

# Care Leavers National Movement

Peer research into the impact of CLNM, and the benefits for the young people involved.



CARE LEAVERS  
NATIONAL MOVEMENT



**NHP**  
Living connected  
and fulfilling lives

**Partnership  
for Young  
London**

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# Introduction

The Care Leavers National Movement (CLNM) is comprised of care leavers, from Local House Projects (LHPs), who have come together to make a difference. The role of CLNM representatives (rep) has expanded over the past six years, but remains the same at the core: to improve the lives of all young people in care.

This peer research, designed and conducted by young people, looks at the change that CLNM creates, and the impact it has on CLNM reps. We want to thank all the current CLNM reps who designed this research, and conducted interviews. We also want to thank the reps past and present who gave up their time to take part in interviews, or to complete the survey. This work could not have been done without their contributions.

We found that as LHPs develop, CLNM reps are key in providing on the ground feedback from the young people going through the House Project programme. Acting as a conduit for young people's voices, CLNM reps ensure that LHPs continually improve with the needs of the young people it supports in mind. They work together, as a team, to share what works and to highlight the challenges they face. We found that CLNM reps felt like they had made meaningful change, and importantly felt listened to by staff at their LHPs and at National House Project (NHP).

Recently, CLNM has worked at a national level to bring more attention to care leavers both in and out of House Project, meeting CEOs, National Care Advisers, and the Government's Minister for Children and Families. Their work building partnerships, such as with Madlug to set up Senses of Home, has helped to expand the offer for care leavers across House Projects. This helps drive a positive narrative, about the potential of care leavers nationally, with CLNM reps being role models of what is possible.

Change doesn't happen overnight, but for CLNM reps we found dramatic improvements to their confidence and their skills for the future, alongside the creation of a community of friendships that go beyond their time as a rep. The experiences of CLNM push reps outside their comfort zone, enabling them to travel to different parts of the country, or planning and delivering conferences in front of hundreds of people. This is supported by the strong relationships reps have with staff and their peers, developing a shared community.

This community of past and present CLNM reps will continue to be supported in the future, with an expanded Alumni offer. We heard how young people wanted to stay in touch, and continue to engage with House Project past their time as a rep. This research is the first step in engaging the wider CLNM community, gathering what they want to see from an Alumni offer going forward.









# Key findings

## The work of CLNM

- 1. The work of CLNM is important in improving their Local House Project, and through the informal support and leadership they provide to others in their cohort.**

CLNM has developed Local House Projects, changing the way it supports young people, such as during the Covid-19 lockdown. However, there are barriers to creating change, like the difficulty in getting feedback and changes requested being out of the power of CLNM reps or NHP.

- 2. CLNM reps are also involved in creating change at a regional, and national level by working with key stakeholders to improve outcomes for Care Experienced young people.**

There are clear examples of CLNM reps working to influence change on a national level, meeting with the Children's Minister and Mark Riddell, the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers. They also speak to CEOs, and other national organisations, to secure additional opportunities. CLNM reps also, especially in recent years, are more engaged with Local Authorities to provide advice and expertise to shape the local offer for care leavers.

- 3. CLNM reps getting feedback from young people is essential to making change but can often be difficult, adding to an already sizeable workload.**

The most difficult aspect of being a CLNM rep, the one that most respondents wanted to see change in, was the process of getting feedback from young people and staff at their LHP. This added to reps' workload, especially for areas where not enough reps have been recruited.

## Impact on CLNM reps

- 4. Being part of CLNM greatly develops young people's confidence, through experiences that take them out of their comfort zone, with conference and travel demands being key.**

Overall, young people had a good experience of CLNM. CLNM reps reported a massive increase in confidence, with overnight trips away, and conference being key to this. Many reps felt that CLNM took them out of their comfort zone, doing things they would not have done otherwise.



- 5. Being part of CLNM provides a sense of community, with the relationships built between reps, and with staff, one of the most valued aspects of being a CLNM rep.**

Young people made friends as part of CLNM with other reps, and staff. Many of these relationships continue past their time as a rep. CLNM creates a sense of community that reps feel part of, built through working as a team on conference, or the balance of fun and work at overnight trips away.

- 6. Being part of CLNM improves young people's employability, increasing soft skills like organising and planning, and often changes what they want to do in the future.**

Young people develop a range of skills during their time at CLNM which improve their employability for the future. The experience CLNM provides has had a lasting impact on many young people's future aspirations, with many wanting a career which helps others and creates change going forward. Young people at CLNM put it on their CV, and it is a valuable experience for them to talk about in job interviews.

- 7. Transitioning from a CLNM rep to Alumni can be difficult, but young people demonstrate a desire to stay in touch.**

Many young people spoke about their mixed experience of ending their time as a rep, with some finding it difficult, and others feeling it was time. Young people want an active Alumni offer, with opportunities to socialise and meet up. A membership card was supported.



# Recommendations

These recommendations were created from a discussion with current CLNM reps during after looking at the interviews and survey data.

1. In the past six years, CLNM reps have made a huge positive impact. These stories need to be collated, celebrated, and communicated to all new CLNM reps and young people joining House Project.
2. A better understanding of CLNM, what it offers and achieves, for young people when they first join House Project will improve recruitment to CLNM and communicate the value of giving feedback to reps.
3. A new, standardised structure in Local House Projects needs to be developed that allows all new CLNM reps the space and time to gather feedback from young people. This needs to be recognised and supported by Local House Project staff.
4. In their time as a CLNM rep, young people develop their confidence, and a range of skills. This should be supported with additional formal training sessions, as requested by reps:
  - » Public speaking training, to build the skills and confidence to speak before they are asked to at Conference.
  - » Induction training on how to be a CLNM rep, how to get feedback, and how to provide support to others.
5. Being part of CLNM can be a life changing experience, and creating a strong CLNM Alumni will allow that community to continue.
6. CLNM reps want an active Alumni offer, with a membership card, that goes beyond a newsletter, providing opportunities to influence change, meet up and socialise, and keep in touch with staff and other reps.





# Co-Production:

A way of working, whereby everyone  
together on an equal basis to create  
come to a decision which works



# Methodology

This work is peer research into CLNM, one that involves current reps in the creation of interview questions, survey questions, and analysis. The aim of the work was to explore CLNM, the work it does, and how it supports young people. This project had several research questions, shaped by current reps and NHP staff:

- What has been the impact of CLNM on current and past reps?
- What has been the impact of CLNM on LHPs, NHP, and external stakeholders?
- What do CLNM reps want from an Alumni offer?

**The fieldwork took place between August 2024 and September 2024, with a total of 35 reps taking part in the research process through surveys, or with a one-to-one interview.** Since inception, CLNM has had over 60 reps, and we aimed to speak to a large proportion of those reps both past and present.

- **Interviews:** Current CLNM reps wrote every question on the interview guide, brainstorming a bank of questions under key themes, which was later organised into an interview guide. This was tested on the day with reps interviewing each other using the draft interview guides. These guides were then revised based on feedback, before they went out to conduct additional interviews. In total, the peer researchers conducted nine interviews, both online and in person, which were recorded and then transcribed. Interviews lasted on average 18 minutes, with nearly three hours of conversation captured.
- **Survey:** Current CLNM reps wrote every question on the survey, which was later organised by staff into a final survey. It was disseminated through emails via the Alumni network, and through targeted emails aimed at CLNM reps, past and present. It took ten minutes to complete and was completed by 26 reps in total. The results were analysed by current reps, with key findings drawn from that.



## Research sample

**Gender:** Participants were balanced in terms of gender, with 50% identifying as female, and 46.2% identifying as male. A minority of responses (3.8%) identified as Non-Binary/Third Gender.

**Generation of CLNM rep:** Participants were spread across different cohorts of CLNM reps, with more representation from recent cohorts. Most commonly participants were current reps (33%), followed by reps from 2023-24 (25%), reps from 2022-2023 (11.1%), reps from 2021-2022 (11.1%), founding CLNM reps (11.1%), reps from 2020-2021 (5.5%), and reps from 2019-2020 (5.5%).

**Local House Project representation:** Participants were reps in ten different LHPs, with the most common LHPs represented being Stoke-on-Trent (23.1%), Warwickshire (19.2%), Bury, Rochdale and Oldham (11.5%), Wolverhampton (11.5%), Coventry (7.7%), Islington (7.7%), Stockport & Tameside (7.7%), East Dunbartonshire (3.8%), Fife (3.8%), Manchester & Trafford (3.8%).

**Ethnicity:** Participants predominately identified as White young people (69.2%), followed by Mixed/Multiple ethnicity (11.5%), Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (7.7%), Asian/Asian British (3.8%), or Other (7.7%). This sample largely reflects the LHPs which reps were predominately from.

## Analysis

Data gathered was simplified, with clean transcripts being created and survey data presented in graph format before being examined by current CLNM reps. From this, they examined the transcripts to identify codes and themes which has provided the structure for this report.

They also examined the survey results, providing insight about which data points stood out to them, and which resonated most strongly with what they had read in the interviews.

At the end of the analysis session, CLNM reps brainstormed what changes they would like to see to CLNM going forward based on their own experience as a rep and what they had read and seen from the data.

