chapter begins with a definition of the term 'youth', which incorporates a discussion of both the 'life course' perspective and the concept of 'transitions of youth'.

This is followed by a consideration of both the relationship between youth and citizenship and the claim that full participatory citizenship is denied to many young people. Youth is represented as a period in the life course in which young people's ability to fulfil the obligations of citizenship is limited by structural factors such as high youth unemployment. Many young people may then be forced to claim citizenship 'by proxy' through their membership of a family unit.

Finally the chapter explores the idea that those young people who do not enjoy the safety net of family membership are those who are most vulnerable to homelessness. Problems arise where young people need to claim the rights of citizenship before they are able to fulfil the obligations that the social contract demands. It is at this point that the relationship between the structural and the individual can be understood, within the theoretical framework of the life course perspective and through the concept of youth transitions into citizenship.

Defining Youth

The term 'youth' is complex and has evolved over time (Mitterauer 1992) and any definition will reflect the historical, social, economic and political context in which it is situated (Osgerby 1998). A plethora of theories has emerged throughout this century in an attempt to explain 'youth' as a social phenomenon.

The biological determinist approach of G.Stanley Hall (1904) represented puberty as the defining point at which adolescence and so youth began. Hall defined youth as a period of 'storm and stress' and claimed that in order to nurture 'normal' adults it was important to establish a balance between control and freedom for young people. Functionalist theory (Parsons 1956, 1961), represented youth as a period in which the family as the source of 'primary socialization' offers young people greater autonomy in preparation for independence. This process is aided through 'secondary socialization' obtained via membership of school and peer groups.

In the 1960s media moral panic represented youth as a threat to the prevailing norms of society (Cohen 1973) and sociologists began to produce research that investigated youth subcultures and the process through which the media presented youth:

> "From the skinheads of the late sixties, through the punks of the seventies, to the 'New Age travellers' and 'acid house ravers' of the late eighties and early nineties, youth subcultures have been subject to processes of stigmatization and stereotyping which paradoxically, have worked to popularise and lend substance to styles that were initially indistinct and ill-defined"
>
> (Osgerby 1998:45).

At the same time the sociology of youth was questioning representations of youth that failed to take account of the way in which social class impacted upon young people producing a range of different experiences (Willis 1977, Jenkins 1983) while later studies considered the impact of additional factors such as gender and locality (Griffin 1985, Ashton et al 1986).

More recently, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) have applied the theories of Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) to examine the position of youth in high modernity. They claim that in the modern world:

> "young people face new risks and opportunities, the traditional links between the family, school and work seem to have weakened as young people embark on journeys into adulthood that involve a number of routes, may of which appear to have uncertain outcomes"
>
> (Furlong and Cartmel 1997: 7).

Each approach has in some way contributed to changing representations of youth and each reflects the prevailing social circumstances and concerns of a time

For the purpose of the thesis, I have adopted the "life course perspective" as a means of understanding the concept of youth in the context of current historical, social, economic and political circumstances (Hareven 1982, Jones and Wallace 1992). This is because this perspective provides us with a holistic understanding of 'youth' as it "integrates process and structure" and "links individual time with historical time" (Jones and Wallace 1992:14). The life course: "encompasses "pathways" by which individuals move through their lives fulfilling different roles sequentially or simultaneously" (Hareven 1982:6).

In attempting to define 'youth' within the theoretical framework of the life course perspective, Coles (1995) offers us a clear interpretation of the term:

> "At its simplest, youth can be defined as an interstitial phase in the life course between childhood and adulthood"
>
> (Coles 1995:4).

Youth thus represents a period in the life course of an individual when they cease to enjoy the legal protections of childhood and dependence on adult society and do not yet have access to the advantages of adult life (I shall return to the question of how we define 'adult life' later).

Equally, within this perspective 'youth' does not represent a prescribed age category. However it should be noted that the young people referred to in this research were between the ages of 16 and 25 years. There are a number of reasons for the prescription of an age category here; first the term 'youth homelessness' in the UK generally refers to young single people between the ages 16 and 25 (Hutson and Liddiard 1994:3). Secondly, social policy makes a distinction between those over and under the ages of 16 and 25 years respectively, in terms of entitlement to social security benefits and housing benefit (see chapter 2). Finally, the Foyer movement operates a policy that dictates that its services are open specifically to those young people aged 16 to 25 years. However, I have imposed these age limits only for the purposes of this piece of research. I do not claim that 'youth' can be defined in terms of a specified age category.

The term 'youth' is a social construct, whose meaning is shaped by the historical context in which it is situated, and the experiences of 'youth' are not unitary. It is evident that the transition from "childhood dependence to independence from parents takes place in different ways for different social groups and at different periods of time" (Wallace 1988).

To recap, I define 'youth' as a period in the life course between childhood and adulthood. However this is not to claim that youth is a period of limbo in between two distinct life stages, rather:

> "Youth can be seen as a series of processes of transition to adult life, roughly parallel longitudinal processes which take place in different spheres, such as at home or in the labour market, but which must be understood together because they relate closely to one another"
> (Jones and Wallace 1992:13).

In order to deconstruct this definition further it is necessary to provide some analysis of the concept of 'transition'.

Recent academic literature (Coles 1995, Irwin 1995, Jones 1987, Jones and Wallace 1992, Wallace 1988), has used the concept of 'transitions' to describe the "changing dynamics of youth at population levels" (Borland and Hill 1997:57). Three main areas of transition have been identified as the labour market transition (the school-to work transition), the transition from home of origin to home of destination (the domestic transition) and the transition to independent accommodation (the housing transition) (Coles 1995, Wallace 1988). These three areas of transition are interdependent, so that for instance, failure to secure paid employment may influence the success of other transitions (Jones 1988, Wallace 1988).

The transitions of youth are not universal; they differ according to race, sex, and class (Jones 1987, Wallace 1988). However, Wallace (1988) indicates that a 'normal' model of transition has evolved as an ideology, one that is informed by political discourse and by the historical context in which it is situated. So that what was considered 'normal' at one point in history may not prevail during another time and what is considered 'normal' for one social group may differ from what is 'normal' for another. She goes on to claim that contemporary political discourse has reacted to the displacement of youth from the labour market by introducing legislation that seeks to increase the period during which young people are dependent on their families. So that "the underlying implication is that 25 is now the age of majority" (Wallace 1988:27) and this claim is dealt with, in detail, later in the chapter. What is relevant here is that a combination of structural factors and ideological reactions to them has

resulted (in general) in transitions becoming "more extended, more spaced and more complex in recent years" (Jones and Wallac 1992:97).

Youth transitions do not happen at a single point in time and do not involve a simple overnight transition from one status to another. Individuals may move in and out of work, or the parental home. Transitions are experienced by individuals as a sequence of events which influence each other and which culminate in adult status. Academics have utilised the concept of 'career' to explain this process (Banks et al. 1992, Coles 1995, Jones 1987, Wallace 1988). The transition to adulthood:

> "not only occurs at a certain pace, but also involves changes that may occur in particular sequence and may additionally lead to different destinations. The concept of a 'career' captures both these features of the transition"
>
> (Banks et al. 1992:174).

This is not to claim that each change determines the next but that "the attainment of each status position, in turn, has the capacity to both open and close down future opportunities" (Cole 1995:9).

In sum then, the approach outlined above allows us to consider youth as a series of transitions towards adult life within the life course perspective. The benefit of this approach is that it provides a flexible and complex vehicle for understanding structural and individual factors, the way in which they are interrelated and ultimately the way in which they affect the life courses of individual young people.

In defining youth I have claimed that adult status is the end product of the series of processes of transition that 'youth' involves. However how do we define 'adult life', what does the status of 'adult' embody in contemporary British society? A successful

transition represents more than the mere attainment of the age majority, it also implies the attachment of citizenship. Accordingly the next section of the chapter presents the claim put forward by Jones and Wallace (1992) that citizenship is the prize of adulthood and examines the ways in which young people are excluded from full participatory citizenship.

Youth and Citizenship

Jones and Wallace (1992) put forward the claim that "citizenship offers a more useful framework than adulthood for understanding the 'end product' of youth" (Jones and Wallace 1992:18). If citizenship is the end product of youth, then by definition young people do not possess citizenship. The concept of citizenship is highly contested and complex (see for example: Coote 1992, Lister 1998a, Lister 1998b, Mead 1986, Plant and Barry 1990, Turner 1990, Twine 1994, Roche 1992). Before we can proceed it is necessary to ask two questions. First what is citizenship and second why are young people not thought of as citizens?

As I mooted in the introduction to this thesis, T.H.Marshall's seminal formulation of citizenship (1950) provides a classic definition of the concept. For Marshall:

> "Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respects to the rights and duties with which the status is bestowed. There is no universal principle which determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed"
>
> (Marshall and Bottomore 1992:18).

Citizenship as defined by Marshall has three elements, the civil, the political and the social:

> "the civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom- liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice....By the political element, I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body. The corresponding institutions are parliament and the councils of local government. By the social element, I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share in the full social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society"
>
> (Marshall 1950:74).

Following on from Lister (1990b), Jones and Wallace have criticised the failure of Marshall's account (1992:21) to consider the dimensions of gender, race or age as a basis of differential access to the rights of citizenship:

> "Full participation (rights and access to them) in society is, as Marshall (1950) indicated, dependent on personal resources and position in the social structure; and thus, following Lister (1990), also depends on the achievement of economic independence: this applies to young people of both sexes".

The crucial implication therefore being that as long as economic independence is withheld from young people so is the status of full citizenship. The marginalised position held by young people in relation to citizenship has been further enforced by an ideology which has altered the balance of rights and duties in the relationship between the state and individuals, that constitutes citizenship.

Marshall's theory of citizenship was a rights-based approach, one which was "circumscribed by place and by time" (Bulmer and Rees 1996:269) and one which reflected the relationship between the state and the members of its community at a time of economic confidence and the establishment of a comprehensive welfare state.

Barbalet (1988:109), claims that Marshall "takes the state for granted and fails to reflect upon its significance for the development of citizenship". Ultimately the state grants social rights and in the context of different times and circumstances it may deny them (Barbalet 1988).

The New Right presented a political ideology that has altered the social contract between the individual and the state, in which individuals fulfil obligations towards the state in return for entitlement to the civil, political and social rights of citizenship and the protection of the state (Marshall 1950).

Lister (1990a:7) claims that the state under the rule of the New Right altered the balance of citizenship and "turned commonly accepted notions of citizenship on their head and exchanged the language of entitlement for that of obligation and responsibility". This has been interpreted as a reaction to the imagined existence of a "dependency culture" (Dean and Taylor-Gooby 1992), one in which certain individuals were able to ignore the responsibilities of citizenship and still enjoy membership of the 'Nanny State'. The end result of:

> "this discourse over the morality of citizenship has been a restructuring of its meaning. It is a rejection of the notion that the state is responsible for providing rights and benefits for the citizen in claims proposed by Marshall (1950). In its place the New Right have tried to assert a form of citizenship that has its basis in economic individualism and the responsibility of the citizen."
>
> (France 1996:39).

Sjoberg (1999:295) offers an economic explanation in which the increased role that social duties have "played within social policy reform is that they quite simply have been instated in order to pay for the benefits that mostly are at the focus of these reforms". Changes in the contract of citizenship therefore represent the complex

relationship between fiscal and moral concerns as "when fewer citizens are entitled to claim a benefit, not only is money saved, but a declaration is made that the right in question is no longer available to some people" (Cox 1998:6).

What is clear is that the New Right challenged the rights based approach to citizenship espoused by Marshall. The impact of this challenge is still being felt as "ideas that originally entered British politics on the back of what has been termed the New Right agenda appear to have been influential in the ongoing redefinition of citizenship" (Dwyer 1998:406). This was clearly demonstrated in the words of Tony Blair (1995) when he asserted that " the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe". This principle has been applied to the young unemployed with the introduction of the New Deal for Young People for those under 25 years of age (see Chapter 2). The New Deal offers young people a subsidised job, full-time education, work in the voluntary sector or with the Environmental Task Force. The government has made it clear that with the provision of these 'opportunities' there are implied duties and for the young unemployed there will be "no fifth" option of remaining on benefits (DSS 1998:25) (a fifth option has since been introduced- self-employment). The central claim made for such an approach is that it 'helps people to help themselves' and the implication remains that those who do not succeed in terms of participating as full citizens fail as a result of their own lack of effort.

Lister (1998a:313) claims that:

> "The New Labour Mantra echoes the deployment of the language of citizenship obligations by Conservative ministers in the 1980s. It also reflects a more deep-rooted paradigm shift in which the discourse of citizenship draws increasingly on the lexicon of obligations rather than rights".

The opportunity for young people to fulfil these obligations is restricted by structural factors. So that at the same time as the "costs of full citizenship participation increase" (Lister 1990a:51), young people's ability to meet those costs have been restricted by factors, such as high youth unemployment and low wages. This has serious implications for young people, in particular those who are vulnerable because of a set of coinciding factors such as lack of family support. Especially as Dean (1999:222) contends:

> "In spite of New Labour's insistence that vulnerable people will always be protected, the overwhelming implication is that social rights can be conceded only if they are earned or, exceptionally deserved. There are no unconditional rights of citizenship".

The inability of many young people to fulfil the obligations of citizenship therefore means that they are denied the status and its incumbent rights.

Two avenues are open to young people who seek to enter the social contract of citizenship. First economic independence, young people who are able to secure employment can then fulfil their obligations to the state and so claim the rights that the status of citizenship affords them. Second, young people may delay their entry into this social contract by claiming support from their families until they are in a position that allows them to achieve the status of citizenship in their own right.

Many commentators have argued that policies have been directed at fostering the extended dependence of young people upon families and that there has been a residualisation of state support for those under 25 years of age (Cole 1995, Finch 1996, France 1996, Jones and Wallace 1992, Stewart and Stewart 1988). In this way the state has reacted to structural factors, which obstruct and delay young people's

transitions to adulthood by formulating policy that accepts this pattern as 'normal'. So that "it is no longer deemed appropriate in policy terms for young people under 25 years to make a 'successful' transition to full participation in society." (Jones and Wallace 1992:112).

Jones and Wallace argue that the conditions of the present political and policy framework deny young people the right to enter into the social contract of citizenship. Instead young people are forced to claim 'citizenship by proxy' through their membership of a family unit. Jones and Wallace (1992) interpret the main difficulty with this situation in the following terms:

> "the imposition of dependency status on many young people who in other historical and social circumstances might be able to live independent lives, takes away adult responsibility and places young people under the legal control of parents. Their rights to freedom and self-determination are thus restricted. So too are their responsibilities. Thus at a time when both independence and responsibilities should be increasing, they are not"
> (Jones and Wallace 1992:154).

This is clearly a valid and important consideration. The state has constructed a policy framework that seeks to reduce state dependency by making the family responsible for young people; the effect of which is to deny young people the right to secure citizenship as of right. However, the important point here is that this policy framework is based on an assumption about both the nature of families and the level of support they can offer. As Jones and Wallace (1992:116) recognise:

> " When the state takes away the safety net of social citizenship, some (wealthier) families can step in and provide financial assistance, food and housing, while others cannot".

Social policies that assume that particular types of responsibility are normal in families are essentially flawed (Finch 1996). So for example as Fox Harding

(1996:223) points out, where policy is built on assumptions about certain family obligations, which cannot be enforced by private or public law the result is that:

> "'Holes' occur where a void is left in the provision of needed care, support or financial maintenance because state assistance is withheld on the assumption of family obligations which cannot be enforced".

Ideology informs policy, which in this case presumes that it is both 'normal' for the completion of youth transitions to be delayed until the age of 25 and that until that time young people will be able to rely on their families. This principle was developed within New Right ideology and there is no evidence to suggest that New Labour intend to reject or challenge this established representation of youth. Where these assumptions do not apply, as in the case of young people who do not have the safety net of family support, the result may be 'premature' transitions in which young people leave the parental home before gaining secure employment. They are met with a policy framework that is designed to resist rather than accommodate their independence from the family unit. It is under these circumstances that some young people may become trapped in a cycle of no home, no job, no home.

In terms of citizenship, for those who cannot secure citizenship 'by proxy' through membership of a family unit, and who are unable to overcome the structural obstacles which all young people face in 'meeting the costs of participation' (Lister 1991), there is a very real threat of exclusion, and therefore, of homelessness.

Conclusion

Youth is a period in the life course in which young people may need to claim the rights of citizenship before they are in a position to fulfil their obligations towards the state. The state has reacted by removing those young people who are unable to fulfil

their obligations from the social contract of citizenship. One outcome of this is that in the transition to citizenship many young people are forced, by a combination of structural factors and state responses, to remain dependent on their families for material resources and social rights. Family support has therefore become a crucial factor in the achievement of 'successful' transitions to adulthood, that is full participatory citizenship. In this way, the biography of young people who do not enjoy this level of family support collides with structural and state obstacles to independence. The result in terms of the 'housing careers' (Jones 1987, 1995a) of these young people may and can be homelessness.

This chapter has been concerned with the complex and interdependent relationship between individual and structural causes of homelessness. A representation of youth as a series of processes of transition to citizenship has been constructed. This has involved discussion of the definition of youth, the meaning of citizenship and the relationship between the two. An examination of the way in which the state has sought to extend the period during which young people are dependent on their families has allowed us to consider the consequences of this paradigm for those young people who are unable to be dependent on their families. This is the context in which we can understand the complex relationship between individual and structural causes of homelessness.

Jones (1995a:15) identifies four elements all affecting young people's access to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship: access to an income from employment; access to a state safety net; access to family support; and access to independent housing. Chapter 2 explored in detail the problems faced by some young people in

accessing an income from employment, the state safety net and access to independent housing. This chapter has been concerned with developing an understanding of the way in which all four elements as identified by Jones (1995a) in conjunction with changing representations of 'youth' and 'citizenship' may serve to exclude young people from the status of citizenship and render them vulnerable to homelessness.

The next chapter considers traditional approaches to youth homelessness and provides a background of the British Foyer Movement. Foyers represent an approach to youth homelessness that is intended to break the cycle of no home, no job, no home, through providing a service which offers young people in housing need between the ages of 16 and 25, good quality accommodation and employment services. The chapter examines the history and principles of the Foyer system. Furthermore it examines whether in principle, Foyers can provide a realistic alternative to family support for young people making the transition to citizenship. In later chapters the adequacy of the Foyer principle in practice is addressed, namely if economic independence is the key to citizenship for young people who can not claim 'citizenship by proxy' can a Foyer help young people achieve economic independence and break the cycle of 'no job, no home, no job'.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BRITISH FOYER MOVEMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FOYER PROJECT

This chapter seeks to place the Foyer within the wider context of the British Foyer Movement (BFM) and to outline the organisational structure and procedures of the Foyer upon which this research is focused.

There is a high level of diversity between different organisations operating as Foyers (as detailed later in this chapter). However the principles that inform the operation of Foyers as stipulated by the Foyer Federation for Youth (FFY) are shared by all organisations operating as Foyers (although they may be operationalised in different ways). It is necessary to place the Foyer that is the subject of the study within the wider context of the Foyer Federation for Youth and the British Foyer Movement. The organisational structure and procedures of the Foyer that is the subject of this study are also considered and provide a context for the findings presented in later chapters.

This chapter begins with an historical account of the origins and early development of Foyers in France and the relatively recent adoption of the Foyer concept in Britain. The principles of the British Foyer Movement are then considered, as set out by the Foyer Federation for Youth, the organisation established in the early 1990s to promote the development of a network of Foyers in Britain (Shelter 1992). The operation of Foyers throughout Britain are discussed drawing on the findings of a postal survey and evidence provided in other research. The amount of published literature on the Foyer Movement is limited and much of it has been commissioned by the FFY itself, therefore I have drawn on two major independent studies (Anderson

and Quilgars 1995, Maginn et al 2000). Finally the structure and procedures of the study Foyer are presented.

The first section of the chapter provides a historical account of the development of Foyers in France and later in Britain.

Foyers: from France to Britain

The history of the British Foyer Movement is a relatively short one; the Foyer concept was introduced in 1991 by the homeless charity Shelter and was based on the earlier development of Foyers in France. In France Foyers were initially developed during the First World War with funding from the American YMCA and the French Ministry of War. 'Foyers du soldats' were designed to provide soldiers with a safe environment in which they might enjoy educational and recreational facilities and between 1915 and 1919 over one thousand five hundred Foyers opened throughout France (Gilchrist and Jeffs 1995). The number of Foyers did decline following the war to around 300 and management was taken over by various voluntary and religious organisations which came together to form the 'Union des Foyers des Jeunes Travailleurs' (Union of Hostels for Young Workers) in 1955 (Gilchrist and Jeffs 1995). The central role of Foyers had changed and they were used primarily to facilitate the movement of labour, by the end of the 1970s there were a network of nearly 500 Foyers (Crook and Dalgleish 1994).

In 1992 the housing charity Shelter produced a number of background papers that described the Foyer system in France and promoted the development of a similar

system in Britain as a means to breaking the homelessness cycle of 'no job- no home- no job' (Shelter 1992). Subsequently the Foyer Federation for Youth (FFY) was established in 1992 to promote the development of Foyers in Britain, the Board of which included representatives of the YMCA, YWCA, London and Quadrant Housing Trust, Peabody Trust, Look Ahead Housing Association, Grand Metropolitan Trust and John Laing Builders. The campaign for a British Foyer system was also given political credence in the Conservative Party Manifesto of 1992 :

> "We will carry out pilot projects for the 'foyer' concept whereby young people are given a place in a hostel if in exchange they give a commitment to train and look for work".

Following extensive lobbying funding was sought for a pilot project of two purpose built and five YMCA Foyers during 1991/92 by the London and Quadrant Housing Trust (L&QHT) and North British Housing Association (NBHA) (Anderson and Quilgars 1995). The housing associations were successful in securing capital and revenue funding packages for the new build Foyers while the addition of employment and training facilities at the YMCA pilot projects was set up with funding from Employment Department sources. An evaluation of the two-year pilot period was undertaken by Deborah Quilgars and Isobel Anderson on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and their report provides a detailed account of the development of the pilot projects (Anderson and Quilgars 1995). The main findings of their study are considered in the next section of the chapter.

By the time the Labour Government came to power in 1997 there were nearly 50 Foyers in operation and the incoming government promised a Foyer in every town as part of its key election pledge of getting people off welfare and into work (Weaver 1997). On July the 4th 2000 the 100th British Foyer was opened in Liverpool and

Foyers now provide around 5000 young people with accommodation (FFY 2000). The number of Foyers established in the eight year period since the concept was brought across the channel is significant, however the numbers do fall short of earlier estimates of expansion. For instance by July 1998 there were 70 Foyers in operation and another 200 "were planned" to open over the next few year (Cooke 1998). The Foyer concept is realised in diverse ways (see later), however there is a common set of principles that inform organisations that present themselves as Foyers and these are considered in the next section of the chapter.

The Principles of the British Foyer Movement

The Foyer Federation for Youth (FFY) was founded in 1992 and is supported and steered by a Board of Directors drawn from housing, training and employment fields, youth organisations, Foyer operators and the private sector. The FFY (1997:12) describes its role as being to:

> " raise awareness of the Foyer movement and to help bring together partnerships of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to develop Foyers. In addition, it acts as a leading source of information on standards and best practice, offering training and advice to both existing projects and seeking to develop them".

The vision of the FFY (1997:12) is stated as:

"A national network of Foyers providing safe and affordable accommodation with access to training, education and employment opportunities from which young people are empowered to become socially and economically active citizens".

It is not difficult to understand why Foyers have gained the support of the government; the role and aims of the FFY clearly echo the rhetoric of the present administration. The principles underpinning the present policy agenda can all be identified in the stated role and aims of the FFY; partnership between the public, private and voluntary sector; joined up thinking; the emphasis on opportunities; an

emphasis on training, education and employment as the tools of social inclusion and the idea that individuals should use the opportunities made available to them to become 'socially and economically active citizens' (Powell 1999). This synergy between the aims of the incoming Labour government of 1997 and the aims of the FFY was highlighted in media articles and headlines such as "Four walls and a future Tony Blair is championing 'foyers' as the solution to homelessness" (Rickford, The Big Issue 1997) and "Excuse me, your future is waiting in the foyer" (Williams, TES 11/07/97). The Labour Party voiced its support for the Foyer movement even before the general election that saw them return to government (Henke, The Independent 03/02/97).

The conditional nature of support contained in the Foyer approach also marries with the government's emphasis on conditional access to social rights (as discussed in Chapter 3 and below). The Foyer Federation has issued a definition of a Foyer which requires projects to meet three basic conditions (FFY 1997:13):

- That the focus is on helping disadvantaged young people, aged 16-25 who are homeless or in housing need, achieve the transition from dependence to independence.
- That it is based on a holistic approach to the young person's needs, offering integrated access to at minimum, accommodation, training and job searching facilities.
- That the relationship with the young person is based on a formal agreement as to how the Foyer's facilities and local community resources will be used in making the transition to independence, adherence to which is a condition to continued residence in the Foyer.

Let us consider each of these three criteria in turn. The first condition sets out the client base of the service, it acknowledges a representation of 'youth' as presented in Chapter 3. That is, that 'youth' represents the period in which the transition from dependence to independence takes place and that social policy distinguishes between young people aged between 16 and 25 years and other age groups, in terms of entitlement to social security benefits and housing benefit, which disadvantages young people seeking independent accommodation and may result in homelessness (Hutson and Liddiard 1994; Jones and Wallace 1992).

The second condition is concerned with the need for a holistic approach to the social problem of youth homelessness and acknowledges the link between unemployment and homelessness that has been discussed earlier in the dissertation (Chapter 2). It has been claimed earlier that economic independence is vital for young people attempting to secure accommodation in the absence of adequate family support. As the Prime Minister stated in a speech regarding the launch of the Social Exclusion Unit (Stockwell Park School 8/12/1997) the present government is committed to the belief that "Joined up problems demand joined up solutions". The Foyer approach seeks to offer a 'joined up solution' to youth homelessness. In the short term through the provision of accommodation and in the longer term through supporting young people into employment so that they can secure independent accommodation.

The third condition refers to the need for a formal agreement between young people and the Foyer in relation to how the young person will make the "transition to independence". Adherence to such an agreement should be a "condition of continued residence". The emphasis on conditional access to support that is central to the Foyer

approach is in line with the present administration's approach, the "dominant characteristic of New Labour's approach to social policy is bonding duties to rights" (Lund 1999:447). This approach is essentially different from that taken by the New Right administrations that preceeded it and by 'Old Labour', in that the "notion of causation moved from the structural to focus on individual character as shaped by personal circumstance" (Lund 1999:458). The present approach does not seek to demonise the disadvantaged in the style of the New Right while at the same time it rejects the Old Labour principal focus on structural causes of disadvantage. Rather there is an admission that the socially excluded are not feckless but the victims of past disadvantage which is married to the belief that the excluded must obliged to take advantage of new structural opportunities. New Labour has "linked obligations to rights in a way that attaches receivers to givers via the 'contract' that assistance is owed only if 'character' is enhanced" (Lund 1999: 458). The Foyer system has turned this principle into a practice. In order to qualify for continued assistance young people in housing need must demonstrate their commitment to partake in the enhancement of their character, to take full advantage of the support offered and to make the transition to independence. The conditional nature of assistance offered by the Foyer system has been criticised (Gilchrist and Jeffs 1995:7):

> "Foyers adopt the workhouse model, without the cruelty, but like their forerunners they have all the potential for inflicting sanctions on those unable or unwilling to conform.....Any policy which seeks to link the right to shelter to employment is fundamentally regressive".

The idea that employment and training support should be mandatory was also rejected by the majority of respondents in Anderson and Quilgars' (1995) study of pilot Foyers. Respondents felt that such a policy was counter-productive, would cause resentment and was unfair in view of the problems faced by young people experiencing homelessness (Anderson and Quilgars 1995:38). However as reported

in Chapter 7 the majority of respondents in this study stated that the obligation to undertake training and seek employment was a good policy that had the potential to provide the motivation they needed to achieve their goals. However as is discussed in Chapter 7 although they agreed in principle with the policy they often had difficulties in fulfilling their side of the 'contract' in practice. The postal survey of Foyers carried out for this research in 1997 was completed by respondents representing 28 British Foyers. Of those 64 per cent used a written contract between the client and the Foyer, which was based on a requirement to participate in actively seeking work, a training scheme or education. Failure to comply with these conditions resulted in some form of sanction in 78 per cent of those cases, however failure to comply resulted in exclusion from all Foyer services in only 22 per cent of cases.

Foyers as presented by the FFY are intended to provide good quality accommodation and employment and training services to young people aged 16-25 years who are in housing need and who must enter into a contractual agreement to participate in the Foyer programme in order to retain their accommodation. There is also recognition that life skills training and education is an important element of the support needed to aid young people in the transition to independence. The way in which this is operationalised is diverse and at the start of this study the FFY were still wrestling with the criteria which organisations would have to meet in order to be acknowledged as a Foyer. I attended a meeting held between a representative of the FFY and the Foyer manger in September 1997 during the consultation process that took place before the introduction of an accreditation system. It was suggested by the FFY representative that the three core criteria outlined earlier in this section should

be broken down into a number of indicators and standards that organisations seeking FFY accreditation would have to satisfy. The framework for accreditation was to be developed in line with quality standards used elsewhere in industry and training. It was suggested that clarification was still needed at that time as to whether support should be based on a reciprocal 'commitment' or a 'contract'. Quality standards were to be measured against tenant outcomes: *"Client outcomes- I guess that's our product. What happens to the resident because of the Foyer and despite the Foyer"* (FFY representative, September 1997). The Foyer that is the subject of this study was involved in the pilot accreditation scheme in 1998. The need for an accreditation system was highlighted through the postal survey carried out in early 1997. Many of the YMCA 'Foyers' did not meet the three core criteria outlined earlier. Many of them provided services for a much wider age group, access to accommodation was commonly not subject to participation in the Foyer programme and Foyer services were in some cases 'tacked on' to mainstream YMCA services. The next section of the chapter examines the operation of Foyers in Britain in more detail.

British Foyers

In July 2000 the 100th Foyer in Britain was opened. Foyers come in two main forms, YMCA Foyers involve the introduction of a Foyer programme into a YMCA hostel, other Foyers are in purpose built or purpose converted buildings. This section of the chapter considers three pieces of research, a study of the five pilot Foyers (Anderson and Quilgars 1995), the findings of a postal survey undertaken for this dissertation in 1997 and an evaluation of Foyers undertaken for the DETR in 1998 and published in 2000.

In 1992 a pilot project of Foyers was set up in two new built Foyers and through the introduction of a Foyer programme in five YMCA hostels. The pilot scheme was the subject of a study undertaken by Isobel Anderson and Deborah Quilgars and published in 1995. YMCAs became Foyers through the introduction of new employment and training support systems. The other two Foyers were purpose built and were not in operation at the time of the research undertaken for the study. More than 500 young people took part in the pilot schemes, 130 full-time and 40 part-time jobs were found by participants in the first 18 months of operation, many of whom required quite intensive support (Anderson and Quilgars 1995). The study found that most young people were positive about the Foyer system and found the support useful, although a need for further life skills and move-on support was identified. In Anderson and Quilgars' study the characteristics of Foyer participants were identified as:

- 67% were aged between 18-25, with 7% 16 or 17 years old
- 83% were male, 17% female
- 10% were from an ethnic minority group
- 88% were unemployed, 60% out of work for 6 months or more
- 15% had been in care
- 42% had been in trouble with the police
- 47% had slept rough

These figures are comparable with those provided in relation to the participants in the Foyer that is the subject of this study as detailed in the next two chapters. There are however two significant differences. First the age distribution in the Foyer that is the subject of this research was younger, 44 per cent were under 18 years of age. Secondly a larger proportion have experience of local authority care - 56 per cent. In both cases it is clear that young people who come into contact with the Foyer system have a high incidence of unemployment and have a history of past disadvantage. Anderson and Quilgars identified the fact that Foyers were limited in what they could

achieve as their level of success was directly influenced by structural factors that were beyond their remit and control.