**All quotes found in the report are from what was said to our CLNM reps by their peers.**





# 1. The work of the Care Leavers National Movement



# The development of CLNM

The work of CLNM has grown since its inception, with the work of reps increasingly varied in the way that they create impact and the scope of the impact. **We spoke to CLNM Founders, the first group of reps, about the start of CLNM. Their experience was quite different to that of recent reps, with their contributions being key to defining the identity of CLNM in the first few years.**

*"We decided to pick the name...we decided on the name Care Leavers National Movement while I was a rep, because before that it was the Young People's National Steering Group. Which is a terrible name, whoever decided that at the start."*

Their contributions were key in defining the identity of CLNM, and what the key purpose and aims of it should be. While the work of CLNM would continue to change and expand, the foundation set in the first cohort largely remained, which was to be the voice of care experienced young people across the House Project.

*"We've changed how we run like half a dozen times... we've changed a lot but we've not changed our morals and what we've been built on."*

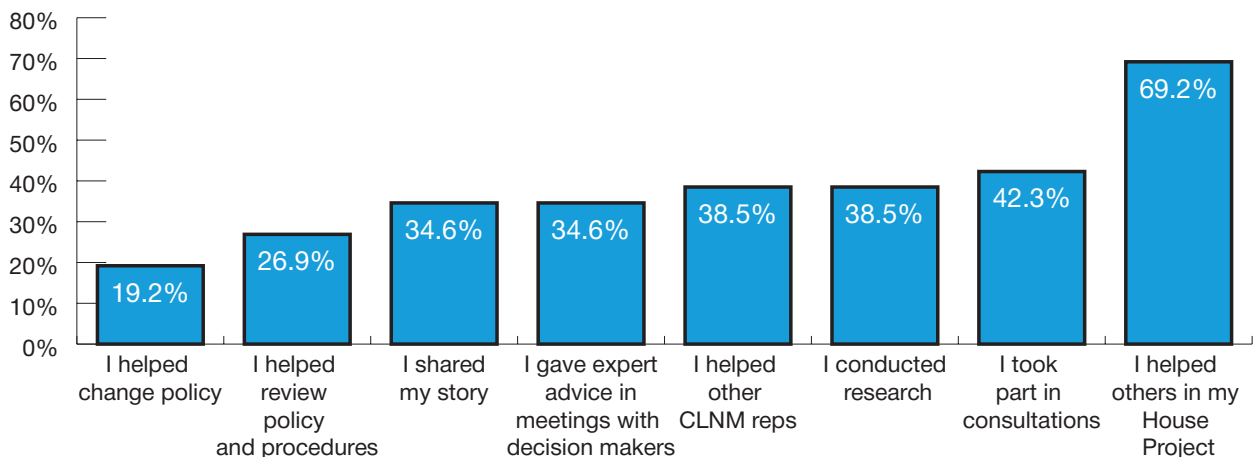
**Since then, CLNM has expanded in the scope of the work that it does, developing what it does over time to influence change.** This is partly as a result of the growing size of House Projects, with more LHPs across different regions, but also the influence of new staff and different reps.

*"A lot's changed. The workers. The staff. The people. CLNM is something that's constantly developing. Which is something that I always think is a good thing. You don't want to become one of those organisations that is just kind of, you know, we've been doing this same old thing for 70 years and it's going to work still, because that doesn't work."*

We found that often new CLNM reps would bring new ideas, and new ways of working to the role. This helped to continually develop CLNM, as it is shaped by the personalities of whoever the current reps were.

When we asked CLNM reps what impact they had during their time, the most common answer was “I helped others in my House Project” (69.2%), followed by “I took part in consultations” (42.3%), “I conducted research” (38.5%), “I helped other CLNM reps” (38.5%), “I gave expert advice in meetings with decision makers” (34.6%), “I shared my story” (34.6%), “I helped review policy and procedures” (26.9%), and “I helped changed policy” (19.2%).

What impact did you have as a CLNM rep? Choose all that apply.

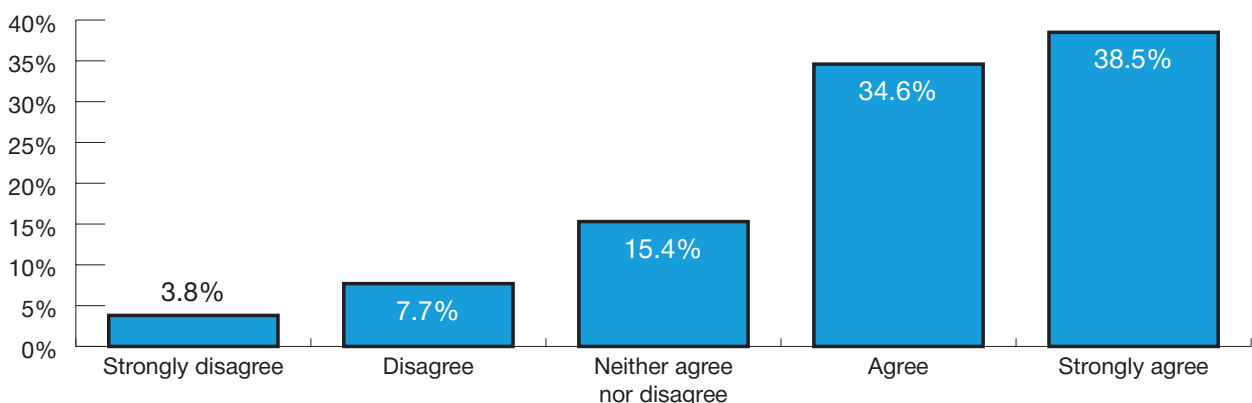


Alongside their core duties as a rep, we spoke to some reps who were proud of their work supporting other young people personally, taking a leadership role in their LHP. While others focused on making changes to their LHP, or for all care leavers nationally.

*“...changing their lives giving them a better start, teaching them skills, changing the parliament, changing public opinion, there's been too many things to list and being involved in so much is it's...amazing...it's just an amazing opportunity and I never take it granted I always love it.”*

Importantly, we asked past and present reps if they agreed or disagreed with the statement “I made meaningful change to lives of others during my time at CLNM”. Almost three out of four (73.1%) agreed or strongly agreed, while only one in ten (11.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. In whatever way they chose to make an impact, generally reps felt positive about their ability to make positive change to the lives of others during.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I made meaningful change to the lives of others during my time at CLNM”?









# Impact on Local House Projects (LHPs)

## Getting feedback to improve Local House Projects

The core focus of CLNM reps is to use their skills and experience to be expert advisors and develop LHPs whilst improving outcomes for all young people leaving care. From the very start of NHP, CLNM reps have been an important way of providing feedback from young people at LHPs to develop them.

*“One of the things we did do quite often was we used to have debrief sessions at the end of every session and...the staff members would step out and it would just be CLNM reps and young people...we got a fair amount of feedback.”*

**Feedback from young people, relayed by CLNM reps, allows LHPs to listen to the needs of young people.** Sometimes this can be in seemingly small ways, like ordering food that wasn't pizza for a change, or adjustments to the time of sessions. However, these small changes give young people greater sense of ownership and control over their LHPs.

Feedback and input in decision making was especially important during the pandemic, where feedback allowed LHPs to be responsive to the needs of young people. For example, one rep worked to provide opportunities to meet and socialise in person at a time where delivery had shifted online.

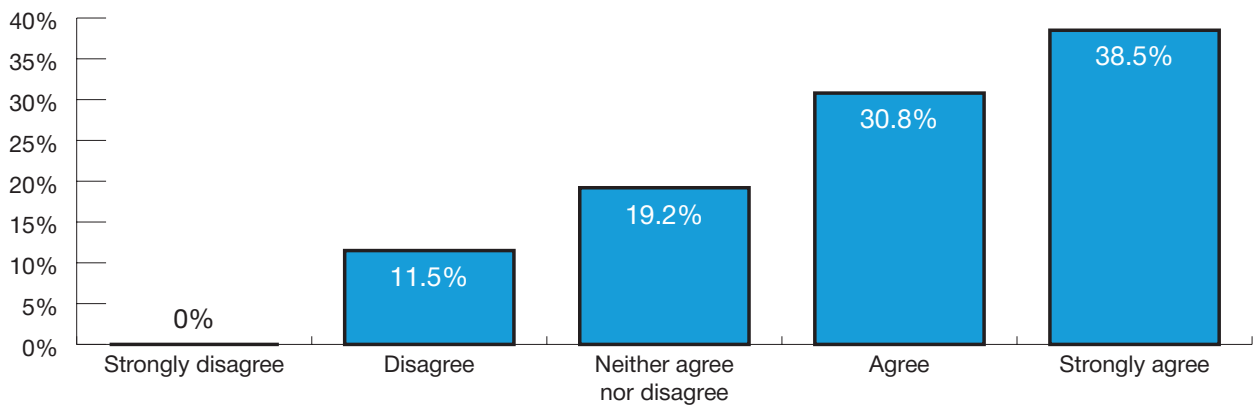
*“One of the things that we did during my time was, well, essentially lockdown happened...the House Project was very much moving on toward doing online things, which with lockdown probably a good thing. The downside is that it (could have) turned the House Project programme into just a bunch of forms people have to fill in. Which isn't really what the house project is about.*

*So, one of the things that I suggested to my House Project was that instead of just doing these forms, or even if you're still going to do them, do them as a group online. And, or, maybe meet up somewhere you can socially distance, obviously, and try and do them there. And they took that and turned it into a bike ride around a lake, including a picnic. And we did, we filled them in there.”*

**However, some CLNM reps were less clear about the exact changes that were made to their LHP as a result of their feedback.** They were particularly unaware of the changes that had been made already to LHP as a result of previous reps in previous years. Often much had already been changed as a result of CLNM, and awareness of the impact and changes already made needed to be clearly communicated, and passed down between reps.