In 1997 a postal survey of the 45 Foyers operational at that time was undertaken for this research (see Appendix 1). The survey was addressed to the Foyer manager. The total response rate was 62 per cent. YMCA Foyers accounted for 80 per cent of responses. The number of bed spaces at Foyers varied from less than 10 to over 150 although the majority had between 10 and 50 bed spaces. Only 46 per cent of Foyers catered exclusively for the 16 to 25 year old age range as specified by the FFY, this was as a result of the wider age range of YMCA clientele. The services most widely available at the Foyers were: job search, housing search, provision of facilities, training in interview skills and in the completion of application forms, life skills, numeracy and literacy. The majority of Foyers used Action Plans to structure the support services offered to participants. Although 88 per cent of respondents stated that they did monitor outcomes only 56 per cent were able to provide figures in relation to outcomes and very few monitored housing outcomes. On average each Foyer had provided services for just over 100 clients to the end of 1996. Among those who supplied outcome data the average outcomes were of 22 per cent of clients finding employment, 13 per cent entering training and 9 per cent entering full-time education. The majority of respondents did not feel that the Foyer had failed where a client had failed to obtain employment or housing.

It would appear that a number of organisations, in particular members of the YMCA, had jumped on the Foyer bandwagon without integrating the principles of the Foyer movement into their practice. YMCA Foyers in particular did not target services at

the prescribed age range but offered job search and training facilities to all clientele. The large size of some organisations operating as Foyers is likely (in view of evidence provided in the concluding chapter of this thesis) to prohibit the delivery of a training programme that meets the needs of all participants and may lead to serious management problems in terms of issues related to tenant behaviour. It is also clear that inadequate monitoring procedures are in place in many Foyers. This will make the task of evaluating the adequacy of a system that relies on financial support from public, private and voluntary bodies difficult. In particular the lack of data in relation to housing outcomes raises problems in relation to any evaluation of whether the Foyer system can offer a solution to youth homelessness. Evidence provided from the postal survey suggests that the sheer diversity in the way that Foyers operate means that it is not possible to make conclusive claims about the nature of provision elsewhere in the British Foyer Movement on the basis of the in-depth study conducted for this research. However it is still possible to draw conclusions about the validity of the principles which inform the Foyer movement on the basis of evidence gathered in the course of this research. Many of the issues highlighted by the postal survey, in particular in relation to the lack of adequate monitoring systems were identified in a recently published study undertaken on behalf of the DETR.

In 1998 a national evaluation of Foyers was undertaken by Maggin et al (2000) on behalf of the DETR. The study found considerable variety among schemes calling themselves a Foyer. The key features identified as distinguishing organisations as Foyers were an emphasis on improving vocational skills and qualifications and the provision of services on-site. Foyers were able to access capital set up funds but difficulties in securing revenue funding restricted the programmes offered. The

majority of clients were male (62%) and under 21 years old (59%) with a quarter under 18 years old (28%) and just under three-quarters (73%) were unemployed. Just over 90 per cent of Foyers used an Action Plan to work with young people. The study found little evidence of eviction on the grounds of failure to comply with the Action Plan and there were usually other grounds such as behaviour problems or rent arrears. The authors note that the collection of data in relation to participation and outcomes was generally poor and where outcomes were reported they were generally poor, although scheme leavers were less likely to be unemployed and more likely to be in independent rented accommodation than scheme starters.

This section has provided a brief synopsis of data in relation to operational Foyers in the period proceeding and during the period of this study. It is apparent that there is a high degree of diversity between Foyers and that it is not possible to point to a model of a 'typical' Foyer in operation. Organisations operating as Foyers do however share a common philosophy as it is presented by the FFY, built on the three principles outlined earlier in the chapter and solidified with the introduction of an accreditation scheme. In addition to the three overarching criteria offered the FFY espouses the need for a 'balanced community' within Foyers, incorporating young people already in employment, training or education as well as the unemployed. Foyers are also encouraged to use Action Plans to map out the development and support needs of individual tenants and to set individual goals. The next section of the chapter provides a description of the way in which the Foyer philosophy has been operationalised in the Foyer that is the principle subject of this study.

The Development and Operation of the Study Foyer

In early 1993 local representatives from the homeless charity Shelter, the local authority, a housing association, Barnados and the training council met at an open day to discuss the development of a Foyer in a city with a population of approximately 230,000. The housing association was to take the role of parent body and management of the Foyer.

Capital funding was received from a charitable trust and a national housing organisation and in late 1994 the post of Development Officer/Manger was advertised and in early 1995 it was filled. The manager was based in a housing association with the remit of raising revenue and money for equipment, liaising with appropriate bodies and developing policies for the Foyer operation. At this time the plans for the conversion of a listed building near the city centre had been put to tender but costs were too high to proceed. An architectural firm came forward and offered their services for free and further capital funds were provided by the local authority and two national development organisations. Building work began in December 1995. Revenue was to be secured through rent, social regeneration funds, money from Children in Need and training revenue from the European Social Fund.

Three key workers were appointed, one a secondee from Barnados to offer life skills support, one housing worker from the parent housing association and one employment and training worker whose post was funded by the Employment Service. Concierges were employed to cover the night duty between 10pm and 8.30 am and sessional workers were employed to support the key workers who worked on

a rota basis. At the beginning of May 1997 the Foyer opened its doors and the first eight tenants moved in.

In the interests of clarity and in view of the descriptive nature of the majority of information regarding the organisational structure of the Foyer the procedures of the Foyer are illustrated in a table format.

Stage 1

Alternative paths to stage 1

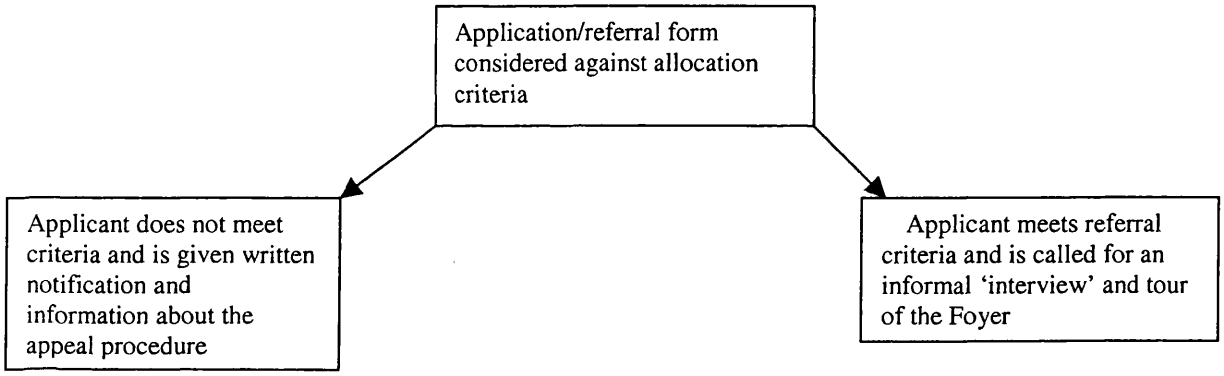
A: Young person in housing need sees publicity regarding the Foyer or is told about the Foyer by a friend or tenant.	A1: Young person calls in person or phones the Foyer for information and is given or sent an application form. Foyer staff offer assistance in the completion of the form.
B: Young person in housing need approaches an agency (Shelter, Housing Advice Centre) for assistance and is told about the Foyer	B1: The referral agency contacts the Foyer. Assists the young person in the completion of the application form and completes a referral form.
C: Young person leaving care is asked to consider the Foyer as a form of move-on accommodation or as an alternative to unsuitable accommodation (e.g.Bed and Breakfast) by their social worker.	C1: The social worker assists the young person in completing an application form and completes a referral form.

The application and referral forms include questions in relation to current housing and employment, training and education situation of the applicant, support required, support already received from other agencies, past offending, any particular issues in need of support, income and expectations of the Foyer. An equal opportunities monitoring form was also included.

The Foyer does not offer emergency accommodation for young people with nowhere to sleep. Young people who were experiencing a housing crisis at the time they approached the Foyer were given details of agencies that did provide emergency accommodation, were informed of the Foyer application process and were given an application form. The personal reservations that staff had about being unable to offer

emergency accommodation were voiced at staff meetings and staff were particularly concerned about the moral dilemma of restricting the number of nights a homeless young person could stay with a tenant. This issue became particularly pertinent when a former tenant (who had been given notice to quit) who was in housing crisis was visiting a current tenant.

Stage 2



The following criteria are used to assess applications and referrals :

- Aged 16-25
- Satisfies age mix targets
- Has urgent need of accommodation
- Wishes to participate in the Foyer training programme
- Is motivated to find or maintain employment, training or education
- Ability to maintain tenancy with support
- No recent history of violence, criminal damage or arson
- No current problems in relation to mental health
- Has no current problems in relation to drugs, alcohol or substance misuse
- Has no personal care needs

Stage 3

The young person is invited to attend the Foyer for an informal talk with staff and a tour of the Foyer, sometimes accompanied by a current tenant. The majority of tenants were very impressed by their first visit to the Foyer and commented on the quality and décor of the building.

Stage 4

The applicant is called for a second interview. Two staff are present and the applicant is asked questions which are related to a number of issues: housing history, education, training and employment history, level of life skills, living with others, health, keeping to a plan, any history of violence or offending. Answers are recorded by staff on an interview schedule. The final statement requires the applicant to affirm that by accepting an offer of accommodation the applicant also agrees to participate fully in the Foyer programme.

Stage 5

The application is considered at an allocation meeting. Information is gathered from referring agencies and other agencies that the applicant is in contact with and sometimes from family members. This information together with the information from the second interview is discussed by staff at the allocation meeting in relation to four issues: housing, health, employment/training and other issues (substance misuse, offending etc). On the grounds of available information staff decide whether the applicant is suitable for a tenancy at that time. Staff also consider the application against the letting targets that were introduced to achieve a 'balanced community'. The letting targets aimed to achieve an age mix,

- 16-17 years 9 tenants
- 18-21years 13 tenants
- 21-25 years 13 tenants

It was also intended that a gender mix of 17 male and 17 female tenants should be achieved and that 10 per cent of tenants should be from an ethnic minority group and that two should be disabled at any one time. The staff were unable to meet the letting targets as the majority of applicants were white males and under 18 years old.

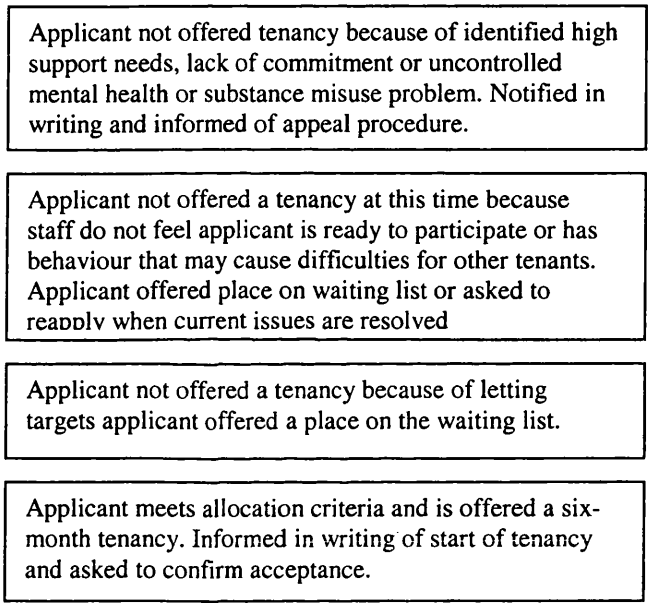
Some applicants were referred to the waiting list in an attempt to control the balance of the Foyer community.

There was also a letting target in relation to employment status at start of tenancy

- In low paid employment 7 tenants
- In training/further education 15 tenants
- Unemployed 12 tenants

These letting targets were not met, the majority of tenants were unemployed (see Chapter 6 and 7).

Allocation meeting outcomes



Tenancy

Core workers attained a 'case load' of tenants in addition to their specialised role in providing services to all tenants in relation to life skills, housing or education and training. Each tenant was allocated a Keyworker. The Keyworker met with them to assess their support and training needs and to work with the tenant to set short-term and long-term goals and aims. These goals and aims and possible ways of achieving them were recorded on a Personal Development Plan (PDP). (Towards the end of the study staff were discussing a change from the Keyworker system as they felt that

it was better if core staff worked with tenants in relation to their specific roles). Tenants were supposed to meet with their Keyworkers at regular intervals to discuss, evaluate progress and amend their PDP. In practice this system did not always work (as discussed in Chapter 7). All staff recorded contact with tenants in relation to significant issues (emotional distress, training advice etc) on a record sheet that was kept on the tenant's file.

Tenants were expected to abide by the rules of their tenancy through participation in the training programme and an absence of behaviour that caused nuisance or harassment to other tenants or to staff by the tenant or their visitors. They were also required to abide by the visitors' rules. These rules required tenants to sign in their visitors, to accompany them at all times and to take responsibility for them. Visitors were prohibited from entering the Foyer after a specified time and from staying at the Foyer for more than three consecutive nights.

A tenant's representation scheme was established and two tenants were nominated and elected to the position of tenants' representative. Tenants' meetings were held and issues raised at the meetings were brought to the staff's attention.

If tenants failed to attend Keyworker meetings, to participate in the training programme or to demonstrate commitment to their PDP plans they were sent letters outlining the problems identified by staff and asking them to attend a meeting with their Keyworker. If tenants consistently failed to engage in the Foyer system and programme they were warned in writing that their tenancy might not be renewed if they did not seek and accept support.

Where a tenant consistently failed to participate in the Foyer programme or broke a condition of the tenancy (e.g. harassment of another tenant) he or she was given three written warnings before a decision was made on a renewed tenancy or eviction. The way in which this system of conditions and sanctions was experienced by tenants and the impact of control systems on tenant/staff working relationships and on participation in the Foyer system is discussed in Chapter 7 and in the concluding chapter.

A review of each tenancy was undertaken after a three-month period and tenants were given written information in relation to the outcome of the review.

End of tenancy

Tenant fails to participate in the Foyer programme or breaks a condition of the tenancy. Tenancy is not renewed at the end of the six-month period. Staff give move-on support.
Tenant fails to participate in the Foyer programme and there is a serious breach of the tenancy agreement. Tenant is given 28 days notice to quit. Staff give move-on support
Tenant is ready to move-on, or is pregnant or wants to leave. Staff give move-on support. Tenant may be offered opportunity to return to Foyer if necessary.

The actual outcomes for young people who were tenants during the 18-month period of the study are detailed in Chapter 7.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the development and principles of the British Foyer Movement and the Foyer Federation for Youth. An overview of Foyer provision

across Britain has been provided and the level of diversity among organisations operating as Foyers has been highlighted. Finally this chapter has provided a description of the organisational policies and procedures of a single Foyer that is the principal subject of this research. The next chapter provides a discussion of the methods used in the examination of the study Foyer. This is followed by two chapters that present the research findings and consider the Foyer principles and procedures in practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter sets out the methods used in the study. The findings of this thesis are based upon original research carried out at a British Foyer and are supplemented by a postal survey of other Foyers in Britain. The research was conducted during 1997 and 1998. First, in April 1997, a postal study of 45 Foyers was conducted using a postal questionnaire, this was primarily intended to provide data that would allow me to compare the Foyer that is the focus of this study with others in operation in Britain at the time of the study.

This was followed in May 1997 by the commencement of an eighteen-month period of fieldwork, on the basis of approximately one day per week, spent at one Foyer. Multiple methods were used during the period of fieldwork (Burgess, 1982, 1995). These included, a survey questionnaire, the analysis of administrative documents, participant observation and interviewing. Burgess (1995) supports such use of multiple methods and states that researchers need to:

> "approach substantive and theoretical problems with a range of methods that are appropriate for their problems. Such a perspective means that researchers cannot rigidly apply their methods but need to be flexible in their approach and utilise a range of methods for any problem."
>
> (Burgess 1995:143).

When deciding on a research design, it seemed clear that quantitative methods could provide data which would establish both a base line and a measure of outcomes (in terms of numbers of users who gained housing, employment, education or training). Alone, however these data would have provided little insight into the organisational and social mechanisms which influenced the final outcomes. In other words

quantitative data could tell me whether or not the Foyer was meeting its quantifiable objectives, however this method could not illuminate the reasons why it succeeded or 'failed'.

I also wanted to develop a methodology that would allow me to explore the hypothesis that the transition from youth to adulthood is one that involves a movement towards the status of citizenship with its incumbent rights and duties. For those young people who lack sufficient family support the Foyer may provide a substitute social system within which young people can gain access to the responsibilities and rights of citizenship (as discussed in chapter 3). I hoped that qualitative methods would offer an avenue for testing this hypothesis. In particular, is the Foyer as a social system an adequate substitute for family support in terms of aiding this transition? Does it intend to fulfil this role? Is there any evidence that young people, who leave the Foyer program without gaining work or permanent housing, are however better equipped to fulfil the role of citizenship? To this end, qualitative methods were included in order that I could investigate the purpose, practice and outcomes of the Foyer as perceived by tenants and search for any evidence that might support or refute the idea that the Foyer can help young people 'meet the costs' of citizenship. This is a complex task and one that could not be dealt with through quantitative methods alone.

There were a number of other factors that demanded the use of qualitative methods. First, as well as measuring 'hard' outcomes, in terms of housing and employment, I wanted to gain some insight into any incidence of 'soft' outcomes, such as those reported by Anderson and Quilgars in their study of seven pilot Foyers:

> " both staff and young people themselves reported increases in confidence and sense of self-worth from taking part in the foyer initiative"
> (Anderson and Quilgars 1995:74).

Qualitative methods seemed most appropriate, if I was to investigate the incidence of similar outcomes among respondents in this study.

Secondly, it seemed likely that the life experiences of young people in housing need were unlikely to lend themselves to an eagerness to collaborate with a researcher who worked at the University and was attempting to complete a thesis. I hoped that qualitative methods might provide the opportunity to build the kind of long-term contact with respondents needed to facilitate access to the required information.

Thirdly, when access to the field was negotiated I agreed to provide the parent body of the Foyer (a local Housing Association), with an evaluation report, which was to include user perceptions. Qualitative methods provided an appropriate vehicle for providing this kind of data.

Although the study population is small quantitative methods have also been incorporated so that baseline data and outcome data in terms of 'hard' outcomes could be measured. Bryman (1988) cites a number of studies that have successfully combined quantitative and qualitative methods (Woods 1979, Ball 1981, Ford et al 1982, Cook 1984) and states that:

> " quantitative and qualitative research may be perceived as different ways of examining the same research problem. By combining the two, the researcher's claims for the validity of his or her conclusions are enhanced if they can be shown to provide mutual confirmation"
> (Bryman 1988: 131).

Furthermore, the use of multiple methods allows for the data to be examined from a number of perspectives, resulting in a process of triangulation (Denzin 1970).

The Foyer Federation for Youth were contacted and a letter of support was requested in relation to the postal questionnaire of operational Foyers. This request was refused on the basis that there was already a high level of demand for information from Foyers for research purposes. This suggested that there were already high demands for data on a small pool of respondents and meant that piloting the questionnaire could have had a negative impact on response rates in the main survey, especially as I wished to survey the total Foyer population. However I sought advice in the development of questionnaire from my supervisor and other experienced researchers on the clarity and appropriateness of the questions included.

The research was limited by more personal constraints. Namely, the researcher had a part-time teaching post, during the first two years of the research and a full-time post during the last eighteen months of the research, a young family, limited resources and no driving licence. These all took their toll.

Having set out the general terms of the research design and the rationale for it, the chapter now considers the perspective of the researcher as a human being (Gans, 1982). This is followed by an account of each of the methods as they are employed in the study. The chapter ends with a summary of the main points.

Guilt, stereotypes, and friendships.

Colin Barnes writes that:

> "When confronted with the obligatory chapter on research methods many social researchers seem to opt for a succinct but revealing autobiographical account on how and why their interest arose and how it affected their investigation"
>
> (Barnes 1990:40).

This is not the key aim of the chapter, but it is relevant to provide some account of the process I went through both as a researcher and a person during the course of the study.

My interest in youth homelessness was born of a mixture of curiosity and guilt. I was curious about the life course which might lead a young person into the position of dire housing need, but most of all I was curious about the seemingly complacent stance which society took in relation to this problem. For example why is health care accepted as a basic right in British society when the right to decent accommodation has become more like a privilege to be earned? There is no doubt that my social conscience led me into certain preconceptions about what I would find in my research. I naively believed that I would meet young people desperate for the opportunity to gain qualifications and find work, people who just needed a break, the reality is rather less hopeful. I hope that this brief explanation offers the reader some understanding of the factors influencing my choice of an area of research.

Once the research was underway, I experienced some difficulties in reconciling my feelings as a person and my role as a researcher. I began to feel uncomfortable with the fact that, in basic terms I was profiting from the misfortune of others. I also felt that I was involved in a one way relationship as highlighted by Gans (1982):

> "Once the feildworker has gained entry, people tend to forget he is there and let down their guard, but he does not; however much he seems to participate, he is really there to observe and even to watch what happens

> when people let down their guard. He is involved in personal situations in which he is, emotionally speaking, always taking and never giving, for he is there to learn and, thus, to take from the people he studies, whereas they are always giving information, and rarely being given anything".
>
> (Gans 1982:59).

In order to deal with these feelings, I decided to try and give something back to the tenants in a practical sense. I made it known to the staff that I was happy to help tenants who were experiencing difficulties with any academic work. In practice the times upon which I was asked to undertake such work were limited but I did provide some study skills support. Other assistance involved lending my support to tenants in a variety of ways (such as attending an award ceremony or accompanying a tenant to the library) and it soon became apparent that many tenants valued the fact that I was able to take time to sit and talk with them.

Secondly, I made a conscious decision that as soon as a line of inquiry within an interview or conversation with a tenant appeared to me to be causing him or her distress, I simply dropped it. I stand by this decision and I do not feel that it has adversely affected the quality of the data collected. I could have recorded sensational accounts of, for example, abuse and misfortune in the lives of respondents but this was not the aim of the study. My task was to understand practice in order to analyse policy, accordingly I tried to assess the significance of sensitive information in light of the terms of the research and unless further inquiry was vital I did not pursue it.

My commitment to attempt reciprocity in the relationship between researcher and respondent did not become an issue during the first few months of the research, primarily because the nature of the research relationship was limited by my reticence

in entering in to a relationship at all. During the first months of the fieldwork there were relatively small numbers of tenants resident in the Foyer (between 8 and 16). I found that a self-imposed ban on spending long periods of time in the common room had developed. The reason for this, in simple terms, was that I was intimidated. I realised that, en masse, I found the physical appearance and demeanour of the tenants in many ways frightening (similar experiences are reported by Johnson 1975). I felt uncomfortable in what I saw as *their* communal space, and spent a good amount of my time in the general office with the staff jumping out to greet individual tenants as they passed on the stairs. There was no one point at which this situation changed; it altered gradually over time. One by one I got to know a lot of the tenants as people and I learned to look beyond the stereotype. Personally it was a valuable process, especially as I was under the illusion that I was not susceptible to the trap of stereotyping. As a researcher it was a vital step in gaining the trust and respect of possible respondents and for the collection of valid data.

I developed friendships with many of the tenants and staff during the course of the study. This is an accepted part of methodology in the field:

> "Establishing and maintaining relationships based on trust and co-operation depend on the deliberate use of common-sense abilities and strategies for gaining rapport and making friends with people within particular situations" (Jorgenson 1989,74).

However, I became aware of a number of difficulties that were caused by my involvement in friendships in the field, and these are explored in detail below. Although I feel that I was able to overcome them, at a personal level I often found the constraints of my position as a researcher frustrating. I attempted to place what appeared to be a personal experience into an academic context by reading some classic ethnographic studies and this did assist me in coming to terms with the fact

that my experiences as a researcher were not unique (Ditton 1977, Patrick 1973, Parker 1992, Whyte 1971).

In relation to friendships with the tenants the main problems involved the need to curb my desire to offer advice on the advisability of a course of action or a type of behaviour. Such behaviour on my part, could have damaged my position as a researcher as:

> "Toleration and acceptance generally require moral neutrality regarding members' beliefs, values, and activities (see Whyte 1955). Insiders may request or even require that you become morally accepting of or committed to their way of life"
>
> (Jorgensen 1989:75).

For instance when one tenant told me that he or she had given up a college course to take temporary, insecure employment, my initial instinct was to tell the tenant that this was ill advised. I resisted the temptation and instead inquired about the reasons for this decision. If I had offered advice that contradicted the tenants' perceptions, it is possible that I would have jeopardised our relationship as researcher and respondent and of course it may have been the wrong advice! There were also numerous incidents when I was present while tenants made derogatory remarks about one another. Maintaining my silence while tenants used phrases such as 'fat boy' and 'slag' in relation to particular tenants was difficult, but in terms of the research vital. Staff often challenged tenants for using such derogatory language and it was important that my reactions were not identified with staff 'behaviour'.

There came a point when tenants seemed comfortable with openly discussing their use of drugs and alcohol in my presence. Although I hold no strong moral views with regards to the use of such substances, the way in which some tenants used drugs and

alcohol sometimes bordered on self-harm. Pointing this out or reporting back to the staff was impossible if I was to maintain any level of acceptance among the tenants. I constantly (and successfully) fought my wish to do so. This wish was born of a desire to offer what, from my personal perspective, amounted to assistance and support. However I was aware that any such action on my part would have broken the trust and acceptance required of a successful research relationship.

Another potential stumbling block was that, at certain times, the tenants tried to recruit me as an advocate on their behalf. This was complicated further by the fact that the staff were also desperate to receive feedback from the tenants. Both parties at one time and another identified me as the ideal intermediary. With the tenants I managed this problem by explaining that 'my hands were tied' and suggesting alternative systems of advocacy (for example the tenants' representation system).

With the staff the position was even more difficult. A number of indicators (which are discussed later in the chapter) led me to believe that the staff felt that I was, in some way, testing them, not only as part of an organisation but as individuals. This view did, to a certain extent, obstruct the research process. It was difficult to put the staff at ease when I was forced to be unhelpfully vague when asked direct questions about tenant's perceptions in order to avoid the problem of my participation contaminating data. Especially when the answers to such questions could have been used to improve practice or when the staff simply needed some reassurance that things were all right.

These problems were further complicated by the fact that as I developed relationships with staff and tenants, I desperately wanted to offer my assistance and to pass on information which might have helped to resolve problems at an individual and organisational level. As a person, at times, I found the constraints of my position very frustrating. As a researcher I realised that any influence I exercised during the course of the study might alter outcomes in a way which would have compromised the validity of my findings.

There was only one incident in which I decided to pass information on to the staff at the request of a tenant. During the first interview I conducted at the Foyer the respondent asked me to relay information which related to a health and safety matter, the safe disposal of syringes. I tried to persuade the tenant to take this information directly to a member of staff. However, the tenant was convinced that if the information was not received from myself, there was a chance that the other tenants would identify him or her as a 'grass'. When I gained access to the Foyer I agreed that I would adhere to their confidentiality policy, which states that confidentiality will be maintained unless "the well-being or safety of an adult or child is at risk". All respondents were informed of this, and in this case the tenant requested that I pass on the information. Because I judged the situation to be one in which the health and safety of others was at risk I reported the problem at a staff meeting which I attended immediately after conducting the interview. As a result a safe method of syringe disposal was introduced to the Foyer.

In this section of the chapter I have attempted to provide some insight into the particular problems I faced during the course of the research, which stemmed from the

internal struggles between myself as a researcher and myself as a human being (Gans 1982).

The remainder of the chapter gives an account of each of the methods used in the course of the research and ends with a summary of the main points.

The Postal Survey Questionnaire

The decision to use a postal survey was based on the need to place the Foyer which, was to be the focus of the study, within the context of the larger British Foyer movement. In order to do this it was necessary to obtain information about general practice in other Foyers, this would also enable me to ascertain the feasibility of drawing any generalisations from the single study. At a practical level a postal survey offered the most time and cost effective way of fulfilling these aims. (Moser and Kalton 1989, May 1993).

Selecting the survey population and constructing the questionnaire

A list of operational Foyers was obtained from the Foyer Federation for Youth in November 1996. As there were only 45 Foyers in operation at that time it was feasible to include them all in the pilot study.

I contacted the Foyer Federation for Youth (FFY) explaining my intention to carry out a postal survey and asking if it were possible for them to provide me with a letter of recommendation. In return I offered to supply the FFY with a copy and analysis of the survey findings. In December 1996 I received a letter from the Network Director, David Tyler, in which my request for a letter of recommendation was refused. The

decision to refuse my request was based on the fact that a major Government evaluation was to take part during the following year and that:

> "This will necessitate substantial time and effort from most of the current Foyers to cooperate with the research.
>
> For these reasons I don't feel able at this time to endorse any further calls for information from the Foyers".

This was a set back. However I was able to obtain instead a letter of recommendation from a member of staff at the Foyer in which the main survey was conducted. This was sent with the questionnaire and a covering letter (see Appendix 1 and 2) and a reply paid envelope.

I constructed the questionnaire, after extensive preliminary reading (May, 1993), namely the 'Good Practice Handbook For Foyers' (FFY 1993) and the findings of a study of seven pilot Foyers by Anderson and Quilgars (1995). This was necessary in order to ensure that:

> "The questions should fit the respondent's frame of reference: they must seem logical and meaningful"
> (Kane 1997:77).

I was then able to construct a questionnaire that was designed to obtain the data I required within a framework and using language that would be familiar to the respondents.

The questionnaire contained 11 main questions (broken down into 24 parts) with 95 data points (see Appendix 1). These consisted of 19 multiple-choice questions in which the respondent ticked the relevant box, and 4 questions in which the respondent was required to give written answers or was given the option to supply pre-printed

material. The final question consisted of a Likert scale, which placed respondent's answers on an attitude continuum (May 1993:79).

Questionnaires were sent to 45 Foyers in May 1997. A covering letter was attached (Appendix 2), which stated my credentials, and provided an assurance of confidentiality. A follow up letter, a further copy of the questionnaire and a reply paid envelope were sent to those Foyers, which had not responded one month later. Poor rates of response are a recognised weakness of this method (Moser and Kalton 1989). However, the final response rate for the survey was 62 per cent. Whilst the overall figure approached a satisfactory level, I was concerned that the response rate for YMCA Foyers was 80 per cent, that for non-YMCA Foyers was only 35 per cent. In terms of the research this was significant for a number of reasons. First, the information received from YMCA Foyers pointed towards the conclusion that many of them were not operating within the criteria set out by the FFY (for instance they served a wider age group). The FFY were already discussing the possibility of an accreditation scheme, and the data suggested that many of the YMCA Foyers would then fail to qualify as Foyers. Second, the Foyer that was used in the main study was a non-YMCA Foyer. It was therefore, most important to collect data from other non-YMCA Foyers in order to test the case for any generalisations which could be made from the main study.