Young people influencing decision making at LHPs can only happen when there is a good relationship between CLNM reps and LHP facilitators, with a clear and open dialogue between them. **Importantly, a majority of reps (69.3%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “I felt listened to as a CLNM rep by my Local House Project”.** One in five neither agreed nor disagreed (19.2%), while one in ten (11.5%) disagreed.

**Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I felt listened to as a CLNM rep by my Local House Project”?**



*“I caught up with my facilitators regularly. I caught up with the project lead regularly. We went to steering panel. We spoke with the strategic lead regularly as well.”*

*“So, the CLNM reps were always part of decision making within our (LHP). Sometimes it was more difficult than others. So, the CLNM rep would often meet with the house project facilitators or the project leads, and kind of talk things out there...I like to think we at least made people think about some of the stuff that they could be doing differently.”*





## Sharing good practice across Local House Projects through CLNM

**We found that one of the biggest drivers of change came from the sharing of good practice across LHPs that CLNM reps facilitated.** Reps would naturally share what is happening in their House Project, which would provide good ideas or models of delivery that other reps would take back to their LHP.

*“And we got (those ideas) from CLNM. I mean, like CLNM have changed our House Project like probably so much. I mean, our House Project, it’s not just a base. It’s genuinely like a safe space for anyone really.”*

In some cases, CLNM reps would take ideas for sessions, or policies that they wanted to be adopted. While it was acknowledged that not everything could be transferable, CLNM reps were important to sharing what worked between young people in House Project.

*“...take what worked to a different House Project and giving that option to other House Projects. Being able to share so much from other places, it hasn’t always worked since different House Projects have different policies and differences things and different things they can do, but (when) they can, it can give so much back.”*

Good practice was shared both ways too, with CLNM developing as a result of good practice from LHPs. For example, one rep took good practice from their LHP where all CLNM reps got free rail card to support with travel.

*“So, as a CLNM rep, we took a lot of things back. So, whether it was, you know, improvements or ideas of what was going on in other LHPs, we very much took all of that back. Some of it was kind of listened to, other things, people have basically just kind of said, you know, we’re not able to do that for whatever reason. One of the things we took back was rail cards. So, when I was in (my LHP), we’d always get a rail card, whenever we were a CLNM rep. Well, CLNM started doing it, and we always made sure that young people had rail cards. And that was just one of the kind of ideas.”*

**In other cases, it provided additional pressure for fidelity across LHPs. CLNM reps were aware of the difference between LHPs, from the base, or allowances.** However, this accompanied by an increased understanding of how LHPs are setup and funded, and why those differences existed.

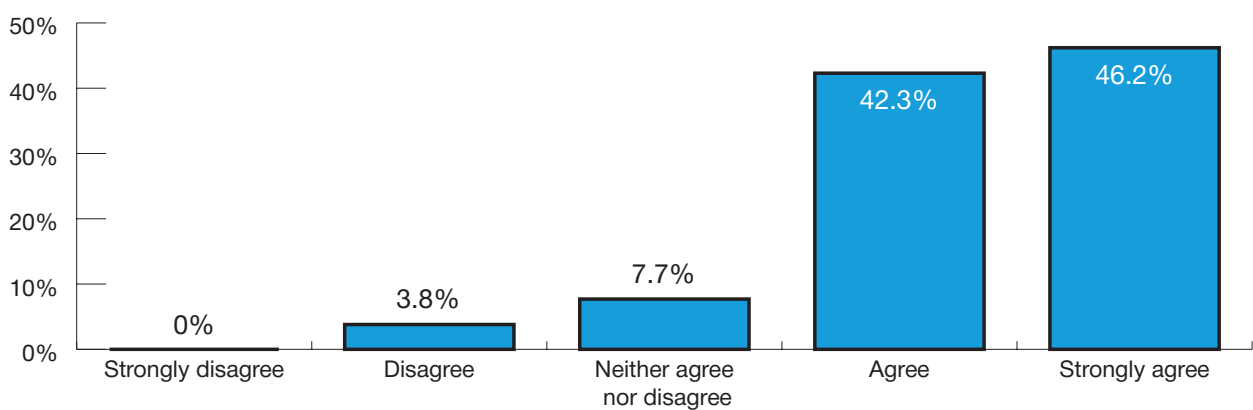
*“I guess the best thing is...talking to reps is probably just finding out how different things are so, people often refer to kind of like a local offer...it’s like a postcode lottery you know some places get more than others some places get less, some places are just completely different in every way shape or form. So, it’s just understanding it and finding out that it’s technically the same project everywhere, but with slight differences. It’s always interesting to hear how things are or have been.”*

## Impact on National House Project

CLNM is supported by the National House Project (NHP), and staff based there. They are the first point of contact with CLNM reps for their feedback and have the opportunity to hear what young people across all LHPs are saying. As such, it is important that CLNM reps feel listened to by NHP.

**A majority (88.5%) of reps agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “I felt listened to as a CLNM rep by National House Project”,** with less than one in ten (7.7%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing and a small minority (3.8%) disagreeing.

**Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I felt listened to as a CLNM rep by National House Project”?**



*“It has been so far reaching and so much bigger than we’ve ever thought and we always think big and it’s always been bigger than we’ve ever thought.”*

We have seen, especially through peer evaluation, how NHP have set up a clear process for working with CLNM to obtain the views of young people across LHPs and respond directly to the recommendations. This structure of “You Said, We Did”, is clearly communicated through the CLNM Conferences, which helps convey the importance of the work of CLNM reps at their LHP.



## The increasing challenge of getting feedback as a CLNM rep

We found that despite the ability of CLNM reps to obtain feedback from their peers being vital to creating change, many reps can find this a challenge, one that has gotten harder in recent years. Smaller groups, and a sense of newness made obtaining feedback for the first years of CLNM much easier.

*“So because the House Project was very new when I first started it was, well it literally just started. A lot of the local authorities kind of I guess wanted to prove that they should have a House Project and were very willing to work towards having and doing better. It was a lot easier to get feedback than it is now.”*

While some current reps do obtain feedback, through good relationships with current cohorts at their LHP or the facilitators, the picture is mixed. **When we asked what the three things are you would have changed about your time as a CLNM rep, “Getting feedback from your local House Project” was the most chosen option (84.6%).** When asked what they would have changed, answers mainly focused on the process of getting feedback. Some reps felt that there was no organised time in sessions for them to get feedback at their LHP, others felt the organised time was too formal. Some reps felt there was a lack of coordination between reps, cohorts, and staff.

*“Feedback from LHPS I would change to make it easier for reps to do so as it can be very difficult with the lack of communication between reps, cohorts and staff.”*

Other reps spoke about an over-reliance on feedback from facilitators, after facing challenges getting feedback from young people, while others wished for more feedback from facilitators.

*“I’ll probably say all House projects staff should give updates or feedbacks to their reps where we could discuss how to support them or change them or give them an ideas.”*

*“you kind of have to rely on the facilitator to give you the feedback. And obviously, it’s kind of hard to get feedback from facilitator because they will see different issues than a young person would.”*

Some current reps have adapted their methods, inventing online polls or surveys to get feedback outside of session time. However, there is often no formalised support for them to do so, and is often dependent on the initiative and skills of the individual rep.

*“...it’s still very hard to get the feedback, but it is a little bit better because obviously, you can use Facebook to do polls for the House Project group chats.”*



**In some cases, the process of getting feedback can be difficult as young people at LHPs do not understand the importance of it.** This partly can be where feedback highlights challenges that are out of CLNM's remit to change and are the responsibility of the Local Authority. In this case, changes do not come quickly or at all and can undermine the importance of giving feedback.

*"The only feedback we keep getting is just things that CLNM can't really help with yet. We would love to have the budget, time, and everything to do that, but it's literally it's a rock and a hard way situation because you need to give feedback, but the feedback is the same. Most of the time very rarely anything changes and it's what, our local council, local people can do look at these facts it's not what CLNM can do, it is it's just staff and budgets, everything else is running smoothly."*

**CLNM reps felt that they needed support, either in training or providing a clear system for them to obtain feedback, or for more information to be provided to cohorts about the importance of CLNM and what to expect from their reps.** This is often done informally between reps, as a handover. A lack of clarity too, about what previous impact CLNM has had on their LHP, could create reluctance to providing meaningful feedback.