Phone calls were made to those non-YMCA Foyers that did not respond to discover the reasons for a low response rate. Even here I was not entirely successful as actually getting to speak to the person who had received the questionnaire was in many cases not possible. Of those who I was able to contact the two main reasons for non-

response given were, lack of time or the fact that the Foyer had not been operational for a sufficient period of time.

A further problem with the questionnaire was that while 62 per cent were returned, my questions about user outcomes enjoyed only a 57 per cent response rate (although 88 per cent stated that they did monitor outcomes). Of those, the majority monitored outcomes in terms of employment, training and education, but not housing. There was also such a lack of consistency in the way these figures were calculated and recorded that any attempt at comparison would have been difficult to validate.

The postal questionnaire was useful in providing me with a context against which to place the Foyer that is the subject of this study within the British Foyer Movement, although the problems discussed above meant that comparisons in terms of outcomes have not been possible.

The Main Study

The main study was conducted in a single Foyer, over an eighteen-month period. This part of the chapter provides an account of gaining access to the site of the study, the purpose of the study and of each of the methods employed.

Gaining Access

Gaining access to the site of the main study posed none of the problems commonly encountered by other researchers. I simply obtained the number of the Foyer manager and contacted her office in February 1997. I was invited to a meeting and open day that was intended to explain the purpose and letting policy of the Foyer and was to

include a tour of the building (which was not yet complete). The meeting was primarily intended for possible referral agencies. After the meeting I approached the Foyer manager and outlined my proposal for the research. The manager's response to the idea was positive, in principle and I agreed to 'put something on paper'. A research proposal together with a covering letter was then sent to the manager. At the end of March I was invited to the offices of the Foyer's parent body where I met with the manager and two members of staff to discuss the research and answer questions. Access to the site was granted with the proviso that at the end of the study I would provide the Foyer with an evaluation report based on my findings. The Foyer opened in May 1997 and from then on, I spend approximately one day a week at the Foyer over the next eighteen months.

The methods used during the study included the analysis of documents, a questionnaire survey of tenants, participant observation and interviewing. Each of these methods will be considered in turn. First I give an account of the way in which respondents were approached.

Recruiting Respondents

Tenants at the Foyer have recently been in acute housing need and are likely to be at a vulnerable stage in their life. At the start of the tenancy this is accentuated by the problems of settling into a new place to live and coming to terms with the principles of the Foyer programme. For this and other reasons I took care to stress to tenants that I was not a member of staff and that the decision to take part in the research was entirely their own (a view shared by the staff). I introduced myself to the first tenants to move in to the Foyer at a tenants' meeting, explaining my research and answering

their questions. Each of the tenants was given a pre-printed form (Appendix 3) which allowed them to indicate whether they wished to take part in the research or not, or if they required further information before making a decision. They also received an information leaflet, which explained the purpose of the research in more detail (see Appendix 4). As new tenants moved in they were also given the form and the leaflet. I used a number of ways of getting this information to new tenants. The most effective system proved to be, leaving the information in a tenant's mailbox and then approaching the tenant a week or so later to ask if they had come to any decision. A number of tenants decided against taking part in the research at first but later approached me (up to 6 months later) to ask to take part. I also found that some tenants agreed to take part but were unhappy about being interviewed. This was in some cases verbalised and in others apparent by their failure to keep appointments. In view of the fact that some tenants were reluctant to be interviewed, I added a fourth option to the request form, asking tenants whether they would give me permission to read the file held at the Foyer relating to that tenant. Some tenants who decided on this option later asked to be interviewed. Such changes in decision on the part of tenants could be the result of a tenant overcoming some personal situation, which had made taking part unattractive or impractical. Alternatively it could be the case that some tenants needed to feel comfortable about me, my presence and my purpose before they decided to invest in the research.

The research population

During the period May 1997 to October 1998 a total of 50 young people were given tenancies at the Foyer. Of those 33 or 66 per cent agreed to take part in the research:

Agreed to interview and gave access to files	24 (48%)
Gave access to file without interview	9 (18%)

Decided not to take part in the research	10 (20%)
Began tenancy after June 1998: not asked to take part in the research	7 (14%)

Sex and Age correlation between total population and research population:

Gender	Male	Female
Total Population	33 (66%)	17 (34%)
Research Population	20 (61%)	13 (39%)

Age (start of tenancy)	Total Population	Research Population
16	6 (12%)	3 (9%)
17	16(32%)	10 (30%)
18	8 (16%)	5 (15%)
19	4 (8%)	4 (12%)
20	4 (8%)	2 (6%)
21	5 (10%)	4 (12%)
22	4 (8%)	4 (12%)
23	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
24	1 (2%)	1 (3%)

At the start of the tenancy 76 per cent of the research population were unemployed. The rate of unemployment for the 17 tenants who did not take part in the research was 65 per cent. The data provided demonstrates that the research population was adequately representative of the total population. The data required to compare the research population with the total population was correlated from the current tenant list forms maintained by the Foyer. These forms include the name, age and employment status of each tenant and were updated by staff each time a tenancy was started. The next section of the chapter considers the analysis of documents in detail.

Analysis of Documents

The main documents analysed for the purposes of the research were individual tenant files which contain the tenant's application form, referral form (if a referral was made by an outside agency), personal development plan (as formulated by the Foyer) and a

document recording the three month review of tenancy and a notice to quit (if any of these latter processes had taken place). Files also contained other material relating to the progress of the tenant, and records of contact with staff members and other agencies (employers or support services for example).

These files were used to keep an account of individual tenant issues and progress, by the Foyer staff. Burgess (1995) argues that:

> "The value of documentary evidence is that it provides data which may be used to examine social categories and social processes. In this sense, these data link up with other data that are obtained in the conduct of field research"
>
> (Burgess 1995:140).

However:

> "Collections of records and documents must be found rather than created by the researcher's specification, and their value will depend on the degree of match between the research questions addressed and the data that happen to be available"
>
> (Hakim 1987:37).

I was able to photocopy the relevant information from the files and take it away for analysis. I was fortunate in that the files provided me with information that could be matched to part of the research question, they could produce data on base lines and outcomes in terms of employment and housing.

The files also performed other important functions. I was able to identify areas of inquiry in relation to individual tenants and to cross check information received or observed by other means. I also used the files to provide a case history of tenants before interview. This allowed me to adapt the interview aide memoire so that for instance I did not ask a respondent who had been in local authority care since childhood when they had moved out of the parental home. Finally the files were

useful in providing information that might not otherwise have been obtained in relation to issues that were not always accessible by other means. For example some tenants spent very little time in the communal space and did not want to be interviewed. Access to their files provided me with information about their employment status, previous housing status, qualifications, goals and changes in status.

Burgess (1995) indicates some of the possible problems with the use of documentary evidence:

> "no mater what documentary evidence is used there are problems concerning authenticity, availability, sampling, interpretation and presentation"
>
> (Burgess 1995:140).

One of problems I encountered was that the material was not common to each file. This was the result both of differences in tenant circumstances and the fact that different members of staff were responsible for each file. The files were kept up to date by the tenant's key worker and were supplemented by material provided by other members of staff in the form of file notes and information about specific issues relating to work carried out by the housing, employment and training, or life skills worker. It was important to bear in mind the fact that although the files contained material written by the tenants themselves, the majority of the information was recorded by the staff. This meant that the information contained in the files reflected reality as perceived by staff members and was recorded in response to an agenda set by the staff and the organisation (Platt 1976).

The task of analysing the files was also complicated by the fact that the information I required was spread across several different documents.

Other documentary evidence used in the research were the minutes of meetings, records of attendance at training sessions, and policy documents, including the Foyer operational policy. The main purpose served by these documents in association with tenant files was to clarify the stated aims and objectives of the Foyer and to assist me in 'filling in the gaps' in tenant progress. I also used my field notes as an additional source of documentary evidence. These were particularly useful at the end of the study as they allowed me to form a picture of the true chronological order of events that had taken place during the study (the use of field notes is discussed in more detail later in the chapter).

I have outlined the main ways in which documentary evidence was used for the purposes of the research. There were of course some weaknesses with this method. Although 66 per cent of tenants granted me access to their files I was eager to obtain basic information about outcomes from the other 34 per cent of tenants. In order to try and counteract these problems it was appropriate to conduct a questionnaire survey at the Foyer.

The Questionnaire Survey

> "The purpose of a questionnaire is to measure some characteristics or opinion of its respondents"
> (May 1993:65).

A short period into the main study, I identified the need to supplement my information gathering in two ways. First, I had been unable to collect evidence of hard outcomes for those tenants who did not wish to take part in the research. Second the methods already in place led to a process in which relevant data was 'scattered'. A survey offered both "data structuredness and collection efficiency" (Smith 1975). A

questionnaire seemed to offer the best solution to the problem of collecting easily accessible data on the past experiences of and outcomes for, tenants at the Foyer.

Two questionnaires were constructed which were headed "Monitoring Form 1" (MF1) and "Monitoring Form 2" (MF2). These were intended to provide baseline data for tenants at the start of their tenancy (MF1) and data relating to outcomes for tenants at the end of their tenancy (MF2). Monitoring form I (Appendix 5) contains closed-ended, multiple choice questions, which asks questions about the situation of the respondent at the time they applied to come to the Foyer (in terms of housing, employment etc) and their past life experiences.

Monitoring Form 2 (Appendix 6) contains both closed-ended, multiple choice questions, about the tenant's situation on leaving the Foyer, and open-ended questions which ask questions relating to tenant perceptions about the Foyer and their time spent there.

The questionnaire was constructed after I had been at the Foyer for six months. I was therefore able to use the knowledge gained to help me construct a questionnaire, that met the needs of my research question and was expressed in terms which would be meaningful to the respondents (Kane 1997).

I was also better attuned to my "subject's vocabulary breadth and understanding" (Smith 1975) and I took this into account when constructing the questionnaire and questions have been kept short and simple.

In an attempt to minimise non-response, a number of strategies were employed. The questionnaires were anonymous, I kept a record of those tenants who returned completed forms but the forms stated that there was no need for the respondent to enter their name on the form itself. The questionnaires were comprised of mainly multiple-choice questions, so that they were simple to complete and could be filled in in a short period of time.

To maximise the numbers prepared to respond I asked the Foyer manager if the questionnaire survey could be given to tenants with other material received at the start of the tenancy. However, this request was refused. The reasons for this decision were unclear. It worth noting that at that time the manager had only just taken over her post and had 'inherited' me. It may have been the case that at that time she was unclear of my agenda and purpose. The manager did request that the information was made available to the Foyer staff at the end of the research and a decision was made to write the form in a way which suggested that this would be the case.

Therefore, tenants were approached by myself, or a volunteer who worked at the Foyer and asked to fill in the form. It was explained that this would take only a short time to complete and that assistance would be given if necessary. Some tenants had literacy problems that would have made it difficult for them to complete the questionnaire without assistance. Some tenants filled in the form in my presence while others decided to take them away and return them at a later date. In other cases a questionnaire was placed in the tenant's mailbox with a cover letter asking them to leave the completed form at reception.

The response rate for the questionnaire MF1 was 68 per cent. Although this did not prove to be a significant improvement on the 66 per cent response rate for the whole study it did provide data in a format which was easily accessible. As with the other methods employed there was a pattern of non-response. Those tenants who spent little time in the communal space of the Foyer or more specifically, had little or no contact with the researcher because of this, were least likely to respond. The only possible way to avoid this would have been to knock on doors. In view of the circumstances of the life stage at which many of the tenants had found themselves, I felt it important to respect privacy unless invited to do otherwise, even at the expense of the remaining 32 per cent of questionnaires.

The response rate for MF2 was 74 per cent however this questionnaire was only administered to the 27 (54%) tenants who ended their tenancies during the course of the study. Of those moving out during this period, 22 or 44 per cent had agreed to take part in the research.

The questionnaire provided quantitative data that was used to measure tenant outcomes. However:

> "a questionnaire asks questions at one particular time. It is a 'static-causal snapshot' of attitudes; how and why people change is not understood"
> (May 1993:113).

Participant observation was used in conjunction with interviewing in an attempt to gain some understanding of why and how tenants did or did not change. Participant observation was also an important methodological tool for obtaining data about the operational policy of the Foyer and the way this was put into practice.

Participant observation

In my field research I undertook participant observation over the eighteen month period of the main study. Johnson (1975) describes a field researcher as:

> "one who participates with a group of people in order to observe their everyday actions in their natural social settings"
> (1975:x).

Field research is distinguished from other methods in that:

> "it tries to ground its empirical observations in the intersubjective cognitive criteria actually used by societal members in their daily life situations"
> (Johnson 1975:21).

The main rationale for the use of participant observation was the need to gain some understanding of what being at the Foyer meant for the tenants, what was the social context of their experiences.

The most productive role to take in order to gain this knowledge would have been one of complete covert participation, in other words I could have taken the role of a homeless young person and applied for a place at the Foyer. There were a number of reasons why this role was not employed. At a practical level the researcher's personal circumstances and commitments did not allow for this level of complete covert participation. There were also ethical considerations. Firstly, adopting a covert role would have meant taking the place of someone in genuine housing need. Secondly, the personal circumstances of the subjects of the research called for the adoption of the "principle of informed consent" (Homan 1991). In terms of the purpose of the research adopting a complete participant role would have ruled out the possibility of investigating the aims and purposes of the Foyer as an organisation and of its staff. This could have been overcome if access were obtained from the organisation with

their agreement that I should adopt a covert role. However in negotiating access, the need to gain the informed consent from tenants was a clear pre-requisite of access.

In consideration of these factors I decided on a role of overt participation as an observer (Jorgunson 1989). All the tenants were made aware of my position as a researcher and every effort was made to inform them of my purpose (see recruiting respondents above).

As a rule I attended the Foyer on the same day of the week, each week (a Wednesday), this enabled me to establish a clear pattern of attendance that the tenants recognised. I also attended the Foyer on other days of the week in order to make contact with tenants who were frequently absent on Wednesdays. During the first five or six months of the main study I attended the Foyer in office hours. However, as more tenants moved in, it became clear these hours were not the most productive in terms of contact with tenants. In view of this I began to attend the Foyer during the afternoons and evening, which did result in a sharp increase in contact with tenants.

Relationships in the field can be separated into two distinct phases. During the first six months my time was overwhelmingly spent in staff space, the general office and behind the desk at reception. This was in part self-imposed (as discussed above) and was also influenced by tenant perceptions and behaviour. Having worked in residential settings in the past I identified with the staff role, I also had more in common with staff members as people than with tenants. The staff had been involved in the decision to accept me as a researcher and appeared to be comfortable about my presence. However when I did venture into tenant space I felt very exposed, tenants

would often lower their voices or indicate to each other to leave the common room in order to discuss something. This situation altered gradually over time. As I got to know individual tenants greater acceptance of me developed, I was seen as being there to share conversation. I also lost my battle with nicotine. Staff are not permitted to smoke in the Foyer. Smoking gave me a reason for being in the common room and it also helped to define my role as one that was distinct from the staff. In other words, I enjoyed the same rule that applied to tenants rather than staff. Cigarettes also allowed me to 'break the ice' with those tenants who did smoke, we had a smoke together and I often gave cigarettes to tenants. Gradually my presence in the common room or on the tenant's side of the reception desk became normal and the Foyer manager later described me as having become "part of the furniture". Many new tenants were at first curious about my role. As a general rule my contact with new tenants was informal and limited during the first couple of weeks of their tenancy, before I formally introduced myself and explained my purpose. Before this time I restricted my contact to polite greetings. When I explained who I was, established tenants would often voluntarily offer their own introduction of me and in a sense vouch for me.

As outlined in my discussion of the questionnaire the tenants could be separated into three distinct groups. There were those who spent a good deal of their time in the communal space of the Foyer, and some of these tenants were able to act as informants or 'key actors' (Fetterman 1998) who kept me up to date on incidents that occurred during my absence. They also supplied information about the situation of the tenants with whom I had little contact and reported on their contact with ex-tenants.

The second group of tenants spent sufficient time in the communal space for me to establish contact with them. They were also present at a lot of the group activities I attended and seemed happy with my presence in their personal space (in particular I was able to join them in their shared kitchens).

The third group of tenants spent little or no time in the communal space of the Foyer. My contact with them was limited to the time in which they entered or left the Foyer, or when they carried out functions such as using the phone, collecting messages and opening their mailbox. A small number of these tenants did agree to take part in the research. However the opportunity to be with them in the social setting was very limited. I had to rely largely on other tenants, members of staff and the public list of tenants (listing name, age, and employment status) to gather basic data in relation this group.

The need to maintain neutrality in the approach of the researcher between different groups has been highlighted by Gans (1982) and Jorgunson (1989). This was a recognised difficulty in the field research. About six months into the main study, at about the same time as I began to feel accepted in the tenants' space, there was a recognisable change in the attitude of the staff towards me. There are a number of possible reasons for this. First, at this time a new manager was appointed to the Foyer. This manager inherited my research and me and it may be the case that she was not completely happy with my presence, although this view was not reflected in the conversations I had with her. Staff began to comment on my presence in terms of me testing their performance and although many of the comments were dressed in humour, it was apparent that the staff felt that they needed to justify their position to

me. A new defensive stance was adopted at times by some members of staff, which seemed to stem from the staff's fear that the Foyer was not meeting its objectives. I attempted to overcome this problem by reassuring staff that my findings would be put in context and that the research would attempt to explain the difficulties reported by staff in meeting their objectives.

Despite these problems I was able to maintain a relationship with staff members which aided me in completing the research. The staff were never obstructive and continued to answer my questions and to keep me up to date on the progress of the Foyer. The only times when core staff adopted a position of non-disclosure was when particular incidents (such as theft or assault) had occurred. In these cases peripheral staff (such as sessional workers) and tenants were happy to furnish me with details, however the way in which they reported such incidents was coloured by their relationships with the people and issues involved.

Although I had no space to call my own in the Foyer, I was able to record field notes on site, usually when the general office was not in use by staff. These notes recorded events and conversations, who was present and where they took place (Burgess 1995). I also recorded possible lines of further inquiry as they emerged from my observations. When I returned to my office the following day, the field notes were read and transferred on to computer, in the form of a research journal. At this point I was able to record observations which had been omitted from my hurried field notes. The journal provided an essential point of reference that assisted me in the development of an overview of progress of both the Foyer as an organisation and of those it aimed to serve. The original notebooks served an extra purpose in helping me

to focus on the need for any development of the research methodology (Burgess 1995). In this way field notes served a reflexive as well as a substantive purpose.

During the period of participant observation I also attended a number of meetings and organised social events. The meetings attended included staff meetings, tenants' meetings, an allocation meeting and a development meeting which was intended to evaluate a first draft of the "Foyer Operational Policy" document. I was able to take notes during these meetings and I also participated in the discussions where invited to do so. Attendance at these meetings helped me to gain an insight into staff perceptions and attitudes concerning Foyer practice and tenant progress. I also sat in on a number of training and information giving sessions (for example a presentation given by a member of the Employment Service about the New Deal). This was useful both in that it enabled me to observe Foyer practice and also provided information that was relevant to the general research question. The organised social events consisted of 'Street Eats' in which tenants cooked a meal together with the help of staff, as well as a number of small parties held for leaving volunteers or members of staff, or on special occasions (e.g. Christmas). These gave me a useful opportunity to be a full participant in social events that were enjoyed by both tenants and staff.

Many friendships were born of my role as field researcher and a discussion of some of the problems encountered as a result are included at the start of this chapter. Developing friendships are a necessary part of participant observation (Jorgenson 1989). The fact that I established good relationships with some of the tenants also enabled me to maintain contact with them after their tenancy at the Foyer had ended. Writing to ex-tenants enabled me to chart their progress in the months following their

departure from the Foyer in a way that was useful in meeting the agenda of the research design in terms of measuring outcomes.

Participant observation allowed me to put the findings of the research into their social context. The friendships developed with both tenants and staff at the Foyer have had an influence on the way in which the findings are reported. I have been concerned to acknowledge and respect the circumstances that constrain both tenants and staff. I believe that this has enriched rather than undermined the findings of this research.

I came to care about the tenants, the staff and the Foyer as an organisation. In doing so I became aware that I was in danger of adopting a sympathetic, rather than an empathic stance (Johnson 1975). Johnson (1975) identifies this as a common experience in field research and states that:

> "It is incumbent on the researcher to use his or her sociological competencies to evaluate the effects of these features on the observations"
> (Johnson 1975:26).

I have tried to provide an honest account of my changing position in relation to the subject of the study. The reader should bear this position in mind when taking account of my findings. The problem of "how to maintain scientific integrity while effectively involved in the research", have been highlighted by Bruyn (1966:19). However the fact that I was aware of the possible influences of my subjective feelings has led me to be particularly vigilant (if not neurotic) about the need to maintain objectivity.

Participant observation enabled me to place the findings in their social context and to answer questions about how and why change occurred. However, the amount of time spent at the field site was limited for reasons discussed above. I also felt that I had been unable to record the actual views of specific tenants in sufficient detail. In order to overcome this problem the period of participant observation included an interview schedule, the details of which are the subject of the next section of the chapter.

Interviewing

During the course of the field study 48 per cent of the total study Foyer population agreed to be interviewed. A mixture of interview techniques was used, namely, semi-structured interviews, unstructured or open-ended interviews and a group interview. The interviews were conducted in a number of places including the common room, general office and both training rooms. The majority of the interviews were conducted in one of the two training rooms, as this space was most often available without the risk of disturbance.

The first interview with each tenant was semi-structured. An aide memoire (Burgess 1995) was used to guide the interview (Appendix 7). Each tenant was asked the same range of questions although the wording of the questions was altered with individual tenants. Similarly, some questions were repeated in a different form when a tenant appeared unsure of the meaning of the question. An assurance of confidentiality was given before the interview and each interview was tape-recorded.

These first interviews explored the life circumstances of the tenant at the time they applied to come to the Foyer and in the years before. If the tenant had been resident

at the Foyer for a sufficient period they were also asked about their perceptions of the Foyer. Finally questions were included about the tenants' goals for the future. In some cases the respondents were reluctant to elaborate beyond the questions asked, however where the respondent did elaborate probes and invitations were used to expand on the issues raised (May 1993).

The interviews varied in length from between 15 minutes in one case (in which it was a young male tenant gave very brief, often one worded answers) to 1 hour 45 minutes. There are a number of factors that contributed to the differing lengths of interviews. Although I started off with the intention of using a fixed interview schedule, actually getting those who had agreed to an interview to meet me proved difficult. Tenants would often forget that we had agreed to meet when the interviews were planned in advance. Their plans changed form one week to the next and I was 'stood up' on a number of occasions (similar experiences were reported by staff who had arranged to meet with tenants). In the end it seemed the only way to conduct interviews was on an ad hoc basis, I became an expert opportunist. If I got into conversation with a tenant who was not busy, I would ask them to spare me twenty minutes for an interview. There would invariably be a shop trip or a friend to meet and it was difficult to get the tenants to commit to a long interview.

It seems probable that tenants were also concerned about what the interview would consist of and my assurances were not accepted in the early stages of our relationship. Many of the longer first interviews, in which issues were explored in more depth, were given by tenants who had known me for a considerable period of time before agreeing to be interviewed.

One of the main factors in the length of these interviews was the personality of the respondent. The age and life experiences of many of the tenants resulted in a style of conversation that was far from elaborate. I also suspected that in some cases the respondent felt that there was a 'right answer' and that there was a very real concern that they would be seen to be wrong. Jones (1991) notes that "Even the most experienced interviewer will encounter people with whom it is very difficult to establish a basis from which to conduct a conversation" (1991:208).

All this said the first interviews did supply me with useful data and while the information given was often brief it did not lack substance. I was able to gain an insight into the perceptions of tenants in a way that was not possible through the use of the questionnaire survey alone.

Second interviews were unstructured and 30 per cent of the research population agreed to second interviews. These were conducted after a long period of tenancy and where possible just before a respondent ended their tenancy. There were difficulties in scheduling interviews with tenants who were about to leave the Foyer. During the period running up to the end of a tenancy, tenants were often involved in organising changes to their benefits claims, dealing with housing agencies and trying to gather furniture etc. The difficulties in getting tenants to commit to an interview, as outlined above, were therefore accentuated.

Second interviews were in the form of conversations that were directed at the topic of the research (Burgess 1982, 1995). They included questions about the current progress of the tenant and their views on policy and practice at the Foyer. Towards the

end of the interview I also made comments relating to my view of policy and practice at the Foyer and invited tenants to consider my interpretation (Burgess, 1982). Although in both first and second interviews I often pleaded ignorance about situations and practice of which I had knowledge. This allowed me to record these situations from the tenant's perspective. Often the full picture would only emerge after I had pieced together a number of different accounts; this process was also used in conversation outside the interview setting.

Reflection and probing (Whyte 1982) were used to explore and clarify issues raised by respondents. The resulting interviews were more in depth than the first interviews. This was possible as, by the time of the second interviews it had been possible to build a relationship with the respondents. It was also easier to stimulate responses outside the constraints of an interview schedule, by this time in the tenancy it was natural for the tenants to converse with me. I was able to tape record the interviews although in two cases I became so unaware of the tape recorder that I forgot to turn over the tape!

In-depth unstructured interviews were also carried out with two (out of the three) core members of staff and a live-in volunteer. I used these interviews to gain the perceptions of staff and the volunteer in relation to the aims and objectives of the Foyer and the way in which these were (or were not) being implemented. The interviews were also used to explore issues that I had identified as significant in more depth and to gain the insight of those who spent a significant amount of time at the Foyer, but were not tenants.

Finally a group interview was conducted. Posters were put up in the Foyer inviting tenants to attend and refreshments were provided as an inducement. This was attended by fourteen tenants. Such a situation:

> "provides informants with an opportunity to discuss their world and to argue over the situations in which they are involved (and to argue over the situations in which they are involved). These interviews may afford glimpses of competing views and how consensus or difference is arrived at. However, the members of the group interview will normally only produce views that can be stated in public"
>
> (Burgess 1982:108).

I began this interview with a presentation about the purpose of the research. I then explored the issues of Foyer policy and practice with respondents, questions were written on a flip chart and responses were also recorded on the flip chart. Each issue led naturally into another and I was able to cover quite a bit of ground. The only draw back with this method was that at times it seemed likely to deteriorate into a general moaning session about the staff. I countered this by asking questions about tenant input and on the whole the respondents were able to reflect on the way in which their own behaviour influenced Foyer practice. The issues raised in the group interview were also coloured by recent events that had taken place in the Foyer. There was an emphasis on issues of security and safety and the need to exclude certain tenants at the group interview, which took place shortly after a tenant had been assaulted by another tenant's visitor.

The three interview techniques used enabled me to record data on tenants and some staff's "experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings" (May 1993:91). This data enabled me to clarify points and 'fill in the gaps'. It also aided me in the crosschecking of data from other sources. Most importantly the interviewing

provided me with an accessible form of data to which I could return at stages of the analysis in order to understand the life experiences and perceptions of tenants.

Use of pseudonyms and analysis

The information contained in this thesis relates to the lived experiences of vulnerable young people, both the nature of the material and the fact that access to data was agreed on the grounds that names would not be used called for the use of pseudonyms (Fetterman 1998). In many cases tenants were only prepared to take part in the research once they have been assured that they would not be named or identified in the work generated by the research. However, a few tenants were disappointed that their names would not appear in my 'book'. This seemed to stem from the feeling that to appear in writing would mean that they were in some way important. I did discuss the alternatives with tenants and tried to explain why the use of pseudonyms was important. Those who said that they wanted to use their own names did reluctantly agree to the use of pseudonyms.

The relatively small nature of the sample for both the postal survey and the survey carried on in the Foyer meant that analysis of the raw data obtained was achieved through simple counting and the use of a calculator. In relation to analysis of documentary evidence, including material from individual files and notes made during participant observation and of transcribed interviews a latent content analysis approach was adopted. This involves the identification of themes and patterns (Holloway and Wheller 1996). Each source of data was examined and themes and patterns were identified, further examination was then carried out and data was divided into different identified themes. These were used in the organisation of

material and to clarify the significance of data in its presentation. A process of triangulation was used to test internal consistency in which one source of data was cross-checked against another (Denzin 1970). This process allowed for the identification of concepts and themes arising from the research, it helped me to understand the whole situation in perspective and importantly, to validate data through cross-checking.

Summary of the Chapter

This thesis is based, then, on evidence gathered from a survey of Foyers in Britain, documentary evidence, a survey questionnaire, participant observation and interviews with tenants and staff at one Foyer.

In this chapter I have set out the methods employed in the study, the rationale for their use and the way in which they were put into operation. I have also attempted to provide the reader with an honest account of my experiences as a researcher and a person during the course of the research.

The possible strengths and weaknesses of each of the methods used and my attempts to overcome these problems have also been assessed. The remaining chapters are concerned with the findings of the research that were made possible through the use of the methods that have been discussed.

CHAPTER SIX

JOURNEYS TO THE FOYER

The last chapter provided a discussion of the methods employed in the research undertaken for this work. The following two chapters provide the research findings of the study. Any effects that participating in the Foyer system may or may not have had upon on the lives of the young people who took part in this study can only be understood in the context of their past life experiences. This chapter is concerned with providing such a context. This allows us to establish some measure of outcomes for young people using the Foyer and serves to develop our understanding of the process of youth homelessness from an individual perspective.

I start by offering a baseline of quantitative data against which to measure outcomes in terms of housing, employment, education and training for young people using the Foyer services. The base number for the data is small (33 for young people giving access to their files and 34 for young people completing the survey questionnaire) and therefore wider generalisations about the experience of young people in housing need can be drawn only with caution. However in terms of evaluating the impact of the Foyer system on the lives of these young people it is essential that a baseline be provided.

Second, the chapter provides an explanation of the processes involved in becoming homeless from an individual perspective. Chapter 3 presented youth homelessness within the theoretical context of citizenship as resulting from a complex interplay between structural disadvantage and biography. This chapter provides biographical accounts of a group of young people who found it necessary to use Foyer services.

This includes a discussion of tenants' past housing careers, qualifications and training, employment status and experience of additional difficulties (such as experience of local authority care, mental health problems, etc.). The value of the material presented is that the period and size of the study has made in-depth analysis possible.

This chapter, then, serves two main purposes, it provides the baseline data necessary for an evaluation of the Foyer system and provides an account of homelessness from the perspective of individuals. This is intended to illustrate the ways in which certain individuals may become particularly vulnerable to the structural disadvantages of youth. Data from a number of sources has been used including documents kept on tenants' files, participant observation, the survey questionnaire and interviews.

The data obtained from tenants' files varied in its comprehensiveness from file to file (see Chapter 4). This data source is used to provide data for the whole sample. The survey questionnaire was completed by young people themselves and revealed that 56 per cent of tenants taking part in the study had some experience of being in local authority care. This data has been further divided to allow for a comparison of the experiences of the two groups: those who had experience of being in local authority care and those that did not.

To be in housing need is essentially to be without adequate housing and in view of this the first section of this chapter will consider the housing 'careers' (Jones 1987) of the young people involved in the study.