## Impact at national level

CLNM has developed with an increasing ambition to improve the lives of all care experienced young people across the country. We found that this was done primarily in three ways: engagement with aspects of the UK Government, work with key national partners, and participation through consultations and researching.

In recent years, CLNM have been engaged with Mark Riddell, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers at the Department for Education. Their input has helped shape national policy around care leavers, and raise the profile of the work of CLNM through their peer evaluation work. This culminated in CLNM being invited to meet the Children's and Families Minister at the time, Will Quince.

*"I did have an opportunity to meet with a children's minister at one point... we talked to them and that was amazing to speak to someone so high up in Parliament.... They remember us and recognize us, and they will take that experience into the houses of Parliament meetings... and that change their opinion and change how they choose to vote on different policies and laws."*

Those CLNM reps who met Will Quince felt a sense of pride, as they were able to present a different narrative about care experienced young people, while Will Quince described the meeting as 'inspirational' and 'informative'. It also provided CLNM reps with the experience of visiting and learning about the UK Parliament.

**We heard from CLNM reps how being visible at a national level helps to change the "negative stereotypes" around care experienced young people. Some felt a responsibility to present a positive image, and represent young people who grew up in care generally, not just those who are from House Project.**



## Working with national partners

The second way in which CLNM reps talked about change nationally was with their work with national businesses and charities. In recent years especially, reps have been given the opportunity to speak to CEOs of large employers or do more direct work with some key national charities, with the view to create important partnerships.

*“I spoke to a lot of people like different managers and directors and stuff throughout my time there so and not just at the conferences you got to see a lot more people of that from different local authorities, so, you get a feel for like what they’re doing which as well was nice.”*

One of those key partners is Dave from Madlug, who has been a key supporter of CLNM, whose company provides bags for care leavers across the country. **More recently, this partnership was developed further, with 12 CLNM reps attending the ‘Madlug Innovation Academy’ to create a social enterprise, Senses of Home.** This social enterprise, supported by Madlug, followed a social enterprise model, supported by Madlug, selling homeware such as mugs. Profits were used to purchase bed linen for young care experienced people moving into their own homes.

*“Probably Northern Ireland so we went to Northern Ireland to meet with Dave from Madlug and set up a social enterprise called Senses of Home. And that was probably, well I mean it was the first time that I’d been to Northern Ireland, this is the second time I’d ever been on a plane so yeah it was definitely very memorable.”*

This engagement by CLNM can be an important driver of obtaining additional support for young people in LHPs across the country, through partnerships with MyBnk, and Suited and Booted, for example.







## 2. Being a Care Leavers National Movement representative

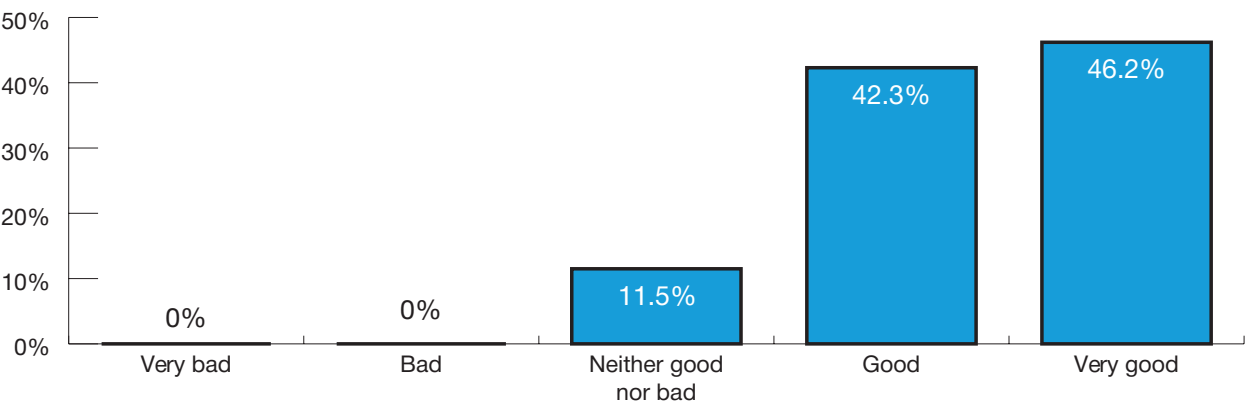


# The impact of being a CLNM rep

The experience of being a CLNM rep is one that provides a range of benefits and opportunities, but in this work the reps we spoke to identified three key areas: confidence, community, and employment skills for the future.

Generally, CLNM reps rated their overall experience at CLNM as good (42.3%) or very good (46.2%), with a minority (11.5%) saying it was neither good nor bad, and no respondents saying it was bad or very bad (0%).

Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I felt listened to as a CLNM rep by my Local House Project”?



We heard how being a CLNM was hugely important to reps, and how impactful it had been on their lives in different ways.

*“I basically chose it ever since and I loved it ever since because it's been just a wonderful experience, it's helped me so much and still helps me every single day.”*

When asked to look over their time as a whole, CLNM reps were positive. Even where they spoke about things they enjoyed less, many recognised that it likely brought benefits to their development.

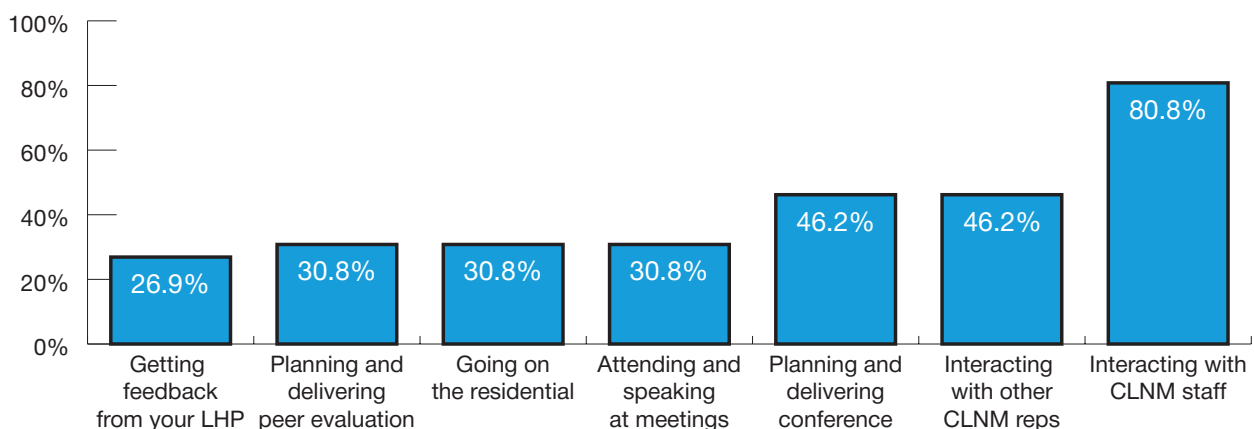
*“I definitely enjoyed being a rep...I enjoyed kind of you know meeting new people, building my confidence, doing things that I never would have done, but at the same time I also didn't enjoy things like...standing on stage and talking to people but just because I didn't enjoy it doesn't necessarily mean it probably wasn't a good thing I did it anyway.”*





When we asked what the top three things were about being a CLNM rep, the most commonly selected answer was interacting with CLNM staff (80.8%), followed by interacting with other CLNM reps (46.2%), planning and delivering conference (46.2%), attending and speaking at meetings (30.8%), going on the residential (30.8%), planning and delivering peer evaluation (30.8%), and getting feedback from your local House Project (26.9%).

#### Which are the top three things you enjoyed about being a CLNM rep?





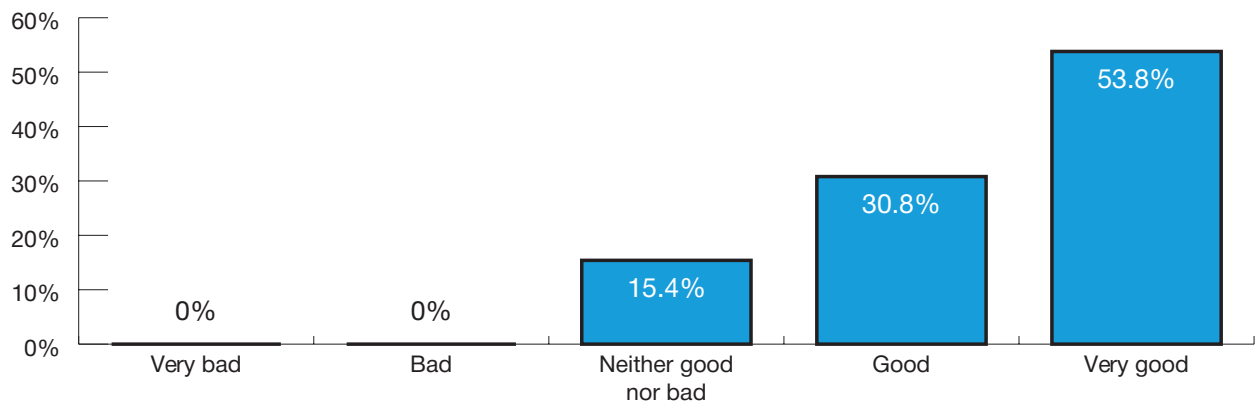
## Building the confidence of CLNM reps

Being part of CLNM was found to develop young people's confidence, with a range of experiences that took them out of their comfort zone. The confidence built during their time as CLNM reps was one of the lasting benefits, supporting them in their lives beyond House Project.