The Housing Careers of Young People using the Foyer

This section considers the housing careers of 33 young people throughout their lives up until the time at which they became tenants of the Foyer. A major transition in the change from childhood dependence to independent adulthood is the transition from home of origin (parents or other carer) to independent accommodation. The structural changes discussed in Chapter 2 mean that young people generally leave home later than was the case in the past and because of delayed entry into the labour market often return to live at home at least once before finally obtaining secure independent accommodation (Jones 1987, Morrow and Richards 1996). As a consequence many young people remain in the parental home until their mid twenties (Jones 1990).

However the opportunity to stay in the parental home is not open to the substantial minority of young people who are escaping abuse or family friction or whose families evict them. For instance Smith et al (1998) found that most of the homeless young people in the study they conducted had left home when they were 16 or 17 with two-fifths stating that abuse or violence in the family household affected their decision to leave. While a study by Hendessi (1992) found that 4 in 10 homeless young women were escaping sexual abuse.

The fact that young people leaving local authority care are expected to make the transition to independent living at an early age has been well documented (Biehal et al 1995, Garnett 1992, Stein 1990). For instance Biehal et al (1995:30) found that 29 per cent of their sample of care leavers had moved to independent accommodation at the age of 16 and 61 per cent had done so before the age of 18.

The connection between leaving home prematurely and homelessness has been recognised by agencies working with young people (Hutson and Liddiard 1994). The next section of the chapter therefore provides data relating to the age at which Foyer tenants left home and considers some of the factors which influenced their 'decision' to do so.

Leaving Home

A large proportion of Foyer tenants reported that they had left home before the age of 16. However it must be stated that many of the young people with experience of local authority care identified the time at which they left home as the time at which they left the parental home and went into long term care. Other young people who had experience of local authority care but had returned to the parental home regarded leaving home as the point at which they had last left the parental home. While a small number of young people who had been in long-term foster placements regarded leaving home as the time at which they had left this foster placement. The data provided in Table 1 represents the age at which young people considered themselves to have left home.

Table 1

Age in years at time of leaving home

	LAC n= 19	NON LAC n= 15	TOTAL n= 34
Under 16	15 (79%)	4 (27%)	19 (56%)
16 to 18	3 (16%)	5 (33%)	8 (24%)
Over 18	1 (5%)	6 (40%)	7 (21%)
Total	19 (100%)	15 (100%)	34 (101%)

LAC= Respondents reporting that they had spent a period of time in Local Authority Care
NON LAC= Respondents reporting no experience of Local Authority Care

Note: In this and all subsequent tables percentages are rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Although the majority of young people who had left home before the age of 16 years did have experience of being in local authority care this group did not comprise solely young people with experience of long term care. In fact 10 (53%) of the 19 respondents who had ever been in local authority care had only been in care for short periods of time during their teenage years.

In all 79 per cent of young people at the Foyer who took part in the study had left home before the age of eighteen years. There were no cases of the respondents' experiences reflecting the national trend of young people leaving home in their mid twenties (Jones 1990). Similar findings were made by Hutson and Liddiard's 1991 study of youth homelessness in Wales, based on a larger sample of 115 respondents, this study found that 80 per cent of young people had left home by the time they had reached the age of eighteen (1991:iii).

Many of the young people in this study reported having had little real choice in their decision to leave home at the time they did. Research into the family background of young homeless people conducted by Smith et al (1998) suggests that parental attitudes towards supporting young people may be a contributing factor in the decision to leave home. The research found that both the parents of young homeless people and the parents of 16 to 25 year olds from a housing estate (who were supporting their children) believed that age 16 brought a change in their obligations to feed and house their children. This was the experience of many young people at the

Foyer as Damien (22) recounted : ...*'as soon as my sixteenth birthday my mother said you're old enough to fend for yourself now so I had to go'.*

While young people may not be actually asked to leave by their parent(s) the element of choice involved in leaving may be restricted by intolerable circumstances. For example a letter from social services explained that Jessica (18) had been in hospital as a result of a breakdown and had *'suffered mental abuse from her father which has built up over the years, she is unable to return home'.* While Susie (17) left her mother at fifteen because of problems in the area in which her mother lived. She went to live with her father and his partner. However, although she maintained a relationship with her father she was unable to continue living with him because of his heavy drinking.

The reasons given for leaving home were usually the breakdown of the relationship between the young person and their parent(s) or a step-parent. Nicholas was over eighteen when he left home for the first time, his 'decision' to leave was the result of problems in his relationship with his mother: *'I didn't actually decide to leave my parents it was sort of like they decided for me. It's just my mum at home and we're like really similar...an argument could go on for years and we're both quite passionate about what we believe so they can be quite heated arguments'.* One young man, Ben (17) simply didn't know where his mother was: *'that's why I suffer from stress she's just gone somewhere I just haven't got a clue where'.*

family of origin). The next section of the chapter describes the housing careers of young people up until the point at which they applied for a Foyer tenancy.

Housing Careers

Evidence suggests that for young people in local authority care the experience of a number of changes in housing or living situation may be common. Stein and Carey (1986) found that three-quarters of the care leavers in their study had experienced three or more different placements while 40 per cent had been subject to five or more changes in placement. While a study by Stein (1990:52) reported that one young woman had experienced 20 different placements while in care. The frequency of changes in housing situations for the local authority care group was higher than that for the group with no experience of local authority care although the number of changes was high for both groups.

The average number of different housing situations (before taking on a Foyer tenancy) in which respondents had lived was four for the whole sample. While for those with experience of local authority care this figure rose to five. When we consider the fact that all but one of the respondents (who was 24 years old) were 22 years old or under these figures highlight the instability of these young people's lives. Only one respondent was leaving the parental home for the first time and her decision to apply to the Foyer was based on the need to live closer to her place of employment.

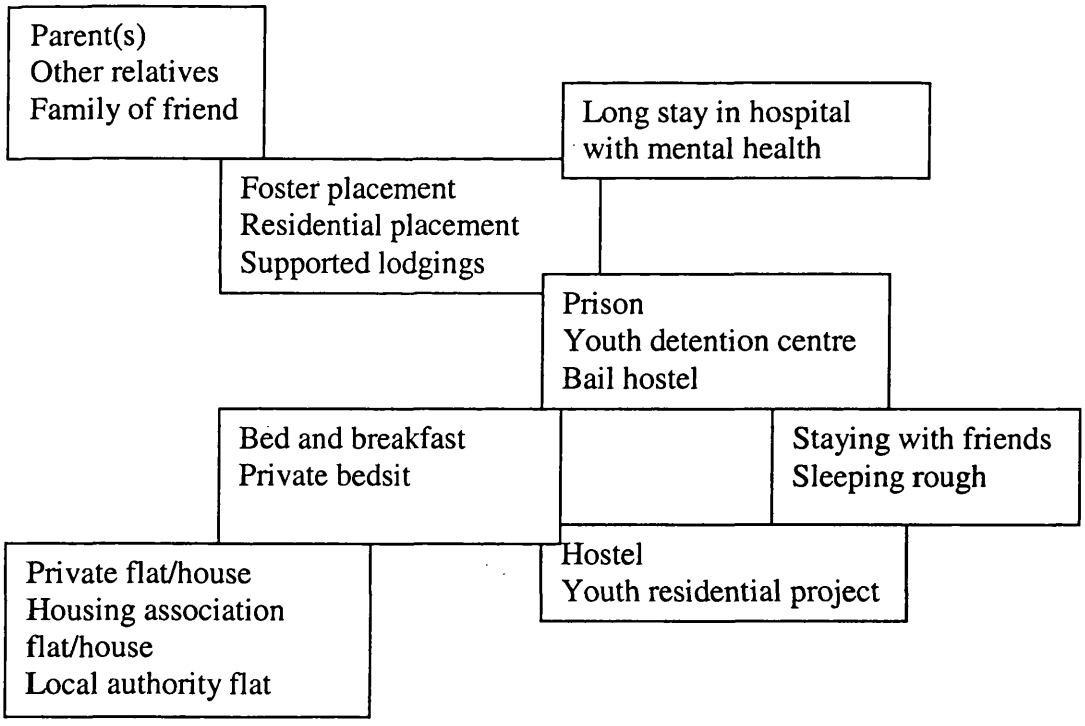
The types of housing situation experienced by young people were varied and are listed in Figure 1. With the exception of one young man who had spent the first six years of his life in an adoption centre all the respondents started their 'housing

careers' (Jones1987) living in the home of their parent(s). Many young people had difficulty in remembering the details of their different housing situations especially when a number of changes had occurred over a very short period of time. Similar difficulties were experienced by respondents in a study conducted by Kirk et al (1991).

The housing situations listed in figure 1 represent every type of situation encountered by respondents however they are not represented in any particular order. The housing experience of each respondent varied considerably with one tenant having lived in 9 different situations and one respondent having lived in the parental home only.

Figure 1

Types of housing situation experienced



Although there was no obvious pattern in the housing changes experienced by respondents it was common for respondents to have used friends as emergency accommodation in times of housing crisis. For example during the period immediately following leaving home or following an eviction (Hutson and Liddiard (1991) reported similar findings in their study of youth homelessness in Wales). Staying with friends was often on a short-term temporary basis and respondents had often slept on floors or sofas, moving between a number of different friends' over a period of days or even months. Although Joe (18) left home when he was fourteen and managed to survive for two or three years moving between different friends' houses: *'I stayed with friends for ages I was just dossing around with friends until I was about 16,17 then got me a place in some little bedsit'*. Young people often experienced a number of different housing situations over a relatively short period of time. This is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Changes in Housing situations over a six month period

Natalie was 16 years old when she applied to the Foyer. After gaining 6 GCSEs she was at school studying for 3 A 'levels. She was still in contact with her parents who had asked her to leave home following a disagreement about religious beliefs but who were prepared to give support. At first she stayed with a friend but when it became obvious that she would be staying for some time she was asked to leave that day. Natalie then went to stay with the family of a school friend who had experience as foster careers. They arranged for a housing benefit to cover the cost of renting a room at their house and she remained there until beginning a tenancy at the Foyer.

Figure 3. Changes in housing situation over a three year period

Jacob was 18 years old when he applied to the Foyer. He left school when he was fifteen with no qualifications. At the time he arrived at the Foyer he had been unemployed for about six months and was claiming benefits, he had lost his last job when the firm he was working for went bankrupt. In the past Jacob had sought medical advice for a drugs problem and at the time he arrived at the Foyer he was experiencing difficulties in managing his use of alcohol. Jacob had been convicted on charges of shoplifting and being drunk and disorderly in the past.

At the age of 15 he was placed in local authority care because he was: *causing havoc at home taking drugs and got into trouble with the police for shoplifting.* Jacob was put in a foster placement for four months until the age of sixteen. He then returned to his mother for a short period of time before spending time: *kipping with a friend, sleeping in cars and things.* Jacob then found a bedsit but he described it as damp and said that he had not liked living there. He then got a place in a residential project for young people before getting a tenancy for a Housing Association flat in a hard to let area. Jacob was evicted from his flat because of his: *friends causing havoc up there.* Finally he ended up sleeping on a friend's sofa. However the sister of his friend and her baby moved in forcing him to leave. By this time he had applied to the Foyer and was able to accept the offer of a tenancy.

Recognising that the respondents had very varied housing careers allows us to consider their position at the time they applied to come to the Foyer in the context of change over time rather than as a static snapshot. The chapter now provides data relating first to the housing situations of young people at the time they applied to the Foyer and second to the housing situation of respondents during the period immediately before they took up their tenancy at the Foyer.

Housing situation before entering Foyer programme

In order to evaluate the Foyer programme in terms of housing outcomes for users it is necessary first to provide data relating the housing situations of young people during the period before they entered the Foyer programme. The period between application and the offer of a tenancy could span anything from a number of weeks to a number of months and the housing situation of respondents often changed during this time. Therefore data is provided which relates both to the housing situations of respondents

at the time of application and then to their housing situation immediately before the start of a Foyer tenancy.

At the time of application the most common housing situation was a foster placement (21%) this reflects the fact that social services were the main referral agency at this time. This was not the result of a planned strategy but rather reflected the fact that social services were eager to use the Foyer as move on accommodation for young people leaving or about to leave their care. Staff later viewed this as a problem and decided to target other referral agencies in order to meet the Foyer ethos of building a 'mixed community'. The other three significant housing situations were parental home, friends and hostels all at 15 per cent each. Although of those applying from the parental home only one was leaving home for the first time.

Table 2.1

Housing situation at time of application to Foyer

Housing Situation	N	%
Parent(s)	5	15
Other relative(s)	3	9
Foster Placement	7	21
Supported lodgings	2	6
Private renting	2	6
Bed and breakfast	1	3
Hostel	5	15
Staying with friends	5	15
Hospital	1	3
Sleeping rough	1	3
Other	2	6
TOTAL	33	102

NB: Other = constantly moving between more than one housing situation.

Some young people were able to return to the parental home from time to time but the situation would then break down again. Steve (19) described his family as being highly involved in crime and he himself had criminal convictions, having spent five years in youth detention centres and prison on a number of different charges. Steve would often return to the family home but the situation always broke down. Describing his housing career he said, '*well mostly in and out of care, prison, foster placements, bed and breakfasts, I had another flat, went back to jail, come back out, back and forth to my parents but every time I went to my parents I dunno why I always went out pinching and ended up back in jail'*. Ann (17) had left home after gaining employment which provided accommodation. However, when this employment ended she returned to the parental home but the situation broke down: '*It just didn't work and me and my sister didn't get on, we had a major argument and they said tough, we don't want you back and that was that'*.

There was often a change in housing situation between the time of application and the start of a tenancy at the Foyer. This period ranged from a few weeks to a number of months. Young people can obtain application forms for the Foyer from a number of referral agencies such as social services or housing advice centres. Both self-referrals and applications from referral agencies are accepted. Application forms are then processed by Foyer staff. Those applicants who succeed at this stage are invited to attend an informal interview so that they can view the accommodation, obtain further information on the Foyer programme and decide if they want to go ahead with their application. This is followed by a third and final stage in which applicants are formally interviewed by two members of staff. Staff then hold an allocation meeting and decide whether to offer the applicant a tenancy (the rationale which is used to

make allocation decisions is discussed in the next chapter). This allocation process means that the Foyer is not able or intended to offer emergency accommodation.

Table 2.2

Housing situation during period immediately before the start of a Foyer tenancy

Housing situation	LAC		Non LAC		Whole sample	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parent(s)	2	10.5	2	13	4	12
Other relative(s)	0	0	1	7	1	3
Foster placement	7	37	0	0	7	21
Supported lodgings	2	10.5	2	10.5	4	12
Private rented	0	0	1	7	1	3
Bedsit	0	0	1	7	1	3
Bed and breakfast	2	10.5	0	0	2	6
Hostel	0	0	2	13	2	6
Staying with friends	4	21	5	33	9	26
Sleeping rough	2	10.5	1	7	3	9
TOTAL	19	100	15	100	34	101

Table 2.2. provides data relating to housing situations during the period immediately before the start of a Foyer tenancy. The data is drawn from the results of a survey questionnaire that 34 tenants took part in. Information provided from the survey has allowed for a comparison of the housing situations of those with experience of local

authority care with the housing situation of those with no experience of local authority care. Although the only significant difference between the housing situations of those respondents with experience of local authority care and those who had never been in local authority care was found to be in the use of foster placements.

A comparison of the data contained in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 shows that there was an increase in the number of young people in supported lodgings, staying with friends and sleeping rough during this period. A number of respondents reported more than one change in housing situation between the time of application and the start of a tenancy. It was not uncommon for staff to experience problems in contacting applicants during the allocation process who could be forced to move from one type of temporary housing situation to another while they waited to see if their application had been successful.

In sum, the data reveals that the experience of the research sample did not reflect the national trend of young people leaving home in their mid-twenties. The majority of young people (79%) had left home by the age of eighteen years. This figure includes young people leaving home to go into local authority care. However of the 56 per cent of respondents in the survey who had experience of local authority care only just under half of this group (47%) had been in long-term care.

There is also evidence of the instability of respondents' housing careers. Only one respondent was leaving home for the first time and an average of four changes in housing situation was experienced by the sample as a whole. The types of housing

situation experienced were diverse and ranged from temporary returns to the parental home to sleeping rough.

None of the sample had been able to obtain secure independent accommodation. The small group who had held tenancies in the past had all been evicted because of financial difficulties or the breakdown of a relationship with the person with whom they were sharing accommodation. Instead young people had experienced a number of insecure and often temporary housing situations since leaving home. Those young people (21%) who were moving directly from long-term local authority care to the Foyer had often experienced more than one placement while in care. In total 38 per cent of the young people in the research sample answered yes to the question: Have you ever slept rough? This response was similar for both groups, with 37 per cent of young people with experience of local authority care and 40 per cent of young people without experience of local authority care having slept rough at some time.

A key factor in obtaining secure independent accommodation is economic stability (see Chapter 2). The British Foyer movement was founded on a recognition of the link between youth homelessness and unemployment and the literature of the Foyer which is the focus of this research invites young people to break the cycle of no home -no job- no home. The chapter now considers data in relation to the employment status, education, qualification and training and past employment history of respondents.

Employment status of Foyer tenant

A detailed discussion of the general trend of high levels of youth unemployment is provided in chapter 2. However the rate of unemployment among the research sample at the time they started their tenancies was over twice the national level.

Table 3

Unemployment levels for claimants under 25 years

UK	County	Foyer
26.7% *	32.4%**	76%

(Source: * Digest of Welsh Statistics, Welsh Office, 1998.
** Digest of Welsh local area statistics, Welsh office, 1998.)

NB: Figures from the Welsh Office relate to 1997.
Figures for the Foyer relate to the status of respondents at the start of their tenancy during 1997 and 1998.

A small number of tenants were ineligible to claim benefits because of their age. In these cases they either met criteria to claim under special circumstances or received the benefit equivalent from social services.

In fact only 3 of the 34 respondents in the survey were employed and only one of them was employed on a full-time basis. As with frequent changes in housing situation between the time of application and the start of tenancy, there were also changes in employment status during this period and unemployment rose. This was the result of young people leaving education and training. Reasons for leaving education included the completion of a course of study, financial difficulties with continuing to study and dissatisfaction with the content or operation of a course of study. Two young people also left training places during this time, in both cases the work placement offering the training scheme ran into financial difficulties. There were no significant differences between the employment status of young people with experience of local authority care and those who had never been in care.

Table 3.1

Employment Status

Employment Status	At time of application % N= 33	At start of tenancy % N= 34
P/T Employed	3	6
F/T Employed	3	3
Training	12	6
P/T Education	6	0
F/T Education	18	9
Unemployed	56	76
Other	3	0
TOTAL	101	100

Of those who were unemployed 19 (58%) had never worked. Of those six (18%) were in process of completing or had just completed full-time education and eight (24%) had been on one or more Youth Training Scheme at some point since leaving full-time education. However, only two young people were in training at the start of their Foyer tenancy. None of the other young people who had been on Youth Training Schemes had completed their training. There were a number of reasons for failure to complete a training scheme including the scheme running into financial difficulties. Some young people reported that they had not enjoyed the content of the scheme and so had left before completion. The majority of young people expressed dissatisfaction with the operation of Youth Training Schemes. Nicholas (24) described his experience of a Youth Training Scheme in a retail unit. *'Anyway I done that, and the employers, you get some employers and you get some right Fagins and I got a Fagin*

and I was doing everything. They had an attitude well be grateful 'cos you could be you know (unemployed). I was getting £29.50'. While Susie (17) was told that there was no point in her returning to her work placement because she had taken two days off sick.

Of the unemployed sample, three respondents had secured work with 'prospects' in the past, one as a trainee manager, one in catering and one working with animals. However all of these positions had been lost following personal difficulties. The rest of the unemployed sample who did have experience of formal employment had worked as care assistants, in fast food outlets, in factories, and one had worked in waste disposal. There were also a number of respondents who had worked off the record on 'hobbles' in the informal labour market mainly on building sites or in public houses. Five of the unemployed group were involved in volunteer work. This ranged from helping on a soup-run for street homeless people to working in a charity shop.

It is clear that in terms of work experience most of the young people who were unemployed had few 'paper' credentials with which to impress employers when competing for the limited resource of youth employment. There is also evidence to suggest that the experience of unemployment may have a negative impact on the psychological welfare of young people (Hutton 1991, Hutchens 1994, Murphy 1990).

However in view of the relatively young age of respondents the absence of a long employment history might be expected. Qualifications are of obvious importance in the successful attainment of employment especially for those too young to attract employers through their past work experience. I now turn my attention to the

educational and vocational qualifications of the 33 Foyer tenants who took part in the main study.

Qualifications and experience of schooling

Young people applying for a place at the Foyer were asked during the course of their second interview with Foyer staff the question:

'What was your experience of school, what did you like and dislike about it?'.

Their answers were recorded by members of staff onto a pre-printed form. In all 14 or 42 per cent of young people reported their experience of schooling in negative terms, including long periods of truancy, low attendance because of problems at home and feelings of boredom. Of the whole group 6 (18%) also reported being the victims of bullying at school.

Respondents' experiences of the education system have been included here because negative representations of schooling and high levels of truancy were a common theme in my conversations with young people at the Foyer. However, it is important to note that although quite a high proportion of respondents reported their experience of schooling in negative terms the other 19 (58%) of young people said that they had enjoyed or liked school when asked about this experience at their second allocation interview. What is more significant in terms of this research is the question of levels of educational attainment among respondents.

Using evidence from a large study Roberts (1993:230) claims that qualifications earned by age 16 'proved the best single predictor of the direction that individuals' careers would take'. This claim has obvious implications for the 36 per cent of

respondents who had no qualifications at all at the time of their application to the Foyer. This figure is higher than the national average for Wales. In 1996 some one in five of 16-18 year olds had no qualifications (Welsh Office 1999:32). While in the period 1996-1997, one quarter of people aged 25 to 69 not in full-time education in the United Kingdom had no qualifications (ONS, Social Trends 1998). Although research has shown that care leavers are over represented among young people leaving school with no formal qualifications (Biehal et al 1995, Garnett 1992, Stein 1990), there was no significant difference in the levels of attainment between those young people with experience of local authority care and the rest of the sample in this case.

Of the 64 per cent of respondents who did have some qualifications only 12 or 36 per cent had 5 or more GCSEs. This compares unfavourably with the national picture for Wales, which saw 80 per cent of 15 year olds gaining 5 GCSEs grade A to G in 1997 (Welsh Office 1997:31). Other qualifications gained by respondents included 9 per cent achieving NVQ level 1 and 6 per cent gaining NVQ level 2. This figure is also low when we consider that 5 in 10 adults of working age had NVQ level 2 or its equivalent in 1996 (Welsh Office 1997). In addition 3 (9%) of respondents had A level passes, 1 (6%) had a Btec qualification and 1 (6%) had a HND. One respondent had gained a University place but had been unable to complete his/her degree because of mounting debt. Other respondents who reported having qualifications had gained one or more Certificates of Education at secondary school.

It is clear that in terms of levels of qualifications gained by the start of their Foyer tenancies well over half of the respondents were disadvantaged when competing

within the labour market, having gained less than 5 GCSEs. Especially when we consider this in the context of competition for jobs from the rising numbers of young people who do react to a restricted youth labour market by staying on in full-time education beyond the age of 16 years to gain further qualifications (Banks et al. 1992:3).

It is clear then that in terms of gaining the qualifications and training needed to compete in the youth labour market a large proportion of respondents could demonstrate a need for the type of careers and training support the Foyer system is intended to provide. The majority of respondents interviewed stated that they hoped to gain the advice and support they felt that they needed to gain further qualifications or to move straight into well paid employment through the Foyer system (although the most stated initial impetus for applying for a place at the Foyer was the lack of alternative accommodation). For example Dai (20) left school when he was 16 years old with three Certificates of Education and NVQ level 1 in Number Power and Word Power and had experience of voluntary work with a leaving care project and the Prince's Trust Volunteers. Dai had decided to apply for a place at the Foyer because he had to leave the hostel where he was staying as it only offered temporary accommodation. However, when asked what he hoped to get out of being at the Foyer he replied: '*More training, life skills, how to cook properly those sort of skills, get a decent job, more qualifications*'. This was a common response when young people were asked what they hoped to get out of being a tenant at the Foyer.

It is apparent that many of the young people at the Foyer, then, did not have the qualifications and training needed to secure well paid employment at the time they

started their Foyer tenancies. Many of the young people at the Foyer were further disadvantaged by specific personal difficulties while they attempted to develop the skills needed for gainful employment. It is possible that these personal difficulties impacted negatively on their ability to compete in the restructured labour market (as discussed in Chapter 2). The next section of the chapter discusses these personal difficulties although in view of the sensitive nature of the accounts of abuse and neglect, sexual, physical and emotional endured by some of the young people detailed accounts of these experiences have not been included. Although it is important to state that these experiences had a profound effect on these young people in their attempts to cope with the demands of independence and therefore these issues are referred to.

Experiences of personal difficulties among respondents.

I now turn my attention to a number of self-reported personal difficulties ranging from alcohol misuse to suicide attempts experienced by the young people involved in the study.

Alcohol consumption among British young people is accepted as a normal part of the transition to adulthood (Furlong and Cartmel 1997:75). Estimations of the levels of alcohol consumption among young people vary but Lister Sharp (1994) claims that 90 per cent of young people have tried alcoholic drinks. While alcohol dependence is unusual in young people under 21 years of age (Fossey et al. 1996) 18 per cent of respondents in this study reported problems associated with the misuse of alcohol.

Almost half of young people take drugs at some time in their lives (Parker 1998, South 1999) and the media has helped to fuel public concern about levels of drug use among young people. Drug taking among this group is in fact rising, with 48 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds having ever used illegal drugs in 1996, compared to 45 per cent in 1994 (Home Office 1998). However only a minority of young people will become regular users (at least once a month) with only a tiny minority taking illegal drugs on a daily basis (Parker 1998, South 1999). In all 29 per cent of respondents to the questionnaire survey had ever received treatment for a drug related problem, while 24 per cent of the main sample referred to problems related to drug misuse at their allocation interview although in many cases they reported that this problem was now resolved. In the majority of cases young people had been or were misusing prescribed drugs such as diazepam, temazepam, valium and benzodiazepine. Other drugs taken included cannabis, ecstasy and amphetamine and one respondent was a recovering heroin user.

The majority of young people who were prepared to talk about their use of drugs said that they used drugs to escape from reality and some respondents felt that experimenting with recreational drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy and speed was an accepted part of being a young person. Joe (18) had a history of serious drug misuse that was now under control. I asked him why he took drugs: '*To escape from reality I worked that one out with my counsellor, I didn't know why I took drugs, but I know it was cos of my life at home and my parents. Plus enjoyment when I done drugs I had some good times you know, I had some of the best times of my life when I was on gear. I know it's a bad thing to say but it's the truth*'. Although Joe's past drug misuse was more serious than was the case with other respondents his statement does

reflect the reasons given for drug use by other respondents. Those young people who had turned to regular drug taking to help them escape the reality of their life experiences inevitably found themselves with one more problem to overcome before they could fully meet the demands of independent living.

The number of young people experiencing mental health problems has increased over the last decade (Furlong and Cartmel 1997) and a number of respondents reported problems related to their mental health. Some fourteen (41%) of respondents to the survey questionnaire had ever received treatment for a problem related to their mental health while 4 (12%) were experiencing or recovering from mental health problems at the start of their tenancies. There is insufficient room here to investigate the claims made by Furlong and Cartmel (1997:67) which suggest that increasing levels of mental health problems among young people may be the result of stress associated with 'changing transitional experiences'. However it was clear that the young people who had received treatment for mental health related problems had usually experienced difficulties in their relationships (or lack of relationship) with one or more family member.

There is an increased risk of depression during the teenage years (Smith and Rutter 1995) and 15 (45%) of respondents in the main study sample reported suffering or having suffered from depression. In the majority of cases young people had sought medical assistance for this problem and some had been prescribed medication. In addition 3 (9%) of respondents reported having stress related panic attacks.

Suicide rates have also increased among young people (Smith and Rutter 1995) and 5 or 15% of respondents had attempted suicide in the past while 5 or 15% of respondents self harmed. Tim (19) (who was involved in peer education) explained self-harming to me in these terms: *'I am a self-harmer which means I do things to myself to punish myself for things that have happened since my childhood and the only way I can talk to people is if they've gone through the same experiences'.*

Hutson and Liddiard (1994:64) point out that mental illness may be both a cause and a consequence of youth homelessness. There is insufficient evidence here to substantiate this claim. However what is clear is that those young people who had experienced the problems outlined in the last few paragraphs had in the majority of cases been the victims of particularly difficult personal circumstances in their childhood and adolescence.

The economic disadvantage experienced by many young people has been discussed in depth elsewhere. However it is important to note here the fact that economic disadvantage can leave young people with a legacy of debt. Five or 15% of respondents reported problems related to past debts. The consequences of debt can have a profound effect on young people's lives, for example one respondent had been unable to complete his university education because of mounting debt, losing the income he received as a student and his accommodation as a consequence.

The fear of rising youth crime has become a constant in the representations of the media and the minds of the public (Haines and Drakeford 1998). However, figures published by the Home Office suggest that the number of young offenders has fallen

in last decade (Audit Commission 1996). Applicants to the Foyer were asked to declare any criminal convictions on their application form and 11 (33%) had criminal convictions. Respondents had been convicted for one or more of a number of different crimes including shoplifting; theft; handling stolen goods; burglary; fraud; taking a vehicle without permission; driving offences and being drunk and disorderly. However, only two respondents had received custodial sentences. Other respondents had been ordered to pay fines, given supervision orders, put on probation, given a conditional discharge or a combination of these. One respondent explained his offending in terms of criminal behaviour by other members of his family while another respondent claimed that his drug addiction was the driving force behind his offending. Other respondents offered no real explanation of their past offending, however the Audit Commission (1996:57) states that:

> "Offending by young people is associated with a range of risk factors including inadequate parental supervision; aggressive or hyperactive behaviour in early childhood; truancy and exclusion from school; peer group pressure to offend; unstable living conditions; lack of training and employment; and drug and alcohol abuse".

The factors listed in this statement are the recurrent themes of this chapter. Although it is important to highlight the fact that the majority of respondents, some of whom had similar life experiences to those who had demonstrated offending behaviour, had no criminal convictions. This was also true in regard to the other personal difficulties that have been discussed above.

What is clear though is that many respondents had multiple problems to overcome while they attempted to develop the personal resources needed to support an independent lifestyle.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented material relating to the past life experiences of young people who became Foyer tenants. This has included a discussion of the housing careers of respondents. The majority of respondents had left the parental home at a young age, the majority having left when they were 18 years old. Material relating to the housing careers of young people in the period between first leaving home and the start of a Foyer tenancy revealed both the diversity and instability of their changing housing situations during this period. Finally data was provided on the housing situations of young people at the time of their application to the Foyer and at the time immediately before they began a Foyer tenancy.

The chapter then considered the position of young people in relation to employment at both the time of application to the Foyer and at the start of a Foyer tenancy. The findings reveal high levels of unemployment and low levels of employment experience among respondents. It would appear that the young people who took part in this study were particularly disadvantaged in the labour market, not only because of their age (as argued in Chapter 2) but also because of particular personal difficulties and poor academic performance which may be related to their past life experiences. A number of young people had attended government training schemes but none had completed a course of training.

A large minority of young people reported their experiences of school in negative terms. While the majority of respondents reported their experience of school in positive terms the number of respondents with qualifications was below the national average as was the number of respondents who had gained 5 GCSEs or more.

Finally this chapter has presented findings which reveal the additional problems encountered by many respondents. These included problems related to alcohol misuse, drug misuse, mental health, depression, suicide attempts, self-harm, debt and criminal convictions.

In chapter 3 the concept of youth transitions was introduced, an approach that allows us to consider youth as a series of transitions towards adult life within the life course perspective. This approach has been adopted because it provides a means of understanding the complex relationship between structural and individual factors that can and may affect the life courses of individual young people. Three main area of transition were identified, labour market transition (the school-to work transition), the transition from home of origin to home of destination (the domestic transition) and the transition to independent accommodation (the housing transition) (Cole 1995, Wallace 1988). As Haines and Drakeford (1998:14) point out:

> "in making these transitions young people face a series of choices which, according to individual circumstances, are characterised by greater or lesser constraint and opportunity".

This chapter has considered the individual circumstances of the young people who took part in this study during the period in their lives that preceded a Foyer tenancy. A large proportion (79%) had left the parental home before they were 18 years old (some to go into long term care) while 56 per cent had some experience of local authority care. In total 36% of respondents had no qualifications and 64 per cent had less than 5 GCSEs. Unemployment rates were high rising to 79 per cent at the start of a Foyer tenancy and 58 per cent of respondents had never worked. Alcohol misuse was a problem for 18 per cent of respondents while 29 per cent had received treatment for a drugs related problem. In total 41 per cent of the young people taking part in the

study had received treatment for a mental health related problem and 45 per cent had suffered from depression at some time. Debt was a serious problem for 15 per cent of respondents and 33 per cent had criminal convictions.

When we add to these statistics the testimonies of young people themselves it is clear that many of them were socially disadvantaged in terms of both their personal experiences and in relation to structural problems such as high youth unemployment. Evidence presented in chapter 3 suggests that an ideology has emerged in response to the structural disadvantage of youth through the construction of a policy framework that is designed to resist the independence of young people under 25 years from their family of origin. As a result it has become 'normal' for the completion of youth transitions to be delayed until this time (Jones and Wallace 1992). Such an ideology is based on the assumption that young people can and should be dependent on the family and not the state.

However where adequate family support is not available this may result in 'premature' transitions. This was the experience of many of the young people in this study. Young people were unable to make a successful transition to independent accommodation, leaving the parental home before they were able to gain the employment needed to secure stable independent accommodation, usually as the result of a relationship breakdown. Others were leaving local authority care at an age when the majority of young people can expect to continue living at home.

As the evidence presented in this chapter illustrates many respondents were unable to gain the employment needed to secure independent accommodation. Often as the

result of an unsuccessful school to work transition in which they left full-time education with low levels of qualifications or in some cases no qualifications, or attended training courses which were never completed. The realities of the youth labour market (see Chapter 2) meant that where work was available it was often poorly paid or found in the unprotected informal employment market.

However as Dean (1997:59) points out these young people:

> "have become a problem, not because they have claimed independence prematurely, nor because they are therefore socially distinctive. They have been constituted as a problem because the government is seeking through its social policies to redefine childhood; to defy the process by which our ideas of childhood, youth and adulthood are socially constructed. Pivotal to the attempt has been the implication that the transition to adult citizenship is not a function of age, but of employment and dependency status".

When Dean (1997) refers to 'the government' he is in fact commentating on changes introduced under Conservative administrations, however it has already been argued elsewhere that the new Labour administration has done little to deconstruct this discourse of youth or the social policies that stem from it (see Chapter 3).

Any change in this dominant discourse of youth is beyond the remit of the Foyer movement. As stated in the last chapter the movement is built on a philosophy of individual rehabilitation and aims to provide young people with the human and practical resources needed to develop their skills while providing them with good quality accommodation. The intended outcome is that young people will be better equipped with the skills needed to compete for employment, independent accommodation and to cope with independent living. So as individuals they might be

able to make the transition to adult citizenship through employment and independence.

The next chapter provides an evaluation of the operation of this system at one Foyer. This includes an evaluation of the operation of the Foyer system in the view of tenants and staff and an evaluation of the Foyer in terms of outcomes for service users. Can a system based on a philosophy of individual rehabilitation help young people to overcome structural disadvantage and the cycle of no home, no job, no home?

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASPIRATIONS, EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES

The last chapter provided the baseline data necessary for an evaluation of the Foyer system in terms of employment and housing outcomes and explored biographical accounts of youth homelessness. This chapter is concerned with the aspirations and expectations of young people, their experience as Foyer tenants and their employment and housing outcomes. The chapter is therefore presented in three main sections.

First, I use interview excerpts and documentary evidence from tenant files to present the experiences of tenants in their own words. These accounts are supported with evidence gathered through participant observation. Quantitative data, gathered through documentary analysis is provided in relation to employment and housing outcomes. During the course of the study 26 tenants moved out of the Foyer. It has been possible to gather evidence in relation to outcomes for a further 7 tenants (whose tenancies continued after the period of the study) through continued contact with both staff and tenants in the period following the end of the study.

The chapter begins with an account of the aspirations and expectations of the young people who took part in this study. This includes examples of tenants' expectations of the Foyer and their stated personal goals as identified on application forms, interview forms and personal development plans. Unsurprisingly much of this data includes statements that correlate with the stated aims and objectives of the Foyer itself. Those applicants that were unable to convince staff of their commitment to self-improvement

through training, education and ultimately employment were not allocated tenancies. Further evidence suggests that there are discrepancies between the reasons given for requesting a tenancy at the application stage and the reasons later identified. The problems young people identified in fulfilling their stated goals and aspirations are also considered, and related to their experiences as Foyer tenants.

Finally the chapter provides data in relation to outcomes for Foyer tenants. First interview excerpts and answers provided in a survey (completed by tenants at the end of their tenancy) are used to provide an evaluation of the tenant perspective of the Foyer experience. Second quantitative data is provided in relation to employment and housing outcomes for participants in the study. Details of the changes in circumstance experienced by individuals are presented in tabular form.

This chapter, then, contains the main study findings and provides data in relation to tenants' original expectations and aspirations of the Foyer, their experiences of the Foyer system and outcomes for participants who held Foyer tenancies during the eighteen-month period of the study. Accordingly I deal here with a principal question of this thesis. Namely – can the Foyer system provide young people who are unable to claim 'citizenship by proxy' (Jones and Wallace 1992) with the support required to gain the economic status and independence that will enhance their opportunities in relation to accessing secure accommodation and making the transition to citizenship (see Chapter 3)?

The first section of the chapter explores the expectations and aspirations of respondents.

Aspirations

This section of the chapter is concerned with the aspirations of individual tenants, their expectations of the Foyer and their longer-term goals. The section begins with a review of statements included in application forms and at allocation interviews by tenants in relation to their aspirations and expectations. The chapter then investigates tenants' aspirations and expectations of the Foyer and of self as they were identified in the research.

As discussed in Chapter 5 young people who wished to take a tenancy at the Foyer had to go through an application procedure that consisted of the completion of an application form, referral form (where there was a referring agency), an initial informal interview and a second interview at which staff recorded replies to set questions (concerning past experiences and current skills). The initial application form included three questions, which are relevant for the purposes of this chapter:

Q34: *What kind of support to you expect to receive from the Foyer?*

Q42: *What do you think living at the Foyer will be like and why do you want to live there? Please can you write a few lines to give us your ideas.*

Q43: *Describe the situation you would like to be in, one year from now.*

There were a number of common themes apparent in the responses given by applicants.

Q34: *What kind of support to you expect to receive from the Foyer?*

Q 34: *'Help in finding direction in life, life skills and employment and training' (Paula, 22).*

The most frequently cited response to Q34 related to help with obtaining employment or training leading to employment (22 cases), support in acquiring independent living skills (such as budgeting, cooking, learning to look after myself) was a secondary consideration in 10 of those 22 cases. Support in acquiring independent living skills was given as the primary response in 6 cases (all but one of which were young people leaving local authority care). Other responses identified the need for support in continuing full time education, benefits advice, the provision of safe accommodation at the Foyer and help in securing independent accommodation. The majority of responses met the remit of the Foyer aims and objectives (in assisting young people to secure employment and independent living skills so that they might secure and sustain independent accommodation).

Q42: *What do you think living at the Foyer will be like and why do you want to live there? Please can you write a few lines to give us your ideas.*

Q42: *'It would help me take responsibility and how to get on with people. It will help me get employment and training and allow me to do something with my life' (Damien, 22).*

The majority of the responses to question 42 referred to the expectation of support in gaining the skills and resources needed to live independently. Another common theme was the wish to live in a *community* of young people while a number of young people leaving care or the homes of relatives felt that the Foyer would give them greater

independence and freedom. Many applicants referred to the Foyer as offering them *a fresh start,* or *the chance to get on track* or to *sort myself out.* Responses indicate that young people identified the Foyer as a place where they could receive supported but independent accommodation and be given the opportunity to make changes to their lives in the company of other young people. In all, 9 of these applicants were moving out of local authority care and 5 the parental home. For those leaving local authority care (9) and for 2 of the applicants leaving the parental home, the Foyer would represent their first experience of independent living. The other 22 applicants had already been living independently for various periods of time and in various housing circumstances (see Chapter 6). However the overwhelming majority of them did not feel that they had developed the skills needed to support independent living and this was a primary reason for wishing to take a tenancy at the Foyer.

Q43: *Describe the situation you would like to be in, one year from now.*

Q43: *'Job and home' (Ben, 17).*

The example response above is representative of all but 4 responses (these referred to the wish to be in further education). All other respondents stated that they wanted to be in full-time employment and living in *'my own'* flat or house. A number of respondents did specify that they wanted a *'decent job'*, a job *'in something I enjoy doing'* or a job that *'will pay the rent'* or work in an identified area. A study undertaken with a sample of young people from diverse backgrounds in terms of class, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity identified similar aspirations:

"A surprisingly large proportion spoke of wanting the makings of a comfortable lifestyle: a car a home of their own, a reasonably satisfying, reasonably well paid job"
(Stainton Rogers et al 1997:32).

The aspirations and ambitions of the young people applying to the Foyer were simply a job and a home, however as discussed in Chapter 2 many young people now face difficulties in gaining access to the labour and housing markets.

'I didn't have nowhere else to go' (Huw, 16).

During the interviews conducted for this research respondents were asked what they hoped to get out of the Foyer, how they thought the Foyer could help them or why they had decided to come to the Foyer. Many respondents gave answers that reflected the themes presented in the application form, greater independence with support and help with employment and independent living skills. However another common reason given during the course of the research, was that of simply having *'nowhere else to go'*. For young people in housing need the Foyer was first and foremost a place to live. This is clearly illustrated in the following interview excerpts:

'Well first and foremost you've got the knowledge and security that you've got somewhere to come home to each night instead of by 4 or 5 o'clock your mind would start working like, where am I going to stay tonight' (Nicholas, 24).

'Basically cos I didn't have anywhere else to live you see' (Ben, 16).

'I've always got a home to come to and they're not going to kick me out at one day's notice' (Ann, 18).

A group interview was conducted in October 1997 and was attended by 14 tenants. Respondents were asked if they believed that being at the Foyer would lead to employment and independent accommodation. The question was written on a flip chart

and a show of hands were taken. Only two tenants thought that this was the case. I then asked *'Why are you here?'* their reply was *'Nowhere else to go'*. Of course the fact that the primary factor in the decision to apply for a place at the Foyer was the need for shelter does not necessarily mean that the reasons given on applications forms were not also genuine. However it may help to explain the discrepancies between stated intentions in terms of a commitment to facilitate change in employment status through participation in the Foyer system and actual commitment in terms of attendance at training sessions etc. This issue is part of a complex relationship between personal development and organisational difficulties. It is therefore explored in more depth later in the chapter and there is some evidence to suggest that many tenants were not yet in a position to participate fully in the Foyer programme. This is not to claim that the aspirations stated at the application stage were not genuine aspirations but rather that young people's past experiences may have adversely affected their ability to participate in the programme.

The Foyer ethos depends on the setting of short-term and longer-term goals. Personal Development Plans included a range of individual goals and plans for achieving them. This varied from *'Eating healthy, sleeping'*, *'Reading books'* to *'own a cottage, be surrounded by children and grow a big beard'*. However some of the young people who took part in this study and who had set such goals with staff expressed a fatalistic attitude that was common among tenants. Many had exercised little control over their past life events and viewed themselves as the victims of circumstance:

'I find that if you've got a goal that means making plans and I tend not to plan ahead cos in my experience. Have you seen a pack of cards when you do the cards and you get right to the top and then someone takes one from the bottom and they just fall and that's been my experience of life so I tend not to plan ahead' (Nicholas, 24).

'All the people I know have been in really bad situations as well, kicked out really young and picked on all their life most people end up like me with a real negative attitude so I don't really like looking to the future I don't like to plan, what happens, happens' (Damien, 22).

Although young people did hold the aspirations outlined earlier they had little expectation that such hopes could be met. This phenomenon was identified in an ethnographic study of homeless and unemployed young people undertaken by Blackman (1997:116) and is referred to in this study as the 'fear of fall':

> "Individuals conceived any movement forward in life not worth taking the risk because they saw any advancement as bringing with it a greater chance of returning to an even worse condition of existence. For some this 'fear of fall' outweighed all possible benefits of efforts towards personal advancement. Most conceived the idea of a fall in terms of a change of status when attempting to move upwards. From their perspective, both the negative fall or the optimistic upward change of status were understood as contradictory moments of change".

Despite the mismatch between stated expectations of change through participation in the Foyer programme (at the application stage) and the lack of control young people actually felt they could exercise in achieving these aspirations, the long terms aspirations identified in the research closely reflect those stated on application forms.

'Decent job, flat of my own somewhere, a car. The usual things everyone wants' (Dai, 20).

The common themes at interviews in terms of long-term goals mirrored those stated in the application forms. The most frequently given reply is illustrated in the above interview excerpt. The majority of respondents hoped to gain employment and independent accommodation and once again the majority specified that they wanted a *'decent'* job. For one respondent this meant *'work where my work's going to be*

benefiting someone instead of working in a grey factory' (Sean, 21) for another *'a full-time job in something I enjoy doing' (Paula, 22).* Some of those already in employment or training hoped to advance in their careers while others referred to continuing or entering further or higher education.

Tenants' main expectations of the Foyer were the provision of independent but supported accommodation and of support in gaining independent living skills and education and/or employment. However during the course of the research it became apparent that for many respondents the Foyer represented *'Mainly a place to stay' (Jacob, 18).* The long-term aspirations of respondents as stated at the application stage were the same as those identified in the research (primarily employment and independent accommodation). However the apparent commitment to achieving these aims through participation in the Foyer programme as identified at the application stage masked the feeling of powerlessness in bringing about such change. This point is crucial as the Foyer philosophy as identified at a meeting to discuss operational policy in October 1997 is concerned with *Helping people to help themselves, support people in setting and meeting goals.* As discussed in the last chapter the allocation process included an evaluation of whether applicants had reached a point in their personal development where they were ready to 'help themselves'. All the respondents had satisfied the staff of this at the point of application, however there is evidence to suggest that many of the respondents were not yet ready to invest in the programme as they viewed themselves as social agents with little control over their futures but rather as the victims of circumstance. This has implications for the ethos underpinning the Foyer movement, the young people who are

most in need of accommodation and support may not yet hold the personal resources needed to fulfil their part of the social contract between tenant and Foyer. This claim is explored in more depth in the concluding chapter. Having considered the expectations and aspirations of tenants of the Foyer the next section of the chapter explores the experiences of young people during their tenancies at the Foyer.

The Foyer Experience

This section of the chapter draws on interview data (including the findings of the group interview), field notes gathered during participant observation and responses to the survey (MF2) to explore the 'Foyer experience' as it was perceived by tenants during the eighteen month period of the study. It is important here to remind the reader of the context of these experiences in terms of organisational development and change. As discussed in Chapter 5 this study took place in the first eighteen months of the project's life and a number of organisational procedures changed or were created at different points during this period. The manager responsible for developing the Foyer project took other employment within the first month of the project's operation (in May1997). A caretaker manager from the project's parent body (who continued to hold wider management responsibilities) managed the project until September 1997 when a new project manager was appointed. The training worker who was funded through the European Social Fund through the Employment Service went on sick leave in October 1997 following an incident in which a tenant's visitor threatened her. She returned to work briefly at the end of November 1997 but in January 1998 ended her employment. A temporary training worker was then seconded on a part-time basis from the parent body

until a full-time training worker was appointed in July 1998. It has been important to return to the question of these organisational changes at this point as they provide a context in which many of the experiences can be understood.

This section of the chapter has been organised under three main headings: support and social contact, the experience of shared accommodation and training and motivation. The first of these themes to be explored is that of support and social contact.

Support and Social Contact

The majority of positive accounts of the Foyer experience were focused on two issues, the level of support offered by staff and the importance of social contact with other young people.

Support

Many tenants referred to the importance of staff support. In some cases tenants referred to the importance of having access to general staff support. For example responses to Q11 of the survey MF2 (see Appendix 6): *Please write down what you think about the Foyer, what are the good points and bad points of living here?* included the following; *'Support from friendly staff'*, and *'Staff available to talk at all times'*. The significance of general staff support was also apparent at interview:

'The staff- they're friendly, they're helpful. They're there when you want someone to speak to when you can't speak to other tenants' (Phillip, 22).

Tenants referred to their relationships with particular staff as important in terms of providing friendship and social contact: *'Just having someone to talk to like TW (Training Worker)' (Robbie, 21).* At the end of their tenancies a number of tenants said that they would miss particular members of staff and the quality of personal relationships between staff members and tenants was significant for a number of respondents. For many tenants, staff represented a significant source of support and advice that could not be accessed through family membership. Tenants also referred to specific areas in which they had received support:

'All the staff are good I need any help and staff are there to help, anything. I was coming off drugs for a couple of months, every hour or half hour they were bringing me coffee' (Sean, 21 years).

Tenants' files contained file notes maintained by staff in relation to significant issues raised during contact with tenants. They reveal that many tenants sought and received contact with staff in relation to personal issues that resulted from their past experiences such as relationship problems, feelings of low self-esteem and depression. This was in addition to organised support sessions with key workers and support and reassurance was often sought from staff covering the night shift. Evidence within the file notes is supported through the observations of the researcher, that a number of tenants had high support needs and consumed high levels of the staff's time. For example, Martha (20) has mild learning difficulties and has problems coping with challenging or new situations. In total over a twelve month period (during which Martha was unemployed) seventeen separate file notes have been completed in relation to significant issues of concern raised by Martha. In addition thirty hours and fifty five minutes of support are recorded on the sessional register (in relation to employment and training, life skills and benefits advice).

During the course of participant observation I also recorded a significant number of incidents when Martha sought advice and support form staff in relation to general issues and day to day living. A minority of tenants' files contained evidence of even higher levels of recorded staff support. In contrast Ann (18) gained employment five months after starting her tenancy at the Foyer. The support and advice received in relation to applying for this post is recorded on her file. In total over a nine month period four file notes in relation to significant issues (relationship problems) are contained in her file while fourteen and a half hours of support are recorded on the sessional register. These examples illustrate the fact that there is little evidence of any correlation between hours of support recorded and positive employment outcomes for individual tenants. In fact the reverse is true, those tenants with the highest support needs were more likely to require a high level of staff support and least likely to enter (or sustain) education, training or employment. In general (although there are some exceptions) those tenants who did sustain or enter training or employment received lower levels of staff support in terms of recorded hours of contact.

A common theme in tenants' files is the problem of tenants' failing to attend appointments with staff. In most cases this happened on a small number of occasions but a minority of tenants consistently failed to attend appointments.

Despite the number of references to staff support as a positive aspect of Foyer life some tenants felt that the Foyer was understaffed. Most of these comments referred to the lack

of access to an employment and training worker at the end of 1997. However some tenants commented on staff shortages in general:

'There's far too many people here and not enough staff.. you've got 2 staff and they can't be exactly see 29 people at the same time' (Susie, 17).

' Maybe the staff are too busy just up and running things' (Joe, 18).

At the group interview a small number of tenants also felt that the staff were too busy running the Foyer instead of *'looking after'* them. This was countered by a tenant who said *'We're not children'*, this statement was supported by a majority of tenants. This was followed by an open discussion in which some tenants claimed that although the staff had attempted to treat them as adults the behavior of a minority of tenants (two of whom were identified as 'culprits' during the interview) had led to a situation in which all tenants were treated like children. Two tenants referred specifically to this issue during individual interviews:

'Well most of the staff I won't mention any names but they treat us like children. They still treat us like 5 year olds, if they treated us like adults I'll admit there are some people here and they're idiots' (Steve, 19).

'When I came here they said they were going to treat us like adults but at the moment I feel like they're treating us like children' (Tina, 17).

In the case of the group interview and the two individual interviews these criticisms were balanced by reference to personal accounts of incidents when tenants had received support from particular staff members.

Youth has been identified as a period in which individuals seek emancipation from parental control (Harris 1983) and as a period when young people are seeking to assert

their independence and identity (Jones 1995b). Studies by Hutson and Jenkins (1989), and Hutson and Wai-yee-Cheung, (1992) illustrate the complex negotiations that take place between young people and their parents as they seek to claim the autonomy of adult status while in a position of economic dependence that renders them subject to a degree of continued parental control (see also Finch and Mason 1993, Jones 1992). The respondents in this study are attempting to make the transition to adulthood under a different set of circumstances, that is in the absence of sufficient parental support. However in seeking to support tenants in the transition to adulthood within the confines of the Foyer philosophy staff also attempted to exercise a degree of control over the behavior of tenants so that they might retain their tenancies and meet the aims and objectives of the Foyer. In this way the conflict between the need for support in achieving independence and the need to gain autonomy and control in exercising that independence (that has been identified in relation to young people within families (Jones and Wallace 1992; Jones 1995a), was also apparent in the relationship between tenants and staff. Ironically then the processes put in place by the Foyer to assist young people in gaining the resources required for independent living were perceived by some tenants as a form of control that denied them the autonomy needed for independence. For example young people who failed to attend training sessions and key worker meetings were sent warning letters and where facilities were abused (for example when the computers were corrupted or the common room was not cleaned) access to those facilities was denied as a sanction. This issue is further complicated by the fact that although tenants expressed resentment when they were subject to such controls the majority supported the existence and enforcement of Foyer rules. The issues explored above highlight the difficulties of

supporting vulnerable young people in gaining independence while enforcing the philosophy of the organisation designed to achieve such outcomes. For some tenants the imposition of control by staff in attempting to 'help young people to help themselves' was perceived as detrimental to their attempts to exercise independent adult status.

Social Contact

It has already been noted that tenants valued contact with staff not only as a source of support but also as a source of social contact. Social contact with other young people was also identified as a positive aspect of the Foyer. Some respondents simply described this in terms of *'making friends'* others referred to the importance of access to social contact:

'In the Foyer you've always got someone at the main desk, you've always got friends in the next room or whatever and if you start to get whatever you can just call on them and have a chat but if you're living on the outside you can't do that. Some people can they're quite fortunate but a lot can't' (Nicholas, 24).

'The fact that you've got someone here to talk to not just in respect of if you have a problem in respect to say you were here on your own one night you can go down to reception and you've always got someone to talk to, it's not as lonely as living on your own, you've got all these people' (Maria, 16).

Many tenants were concerned about the loss of social contact at the point of moving on. In this way just as the dilemma of balancing the need for support with the need for autonomy and independence bore similarities to the negotiations of independent status within the parent-child relationship (see above), young people leaving the Foyer encountered the same reservations about lack of social contact and loneliness as young people following 'traditional' patterns may experience in leaving the parental home:

'It'll be weird getting used to normal life again, I'm not saying it's not normal but it's strange. Just being able to get up in the morning and having people on the steps and stuff like that' (Joe, 18).

The professional support of staff was an important element of the Foyer system for the young people experiencing it. However what appeared to be more significant was access to social contact in the form of relationships with both staff and other tenants. The fact that young people could make contact with staff and tenants whenever they felt the need to talk or share company was a facet of Foyer life that was highly valued by the majority of respondents. A minority of tenants did not seek such social contact and spent very little time in communal spaces. Only five of the tenants who agreed to take part in the research were among those who spent very little time in communal spaces and of those only one agreed to an interview. It was therefore difficult to discern the factors affecting participation in the social life of the Foyer. One respondent who was himself actively involved in the social life of the Foyer offered the following explanation but there is no evidence from the individuals concerned to support this claim:

'But now they're moving in people (who are) too afraid to come out and talk to us because they're like that other people start taking the piss out of them and they hide in their rooms' (Tim, 19).

For the majority of respondents social contact with staff and tenants was a significantly positive aspect of living at the Foyer. Despite this many of the negative aspects identified with living at the Foyer were concerned with the problems of a shared living space and this issue is the next to be considered.

The Experience of Shared Accommodation

This section of the chapter is organised under three headings related to the experience of shared accommodation: noise and mess, safety and security and tenant behavior.

Noise and Mess

A majority of respondents referred to problematic noise levels, at the Foyer, especially during the night. The staff liaison book recorded complaints about noise levels made to night staff and of staff contact with tenants who were playing loud music etc. Night time noise levels were cited as a problem in responses to the survey (MF2): *'circumstances of some tenants can lead to noisy and rowdy behavior which can even be heard in tenants' own rooms'.*

Sleep disturbance was the main problem associated with noise levels especially for tenants in employment or education:

'Noise makes it difficult to get up for work(a government training course)' (Susie, 17).

'Downstairs the music blasting cos I got to get up for college in the morning sometimes 2 o'clock in the morning it's blasting and I got to go to college in the morning, I can't get to sleep' (Ben, 16).

At first staff attempted to resolve this problem through discussion at tenants' meetings and through work with individual tenants. Staff adopted this approach on the basis of a belief that the Foyer was the tenant's home and that because of this there should be as few restrictions on behavior as possible. However the staff in consultation with tenants eventually introduced a noise curfew, a minority of tenants failed to respect this curfew.

The Foyer is organised into 5 'houses', each of which contain 7 tenants' rooms and a shared kitchen. The mess left in kitchens by other tenants was a cause for complaint among a number of tenants, in some cases this issue created a lot of disharmony between tenants and their house mates. Some tenants resented the expectation that they would

clear up after others. Some tenants claimed that the mess prohibited their use of the kitchens:

'We've got a drunk living in our house so the kitchen never gets cleaned after they've been in there. So me and Steve don't bring food into this place we go to the caff or something and that wipes out our money straight away' (Tim, 19).

This issue was identified as a problem by staff at a meeting in August 1997 and house cleaning rotas were introduced. This did resolve the problems in some houses but in others the issue changed to accusations of tenants failing to fulfil their cleaning obligations.

The fact that tenants were failing to keep the common room and the laundry in order was an issue for both tenants and staff (this issue was raised by sessional workers at a number of staff meetings). In October 1997 tenants were denied access to the common room for a period of a few weeks. The imposition of this sanction was resented by tenants:

'They shut the common room for instance and things like that you know. I think that's pretty low on our side what do they expect us to do during the day? There's a pool table here which was put here for us and a TV and they closed it up you know. It's not fair on us really' (Tina, 17).

This issue was also raised during the group interview (that took place during the period in which access to the common room was denied). The majority of tenants claimed that the mess was created by a small number of identified tenants and resented the fact that the sanction had been applied to all tenants. To a large degree the issues of noise and mess that have been identified here are problems that are common to communal living among young people (as anyone who has experienced student accommodation must know). These issues were however significant for a number of reasons. Some tenants reported difficulties in sleeping because of noise levels and this affected their ability to attend

work or training. The mess in house kitchens meant that young people were sometimes unable to cook for themselves and this impacted on the development of their independent living skills. Both issues caused tension between individual tenants and attempts to resolve these issues consumed staff time.

Safety and Security

The issue of safety and security included concern in relation to personal safety and concern about the loss of property. This issue was one of the major themes to emerge during the group interview. The emphasis on this problem at that time must be understood in the context of two incidents that had taken place in the weeks preceding the meeting. The training worker had been verbally abused and threatened by a tenant's visitor (and was on sick leave as a result) and a tenant had been seriously assaulted by the visitor of another tenant (sustaining injuries that needed medical attention). At the group interview tenants claimed that the Foyer was not safe, *'A home should be safe and it's not'*. Some tenants said that they did not feel safe leaving their own rooms while a minority were concerned that they were vulnerable even when in their own room. Tenants suggested that the solution to this problem was that applicants should be carefully vetted and it was even suggested that applicants should supply references. This was also a theme at interview and in responses to the survey *'Letting anybody in to live here (people who take drugs), don't check people's backgrounds before letting them in'*. This was part of a process in which respondents often identified *'bad'* tenants as the instigators of many of the problems associated with living at the Foyer (discussed further under tenant behavior). Interestingly many tenants felt that what appeared to be an

already complex application procedure in terms of qualifying the rules of eligibility was inadequate because it failed to exclude *'trouble makers'*. Tenants also commented on the need for greater security for staff including the addition of an extra member of staff on night shift (covered by one member of staff).

The second issue identified related to the security of personal property. At interview nine tenants mentioned specific incidents in which their belongings had been stolen. Theft of property was also referred to in responses to the survey (MF2). The most common theft was of clothing taken from the communal laundry. The theft of personal items was especially difficult to come to terms with for the majority of tenants who had few belongings and subsistence levels of income:

'I've had two purses stolen from here and my CD player stolen, I've had clothes taken from the laundry and I've just had a guts full I can't afford to keep replacing things all the time' (Susie, 17).

Items were also stolen from the Foyer itself, for example microwaves were taken from some of the kitchens. I asked one tenant during an interview why he thought tenants were stealing from one another:

'Drugs problems especially with a certain person who has been taking things. He goes down town every day pinching things to supply his habit and when he can't do that and it's late in the evening then it's this place. He's got two or three weeks left on his tenancy then we can start to get things replaced' (Tim, 19).

Evidence later emerged to suggest that one individual was responsible for some of the theft taking place and that individual (who did not take part in the study) was given notice to quit. Despite this there is no solid evidence to support the fact that there were a small number of tenants who were responsible for the thefts at the Foyer, or indeed whether these crimes were committed to support drug habits. Evidence from elsewhere does

suggest a link between chronic youth unemployment and crime as some youth enter into 'alternative careers' (Craine 1997). In total 33 per cent of tenants had criminal convictions (see Chapter 6) but this study did not provide any evidence to suggest that these individuals were responsible for the thefts committed at the Foyer. A number of tenants suggested that CCTV should be installed to reduce theft, this option was discussed by staff who rejected it on the grounds that it would infringe on tenants' privacy. However a camera was installed at the entrance to the Foyer so that staff could deny entry to excluded visitors.

In the case of the two incidents concerning threatening behavior towards a staff member and the assault of a tenant the perpetrators were not tenants but visitors. In June 1997 visitors' rules were introduced in attempt to ensure the safety of tenants, staff and property. Tenants were already required to sign their visitors into a book kept at reception and to supervise their visitors while they were at the Foyer, this was reinforced when a copy of the visitors' rules was displayed at the reception desk. In addition no visitors were to be admitted after 2.30 am and tenants were allowed a maximum of two overnight visitors for not more than three nights per week (unless prior consent in writing was obtained from the Foyer manager). Visitors who failed to adhere to the rules of the Foyer were excluded and a list of these young people was maintained at reception. Problems associated with visitors in particular at night were identified at a number of staff meetings. Within the first two weeks of operation the following note was entered in the staff liaison book: *'Need to establish rules-number of friends at a time. There are lots of people here at night already with only 5 tenants- time visitors should leave'*. The

majority of respondents felt that the introduction of visitors' rules were necessary in order to maintain safety although a minority felt that they were too stringent.