*"I think it's changed me as a person...it's made me better. I feel a lot like happier knowing that I've taken away stuff from CLNM. I feel like CLNM has made me comfortable to express, to just be myself really."*

**When asked to rate CLNM on how well it supported them to develop their confidence, over half (53.8%) rated it very good, with one in three (30.8%) rating it good.** A minority rated it neither good nor bad (15.4%), and none rated it bad or very bad (0%).

### Rate CLNM on how well it supported you to develop your confidence:



CLNM supports reps to become, through the work they do, more confident over time. This confidence allows young people to feel more comfortable dealing with people or going to new places.

*"I'm more confident, I'm able to speak more, I've been to more places, I've essentially gained more experience in dealing with people, which is not something I ever thought I'd thought I'd do."*

**We found that CLNM reps spoke about feeling more confident in the importance of having their voice heard. They felt more willing to speak out, having a stronger understanding of why youth voice is important.**

*"Helping me with my...confidence, because it means I have now got the ability, you know, to speak up for myself, voice if something's wrong."*

*"Yeah, definitely more confident so I'm able to go for things a lot more and with less hesitation. I feel like I'm more like confident with making sure my voice is heard in situations where before I would have just stepped back."*

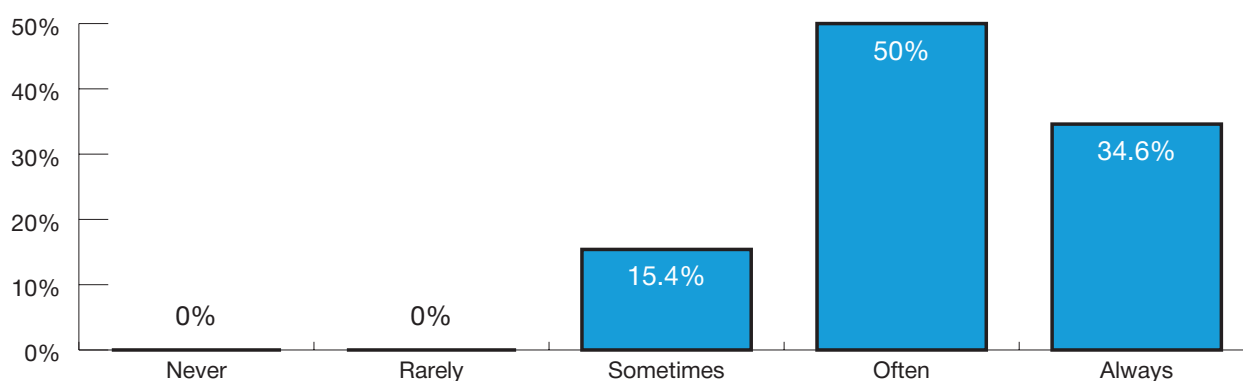
## Comfort zone

The main way that CLNM increases the confidence of reps is by taking them out of their comfort zone, with opportunities and activities that they would have not done otherwise.

*"It's helped me to...To be more confident in myself and when I'm out and about. So, it's helped me broaden my horizons. So, you know, I would...I tend to do stuff that I wouldn't do before."*

**We asked how often being a CLNM rep gave young people the opportunity to try new things, finding one in three saying that it always did (34.6%%), half saying it often did (50%), and a minority (15.4%) saying it sometimes did. No reps said that it never, or rarely (0%) gave them the opportunity to try new things.**

### How often did being a CLNM rep give you the opportunity to try new things?



Reps talked about the variety of activities that they would not have done without being a CLNM rep, things that made them feel nervous, like public speaking, talking to camera, or travelling alone to new places.

*"There's lots of things I have ended up doing that I wouldn't have done. Being in films, meeting children's minister, going to Northern Ireland, standing up at the stadium...I've travelled more during CLNM than I have ever been to before."*

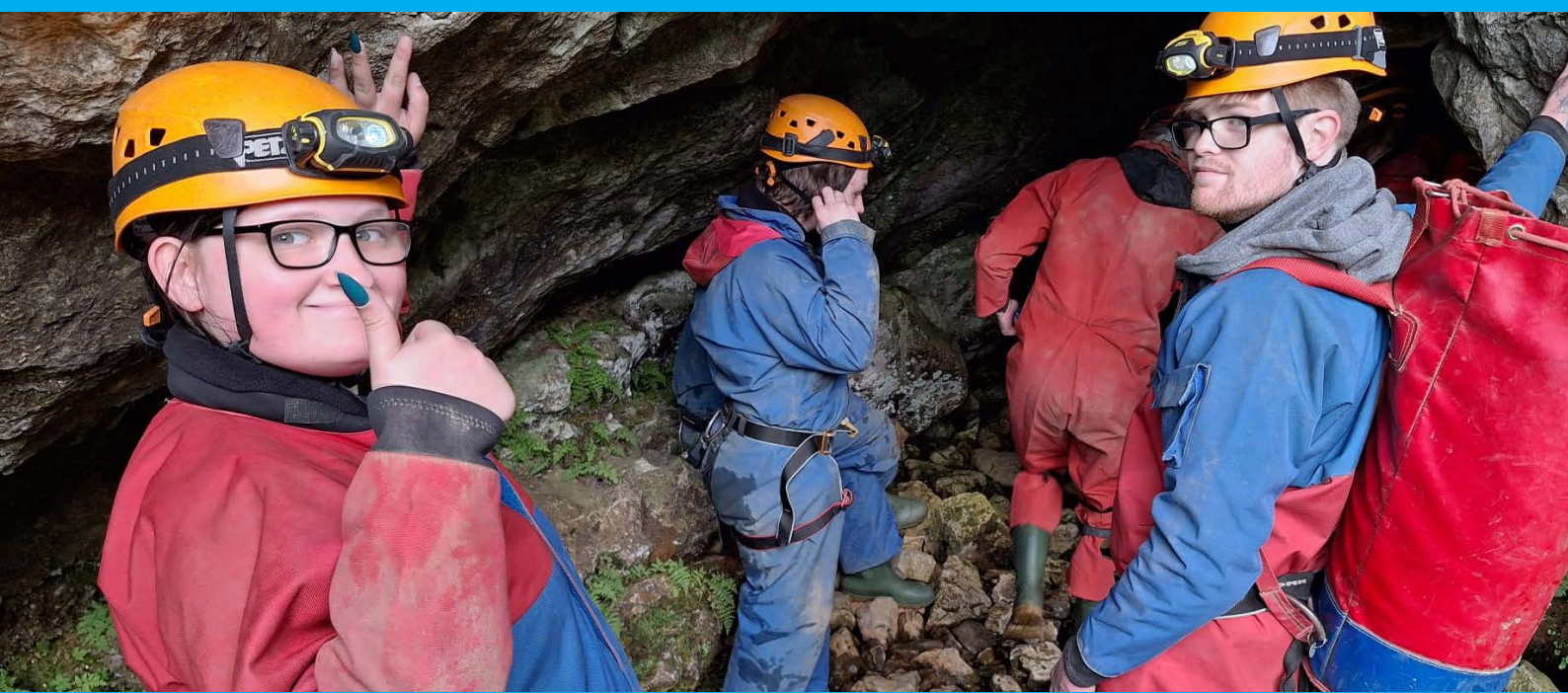
**Conference planning and speaking at conference in particular, was something that many reps talked about. Speaking in front of hundreds of people could be very daunting, but the experience was often rewarding.**

*"So, it was quite scary for me to be fair. I looked down and just got on with it. I tried to have the confidence, and it worked out pretty well. Yeah, I felt proud."*

Other than activities, some spoke about the anxiety they had before joining CLNM and how the responsibilities they had to speak to others took them out of their comfort zone.

*"I'm an anxiety person in general...it's always going to be out of your comfort zone. So, you just need to take it and do it and you don't let it control you."*







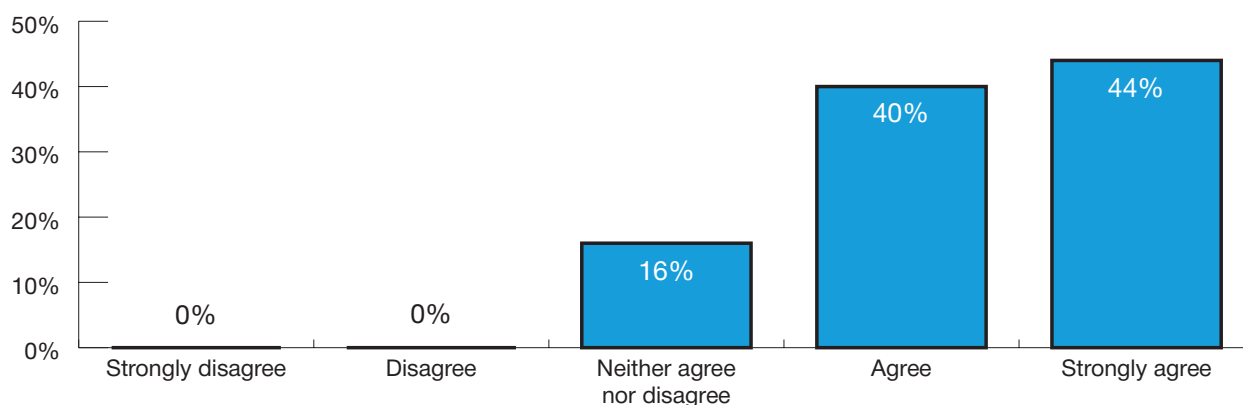
# Creating a CLNM community

The second biggest benefit for CLNM reps we spoke to was the sense of community that CLNM provides, with good relationships with staff and friendships with other reps that lasted beyond their time as a rep.