The issues of safety and security are significant both because of the practical difficulties that the theft of personal belongings caused for tenants surviving on low incomes and because of the psychological impact of feelings of insecurity as they were identified by some respondents. The issue of safety was most prominent during the period following the two incidents described earlier and was not a significant theme in the survey MF2. However the theft of personal belongings remained a significant issue for many Foyer tenants and was identified as a negative aspects of tenants' experiences at the Foyer. A number of tenants viewed this problem as part of a general issue associated with the behavior of identified individuals and their visitors, the issue of tenant behavior is now considered.

Tenant Behavior

Although social contact with other tenants was an issue strongly identified as a positive aspect of living at the Foyer, the behavior of other tenants and their visitors was also identified as a negative aspects of living at the Foyer. This issue was raised both in the context of safety and security as discussed above and as a general problem associated with shared accommodation on a relatively large scale. Many of the problems raised by tenants were identified as issues surrounding the behavior of other tenants rather than the operation of the Foyer itself:

'It's not cos of the Foyer it's cos of the people who are living here. The Foyer's a wonderful place to come it's just some people can bring it down and some people can bring it up' (Brad, 17).

A number of issues emerged in relation to tenant behavior, the problem of noise levels and mess that have already been discussed, the identification of *'bad'* tenants whose general behavior was viewed as unhelpful or threatening and the claim that some tenants were abusing the Foyer system (this last issue is discussed in the next section: training and motivation):

'It's been stressful, it's been living with other people who are just not nice. Late nights, not being able to sleep at night because of the noise and that and the drugs problem in here'(Natalie, 16).

A number of tenants felt that the behaviour of other tenants was caused by drug misuse and responses to Q11 of the survey MF2 included: *'Tenants who take drugs', 'Bad points: other inconsiderate tenants', 'attitudes of tenants towards kitchens'.* Respondents felt that the behavior of other tenants impinged upon their ability to live their lives on a day-to day basis: inability to use dirty kitchens, the loss of access to the common room and computer room, the ability to get to sleep, the abusive behaviour of other tenants. For some tenants the behavior of other tenants had more serious implications. The file notes on some tenants' files chronicle both complaints by tenants who were the victims of verbal abuse and harassment and staff attempts to resolve these problems through mediation. In some cases situations culminated in official warning letters to perpetrators who were warned that they were in breach of their tenancy agreement.

In the majority of cases complaints refer to verbal harassment, however in a minority of cases harassment was more systematic,

'If one tenant says something to another tenant and that tenant takes it the wrong way and you know goes off on one and then seeks revenge so to speak and then it just gets worse for no reason so it goes beyond. And that particular person could be you know one of the boys and then all the rest of the boys start doing it to that one tenant then that tenant becomes a victim' (Brad, 17).

This form of harassment was more difficult for staff to control as there were difficulties in identifying a single perpetrator. One tenant provided the following response to Q2 of the survey MF2 : *Why are you leaving the Foyer? :*

'Continual threats and assaults from other tenants. It makes it look as though nothing is being done as it is allowed to continue'.

This case was exceptional, however a minority of tenants did experience significant harassment while others referred to specific events during which disagreements between tenants had resulted in a *'bad atmosphere'.*

In sum, many of the negative experiences identified related to living in shared accommodation. The main problems identified were those of noise and mess, which made it difficult for tenants to carry out their daily activities, insufficient safety and security that impacted on tenants' economic and psychological well being and the problems related to the inconsiderate and sometimes intimidating behaviour of fellow tenants. These issues had a significant impact on the way in which tenants experienced the Foyer. The evidence suggests that the way in which the Foyer system is delivered – usually in relatively large accommodation blocks- may be problematic and may impact on the ability of staff and young people to fulfil the requirements of the Foyer system. This evidence illustrates the problems associated with shared living conditions however it is not as useful in assessing the adequacy of the Foyer philosophy in operation. Central to

this philosophy is the idea that young people should be 'helped to help themselves'. At the Foyer an obligation to undertake a minimum of 6 hours training a week was a prerequisite of tenancy and this was the central practice through which the aims and objectives of the Foyer were intended to be met. Although failure to meet training requirements did not lead to a loss of the current tenancy held it affected tenants' eligibility for a renewed tenancy at the end of the first six months period. Therefore the next section of the chapter considers the issues of training, motivation and participation.

Training and Motivation

The obligation to undertake training was a central method through which staff aimed to meet the aims and objectives of the Foyer. In-house training was designed to meet the requirements of young people as identified at the point of application and was focused on personal development, independent living skills and the development of skills necessary for labour market participation. The minimum number of hours of training to be undertaken each week (6) was determined by the requirements of European Social Fund funding. The training programme was not intended to operate in isolation, it was to be supported by staff work with individual tenants under a key worker system (as discussed in Chapter 5) and through the general support provided by staff. The obligation to undertake training was a prerequisite of the renewal of tenancy at the end of the first six month period and in this way the Foyer system mirrors the present government's interpretation of citizenship, that there can be no rights without responsibilities and that 'social rights can be conceded only if they are earned' (Dean 1999:222). Tenants were to earn their right to continued Foyer residency through the fulfilment of an obligation to

undertake training and accept support designed to improve their independent living and employment skills. The commitment to make these changes is a criterion of allocation and was clearly outlined in the flyer originally used to advertise the Foyer:

'FOYER is for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who are:
- *homeless*
- *at risk of becoming homeless*
- *living somewhere temporarily*
- *in hostel accommodation/supported lodgings*

AND WHO ALSO

- *need and want support to obtain training or employment*
- *need and want support to keep a job or training course place*

if you really want to make positive and practical changes in your life, FOYER is the place for you.'

As discussed earlier in this chapter the young people who took part in this study were able to satisfy staff at the application stage of their commitment to such change (although for many the primary factor in securing a tenancy was the need for shelter). Additionally the fact that a number of respondents did not feel able to exercise control over their future 'careers' has already been discussed. Related to this issue is the question of motivation to participate in the programme, lack of motivation was identified as a problem by a number of respondents. This section of the chapter outlines the themes that emerged in relation to training issues, these include: a discussion of the operation and content of the training programme, levels of attendance, and motivation. It is important to note that although commitment to training was an 'official' criteria of eligibility in the renewal of tenancies, staff were often generous in their appraisal of the developments made by tenants (seeking to identify and build upon any positive change where future commitment to change was considered possible). The following section outlines the development of the training programme before considering issues of programme content and levels of participation.

The Training Programme: lost promise?

During the first month of the Foyer's operation tenant numbers were small (under 10) and this impacted on the early development of a full training programme. However by June 1997 the training worker had arranged for English and maths classes to be taught on site (delivered by staff from a local college twice a week). A number of tenants signed up for this training and tenants were also encouraged to attend two externally taught IT courses, multi media and the Internet and music mixing. The training worker hoped that such courses would be attractive to tenants and that involvement in these courses would encourage tenants to undertake further training. Only one of the respondents in this study attended the course, gaining a certificate. In July 1997 when the English and maths classes were suspended for the summer there were already concerns about attendance levels, many of the tenants had enrolled for the courses but were failing to attend. By September 1997 when the course was resumed it was reduced to one combined evening a week because of low attendance. In October 1997 only one tenant attended the weekly session and it was no longer possible to sustain the course on site (although tenants were able to attend at a local education and training centre). A number of external speakers were also invited to the Foyer to provide information on issues such as the New Deal.

At the start of the academic year in September 1997 six of the tenants who participated in the study had been accepted on courses taught by external institutions, three on full-time courses and three on a part-time basis. Only two of these tenants completed the course they undertook. It was suggested at a staff meeting that a number of tenants were deterred

from undertaking full-time education because of the loss of benefits, and one respondent reported that she that had left college because of financial difficulties.

After the training worker went on sick leave in October 1997, staff continued to work with tenants on an individual basis in addressing training issues (goals and plans to meet employment aspirations) and in identifying areas in need of development (health needs, nutrition, benefits, budgeting) and this contact is documented in tenant files. In addition some group events were organised which were designed to develop tenants' independent living skills for example 'Street Eats' involved communal cooking and eating. Other social events were organised under the Local Initiative Funded 'Get it Going' (GIG) project. However, although the training worker returned briefly in December before withdrawing from their post there was no in-house training programme in place between October 1997 and January 1998.

In January 1998 a temporary training worker was seconded from the parent body of the Foyer. At this time the staff had been informed that they should have delivered 4,500 hours of training under the former ESF programme in the period between May and December 1997. In fact 1000 hours of training had been delivered in this period. Two factors are significant in explaining this short fall, first the ESF figure was based on the Foyer operating at full capacity when in fact 31 places had been allocated during 1997 and 13 of those tenants had moved on during the same period. Second the Foyer was in essence without a training worker for the last two months of the period.

In January 1998 a new ESF training programme was instigated. The content of the training programme was varied and changed on a weekly basis, a number of sample weeks of the programme are reproduced below:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
January1998 Budgeting..making your money last	Benefits advice	Open meeting on New Deal- guest speaker	Induction meeting	
March 1998 Introduction to using Foyer computers	A New Job..all you need to know about beginning work	How much rent will I have to pay when I start work?	Design your own training course (accredited external trainer)	Budgeting.. how to make your money last
July 1998	Relaxation techniques	Cooking skills: House by house sessions	Counselling : (external counsellor) individual appointments	

Sessions lasted between one and one and a half hours. A report to the Foyer Development Group in March 1998 records that attendance was varied and included up to 5 tenants (some sessions later in the year attracted up to 10 tenants), that tenant feedback was *'positive and constructive'* and that tenants had expressed a wish to have more sessions run by external trainers. It also notes that there continued to be a high demand for individual support sometimes in response to issues raised at group sessions and that this was a *'huge challenge'* for the two key worker staff. Staff shortages, in particular the loss of the training worker, were also identified as a problem by a number of tenants:

'It's a good idea (the training clause) but it haven't been happening much cos TW's (training worker) been off and stuff well it's not their fault but stuff haven't been happening' (Jacob,18).

This situation was eased by the appointment of a full-time training worker in July 1998.

The problem of low attendance at training sessions was a consistent one and respondents identified three major issues affecting participation in the training programme, the delayed implementation and operation of the programme, the content of the programme offered and motivation.

A number of respondents claimed that the training programme had not operated as anticipated, for example the following excerpt is taken from an interview that was carried out at the beginning of February 1998:

'There's other teething problems like the training programme they were supposed to have had like in our tenancy agreements we've got to sign up for 6 hours a week so at the moment whoever's been living here in the past couple of months has broken their tenancy agreement since they moved in. The training wasn't here at all it's only the last few weeks that they're getting the training going here. Personally from my point of view it's too late they said they offered me all this it sounded good when I had my first interview we're going to offer you all this training and all that but as soon as I moved in there was no training at all. Three months down the line there was talk about training and only now they're getting training. It's taken too long to get the training in place and you know people just, they want to carry on with their lives' (Tim ,19).

There are a number of factors that explain the delay in instigating a full training programme. During the first months of operation there were relatively few numbers of tenants and staff were consumed with the establishment of procedures and with the day to day running of the organisation as the operational policy of the Foyer was developed. Staff were involved in identifying the training needs of new tenants and towards the end of the year there were problems associated with staff shortages (as discussed earlier).

A number of respondents complained that training options were discussed and advertised but were not then offered (this was also raised as an issue during the group interview) :

'They write all this stuff put your name down for so and so and you go there and nothing happens about it you know it doesn't kick off at all so I think they should go ahead with more stuff for the tenants here so there's more for people, for people to think about and do' (Joe, 18).

'It's all right it's a bit boring here to be honest with you there's not much going on really they try and organise these courses everyone says 'yeah we want, we'll do them' and then when the course comes nobody turns up so the course just ends up disappearing' (Damien, 22).

This extract highlights the problems of low demand for and attendance at training sessions. During 1997 the programme itself was sparse as discussed above, however where courses were organised low attendance often meant that the course could not be sustained (for example the English and maths classes). From January 1998 a full weekly training programme was offered, however attendance figures remained low ranging from one to ten. The actuality of low take-up contrasts starkly with the views of all but two respondents, the majority felt that the obligation to undertake training was in principle a good idea:

'Yes (training clause a good idea) because many people don't have much things to do like don't go out to work or anything so at least if they get experience or something it's good' (Lucy, 17).

' Yes (training clause good idea) I think that you're not just here to do nothing and enjoy your life you're here to be helped to get somewhere' (Ann, 18).

'Good (the training clause) the whole reason we're here is for like help and if you're not prepared to do anything –you've got play your part in it as well' (Susie, 17).

In fact many respondents criticised other tenants for their failure to fulfil their obligations and participate in the training programme and in the wider Foyer system:

'There are some people here don't use the Foyer, just think it's a place where you can sleep and stay, like I'm not mentioning any names but I know a few people who said they'd be willing to go to college or get a job but just stay in bed all day' (Phillip,22).

'Well a good thing (training clause) I suppose cos a lot of people are coming here and just-and don't really want to train, just want to hang about all day and mess about. Just proves people are trying really' (Dai, 20).

Although in principle the majority of respondents supported the inclusion of the training clause and made statements that reflected the Foyer ethos, in practice those same tenants did not have high training programme attendance records. Two explanations were offered in response to questions about non-attendance, that the course content was inappropriate (from the individual perspective) and that it was difficult for tenants to motivate themselves to participate.

The programme content was considered inappropriate for a number of reasons pertaining to the individual needs of tenants:

'Like some things that have been on recently I've thought well there's no point in me going to cos I know about that and if you're tied to 6 hours a week it doesn't really work out cos different things apply to different people' (Maria, 16-attending a government run training course with a four day a week work placement).

' I think they're handy for- they're quite basic skills but there are a lot of people in here who need those basic skills, I just haven't thought that I needed to know what they were about. There was one that did interest me, computer skills but I couldn't go to that cos it was in the day' (Ann, 18- Working full-time at time of interview).

'They reckon I wasn't interested in what was going on like English and maths but I already done that so there's no point doing it all again so that's the reason I didn't bother going' (Simon, 17- unemployed having left a government training scheme in Word Power and Number Power).

'We had to fill in these forms which were a complete waste of time they said they'd organise things at different times so people could fit in with them and if they didn't do them in the day they said they'd do them in the night when I couldn't make it because of

college and things so I couldn't make any of them' (Susie, 17- studying for GCSEs in between government training courses).

These extracts highlight the difficulties of maintaining a training programme that can meet the diverse needs of young people in a 'mixed community'. Tenants had different levels of ability and need, some had followed 'A'level courses while others were illiterate. Although they shared a common set of aims (employment and independent accommodation), their training needs were diverse. It was also difficult to organise training sessions at times that suited everyone. Tenants who were in training, education or employment were unable to attend in the daytime. However many of the unemployed tenants complained that there was nothing to do during the day.

Motivation emerged as a theme in relation the training clause and as an explanation for non-participation. Some tenants felt that the training clause had the potential to operate as a motivational tool:

'(The training clause) it's a good idea cos it like helps people, motivates people well to agree in the tenancy, then if they move here they know they've got to find a job or go to college to live here, to stay. And they don't really want to leave here then they're going to come around. I think it's a wicked idea' (Joe, 18).

' (Training clause a good idea) Yeah, cos I want to be motivated cos I haven't got any go in me at all' (Frank, 21).

However attendance figures suggest that in practice the training clause did not operate as a motivational tool. During the group interview tenants said that they had good intentions but were *'off our heads'* (through drug or alcohol consumption) so often that it was difficult to follow these intentions through.

'Lack of motivation just spreads. It's easy to follow the crowd, well it's not so much being a sheep, just to think yeah, somebody's up late you can stay up talking to them and then not bother getting up in the morning' (Robbie, 21).

Within the first month of the Foyer's operation the manager recorded concerns in relation to tenant alcohol consumption and lifestyle (staying up all night and sleeping all day) and stated that tenants *'Need to be reminded what the Foyer is about'*. In October 1997 following a staff meeting, two core members of staff expressed concern about their ability to meet targets in view of difficulties in engaging tenants in the programme. Staff appeared to be under mounting pressure to engage tenants in the training programme from the management board, *'What am I supposed to do hold them (the tenants) at gun point?'*. By May 1998 staff morale appeared to be low, one member of staff complained that much of their time was consumed by administration while another felt that it was impossible to work with *'alienated young people'* with so few staff. This member of staff suggested that there was a *'culture of drinking and drugs'* among a core of tenants and that others were *'pulled in'* to this culture. Both tenants and staff identified the misuse of drugs (in the main this involved the misuse of prescribed drugs) and alcohol as a factor that affected tenants' ability to participate in the training programme. This is not to claim that the majority of tenants had chronic substance misuse problems or indeed that all respondents in this study misused alcohol or drugs. Blackman (1997: 126-127) conducted an ethnographic study of young people's experiences of being homeless and unemployed and found that:

> 'Through this ethnographic case study of homeless youth, it was found that these young people experienced many social difficulties. They were experiencing multiple problems in bleak cultural locations; they experienced what I have called cultural immersion. They become submerged in a localized subculture with specific strategies for coping with the difficulties of everyday life, which ethnography can reveal as understandable elements of a culture of survival. ...I also found that this cultural

> immersion was played out in terms of the aspects of young people's experiences such as drug taking and excessive alcohol consumption...A central finding of this study was that drug taking and especially excessive alcohol consumption was not part of a pleasurable lifestyle: drug use was endemic not epidemic (Blackman 1996). These deviant patterns emerge out of a variety of individual circumstances and social conditions such as the experience of hopelessness under economic and material poverty'.

The young people who took part in Blackman's study were homeless while respondents in this study had gained a tenancy at the Foyer. In this way the issue of substance misuse is placed in a different context. However Foyer tenants shared many of the social circumstances and personal experiences identified in Blackman's study (1997) and for some substance misuse remained as a coping strategy. The Foyer offered a new set of opportunities, however many tenants needed to resolve the issues that arose from their past experiences before they were ready to invest in participation in the Foyer programme. In other words it was not possible for tenants to simply step out of the 'culture of survival' (Blackman, 1997) in which they were submerged as they crossed the Foyer threshold. Staff members came to recognise that it was necessary to undertake *'ground work'* with many tenants before they were ready to participate in the training programme. This often meant that one-to-one support was necessary for individual tenants who where dealing with experiences of childhood abuse, parental abandonment or relationship breakdown, poor educational experiences and the insecurity of unemployment and homelessness.

This section of the chapter has explored training issues and suggests that the majority of tenants supported the training clause in principle but had difficulties in translating this support into full participation in the training programme. Two factors that affected levels

of participation have been identified: the operation and content of the programme, and motivation to participate. Evidence suggests that there were difficulties in providing a full training programme during 1997 and that the content of the programme was unable to meet the diverse training needs of tenants. It has also been suggested that many tenants still relied on mechanisms to cope with their daily lives that were part of a 'culture of survival' and which impacted on their ability to participate in the Foyer programme. Earlier in the chapter a number of other issues related to the 'Foyer experience' were discussed including: support and social contact, safety and security, and tenant behavior. As might be expected respondents identified both positive and negative aspects of their experiences as Foyer tenants. The next section of the chapter is concerned with outcomes for young people moving on from the Foyer. First, evidence is provided that offers an evaluation of the Foyer in tenants' own words. Second, a summary of changes in circumstance as experienced by two tenants in the course of their tenancy illustrates the fact that the comparison of baseline data with outcome data may obscure the complexity of changes within the tenancy period. Finally, an analysis of data relating to employment and housing outcomes for tenants is presented.

Outcomes

This section of the chapter is not only concerned with employment and housing outcomes, it also provides an evaluation of the Foyer from the perspective of tenants and records the complexity of changes in circumstance that were experienced by two respondents during their tenancies.

The survey MF2 included the following question: *Q10: Would you say that overall your time at the Foyer has been - A - A positive experience B - A negative experience.*

In total 55 per cent of respondents felt that their time at the Foyer had been a positive experience, 20 per cent felt that it had been a negative experience and 15 per cent ticked neither box and wrote 'mixed'. This issue was explored further during interviews with tenants who were about to end their tenancies. There was no clear correlation between poor employment outcomes and negative evaluations or between positive employment outcomes and positive evaluations. The following interview excerpts are from interviews that took place at the end of tenancies:

'Learnt to stay off drugs but I've done that myself. Yeah it moved me away from my other friends who done gear. It's been a good experience all round you know what I mean, living in the house and stuff like that' (Joe, 18- unemployed and moving into private rented accommodation: length of tenancy 6 months).

This quote appears to contradict the earlier discussion in relation to substance misuse but Joe was referring to his former addiction to a Class A drug. The majority of substance misuse at the Foyer involved the misuse of prescribed drugs.

'It's been stressful it's been living with other people who are just not nice. Late nights, not being able to sleep at night cos of the noise and that and the drugs problem in here and things have gone missing from the laundry and things like that. It's just not a comfortable house to live in' (Natalie, 16- unemployed and moving into private rented accommodation: length of tenancy 6 months).

'Before I came here I was a complete mess you know I never wanted to work when I first moved in here, just didn't want to do anything and now I've really got myself sorted you know I've only got the job now through staff helping me. I'm motivated now' (Ann, 18- employed and moving into owner occupation: length of tenancy 10 months).

'I wanted more sense with money, budgeting, being able to cook better and things like that but I'm still crap at money, I'm still not sure how to cook certain meals and I've been living on my own for a year now so I don't think I've learnt a lot' (Brad, 17- employed and moving to accommodation provided by employer: length of tenancy 8 months).

Tenants who left without gaining employment were as likely to view their involvement with the Foyer system in positive terms as those who gained employment during their tenancies (and vice versa).

The simple comparison of employment and housing status at the start of tenancy with that at the end of tenancy may obscure the complexity of changes in circumstance experienced by many young people during their tenancies. Two examples of the changing circumstance of two tenants who described their experiences at the Foyer in very positive terms but whose employment and housing outcomes were very different are provided (Fig.1. Fig.2.).

Figure 1: Changing circumstances during a six month tenancy

Ann was 18 years old at the time she started her tenancy at the Foyer. She left school with 9 GCSEs and left home when she was 16 in order to take up employment. After 18 months she returned to live with her parents but her relationship with them broke down. She was living temporarily with relatives at the time of application and had recently become unemployed after the workforce was cut at the factory where she worked. Ann commenced her tenancy in July 1997. Initially she found it hard to motivate herself and did not feel that many of the training sessions were appropriate for her. However in September 1997 she started a catering course at college on a part-time basis (so that her benefit entitlement would not be affected) and hoped to enter self-employment with the skills acquired on the course. Ann experienced difficulties in paying for materials and transport and her family gave her some financial support. In November 1997 she decided that she did not want to continue on the course. In December 1997 with the support of staff Ann applied for and was successful in gaining employment as an administrative assistant. Ann continued to work with staff in identifying new goals and gained a number of certificates through training offered by her employer. In May 1998 Ann took out a mortgage on a shared ownership housing association property with the financial support of her parents and moved in with her partner.

At the point of application Ann was unemployed and was living with relatives who were no longer able to accommodate her. At the end of her tenancy Ann had completed the main transitions of youth (Coles 1995) she was employed, in independent accommodation and was co-habiting with a long-term partner. At interview Ann made it clear that she felt that the Foyer had motivated and supported her in making these

changes. Her relationship with her parents improved and the financial support they were able to offer her enabled her to enter the owner-occupier housing market.

As Figure 2. outlines, at the point of application Sean was unemployed and was staying in a hostel. At the end of his tenancy he was unemployed and was moving into a local authority property in a hard to let area. Sean was very positive about his experience of the Foyer, he felt that the staff had provided a high level of support in dealing with his substance misuse and the relationship he formed with one member of staff in particular was of great significance to him. Sean did not have access to family support.

Figure 2. Changing circumstances during a sixteen month tenancy

Sean was 21 at the time he applied to the Foyer. He was unemployed and living in a hostel. Sean spent his life in local authority care and left school at 15 with a media studies certificate. He had stayed in a number of bedsits and had been roofless for various periods (the longest 2 years). He began his tenancy in June 1997 and hoped to do a college course so that he could 'have a career rather than a job'. He attended a number of the in-house English and maths sessions. Sean sought support from staff in relation to mental health and substance misuse issues. Staff provided one to one support and put him in contact with appropriate outside agencies. By October 1997 he had stopped using drugs and was attending Job Club once a week but did not feel ready for full time work. In March 1998 he took a placement with the Prince's Trust under the New Deal. Sean completed the initial training with the Prince's Trust and gained a first aid certificate. However by April 1998 he was experiencing difficulties in coping with the placement and in May he was signed off sick. Sean did not return to the placement. He continued to experience mental health difficulties. When his tenancy ended in October 1998 Sean was unemployed and had started to misuse substances again. With staff support he applied for and was granted a local authority property in a hard to let area.

The experiences of these two tenants have been selected because they represent the two extremes of employment and housing outcomes. However their experiences are to a large degree representative of the experiences of many respondents. Those tenants who had poor employment and housing outcomes often made positive progress during their tenancies but were unable to sustain their participation in training in the long term because of problems in coping with day-to-day living (as discussed in the last section of

the chapter). The overwhelming majority of tenants who had positive employment and housing outcomes had access to some degree of parental or family support (often financial).

It has been important to illustrate the complexity of changes in circumstance that often took place during the course of a tenancy. This experience was common to all but the minority of respondents who were in employment or training at the start of their tenancies and were able to maintain that employment for the duration of their tenancies. Data relating to employment and housing outcomes for the entire sample is represented in a number of tables. Analysis of table contents is presented in relation to changes in employment status and changes in housing status.

Table 1. Changes in employment and housing status

Tenant	Employment Status at start of tenancy	Housing Status before start of tenancy	Employment Status at end of tenancy	Housing Status at end of tenancy
Natalie	F/T Education	Private rented	Unemployed	Private rented
David	Unemployed	Foster parent	Unemployed	Other Foyer
Jacob	Unemployed	Friends	Unemployed	Local Authority
Martha	Unemployed(DLA)	Foster care	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.
Phillip	Unemployed	Hostel	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.
Tim	Unemployed	Friends	Unemployed	Local Authority
Robbie	Unemployed	Sleeping rough	New Deal	Housing Assoc.
Nicholas	Unemployed	Friends	Unemployed	Private rented
Lucy	Unemployed(DLA)	Foster care	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.
Susie	Training	Friends	Training	Local Authority
Dai	Unemployed	Hostel	Unemployed	Hostel
Tenant	Employment Status at start of tenancy	Housing Status before start of tenancy	Employment Status at end of tenancy	Housing Status at end of tenancy
Steve	Unemployed	Friends	Unemployed	Prison
Tony	Unemployed	Friends	Unemployed	Rehab Centre
Melanie	F/T Education	Foster care	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.

Sean	Unemployed	Hostel	Unemployed	Local Authority
Frank	Unemployed	Parents	New Deal	Local authority
Louise	Employed	Parents	Employed	Private rented
Adrian	Unemployed	Foster care	Employed	Housing Assoc.
Edward	Unemployed	Friends	Employed	Private rented
Harry	Unemployed	Hostel	Training	Unknown
Tina	Unemployed	Relatives	Unemployed	B+B
Damien	Unemployed(DLA)	B+B	Unemployed	Relatives
Amy	Unemployed(DLA)	Parents	Unemployed	Supported Acc.
Simon	Unemployed	Foster care	Unemployed	B+B
Joe	Unemployed(DLA)	Private rented	Unemployed	Private rented
Paula	Unemployed	Parents	Unemployed	Private rented
Jessica	Unemployed	Hospital	Student	Student Acc.
Maria	Training	Parent	Training	Housing Assoc.
Ben	Unemployed	Hostel	Unemployed	Local Authority
Ann	Unemployed	Relatives	Employed	Owner occ.
Sandra	Training	Relatives	Unemployed	Private rented
Brad	Other	Foster care	Employed	Employers acc.
Huw	F/T Education	Friends	Unemployed	Private rented

DLA: Disability Living Allowance
Other: Part time Education and Part time Employment

In total 7 respondents were still tenants at the end of the study in October 1998. It has been possible to gather data in relation to these individuals through continued contact with staff and some tenants during the months following the end of the study period.

Table 1a. Change in status between end of study and end of tenancy

Tenant	Employment Status at end of study	Housing Status at end of study	Employment Status at end of tenancy	Housing Status at end of tenancy
Martha	Unemployed	Foyer	Unemployed	Housing Ass.
Tim	Unemployed	Foyer	Unemployed	Local Auth.
Robbie	New Deal	Foyer	New Deal	Housing Ass.
Lucy	Unemployed	Foyer	Unemployed	Housing Ass.
Harry	Training	Foyer	Training	Unknown
Jessica	New Deal	Foyer	Student	Student Acc.
Ben	Unemployed	Foyer	Unemployed	Local Auth.

Changes in employment status

There was no change in status for twenty one or 64 per cent of the total study sample (N=33) and employment status at the end of the tenancy is the same as employment status at the start of the tenancy. Changes in employment status were experienced by twelve or 36 per cent of respondents:

- three (9%) moved from full time education to unemployment
- one (3 %) from training to unemployment as a result of pregnancy
- one (3%) moved from unemployment to full time higher education
- one (3%) moved from unemployment to training
- two (6%) moved from unemployment to the New Deal
- one (3%) moved from part-time education and part-time employment to full time employment
- three (9%) moved from unemployment to full time employment

In total 12 per cent of respondents became unemployed, 12 per cent entered education, training or the New Deal and 12 per cent gained full time employment. Of the 21 respondents for whom no change in status occurred eighteen (86%) were unemployed, two (10%) were in training and one (5%) was employed.

For the entire study population unemployment rates showed a drop of 10 per cent, from 76 per cent at the start of tenancy to 66 per cent at the end of tenancy.

Changes in Housing status

Changes in housing status were considerably more marked, 91 per cent of respondents experienced a change in housing status. A comparison of changes in housing status is represented in the table below (Tab.2). Data in relation to the housing status of respondents before the start of tenancy has been gathered from tenants' files and through interview and was not generated by the survey MF1 (as this did not identify individual tenants). This data reveals different housing patterns than those identified in responses to survey MF1 and presented in Table 2.2 of Chapter 6. It may be the case that some respondents answered questions related to their past housing situation with reference to short-term housing situations in the weeks proceeding a tenancy while others referred only to housing circumstances that had been experienced for a substantial period. Discrepancies may also be result of the difficulties tenants sometimes had in remembering their past housing situations. Similar difficulties were identified in a study conducted by Kirk et al (1991). Evidence gathered through documentary analysis of tenant files and through interview with tenants has been used to generate data in the case of the following table.

Table 2 :Changes in Housing Status

Housing Situation N=33	Before moving into Foyer	At end of tenancy
Parent (s)	5 or 15%	0 or 0%
Other relative(s)	3 or 9%	1 or3%
Foster placement	7 or 21%	0 or0%
Private rented	2 or 6%	8 or 24%
Local Authority	0 or 0%	6 or 18%
Housing Association	0 or 0%	7 or 21%
Bed and breakfast	1 or 3%	2 or 6%
Hostel	5 or 15%	1 or 3%
Staying with friends	8 or 24%	0 or 0%
Sleeping rough	1 or 3%	0 or 0%
Other	1 or 3%	7 or 21%
Unknown	0 or 0%	1 or 3%
TOTAL	99%	99%

Other included: Other Foyer, prison, Rehabilitation centre, Supported accommodation, student accommodation, employer's accommodation and owner occupation.