*"I loved being a rep because, you know, it was like, it was like my second family."*

**When asked if they agree or disagree with the statement: "Being a CLNM rep made me feel part of a community", a large majority either strongly agreed (44%) or agreed (40%).** A minority said they neither agreed nor disagreed (16%), with nobody saying they disagreed or strongly disagreed (0%).

**Do you agree or disagree with the statement: "Being a CLNM rep made me feel part of a community"?**



**Interacting with CLNM staff was chosen by four out of five respondents (80.8%) as one of the top three things they enjoyed about CLNM, the most common option.** This highlights the impact that staff engagement with CLNM reps has, providing support and creating an environment that fosters a sense of community between staff and reps.

*“But I had so much support in every single step of the way. I had so much guidance and even when it was difficult and very overwhelming. I never felt out of my depth or like I couldn’t do it because of the guidance that I’ve had from people, just everyone involved in the NHP.”*

*“Overall, the impact is, it’s really good because we’ve got our own community, we’ve got our own friendships, we’ve got relationships with the staff, which is good to have as support. You know, we’ve got... our own support system.”*

Part of this was the ability of staff supporting CLNM to get involved and be taken out of their comfort zone alongside the young people.



**Some reps’ favourite memories were those where staff got involved in activities,** for example showing a surprising competitiveness on a simple game or being demonstrably fearful of heights. Staff joined in, took part, and shared challenges and the successes with CLNM reps.

*“It was more like just getting involved with like teamwork and taking part in team activities and all that. Just, they didn’t just come together. You start having a laugh. You’re doing team building exercises. It just all falls together really.”*



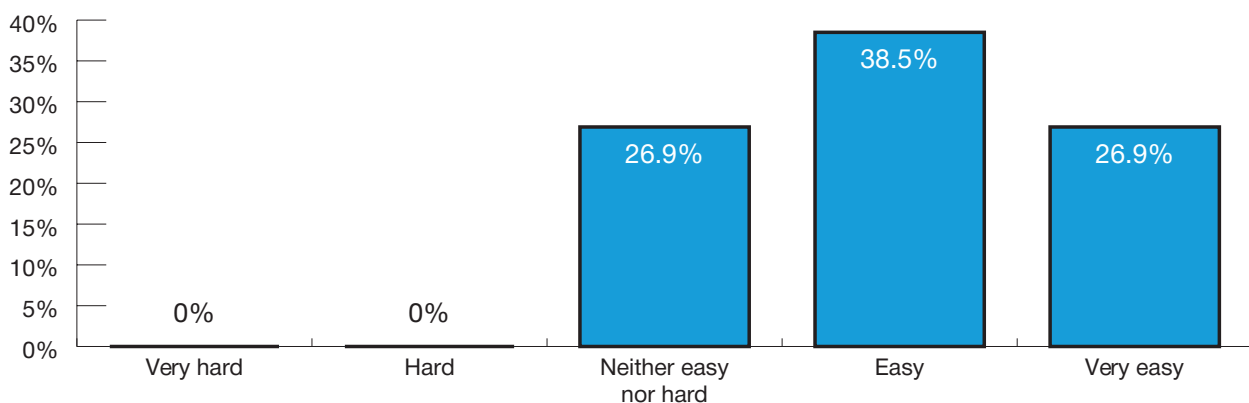
## Relationships with reps

**When we asked reps if they had made friends at CLNM, nine out of ten (92.3%) said that they had.** Being part of CLNM means working to improve House Project, but inevitably through overnight trips away and working as a team, friendships are made.

*"You don't necessarily go in trying to make friends. I'd say it just kind of happens, so whether you end up sleeping in the same room as them during a residential or you end up with them before conference...it just kind of happens, so yeah, I've made quite a lot of friends with CLNM reps."*

**We asked reps how easy or hard it was to make friends at CLNM, with a majority either saying was very easy (26.9%) or easy (38.5%).** One in four (26.9%) said it neither easy nor hard, but nobody said it was hard or very hard (0%).

### How often did being a CLNM rep give you the opportunity to try new things?



Friendships meant that CLNM reps often provided each other with support, sharing similar lived experiences and being able to understand the challenges that they faced.

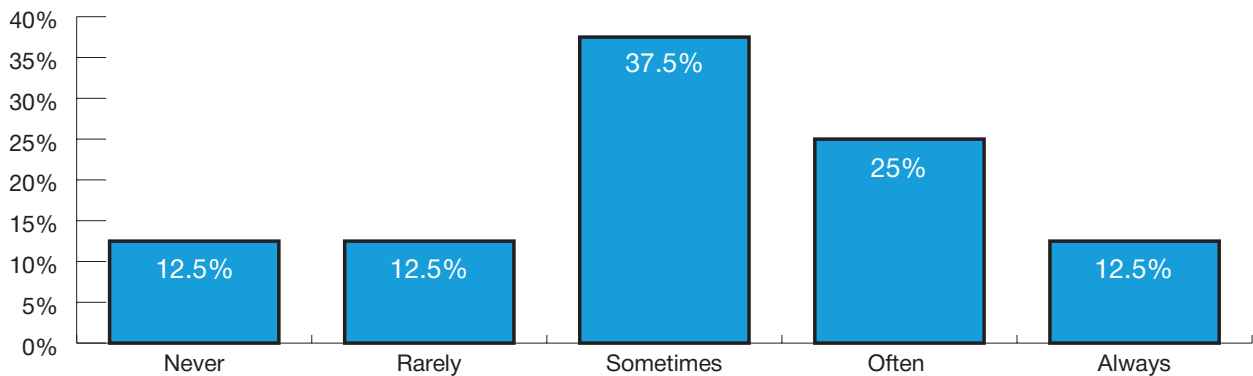
*"They've gone through the same things. And they understand like where you're coming from better. And yeah, it's just nice to be able to talk to them. It's been good. I mean, I still talk to people just to meet new people from all over. I feel comfortable speaking to new people from all over."*





Importantly, we found that many of the friendships that were made during CLNM lasted far beyond the a young person's time as a rep. When asked how often reps still talk to the friends, they made at CLNM, one in ten (12.5%) said all the time, one in four (25%) said often, and many (37.5%) said sometimes.

#### How often do you still talk to the friends you made at CLNM?



*"I still talk to people regularly...it's not like a weekly thing, it's more like a, you know, they all know they can message me if they need me kind of thing."*

*"I'd like to say I've got some nice bonds with some people, yeah. Which is always good. It's nice. I think overall, you know, we've all got a relationship in one way or another. But I think it's nice to have, you know, just some people you can go to if you've got issues or just to talk to if you need just a friend."*

A minority said they rarely (12.5%) or never (12.5%) still speak to people from CLNM, but these were largely reps who had ended their time as a rep three or four years ago. For those older reps, less contact was not seen as a problem, but more a natural evolution of their relationships.

*"I think just in general, relationships can just change, can't they, really? I think all I can say is, obviously, now there is a lot better communication with all the other reps. So, I think relationships are built a lot better."*

Many spoke about their desire to continue to stay in touch with other reps, through meet ups or events as part of a wider CLNM Alumni.



# Developing key skills

The last main benefit that emerged from speaking to young people about their time as a CLNM rep was the impact that it had on their employability in the future. They gained key soft skills, such as organisational skills, listening and speaking, and teamwork. Additionally, their work with CLNM often helped with future job applications and shaped their future working aspirations.

## Planning and organisational skills

**We found that CLNM reps developed a lot of skills during their time, as a result of their responsibilities and the work they were required to do as part of CLNM.**

One of the key skills that reps spoke about was their organisational and planning skills, especially in relation to independent travel, attending meetings, and meeting deadlines for work.