Changes in housing status were more significant than changes in employment status. At the end of tenancy the most common tenure destinations were: private rented accommodation (24%), housing association housing (21%) and local authority housing (18%). The majority of tenants received a high degree of support from staff at the point of move on. The housing worker was able to advocate on behalf of tenants in securing

access to housing association and local authority housing through the city and county wide 'Move on Strategy'. Two of the respondents who moved into local authority housing did so with their pregnant partners the remaining four moved into properties in hard to let areas. The most common housing destination was private rented accommodation a tenure in which young people are traditionally over represented (see Chapter 2).

Changes in circumstance in the period following move–on

It has been possible to gather evidence in relation to the changing circumstances of respondents in the six to twelve month period following the end of their Foyer tenancies. This evidence should be treated with caution because of the means through which it has been gathered. Some evidence was gathered through contact with former tenants both in the form of letters and face to face contact. However the majority of evidence has been gathered through continued contact with staff members and with two tenants who acted as informants and with whom the researcher maintains contact.

The method through which this data has been collected means that there was often no other source of evidence available to validate data. In addition no information is available in relation to six of the young people who took part in the study. Of the remaining twenty-seven respondents in the period following move-on: three gained employment, one entered training and one entered full time education. Two young people moved back to live with their parent (s) and two became homeless (one of whom

was staying with friends). Four of the young people became parents. Two received custodial sentences.

Table 3: Change in circumstance in period following move –on

Tenant	Employment Status at end of tenancy	Housing Status at end of tenancy	Change in circumstances over six to twelve month period following exit
Natalie	Unemployed	Private rented	Employed, 2 changes of Private rented
David	Unemployed	Other Foyer	Unknown
Jacob	Unemployed	Local Authority	Prison
Martha	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.	Volunteer training
Phillip	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.	Training
Tim	Unemployed	Local Authority	Parenthood
Robbie	New Deal	Housing Assoc.	No change
Nicholas	Unemployed	Private rented	Moved back with parent
Lucy	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.	F/T education/ student acc.
Susie	Training	Local Authority	Employment-Unemployment
Dai	Unemployed	Hostel	Unknown
Steve	Unemployed	Prison	Moved back with parent
Tony	Unemployed	Rehab Centre	Unknown
Melanie	Unemployed	Housing Assoc.	Parenthood
Sean	Unemployed	Local Authority	No change
Frank	New Deal	Local authority	Left area
Louise	Employed	Private rented	Unknown
Adrian	Employed	Housing Assoc.	No change
Edward	Employed	Private rented	No change
Harry	Training	Unknown	Unknown
Tina	Unemployed	B+B	Homeless/ B+B
Damien	Unemployed	Relatives	Private rented
Amy	Unemployed	Supported Acc.	No change
Simon	Unemployed	B+B	Prison
Joe	Unemployed	Private rented	Employed, 2 changes of Private rented
Paula	Unemployed	Private rented	Parenthood
Jessica	Student	Student Acc.	No change
Maria	Training	Housing assoc.	No change
Huw	Unemployed	Private rented	Unknown
Ben	Unemployed	Local Authority	Staying with friends
Ann	Employed	Owner occ.	No change
Sandra	Unemployed	Private rented	Parenthood
Brad	Employed	Employers acc.	Unknown

Aspirations, experiences and outcomes.

This chapter has presented the findings of an in-depth study of a single Foyer over an eighteen-month period, three issues have been examined in order to evaluate the Foyer as an organisation and as a possible solution to youth homelessness. This final section of the chapter returns to each of these issues, providing a summary and drawing some initial conclusions.

Aspirations

The aspirations of the young people who took part in this study were simple; they wanted a job and a home. During the application process for a Foyer tenancy these aims were clearly identified and the Foyer was seen as a means to achieving these goals. Their expectations of the Foyer during the application process were focused on the identification of the Foyer as a place where they would receive independent accommodation and be given support in finding employment. The Foyer was also identified as providing an opportunity for participants to bring about positive changes in their lives in the company of other young people. However at interview it became clear that another principle motivation for young people in applying for a place at the Foyer was simply that they had nowhere else to go. This does not necessarily mean that the reasons given during the application process were not genuine.

In practice there were discrepancies between stated intentions in terms of a commitment to facilitate change in employment status through participation in the Foyer system and actual commitment in terms of attendance at training sessions etc. This was despite the

fact that the overwhelming majority of respondents strongly supported the contractual commitment to undertake training and felt that it had the potential to act as a motivational tool for themselves and others. Two principle explanations can be offered for this contrast between stated and actual commitment.

Although young people participated in the setting of personal goals with staff in the Foyer programme there was evidence to suggest that tenants had no real expectations that they could effect the changes needed to achieve these goals. In the course of the research respondents expressed a fatalistic attitude, many had exercised little control over their past life and viewed themselves as the victims of circumstance. In addition many respondents required "their prior needs to be recognised and resolved" (Blackman 1998a:4) before they could reach the point where they were able to participate in the programme. Many of the young people had high support needs connected to unresolved issues from their past such as the breakdown of family relationships, time in local authority care, mental health problems, sexual, physical and emotional abuse in childhood and substance misuse.

The Foyer allocation process included an evaluation of whether applicants had reached a point in their personal development where they were ready to 'help themselves'. All the respondents had satisfied staff of this at the point of allocation, however as highlighted earlier many young people were not yet ready to invest in the programme as they viewed themselves as social agents with little control over their futures. In this way those young people who are most in need of support were least likely to hold the personal resources

needed to fulfil their part of the contract between tenant and Foyer. This has serious implications for the Foyer Movement. Many of the issues identified as causing difficulties for the young people who took part in this study have been identified in other studies of youth homelessness and socially excluded youth (Hutson and Liddiard 1994; Evans 1996; Garnett 1992; MacDonald et al 1997; Social Exclusion Unit 1999). Those respondents with the highest support needs required the highest level of staff support and were least likely to enter (or sustain) education, training or employment. There was little evidence of any correlation between hours of staff support recorded and positive outcomes for individual tenants. This would suggest that the Foyer system is most effective in assisting young people with lower support needs and ill equipped to provide the level of support needed to assist those young people who are most vulnerable to social exclusion and homelessness.

The other principle explanation of the mismatch between respondents' stated and actual commitment to the Foyer programme is related to the process of youth as a period in the life course when young people seek emancipation from parental control (Harris 1983) and to assert their independence and identity (Jones 1995). Complex negotiations take place between young people and their parents as they seek to claim the autonomy of adult status while in a position of economic dependence. The young people in this study were attempting to make the transition to adulthood in the absence of sufficient parental support. A principle objective of the Foyer is to assist young people to gain sustainable independence. However in order to meet this objective within the confines of the conditional Foyer philosophy, staff also attempted to exercise a degree of control over

the behaviour of tenants so that they might retain their tenancies and meet the aims and objectives of the organisation. In this way the conflict between the need for support in achieving independence and the need to gain autonomy and control in exercising that independence (that has been identified in relation to young people within families (Jones 1995)) also existed in the relationship between tenants and staff. This issue highlights the difficulties in supporting vulnerable young people in making the transition to independence while enforcing the conditions and sanctions intended to achieve such outcomes within the Foyer approach.

It is also important to note that disillusionment with the Foyer programme was also a factor in low rates of participation. Respondents identified the fact that the Foyer was failing to fulfil its side of the contract. The establishment of a full training programme was delayed first by relatively small tenant numbers and later through staffing difficulties. Respondents also referred to the issue of control. Many of the young people felt that staff had stated a commitment to treat them as adults and to treat the Foyer as the tenant's home. In the view of tenants this commitment was infringed through the application of sanctions and regulations about how they ran their lives and their 'homes'.

Experience

Despite the problems identified above in relation to the fulfilment of the contract made between tenants and the Foyer the majority of respondents viewed their involvement with the Foyer in positive terms. There was no clear correlation between poor employment outcomes and negative evaluations or between positive

employment outcomes and positive evaluations. The majority of positive accounts of the Foyer experience were focused on the level of support offered by staff and the importance of social contact with other young people. The opportunity to receive support and social contact at any time was identified as being a significant positive aspect of the Foyer and the personal relationships that tenants formed with each other and staff were highly valued. The Foyer provided a social network for respondents, many of whom had experienced several changes of location in their past housing careers and who had no or little contact with their families.

This social network was at times strained and subject to conflict. Many of the negative issues associated with the Foyer by respondents were focused on problems surrounding shared accommodation. These included levels of noise and mess and more significantly problems of safety and security of self and belongings. These problems consumed a significant proportion of staff time and in some cases impacted on the ability of tenants to participate in the Foyer programme. Issues such as cleaning and security also led to the introduction of further rules and regulations that negated tenants' perceptions of the Foyer as a 'home'. The study Foyer was relatively small in comparison with many Foyers in operation in Britain. However it seems clear that the provision of accommodation to vulnerable young people even on this scale and the issues related to shared accommodation that go with this may impact negatively on the achievement of Foyer objectives.

Outcomes

The Foyer was unable to make any significant impact on levels of labour market participation among participants. Although there is evidence of positive outcomes in terms of accessing housing few respondents were equipped with the means to sustain that housing in the longer term. This is apparent in the evidence presented in table 3 which demonstrates further changes in housing status in the period following move-on for a number of tenants.

Conclusion

The last two chapters have presented evidence gathered through the research undertaken for this thesis. The next chapter uses the evidence in this thesis to provide a set of conclusions and recommendations, first in relation to current understandings of youth homelessness and, second, concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the Foyer 'solution'.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The work presented in this thesis has been directed at answering two principal questions. First, how do we explain the existence of a social problem such as youth homelessness at the end of the twentieth century, over fifty years after the establishment of the British welfare state? Second, does the relatively recent introduction of the Foyer Movement in Britain offer one potential solution to youth homelessness?

In this concluding chapter, I draw together the evidence presented in this thesis in relation to these principal research questions. First, I summarise my explanation of the process of homelessness and review the theoretical contribution of the thesis. Second I provide an evaluation of the Foyer approach to solving youth homelessness. I also make recommendations in relation to government responses to youth homelessness and the operation of Foyers. I then consider the limitations and advantages of the research methods employed in undertaking this study. The first section of the chapter, then, reviews my explanation of youth homelessness which sets structural and individual factors within the theoretical framework of citizenship.

Understanding youth homelessness: Social Policy and Citizenship

Youth homelessness has been presented in this thesis as the result of denied citizenship arising from the absence of family membership and from a lack of economic independence from both the family and the state.

In order to understand youth homelessness we must first appreciate the fact that (as discussed in Chapter 2) in this case social policy has been part of the problem rather than the solution. An essential element of the structural causes of youth homelessness is exclusion from the private and public housing markets. Public housing has been established as the 'Cinderella' welfare service, occupying a marginalised position in terms of social rights (Mullins, 1998). The initial post-war vision of good quality homes at affordable rents for the working classes did not produce housing in the quantity promised. The pervasive discourse of social housing as a privilege for the 'deserving' working classes that had been established by the charitable trusts of the nineteenth century continued to influence access to the 'new' public housing of the post-war period. When the targeting of housing resources towards homeless people in priority need became statute with the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act single young people without dependents were in essence excluded during the rationing of public housing. The right to buy legislation of 1980 and the subsequent residualisation of public housing has exacerbated this situation (Lidstone, 1994). Many local authorities were left with surplus stock in hard to let areas and this phenomenon was reflected in my study by the number of the young people who were allocated such housing through the city move-on strategy with the assistance of Foyer staff. However this housing was situated in areas of high unemployment that qualified for European funding for areas of social exclusion.

Attempts to revitalise the dwindling private rented sector through deregulation in legislation such as the 1988 Housing Act led instead to increased tenant insecurity and the creation of a poverty trap in which high rents force people to opt out of work (Balchin, 1995). Access to private rented housing is also limited for young people

who cannot satisfy landlords' demands for 'key money', deposits, bonds and/or rent in advance. The majority of young people who left the Foyer for the private rented sector were those who had access to a family member who would provide them with a deposit, the instability of this sector is highlighted by the fact that the majority of these tenants had moved to another address within six months.

Housing Associations have failed to fill the void in social housing left by the residualisation of public housing. The relatively small scale of housing association provision, rising rents and the fact that many single homeless people are unlikely to qualify as a local authority nominee means that this form of housing tenure is not at present offering a housing solution for young people, however, a relatively high percentage of Foyer tenants did move to Housing Association properties on leaving the Foyer. This was due primarily to the fact that the parent body of the Foyer was a Housing Association and staff were able to negotiate access on the behalf of tenants.

The emphasis in contemporary British housing policy has been to encourage owner occupation at the expense of other housing tenures (Balchin, 1995). The weak economic situation of the majority of young people has meant that they have been severely disadvantaged by housing policy. The drive towards an owner occupied Britain serves to disadvantage the economically weak, private renting has become unpopular with landlords while the shrinking pool of social housing has failed to keep pace with the changing demographics of British society. What is crucial in joining the private housing market (and in sustaining occupancy) in all tenures is gaining command of the economic resources required to obtain independent accommodation.

The relationship between employment and access to housing is a crucial one, and has been widely acknowledged by organisations campaigning on the behalf of those in housing need and by academic commentators. This thesis has outlined the way in which fundamental changes in the British economy and in the labour market since the 1960s have led to a restructuring of the youth labour market, an emphasis on insecure part-time employment and high rates of youth unemployment (Novak, 1988; Ashton et al, 1990; Smith, 1998). Increasing demands for a highly-skilled workforce, exclusion from large parts of the adult labour market and competition from adults forced to 'trade down' into less skilled labour have all resulted in a radically reduced opportunities for young people in the labour market. The young people who took part in this study were particularly vulnerable to disadvantage because of personal difficulties and past life experiences. These factors impacted on their ability to secure the skills needed to compete for employment and influenced their ability to access the personal resources required in securing and/ or sustaining work.

Government responses to high youth unemployment have been targeted at increasing participation in further and higher education and enforced participation in government training schemes, both of which are based on a 'skills-deficit' interpretation of youth unemployment. Participation in further education is an effective means of delaying entry to the labour market and those who do stay on are less likely to be unemployed and tend to earn more (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). However these advantages are not shared equally and those young people from backgrounds "featuring a variety of kinds of social exclusion" are unlikely to gain the qualifications needed to progress to further education in schools. They are more likely to go on to colleges where drop out rates are high (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999; Audit Commission, 1993). The majority

of tenants at the Foyer had low levels of educational achievement and a number of tenants who were involved in full-time education were unable to sustain their participation.

Government training schemes were first introduced in 1978 and have been re-launched in number of different guises ever since. Despite the addition of a formal qualification element, namely National Vocational Qualifications these schemes have been criticised as low paid, the quality of training varies considerably and although government figures suggest that completion of a scheme can improve labour market participation they remain unpopular with many young people (Department of Education and Employment, 1998; Courtney and McAleese, 1993). As my study revealed some of the young people at the Foyer reported negative experiences of government training schemes. One young woman was advised by her training co-ordinator to secure the continuation of her training place by 'showing a bit of leg' and later lost a training place because she took three days sick leave. Another young man lost a place on a training scheme that he was enjoying after the company he was placed with went out of business. Only one tenant was able to sustain the same training placement for the duration of her tenancy. The Foyer was clear in its intention to end the cycle of unemployment and homelessness; publicity material carries the slogan "Break out! No home, no job?". It is clear that external barriers such as poor quality training schemes and the condition of the labour market (structural influences) impact on the ability of the Foyer to fulfil this objective. However central to the philosophy of the Foyer Movement is the proposition that providing accommodation that is tied to individual rehabilitation will provide young people with the skills needed to compete in the labour market and sustain independent accommodation.

The rise of youth unemployment has been accompanied by Government social security policies that also present unemployment in terms of individual culpability and has sought to make reliance on benefits a 'hard' option for young people. These policies have been built on the theories of the existence of a dependency culture as the result of a rights based welfare state (Dean and Taylor-Gooby, 1992). Legislation introduced in the 1986 Social Security Act replaced need with age as a criteria for the way in which benefit levels were calculated, 16 and 17 year olds lost their entitlement to income support and were required to attend a government training scheme. Young people under the age of 25 are paid benefits at a lower rate. These changes were based on the presumption that young people have a lower cost of living and can and should rely on parental support. The present Labour government has introduced the New Deal for young people as part of its commitment to rebuild the welfare state around work. The element of compulsion and the conditional nature of the scheme have been criticised as representing a 'hard' workfare regime (Tonge, 1999). Young people have been left in a precarious financial position.

At the same time the way in which housing benefit is calculated (on the basis of what is considered reasonable in relation to the type and size of accommodation) combined with changes introduced in 1995 have resulted in restrictions on housing benefit levels. Single people can now only claim the equivalent of the cost of a room in a shared house and this means that young people must top up their housing benefits to meet market rent levels. The disparity between full accommodation costs and housing benefit means that young people are frequently being evicted from private rented accommodation (Hutson and Liddiard, 1994). If we take all of these foregoing factors together, it becomes clear how young people are marginalised in the labour and

housing market, at one and the same time. Housing policy and social security policy serve to restrict access to independent accommodation for young people. Indeed as this thesis has argued social policy has been directed at encouraging the dependence of young people on their families until they achieve economic independence. I have argued that restrictions on entitlement to welfare services for young people have been legitimised through changes in the social contract of citizenship, the next section of the chapter considers this claim and outlines the theoretical contribution of this thesis.

Legitimising Youth Homelessness: restricting access to citizenship.

In Chapter 3 I highlighted the importance of the work of Jones and Wallace (1992) who present a convincing argument in relation to the exclusion of young people from the status of full citizenship. Jones and Wallace (1992) present a theory of the transition of youth in which social policy has resulted in the enforced and protracted dependence of young people upon their families. They argue that young people must therefore claim 'citizenship by proxy' through family membership and examine the implications of such a relationship for young people who are denied the right to independent status, autonomy and full citizenship. Although Jones and Wallace (1992) discuss the problems faced by young people who are unable to remain dependent upon their families this issue is not a focus of their work. In this thesis I have sought to develop the theoretical framework provided by Jones and Wallace, in order to examine in more depth the implications of denied citizenship for those young people who cannot claim 'citizenship by proxy'. What follows represents both an explanation of youth homelessness as the result of denied citizenship and the theoretical contribution of this thesis.

Successive administrations have reacted to high rates of youth unemployment by attaching conditions and restricting access to welfare services for young people under the age of 25 years. This process has been legitimised through a "paradigm shift in which the discourse of citizenship draws increasingly on the lexicon of obligations rather than rights" (Lister, 1998b: 313). The structural disadvantages facing young people have made it increasingly difficult for them to fulfil the obligations of citizenship, they therefore lose their right to the status of citizen and its incumbent rights. The social exclusion of many young people is fortified by a process described by Powell (2000:49) in which:

> "The 'responsible'; those who 'do the right thing' (Heron and Dwyer, 1999), are to be included, while those deemed 'irresponsible' are subject to varying degrees of authoritarianism (Driver and Martell, 1998; Levitas, 1998)".

The present policy framework means that young people may be deemed 'irresponsible' because they leave or are taken from families who cannot or will not support them.

Two principle avenues are open to young people who seek to enter the social contract of citizenship. First economic independence, second, delayed entry into this social contract through family membership and "citizenship by proxy" (Jones and Wallace, 1992). For a substantial minority of young people neither of these avenues are open. Young people from what the Social Exclusion Unit has classed as "backgrounds featuring a variety of kinds of social exclusion" (1999) are particularly disadvantaged in terms of achieving economic independence and have restricted entry to the alternatives of protracted or delayed entry to the labour market described earlier. While the presumption that young people can and should depend on their families until they can depend on themselves is based on false assumptions about the support

families are able and prepared to provide (Finch, 1996; Jones and Wallace, 1992). Social policies built on the assumption that families can and will provide a safety net for young people essentially fail those young people who cannot rely on family support, in particular those young people with experience of local authority care. The fact that in the absence of economic independence and/or family membership many young people are denied citizenship means that they are doubly disadvantaged in competing for the scarce social resource, housing. Social policies that disadvantage young people have been legitimised through restrictions on access to the status of citizenship for many young people. This is as "when fewer citizens are entitled to claim a benefit, not only is money saved, but a declaration is made that the right in question is no longer available to some people" (Cox, 1998:6). The shift towards an obligations based social contract of welfare that was initiated under the New-Right administrations of 1979-1997 has continued to flourish under the New Labour administration. This change in the social contract of citizenship has served to discredit the claims to welfare rights of young people under the age of 25 years who are unable to meet the increasing costs of full citizenship participation (Lister,1991; 1998). One outcome of this process is that youth homelessness has grown inexorably since the 1960's (Hutson and Liddiard, 1994; Evans,1996). Youth homelessness is a process in which the complex and interdependent relationship between structural and individual factors results in the social exclusion of an estimated 250,000 young people in Britain (Evans, 1996).

Explaining youth homelessness: young people's experiences

Chapter 6 of this thesis set out the experiences of 33 young people aged between the ages of 16 and 25 years who had satisfied the Foyer that they were in housing need.

When explaining their own experience of homelessness respondents referred to what Carlen (1996:34) has termed the 'precipitating causes' of youth homelessness, "those immediate and situational ones (causes) which young people readily recall when asked to account for their homeless situation, for instance a family row or discharge from an institution".

In my own study there was a diversity of experiences but common to the overwhelming majority of respondents was the absence of the means necessary for economic independence. Unemployment rates were over twice the national average and 76 per cent of the research sample were unemployed at the start of their tenancies. A further six were on government training schemes with traditionally low rates of training allowance.

Another common experience was the breakdown of full family support. Despite the national trend of young people leaving home in their mid twenties (Jones, 1990), 79 per cent of respondents had left home before the age of eighteen years, 56 per cent had left before the age of sixteen years. Of those who had left before the age of 16 years 79 per cent had experience of local authority care. In total 19 of the sample had some experience of being in local authority care. The majority of young people explained their homelessness in terms of the breakdown of family relationships or their 'graduation' from local authority care.

The overwhelming majority of young people who took part in this study were unable to claim the status of citizenship through economic independence and the fulfilment of social and civic obligations. They were also unable to claim 'citizenship by proxy'

through family membership. Their exclusion from full participatory citizenship rendered them particularly vulnerable to the structural causes of youth homelessness outlined earlier. The first half of this thesis was, then, dedicated to an exploration of the causes of youth homelessness and an explanation of this process has been provided. It is clear that in the case of youth homelessness policies are part of the problem rather than the solution. This claim is supported by the weight of evidence available in the literature and by the evidence gathered through the original research undertaken for this thesis. Changes in the entitlement of young people to welfare services could and would have a significant impact on levels of youth homelessness. The next section of the chapter therefore outlines a number of recommendations for policy, this is followed by a section that examines the validity of the Foyer Movement as a solution to youth homelessness and presents a number of recommendations for the operation of Foyers.

Recommendations for Government

The provision of a set of recommendations for government in relation to youth homelessness is in many ways problematic as the basis of the problem lies with the dominant (and as it has been argued here flawed) ideology from which prevailing policy is derived. Recent work undertaken by the Social Exclusion Unit does suggest that the present government is more open to those interpretations of youth exclusion which place less of an emphasis on victim blaming than has traditionally been the case. The 'Report of Policy Action Team 12:Young People" was published in March 2000 and is part of the work undertaken for the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. The report acknowledges that (PAT, 2000:7):

> "a large minority of young people experience a range of acute problems including illiteracy, homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction and serial

> offending; over the last 20 years, many problems have got worse; and on many of these indicators this country is worse than other comparable nations".

The report also identifies the fact that the UK is one of only a few European states that does not have a government department or Ministry with express responsibility for national youth policy. The PAT recommends that Youth Inclusion Objectives should be established at the national level, that these objectives should be taken forward by a Ministerial Group for Young People and suggests that this work should be supported by a Youth Unit. These policy recommendations are to be welcomed, young people have been the victims of fragmented service provision denied the protection of children's services and the right to access adult services. Further, I would endorse the report's acknowledgement of the fact that young people do not choose homelessness (PAT, 2000:45):

> "some young people are catapulted out of their home while still in their teens by arguments, family break-up, poverty and abuse. For those young people, the safety net is failing. This is particularly true for those struggling to overcome trauma and disadvantage, and for those suffering mental health problems, poor skills and unemployment"

There is also an admission by the authors of the report that social policies are failing young people. The lack of access to good-quality affordable housing and the fact that "the benefits system as it operates offers inadequate protection, particularly for those who have left home under 18" (PAT, 2000: 46) are both identified, as is the fact that existing arrangements are failing young people leaving care and my research findings concur with these claims. Evidence from this research underpins the recommendation for the establishment of a Ministry for Youth which may be a means to addressing the inadequacies of current social policies and the PAT also advocates a new preventative budget to promote effective cross-cutting interventions for young people at risk. However the other principle recommendation of the PAT is improved support for

families. Policies such as Sure Start have already been put in place and aim to assist parents in caring for and supporting their children. The practice of providing parents in disadvantaged areas with extra support has the potential to improve the lives of those concerned. However this approach reflects a continuation of the principle that has informed policy so far (with disastrous results for some young people), that young people should be the responsibility of their parents until a time at which they can sustain economic independence. Policies that aim to support families are concerned with assisting parents in fulfilling those responsibilities. This policy approach fails to acknowledge the difficulties related to forced dependence for the majority of young people who now remain in or return to the parental home until their mid-twenties that have been identified in the work of Jones and Wallace (1992). It also fails the minority of young people who are unable or unwilling to rely on protracted family support, leaving them reliant on a state safety net that continues to fail them.

A number of recommendations in relation to government action to tackle youth homelessness can be offered some of which have already been outlined by the work of the Policy Action Team 12 as discussed above. Each of these recommendations are briefly discussed below

Recommendation 1: The Appointment of a Minister for Youth:

Shortly after the completion of a first draft of this thesis the government announced the appointment of Paul Boetang as Minister for Young People, and the establishment of the new Children's and Young People's Unit. On 15 November 2000 a new £450 million Children's Fund to help tackle child poverty and exclusion this fund will be implemented by the Children's and Young People's Unit. However the bulk of the fund will be used in preventative work with 5-13 year olds and their families while

approximately £70 million will go to local community groups working with vulnerable young people aged 0 to 19 years in England. In Wales the Queen's Speech in December 2000 saw the announcement of the appointment of a Children's Commissioner for Wales. Both of these developments are to welcomed, as has been demonstrated in this research youth homelessness is often the legacy of social exclusion, neglect or the experience of local authority care during childhood. The extension of support services for children has the potential to have a positive impact on outcomes for young people. However the impact of these changes will not be felt for some years to come and there is no solid evidence to suggest that such policies will negate the structural causes of youth homelessness. The needs of young people are essentially different from those of children and independent adults and a dedicated service framework for 16 to 25 year olds should be developed under the remit of a Ministry for Youth, on a UK wide basis. There is a need to endorse the recommendations of Policy Action Team 12 and to establish a Ministry for Youth to develop and co-ordinate a coherent national youth policy. The most recent arrangements continue to represent a failure to recognise the specific and particular needs of the 16 to 25 year age group.

Recommendation 2: The provision of appropriate accommodation for young people should be included in the housing policy agenda:

A major difficulty for young people who can not remain in the parental home or who leave local authority care is a lack of good quality affordable accommodation. For many young people the only affordable accommodation option is the isolation and insecurity of bed and breakfast accommodation. In view of housing benefit rules which only provide for the rent to cover a single room in a shared house there is a

need for further accommodation of this kind to be provided by social housing specialists such as Housing Associations. The provision of good quality units that provide small-scale shared accommodation would alleviate the problem of covering accommodation costs and could provide young people with the social contact that has been identified as a valued resource in this study.

Recommendation 3: Changes to the benefit system:

At present the benefit system fails to acknowledge that a minority of young people are unable to claim economic protection from their families. Were entitlement to be based on need rather than age and were benefit levels to reflect the true costs of independent living for young people who cannot rely on their families, then we may expect to see some amelioration of the numbers of young people who become homeless.

Recommendation 4: The establishment of a national advice and advocacy service for young people:

Support and advice in relation to benefit rights, housing advice, specialist services and access to welfare services is currently provided by numerous voluntary and statutory organisations. The present system is fragmented and involves young people seeking advice from a number of different sources. A national co-ordinated system of one stop advice shops (such as a young people's Citizen Advice Bureau) could provide young people with the information needed to gain additional support and could also act as a referring agency to allow young people to access specialist services. This is happening on an ad hoc basis across the UK, however there is a need for the development of a national strategic plan to ensure such as service is accessible to all young people.

Having considered a number of recommendations for government in relation to tackling youth homelessness I now offer an evaluation of, and recommendations for, the British Foyer Movement, a system that has gained government support as a possible solution to this social problem.

The Foyer principle: a solution to youth homelessness?

The principles informing practice in the Foyer that is the focus of this research have been developed by the British Foyer Federation. These principles acknowledge the structural relationship between unemployment and homelessness. Inherent in the approach adopted by the Foyer Movement is an attempt to overcome the structural disadvantage experienced by young people through the rehabilitation of individuals. The conditional nature of assistance offered by the Foyer system mirrors the shift in political thinking in which New Labour has "linked obligations to rights in a way that attaches receivers to givers via the 'contract' that assistance is owed only if 'character' is enhanced" (Lund: 1999:458). In the case of the study Foyer the 'contract' obliges young people to participate in six hours of training a week in return for continued tenancy. In principle the conditional nature of support offered by Foyers can be criticised, as "any policy which seeks to link the right to shelter to employment is fundamentally regressive" (Gilchrist and Jeffs, 1995:7). Implicit in the practice of obliging young people to undertake training and the search for employment is the belief that young people must be coerced into self-improvement so that they can compete in the labour market. This interpretation of youth unemployment is similar to that which has informed social security policy for the past twenty years, conditional entitlement to support is intended to provide a work

incentive for young people who are made individually responsible for their own employment status (Tonge, 1999). Theoretically then, we can claim that the principles which inform the Foyer movement are flawed as they are based essentially on the individual rehabilitation approach to unemployment that fails to fully acknowledge the structural nature of labour market disadvantage. However Foyers do provide good quality accommodation for young people in housing need and the provision of employment support services could potentially assist young people attempting to break into the labour market. The research undertaken for this thesis sought to assess whether the Foyer system could assist young people who were unable to gain 'citizenship by proxy' (Jones and Wallace, 1992) in gaining the economic independence needed to make the transition to citizenship and in turn to access and sustain independent accommodation. The next section of this chapter provides an evaluation of the study Foyer in terms of meeting stated objectives and facilitating positive tenant outcomes.

Break out! No home, no job?

The Foyer Federation for Youth (1997:12) presents the roles of Foyers as:

> "providing safe and affordable accommodation with access to training, education and employment opportunities from which young people are empowered to become socially and economically active citizens".

How well do these aims reflect the operation of the Foyer system at a single Foyer during the first eighteen-months of its operation?