*“Organisation and planning skills. I feel like they got better with CLNM. That did get a little bit more organised.”*

*“Probably like just the skills I need in everyday life, you know, just uh, like time management, you know, like getting places on time. That’d be the main one.”*

**This was linked to a new level of personal responsibility that CLNM provided reps, which many saw in sharp contrast to their previous experience in care the care system.**

*“I’m more consistent, like I have to catch trains every time I come here. I have to be on time for things. So having that level of, especially because when in care, you’re just taken into a lot of things. You don’t always get this option to go there yourself or make that journey yourself.”*

*“So going from being in care, just being taken to a lot of things, and you don’t really have to worry about being on time because all you need to do is just be dressed and ready, and you don’t have to worry about getting there yourself.”*

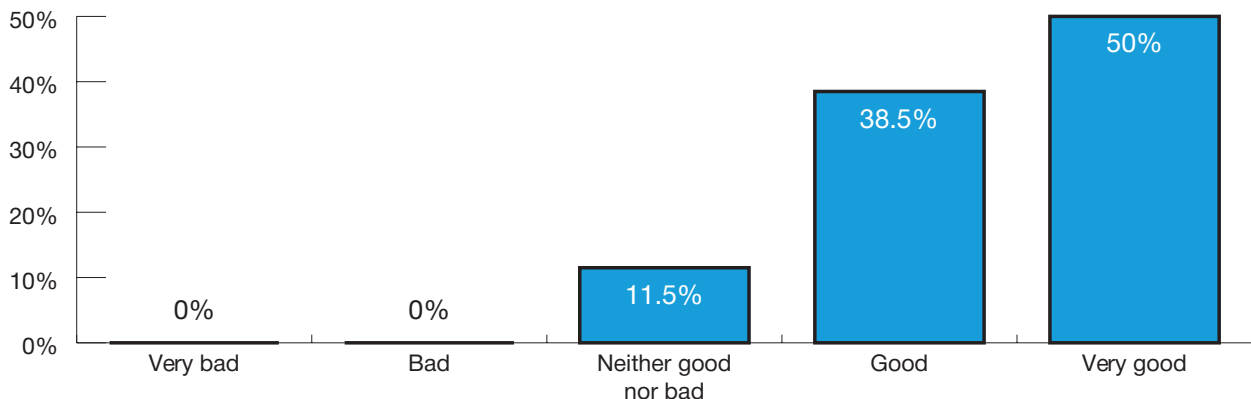




## Speaking and listening skills

Given the importance of collecting feedback, and speaking at conference, it is not surprising that when asked to rate how well CLNM developed their speaking and listening skills, half (50%) said it was very good, with over a third (38.5%) saying it was good. Only a minority rated it neither good nor bad (11.5%), and nobody rating is bad or very bad (0%).

### Rate CLNM on how well it supported you to develop your speaking and listening skills:



Speaking and listening skills were paired with reps being taught the importance of listening to people, in part to improve their LHP but also more broadly too. Speaking skills were linked to improving confidence too, providing reps with a greater sense of freedom in how they communicate to others.

*"I can do a lot more challenges, a lot more speaking...that I'd never be able to do before and because it's so supportive and caring and just genuinely honest, that it doesn't feel impossible or controlled or anything that care would never ever feel like. I feel free and confident to do this stuff now."*

**Listening skills were spoken about in terms of respect for others, and others' opinions. Reps felt better able to respectfully listen to those who they disagree with or show patience in situations they might not have previously.**

*"And then I think, having patience and respect, that obviously helps you overcome challenges. Because if it's a serious challenge, you need someone to give you respect. So, if you can show that you've got that respect and you've got patience, I think you can overcome many things, really."*

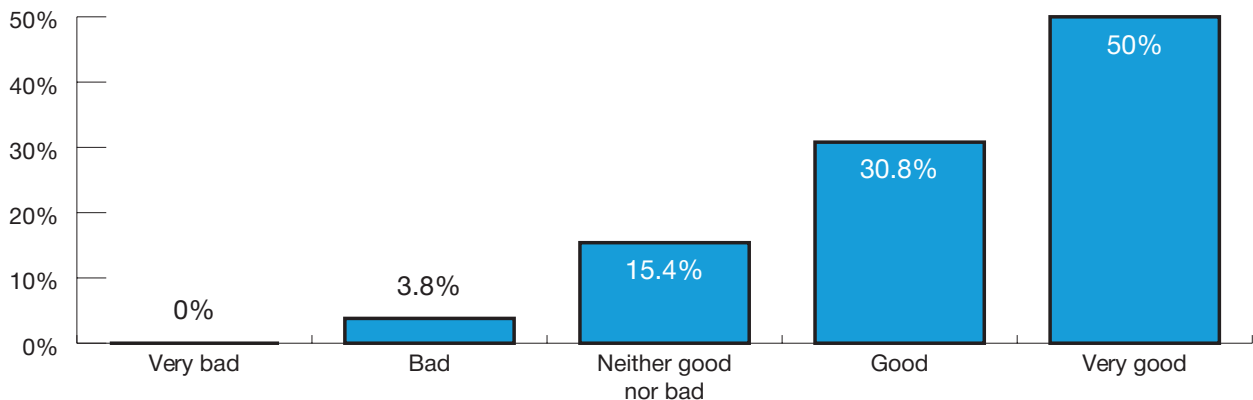
These skills were often developed directly through the experience of being a rep, namely having to speak to other young people they were less familiar with, building a rapport, gathering useful feedback, and reporting that back in a constructive way.



## Teamwork skills

CLNM reps were also asked to rate how well CLNM supported their ability to work in a team, with half (50%) rating it good, and one third (30.8%) rating it very good. A minority (15.4%) rated it neither bad nor good, and the rest (3.8%) rated it bad, with nobody rating it very bad (0%).

### Rate CLNM on how well it supported you to develop your speaking and listening skills:



Reps built teamwork mainly in two ways, through the activities and time spent together on overnight trips away, and the work that they did planning conference.

*"Overall, everything's really good, but I think the main things that stick out for me is, like, the conferences and the residentials because, you know, we're building as a team and working together."*

Overnight trips away often provided a starting point, where relationships were built, and fostered a sense of togetherness that built towards good teamwork.

*"It was more like just getting involved with like teamwork and, you know, like taking part in team activities. Just, they didn't just come together. You start having a laugh. You're doing team building exercises. Um, and it kind of just all falls together really."*

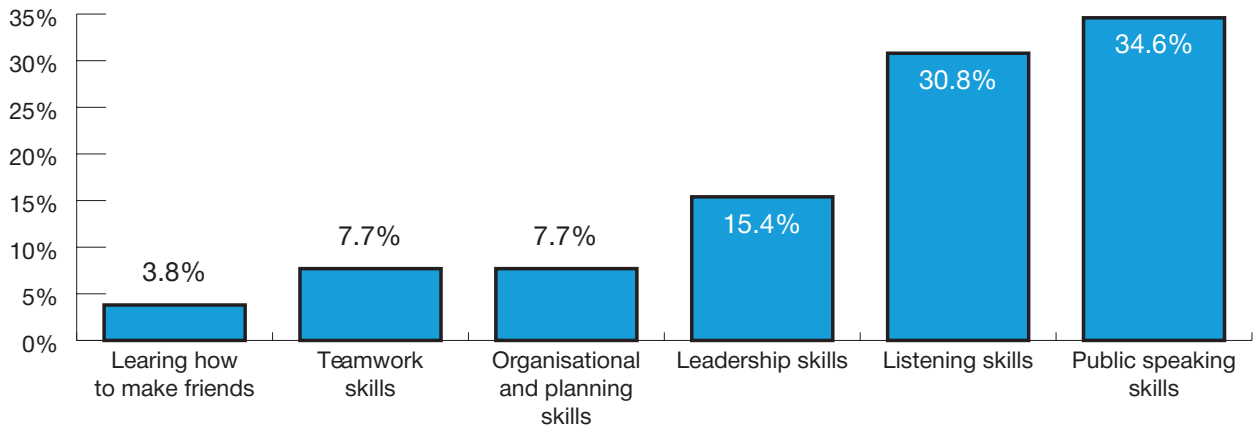
**Planning of conference would be the culmination of months of teamwork, with reps pulling together with specific roles and responsibilities, coordinating to deliver a conference as a team. It also is cited for many reps as their proudest moment.**

*"...watching the togetherness formed in the run-up to conference at (the residential) and everyone's like 'oh I don't know what I'm doing', 'I don't know what I'm doing', to pull it off in the manner that was done is one of the things that stands out."*



Lastly, we asked reps which skills they thought they had gained the most during their time with CLNM, with a third (34.6%) saying their public speaking skills, followed by listening skills (30.8%), leadership skills (15.4%), organisation and planning skills (7.7%), and learning how to make friends (3.8%).

#### Which one skill did you improve the most from being part of CLNM?



Reps brought differing existing skills to the role, and subsequently developed various skills more or less. However, many really valued the different range of skills they were able to develop as a CLNM rep, especially compared to their previous experience in care.