First let us consider the "provision of safe and affordable accommodation". As discussed above and in detail in Chapter 7 there were difficulties in maintaining a 'safe' environment at the Foyer. Two incidents in particular involving the assault of a

tenant and threats made to a member of staff (in both cases the perpetrators were visitors) resulted in unease among tenants about the degree of personal safety the Foyer afforded them. In addition problems associated with shared accommodation led to situations of conflict between tenants that left a minority of tenants feeling victimised. The provision of accommodation to vulnerable young people on a relatively large scale caused considerable management difficulties and staff invested a significant proportion of their time in mediating between conflicting tenants. Also many respondents fell into arrears with the service charge element of their rent that had to be paid out of their income and some left the Foyer with debts in relation to service charges. More significantly both staff and tenants identified the existence of a 'poverty trap' at the Foyer in that young people were deterred from employment because it would affect their eligibility for housing benefit.

The next line of the statement given at the start of this section refers to "access to training, education and employment opportunities". In relation to training opportunities the position at the Foyer I studied represents a particular set of circumstances in which staffing difficulties delayed the implementation of a full training programme. However, the difficulties of securing the participation of vulnerable young people in a set amount of training per week in view of their reluctance and inability to make a personal investment at such a point in their lives is an important issue for the operation of Foyers generally. In addition this research has highlighted the practical difficulties of providing a full training programme for a diverse population of young people. Many respondents felt that much of the training available was inappropriate for them. In terms of participation in external

government training schemes only one respondent was able to sustain the same training placement for the duration of her tenancy.

In relation to education, problems were identified by respondents in accessing and sustaining participation in full-time education because of financial constraints and the difficulties of securing peace and quiet in shared accommodation. Only two of the six tenants who had been accepted on courses taught by external institutions in September 1997 went on to complete those courses.

Finally, then, to employment. This thesis has presented economic independence (through employment) as the key to citizenship for young people who are unable to gain 'citizenship by proxy' through family membership. The Foyer Federation for Youth (FFY) views accommodation with access to training, education and employment as a springboard "from which young people are empowered to become socially and economically active citizens". Theoretically the FFY embodies an approach which in terms of the explanation of youth homelessness as the result of denied citizenship that has been presented in this thesis should provide a solution to the social problem that has been examined. However there are a number of crucial problems with the FFY approach. First, the conditional nature of support offered by Foyers means that the system does little to 'empower' participants. Second, the system fails to acknowledge that the past life experiences of many young people who are homeless require "their prior needs to be recognised and resolved before employment can be sustained" (Blackman, 1998). Finally the approach adopted in Foyers is based on individual rehabilitation and fails to fully account for the structural causes of youth unemployment described in Chapter 2.

Although the majority of respondents supported the conditional nature of the service available in principle, in practice the sanctions used to enforce such conditions were viewed as a threat to expressions of autonomy and independence. Many respondents had additional personal difficulties related to their past life experiences that mitigated against their ability to access and sustain training and employment. A significant proportion of staff time was spent in supporting young people with additional problems that impacted on their ability to carry on with day to day living. In addition on the basis of past experience many respondents were not ready to believe that investment in the programme would or could result in personal gain.

The Foyer that is the subject of this study was unable to make any significant impact on the employment status of participants or to overcome the structural causes of youth unemployment. There was no change in employment status for 64 per cent of the study sample. Among the other 36 per cent of the sample; 12 per cent became unemployed; 12 per cent entered education, training or the New Deal and 12 per cent gained full time employment. For the entire study population unemployment rates showed a drop of only 10 per cent, from 76 per cent at the start of tenancy to 66 per cent at the end of tenancy. This is still well above the UK unemployment levels for claimants under 25 years (26.7% in 1997, Welsh Office, 1998).

The evidence gathered in the course of this research demonstrates that the approach adopted by the British Foyer Movement is ideologically unsound. The conditional nature of the support offered fails to account for what one member of staff described as the "groundwork" (in relation to personal difficulties) needed with excluded young

people before they are in a position to invest in the 'opportunities' open to them. While the emphasis on individual rehabilitation that is central to the Foyer philosophy fails to acknowledge the structural basis of labour market disadvantage facing young people.

In terms of housing, outcomes for participants were more positive. Staff provided a high degree of support for the majority of tenants at the point of move on. The housing worker was able to advocate on the behalf of tenants in securing local authority housing in hard to let areas and housing association property through the city and county "Move on Strategy". Although the most common housing-destination was private rented accommodation (a tenure in which young people are traditionally over-represented) Foyer staff were also able to support tenants in accessing tenures from which young people are traditionally excluded. Staff also assisted many tenants in applying for and securing Community Care grants to set up their new homes. The problem remains that many respondents entered independent accommodation without the economic means to sustain that accommodation in the long term. The overwhelming majority of tenants who had positive employment and housing outcomes had access to some degree of family support (often financial). Family support therefore remained a significant factor in the achievement of sustainable independence.

The Foyer was successful in assisting young people to access housing and other specialist services that they may otherwise have had difficulties in accessing. Foyer staff were able to advocate on the behalf of tenants in securing support and services and this led to positive outcomes for some tenants. The support given varied from

assistance in securing social security benefits, to support in searching for a birth parent to securing access to rehabilitation services for alcoholism. Foyer staff were able to provide emotional support to tenants and this and the support provided by other tenants was a highly valued resource among young people many of whom were denied such support from other sources.

Recommendations for the British Foyer Movement:

Before I offer recommendations for the operation of Foyers, it is important to bear in mind that the research undertaken for this thesis points to the existence of important ideological flaws in the Foyer approach. Any organisation which aims to overcome youth homelessness through individual rehabilitation and which attaches conditions to service provision fails to acknowledge that this social problem is at least the result of structural factors and inadequate and misinformed social policy responses to those factors. This said, the current provision of services for young people in housing need are scarce and the Foyer system may provide a short-term solution to young people's accommodation needs, and also may be received as a positive life experience by participants, a number of recommendations for the operation of Foyers are therefore provided.

Recommendation 1: The impact of unit size on potential success rates

The findings of this research suggest that there are significant problems associated with the operation of Foyer services in large-scale accommodation units. Tenant security and satisfaction could be better maintained in smaller units providing for no

more than eight to ten tenants and this would also aide young people's perceptions of the Foyer as a 'home'.

Recommendation 2: Recognising the holistic needs of young people

These research findings suggest that the prior experiences of young homeless people mean that they may need additional support with personal issues before they are in a position to invest in training and the search for employment. One option would be to concentrate on the identification of support needs with young people within the first month of their tenancy and to put them in contact with specialist services at this point. Young people would also benefit from a period of adjustment before they are required to undertake training. Tenants should be given time to adjust to the change in their living arrangements, to the procedures in place at Foyers and to recover from the often stressful period that has preceded their tenancy before they are expected to engage fully in the Foyer programme.

Recommendation 3: The need for staffing levels to reflect the high support needs of vulnerable young people

The findings of this research suggest that many young people will require a high level of individual staff support. Staffing levels should reflect the needs of tenants. The importance of and value given to one-to-one emotional and practical support suggests that it may be advisable to incorporate a befriending system staffed with volunteers into Foyer services.

Recommendation 4: Assistance for young people in accessing external training

The provision of an internal training programme that can meet the diverse needs of tenants is problematic. Foyers should develop working relationships with external training providers so that internal training programmes can be supplemented by specialist external services. This is already happening in a limited way but needs to be further developed if the training needs of young people are to be met.

Recommendation 5: Conditions relating to the right to accommodation

Foyers are in a position to offer young people good quality accommodation. The right to shelter should not be conditional on participation in specified hours of training or other activities. This approach fails to acknowledge the prior needs of young people. The conditional nature of provision negates participation in the programme and the sanctions used to enforce such conditions deny young people the autonomy needed to express their independence.

This chapter has so far been concerned with presenting conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice that are based on evidence gathered through original research. It is clear that substantial changes are needed in the benefits system and within housing policy if the needs of vulnerable young people are to be met. Furthermore I have claimed that it is crucial that a comprehensive youth policy agenda be established and taken forward by a dedicated Minister for Youth and through the extension of the youth service. I have also offered recommendations in relation to the operation of Foyers. Although Foyers offer good quality accommodation and may provide positive assistance in supporting young people in accessing independent accommodation the Foyer system is unable to impact significantly on young people's labour market opportunities. I have claimed that the

adoption of a principle of conditional entitlement to support and an emphasis on individual rehabilitation fails to recognise the structural basis of labour market exclusion for socially excluded young people. I now turn to the research process that generated the data used to formulate my recommendations.

Observations on the research process

This chapter has presented evidence, conclusions and recommendations in relation to an explanation of youth homelessness and an evaluation of the Foyer system. I now consider the limitations and advantages of the way in which the study was conducted. As discussed in Chapter 5 the methodology used for this study included a postal survey of British Foyers in 1997 and an in-depth study of a single Foyer over an eighteen-month period. Methods used in the main study included documentary analysis, a survey, interviews and participant observation. I begin with the limitations and then discuss the advantages of my research methods.

Limitations of the study

Here I reflect on the research process and suggest differences I might make were I to be starting the research now. Ordinarily one would undertake a pilot study prior to using a postal survey questionnaire. However, there were a number of reasons why such a pilot would be difficult here. First, because the number of Foyer projects was relatively small, I wished to survey not a sample, but all of them. There was a danger that by piloting the questionnaire with some of these, I would contaminate the main survey data. Second, I know that the small number of Foyers were already being asked to respond to other surveys and I was anxious not to endanger the response rate by sending both a pilot survey and main survey.

I decided that the most appropriate response to this dilemma was to try to ensure the clarity, appropriateness and utility of the questionnaire by inviting criticism from a number of experienced researchers and housing workers.

There were also response problems with the postal survey, response rates were higher amongst YMCA Foyers, while the study Foyer was a non-YMCA Foyer, and data in relation to tenant outcomes was so limited that it did not provide a basis for comparison. However the postal survey did provide important evidence in relation to the level of diversity within the Foyer system.

The personal constraints of the researcher also limited the scope of the research. I had a part-time teaching post for the first two years of the research, a full-time position for the last eighteen months of the research, a young son and no driving licence.

Advantages of the study.

In addition to an extensive literature review the evidence used to address the principle research questions was gathered through an in-depth study of a single Foyer. The need to study the processes involved in youth homelessness has been identified elsewhere (Hutson and Liddiard, 1994; Jones, 1995). Fitzpatrick (1998:8) has claimed that work such as that undertaken for this research:

> "is considered essential because snapshot surveys of homelessness, whilst providing useful data, have only limited usefulness in aiding our understanding of the phenomenon because they shed little light on how people came to be homeless, or what is likely to happen to them in the future".

What was essentially a small-scale study has allowed me to examine in-depth the process of homelessness and the experience of involvement in a Foyer project for

young people. It has been demonstrated elsewhere (Downing-Orr, 1996) that it is necessary to understand the real human and emotional side of young people's experience of homelessness in order to inform policy (cited in Blackman, 1998). It is here that I believe the particular strength of this study lies.

Concluding remarks:

The evidence presented in this thesis has demonstrated that youth homelessness is one result of the exclusion of young people from the status of citizenship in absence of economic independence or sufficient family support. It has highlighted the process through which social policies seek to restrict the entitlement of young people under the age of 25 years in order to protect resources. This process is legitimised through the representation of citizenship as a right to be earned through the fulfilment of obligations that many young people are unable to fulfil. Those young people who are most vulnerable to exclusion are those who have been disadvantaged by the circumstances of their childhood that were beyond their control. The approach adopted by the Foyer Movement seeks to place responsibility for positive change with the individual and provides support to young people in accessing 'opportunities'. The fact is these opportunities remain limited for young people with little family support, experience of local authority care, low educational achievements, problems associated with mental health and substance misuse. The evidence provided in this thesis supports arguments made elsewhere in relation to areas such as social security policy, approaches based on individual rehabilitation and the conditional provision of services are ineffective in overcoming structural disadvantage and instead serve to label the excluded as irresponsible and 'undeserving'.

The majority of respondents in this research identified positive elements of the Foyer; the social network and support fellow tenants and staff afforded participants gave many young people access to assistance they would otherwise have been denied. It could be argued that the Foyer system has not been given a fair hearing in this research as evidence has been presented that suggests that respondents failed to complete their side of the 'contract'. However I would contend that this is the case because as many Foyer staff identified, the system failed to recognise the degree of support and assistance vulnerable young people require before they can invest in such a programme. This thesis can provide no convincing evidence to suggest that an approach based on individual rehabilitation is effective in overcoming structural disadvantage for those young people who have already experienced disadvantage and social exclusion. It may be more appropriate for those young people who cannot depend fully on their families for support but do not have any significant additional problems. These young people are also the affected by homelessness and this may be a partial solution to their housing problems. However those who are most disadvantaged are unlikely, on the basis of evidence presented here, to benefit fully from the Foyer system in terms of employment outcomes and the satisfaction of their long term housing needs.

In relation to the operation of Foyers a number of issues have been identified. There are difficulties in providing shared accommodation to relatively large numbers of young people, I would suggest that the use of small scale units would eradicate many of these problems and would aid young people's perceptions of the Foyer as a 'home'. Staffing levels need to take account of the high support needs of vulnerable young people and service provision should reflect the holistic needs of young people rather

than focus so strongly on employment services. Foyers may react to the problems identified here by making allocation criteria more stringent; this would fail those young people who are most at risk of long-term exclusion. The study Foyer was most effective in aiding young people who had lower support needs and who could still access some degree of family support. The housing needs of these young people do demand attention and highlight the fact that young people from diverse backgrounds may fall prey to homelessness. However the rejection of those who are not yet 'ready to help themselves' would produce one more hole in the thin web of the safety net available to excluded young people.

The dominant social policy discourse of the past twenty years has succeeded in rationing young people out of the welfare equation and this process has been legitimised through the exclusion of young people who are structurally disadvantaged in fulfilling the obligations of citizenship from that status. The underlying implication of social policy is that 25 is now the age of majority (Wallace, 1988). This not only denies the majority of young people the right to claim their independence but means that those who have to attempt the transition from childhood before this age are seen as deviating from the established and accepted pattern. Once young people 'deviate' from this established pattern they become at best the subjects of a fragmented set of specialist services and at worst experience protracted exclusion, one element of which may be homelessness.

This thesis has, then:

- Provided an evidence-based explanation of youth homelessness as the result of denied citizenship in the absence of economic independence and family

membership under conditions of structural disadvantage. I have sought to develop the theory of youth as a period in which citizenship is withheld, as presented by Jones and Wallace (1992), through an account of the consequences of denied citizenship for those who do not 'enjoy' enforced family dependence.

- Provided further evidence in support of the need for radical policy changes to acknowledge the fact that social policies based on an assumption of family support fail the minority of young people who cannot access such support.

- Provided an evaluation of the Foyer approach to tackling youth homelessness and concluded that the reliance on an individual rehabilitation model is ineffectual in overcoming the structural causes of youth homelessness. I have also offered a number of recommendations for changes in the way in which Foyers operate.

If we are to develop effective policies for the future, then legislators must recognise the true costs of denying young people the right to claim their independence and contribute to society. At the start of this study I wanted to gain an understanding of why certain young people fell victim to extreme housing need and why we as a society appear to be so ineffectual in addressing this social problem. I can now provide an evidence-based explanation of the process of youth homelessness and throw light on society's failure to solve a social problem that means the potential of so many young people is lost. I hope that this research has given a voice to some of those young people but this is just one more of the many pieces of research that

demonstrate that young people do not choose homelessness, sadly I'm not convinced that those with the power to change the situation are really listening.

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APPENDIX 1

SURVEY OF OPERATIONAL FOYERS

Samantha Clutton
Department of Social Policy
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University of Wales, Swansea
Singleton Park,
Swansea
SA2 8PP

Coding [ ][ ][ ]

Survey of Operational Foyers

1: About you...

Please state the position you hold in the foyer 1

:

2: Age of foyer

Please tick the box giving the age (in years) of the foyer: 2

0-1 [ ] 1-2 [ ] 2-3 [ ] 3-4[ ] 4-5 [ ] 5-6 [ ] 6-7 [ ]

3: Number of bed spaces

How many clients is the foyer able to serve when operating at full capacity? 3

Please tick the appropriate box

0- 10 [ ] 10-25 [ ] 25-50 [ ] 50-75 [ ] 75-100 [ ]

100-125 [ ] 125-150 [ ] 150-175 [ ] 175-200 [ ]

3a : Number of bed spaces occupied at this time

How many clients are being served at present? 4

Please tick the appropriate box

0-10 [ ] 10-25 [ ] 25-50 [ ] 50-75 [ ] 75-100 [ ]

100-125 [ ] 125-150 [ ] 150-175 [ ] 175-200 [ ]

4: About Paid Staff...

How many paid staff are employed by the foyer? 5

1 to 5 [ ]

6 to 10 [ ]

11 to 15 [ ]

16 to 20 [ ]

21 to 25 [ ]

more than 25 [ ]

4a: Staff responsibilities

Please fill in the appropriate numbers in the spaces provided.	Numbers	
How many members of staff are responsible specifically for employment services	------	6
How many members of staff are responsible specifically for housing services	------	7
How many members of staff are responsible specifically for fund-raising and the development of financial support for the foyer?	------	8
How many members of staff are funded by or seconded from outside agencies?	------	9

5: Interagency Links

Has the foyer developed links with other agencies?	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	10

5a:
If yes please indicate with which of the following agencies the foyer has links. (tick the appropriate box)

Local Authority Housing Department	[ ]	11
Housing Associations	[ ]	12
Employment service	[ ]	13
Local employers	[ ]	14
Other Please specify	[ ]	15

5b:

If support is received by the foyer from local employers, please indicate the nature of this support. (tick the appropriate box)

Training on interview technique	[ ]	16
Training on the completion of application forms	[ ]	17
Provision of work experience placements	[ ]	18
Notification of employment vacancies	[ ]	19
Employment	[ ]	20
Other Please state	[ ]	21

6: About your clients...

What is the age range of the foyer client group?	youngest client ------	oldest client-----	22

6a: Which of the following clients is the foyer prepared to serve? (Please tick appropriate boxes)

Young people who are actually homeless	[ ]	23
Young people at risk of being homeless	[ ]	24
Young people who are already employed	[ ]	25
Young people who are short-term unemployed	[ ]	26
Young people who are long-term unemployed	[ ]	27
Young people participating in a recognised training scheme	[ ]	28
Young people with special needs Please specify the nature of these needs	[ ]	29

6b:

Does the foyer operate a written equal opportunities policy?(Please enclose a copy if at all possible)	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	30

6c:

Is there a written contract between clients and the foyer? (if no go to question 7)	Yes [ ]	No [ ]	31

If you have answered yes to 6c, Does this contract require that the client must fulfil any of the following criteria (Please tick appropriate boxes)

That the client is prepared to actively seek employment	[ ]	32
That the client participates in a recognised training scheme	[ ]	33
That the client undertakes to participate in some form of education	[ ]	34
Other condition Please specify	[ ]	35

6d: Does failure to comply to this contract result in any of the following sanctions?
(Please tick appropriate boxes)

Exclusion from employment services	[ ]	36
Exclusion from training services	[ ]	37
Exclusion from education services	[ ]	38
Exclusion from accommodation	[ ]	39
Exclusion from all foyer services	[ ]	40

7: Aims of foyer and services provided

Please provide a statement about the aims and objectives of the foyer 41
(If pre-printed material is available I would be most grateful if you could supply a copy)

7a: Foyer services

Which of the following services are available at the foyer?
Please indicate by ticking the appropriate boxes.

Job search	[ ]	42
Training in interview technique	[ ]	43
Training in the completion of application forms	[ ]	44
Employment training	[ ]	45
Work experience	[ ]	46
Education	[ ]	47
Literacy	[ ]	48
Numeracy	[ ]	49
Clients allowed use of stationery, stamps and telephone	[ ]	50
Teaching of lifeskills (e.g. budgeting)	[ ]	51
Housing search	[ ]	52
Other Please specify	[ ]	53

7b:

Does the foyer use individual action plans for each client? (if no go to question 9)	Yes [ ] No [ ]	54
Do clients participate in the design of their action plan?	Yes [ ] No [ ]	55
If yes please state the main ways in which clients participate		56

7c:
Which clients use action plans?
(Please tick appropriate boxes)

All clients	[ ]	57
Unemployed clients only	[ ]	58
Homeless clients only	[ ]	59

8: After the foyer

Does the foyer operate a move on policy?	Yes [ ] No [ ]	60
If so please provide an outline of this policy. (If this is a written policy I would be most grateful for a copy)		61

8a:

Are clients who secure housing still entitled to use the foyer services to help them secure employment or further training?	Yes [ ] No [ ]	62

9: Outcomes

Does the foyer monitor client outcomes? Yes [ ] No [ ] 63
(if no go to question 10)

If yes please could you attach details of client outcomes (No personal names or identities are requested) Yes [ ] No [ ] 64

9a:

Please could you supply,if possible, the following information (Pre-printed material would be very welcome)

Total number of clients served to September 1998 ------ 65

Employment and Training outcomes:

Number of clients finding employment ------ 66

Number of clients finding training placements ------ 67

Number of clients going on to further education ------ 68

Housing outcomes:

If possible please could you supply the following information

Number of clients securing housing ------ 69

Number of clients moving into local authority housing ------ 70

Number of clients moving into housing association housing ------ 71

Number of clients moving into private rented housing ------ 72

Number of clients moving into other housing ------ 73
Please specify type of housing

9b

Number of clients failing to complete action plan ------ 70

Number of clients excluded for non payment of rent ------ 71

Number of clients excluded for other breach of tenancy ------ 72

10: Perceptions about outcomes

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the statements below by ticking the appropriate box.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD	
The foyer has only been successful when a client goes on to gain employment	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	73
The foyer has only been successful when a client goes on to gain housing	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	74
The foyer has only been successful when a client gains both employment and housing	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	75
The foyer has been successful when a client has not gained employment but has developed the skills needed to gain employment	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	76
The foyer has been successful when a client has not gained housing but has developed the skills needed to maintain independent living	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	77
The foyer has been successful when a client has expressed a sense of increased self worth but has not gained employment or housing	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	78
The foyer has not been successful when a client expresses no sense of increased self worth	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	79

*** THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP ***

PRIFYSGOL CYMRU ABERTAWE
Polisi Cymdeithasol ac Efrydiau Cymdeithasol Cymhwysol
Parc Singleton, Abertawe SA2 8PP

UNIVERSITY OF WALES SWANSEA
Department of Social Policy and Applied Social Studies
Singleton Park, Swansea SA2 8PP

APPENDIX 2

May 1st 1997

Dear Sir or Madam,

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE: OPERATIONAL FOYERS IN BRITAIN

I am undertaking research into the relationship between youth citizenship and homelessness. The focus of this research is the Foyer Movement. The questionnaire attached is part of a larger study which will contribute to a doctoral thesis and which may be published. This work is supervised by Department of Social Policy, University of Wales Swansea.

I would be most grateful if you or a member of your staff could assist me, by answering the attached questionnaire. I appreciate the fact that there are already great demands made on Foyer staff and the questionnaire has been kept as short as possible. Please answer all questions if possible.

YOUR ANSWERS WILL REMAIN ABSOLUTLY CONFIDENTIAL and will not be associated with your identity at any time. I would be most grateful if the questionnaire could be returned to me by 31st May 1997. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to phone me on 01792 205678 ext. 4850.

A reply paid envelope is attached. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha Clutton, B. Sc.
University of Wales, Swansea.

APPENDIX 3

Hello! I am doing some research at the Foyer. As part of this research I would like to interview you. If you decide to take part, I will contact you to arrange a time for us to meet. Then I can tell you a bit more about the research.

If you would rather not be interviewed it would be very helpful if I could have your permission to have access to your personal file.

It's completely up to you whether you take part or not. I am not a member of staff at the Foyer. The information leaflet I have left with this form explains who I am and what the research is about.

Please fill in this form and leave it at reception or with your key worker. Look forward to meeting you soon.

Thanks a lot

Samantha Clutton

Please tick one of the boxes and write your name at the bottom:

A-I want to take part in the research [ ]

B- I do not want to take part in the research [ ]

C- I want to know more about the research before I decide whether to take part or not [ ]

D- I do not want to be interviewed but I give my permission for Samantha Clutton to have access to my personal file [ ]

APPENDIX 4

I am doing some research at the Foyer
I'd like to speak to you about it
Please read this leaflet

Welcome to the Foyer! Please spare a little bit of your time to read this leaflet which explains about the research that is taking place at the Foyer.

Who am I?

My name is Samantha Clutton (Sam). I am not a member of staff at the Foyer. I work at the University. I spend Wednesdays at the Foyer.

Why?
I am doing some research at the Foyer.

What is the research about?

The research is about homelessness and unemployment and the way they effect young people. It is about the Foyer and the way in which it works for you.

The research will ask:

Can the Foyer help you to make the most of the opportunities that are out there? For example work, training, qualifications.

Where will you be living after you leave the Foyer?

What will have changed about yourself?

Both you and I are interested in these questions.

Why am I doing this research ?

It is important that the people who run the Foyer find out if it is working for the people who use it. I will give them a report about how effective the Foyer is when the research is finished. The research will also be written about in a book which will be kept at the University.

Why do I need your help?

Foyers are quite a new idea in Britain. It is important to find out if people like you who use the Foyer think that they are working.

I need to know:

Why you came to the Foyer.

If you like the way the Foyer works.

If you think the Foyer can/has helped you.

How can you help me?

There is a form with this leaflet that you can fill in to let me know if you would like to take part or not, or if you need to know more before you decide. If you loose the form the staff can give you a spare copy. Your key worker can help you with the form.

If you decide to take part I will interview you. The first interview is to find out about your life before you came to the Foyer and what you hope to achieve will you are here. I will also interview again to see how things are working out for you and finally before you leave the Foyer to talk about your time here and your plans for the future.

I will also ask for your permission to see your personal file. The contents of these documents will remain confidential, your personal details will not be identified as belonging to you in the research.

Who will know what you tell me?

I have to stick to the confidentiality policy which is used at the Foyer. Your key worker can show you a copy of it. Everything you tell me is confidential unless it is about something which could harm yourself or others. I will tape the interviews, but only I will listen to them. I will not use your real name in the report or the book. I do not work at the Foyer and I do not work for **** Housing.

Do I have to take part?

No, if you decide that you don't want to take part that is fine. It will make no difference to the way you are treated at the Foyer and it is completely your choice.

What next?

Please fill in the form which is attached to this leaflet and give it to me or a member of staff.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this leaflet.
I look forward to meeting you soon.

APPENDIX 5

FOYER MONITORING FORM 1

This form asks questions about you and your life before you began your tenancy at the Foyer. We need this information so that we can find out who uses the Foyer and why they use it.

You can fill in this form by ticking the boxes which best describe your situation at the time you applied to come to the Foyer. You do not need to put your name on this form.

Q1: Were you employed at the time you applied to come to the Foyer?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If your answer is no, go to question 4.

Q2: Were you employed:

Full time [ ] or Part time [ ]

Q3: How long had you been employed?

0-6 months [ ] 6-12 months [ ]

1-2 years [ ] more than 2 years [ ]

Q4: Were you in full time education at the time you applied to come to the Foyer?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Q5: Were you in part time education at the time you applied to come to the Foyer?

Yes[ ] No[ ]

Q6:Were you unemployed at the time you applied to come to the Foyer?

Yes[ ] No[ ]

Q7: How long had you been unemployed?

0-6 months [ ] 6-12 months [ ]

1-2 years [ ] more than 2 years [ ]

Q8: Were you claiming any of these benefits when you applied to come to the Foyer?

Income Support [ ]

Job Seekers Allowance [ ]

Sickness/Disability benefit [ ]

Q9. Were you on a training course at the time you applied to come to the Foyer?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Q10: Did you have any of the following qualifications at time you applied to come to the Foyer?

Certificate of Education [ ] **NVQ level 1 [ ]** **Other [ ]**
GCSE [ ] **NVQ level 2 [ ]**
A level [ ] **NVQ level 3 [ ]**
BTEC [ ] **NVQ level 4 [ ]**

Q11: Where were you living at the time you applied to come to the Foyer?

Parents house [ ] **With another member of your family [ ]**

With friends [ ]

In a foster placement [ ] **In a local authority run home [ ]**

Supported lodgings [ ]

Hostel [ ] **Sleeping rough [ ]**

Bed and Breakfast [ ]

Council house/ flat [ ] **Housing association house/flat [ ]**
Private rented house/flat [ ] **Private rented bedsit [ ]**

Other [ ]

Q12: About how long had you been at that address?
0-6 months [ ] **6-12 months [ ]**

1-2 years [ ] **More than 2 years [ ]**

Q13: Have you ever slept rough?
Yes [ ] **No [ ]**

Q14: How old were you when you left home?
Under 16 [ ]

Over 16 but under 18 [ ]

Over 18 [ ]

Q15: Have you ever been in local authority care?

Yes[ ] No [ ]

Q 16: Have you ever received treatment for a mental health problem?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Q17: Have you ever received treatment for a drug related problem?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

THANK YOU VERY MUCH
FOR FILLING IN THIS FORM

APPENDIX 6

FOYER MONITORING FORM 2

This form asks questions about you and your life now that you are leaving the Foyer. We need this information so that we can find out if the Foyer is working for the people who use it.

You can fill in this form by ticking the boxes which best describe your situation at the time you applied to come to the Foyer. There are also spaces for you to write down your comments about the Foyer. You do not need to put your name on this form.

Q1: How long have you lived at the Foyer?
0-3 months [ ] 3-6 months[ ] 6-9 months [ ]

9-12 months [ ] 12-18 months [ ]

Q2: Why are you leaving the Foyer?
Because I have found my own accommodation [ ]

Because I am going to live with my family [ ]

Because I have been given notice to quit [ ]

Because the Foyer will not renew my tenancy [ ]

Other reason [ ]

Please write this reason below:

Q3: Are you employed?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes how long have you been employed?

0-3 months [ ] 3-6 months[ ] 6-9 months [ ]

9-12 months [ ] 12-18 months [ ] more than 18 months [ ]

Q4: Are you in training?

Yes[ ] No [ ]

If yes how long have you been in training?

0-3 months [ ] 3-6 months[ ] 6-9 months [ ]

9-12 months [ ] 12-18 months [ ] more than 18 months [ ]

Q5: Are you in full time education ?
Yes [ ] No [ ]

Q5: Are you in part time education ?

Yes[ ] No[ ]

Q7: have you gained any qualifications while you have been living at the Foyer?

Yes[ ] No [ ]

Q8: Where will you live now that you are leaving the Foyer?

Parents house [ ] **With another member of your family [ ]**

With friends [ ]

Hostel [ ] **Sleeping rough [ ]**

Bed and Breakfast [ ]

Council house/ flat [ ] **Housing association house/flat [ ]**
Private rented house/flat [ ] **Private rented bedsit [ ]**

Other [ ]

Q9: Do you feel you have learnt how to live on your own while you have been at the Foyer? In what ways e.g. cooking, budgeting etc.

Q10: Would you say that overall your time at the Foyer has been

A: A positive experience [ ]
B: A negative experience [ ]

11: Please write down what you think about the Foyer, what are the good points and bad points of living here?

12: What would you change about the Foyer if you could?

13: Are you glad you came to the Foyer?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

THANK YOU VERY MUCH
FOR FILLING IN THIS FORM
GOOD LUCK FOR THE FUTURE