*“Because you don’t get a lot of them skills when you’re in care, at least my experience. My experience in care has been a lot more unintentionally controlled and not built properly the skills I needed.”*

**As a result, CLNM reps felt more ready for the world of work, using the skills they had gained as part of their time as a rep.**

*“It’s made me feel like I’m more confident about my job. It made me feel like even if it’s a hard responsibility, it’s something that I’m more built for now.”*



# CLNM's impact on future employment

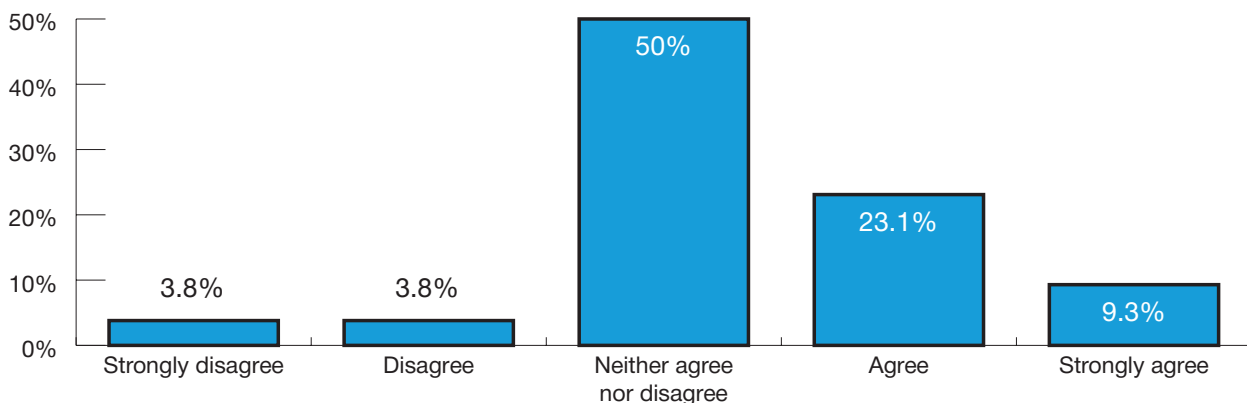
We wanted to know how reps used their time at CLNM to attain the jobs and careers they wanted in the future. **Firstly, we found that the vast majority of reps we spoke to had put their time as a CLNM rep on their CV. This led to employers asking about it, providing reps the opportunity to talk about their achievements.**

*"Yeah, I mean, I've had a few employers ask me about it. And some of them used to be part of social work and used to be involved with like charities, so it was nice hearing kind of like what we did."*

*"I would mention it in an application or an interview to highlight what you've done for under-represented backgrounds in the community. And what your role entailed from national vice chair what vice chair meant, you spoke at conference."*

For those thinking about their future employment, we asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "My time at CLNM has affected my goals and ambitions for the future." While half (50%) neither agreed nor disagreed, we found that over a third of reps agreed (23.1%) or strongly agreed (9.3%), while less than one in ten disagreed (3.8%) or strongly disagreed (3.8%).

**Do you agree or disagree with the statement: "My time at CLNM has affected my goals and ambitions for the future"?**



**We found that many reps, after working with CLNM, expressed a greater desire to seek work that continues to make an impact on the care system, or in a way that benefits others.** Others took away elements of the work that they found enjoyable, such as interacting with others, or planning and delivering events.

*"Obviously, I think it has made an impact, because, obviously, in the future, I would like to do something that does help the system. So, you know, going into that kind of area with the system."*



*“So, I think in the future, I’d definitely do something to help with the system. So, I think that’s what, you know, CLNM has helped kind of broaden my ideas. I think you should definitely do that at some point in your life.”*

Some young reps expressed wanting to directly work for House Project, either a LHP or NHP themselves, inspired by their time working with the staff at both.

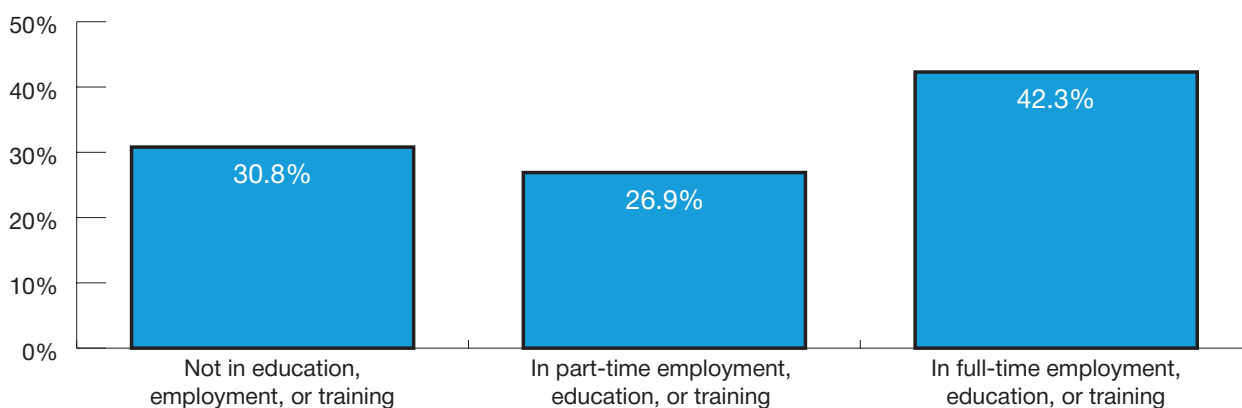
*“Yeah, it’s impacted on me to be fair. I actually kind of really wanted to work for the charity, you know, like, um, I want to be one of the staff members.”*

For some reps, this would become a reality, with a few reps completing an apprenticeship with NHP, and one continuing to work with them full time.

*“CLNM has definitely changed what I want to do in my life...So, I got an apprenticeship, a participation apprenticeship at Rotherham House Project. It was just a couple of months after becoming a CLNM rep. And then I got a business apprenticeship with the National House Project. And I then I got a two-year contract, and now I’m on a full-time contract. So, it’s kind of everything.”*

**Lastly, we asked reps if they were currently in full-time or part-time employment or education. We found that almost half of the reps (69.2%) were either in full-time (42.3%) or part-time (26.9%) employment or education.**

**Are you currently in employment, education, or training?**

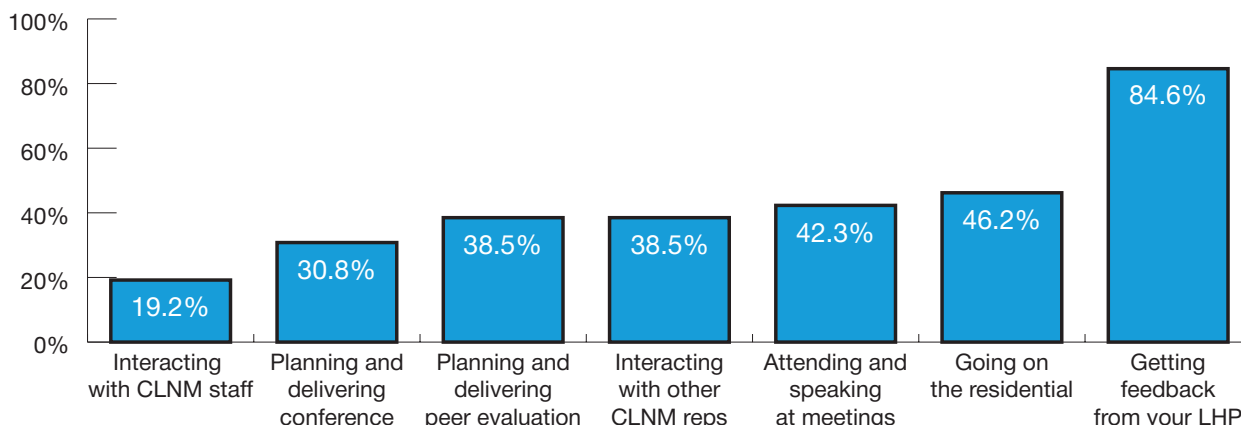


The rest (30.8%) were not in education, employment or training, though these were reps who were under the age of 20, and some were current volunteering either with NHP or elsewhere.

# Changes to CLNM

When we asked what the top three things young people would have changed about CLNM, the most common answers were: getting feedback from your LHP (84.6%), going on the residential (46.2%), and attending and speaking at meetings (42.3%).

## What are the top three things you would change about CLNM in your time as a rep?



While we've covered the challenges with getting feedback, **we found that when reps spoke about their challenges with CLNM there were three key aspects to this: transport and travelling, workload and structure, and additional training.** Firstly, for many CLNM reps travelling around the country helped develop their confidence. Many found the use of split-ticketing challenging while others, especially those based in LHPs further from the NHP office, found travel tiring and time consuming.

*"I would probably say the amount of travelling...If my diary says I'm in an appointment for two or three hours, I need to put six hours aside for it to take into account traveling, that's a lot of time...there should be a hybrid option."*

Secondly, the time-consuming nature of transport for some was part of a larger problem of an increasing workload for reps. Reps have been doing more, with Madlug, Consultations, and Peer Evaluations, but with recruitment of new reps difficult, workload increases, particularly where reps had multiple roles, such a regional chair, or vice-chair.

*"...the demand put on you at times. Like if you're national then you've got national meetings, regional meetings. If you go up to Vice Chair, you've got board of trustees, you've got all the other meetings."*

Lastly, some reps requested more training and support to be provided to CLNM reps, especially around key responsibilities. For example, more public speaking training ahead of delivering conference, training on how to get feedback for new reps, or more training on how to mentor/support their peers.





# Creating a CLNM Alumni offer

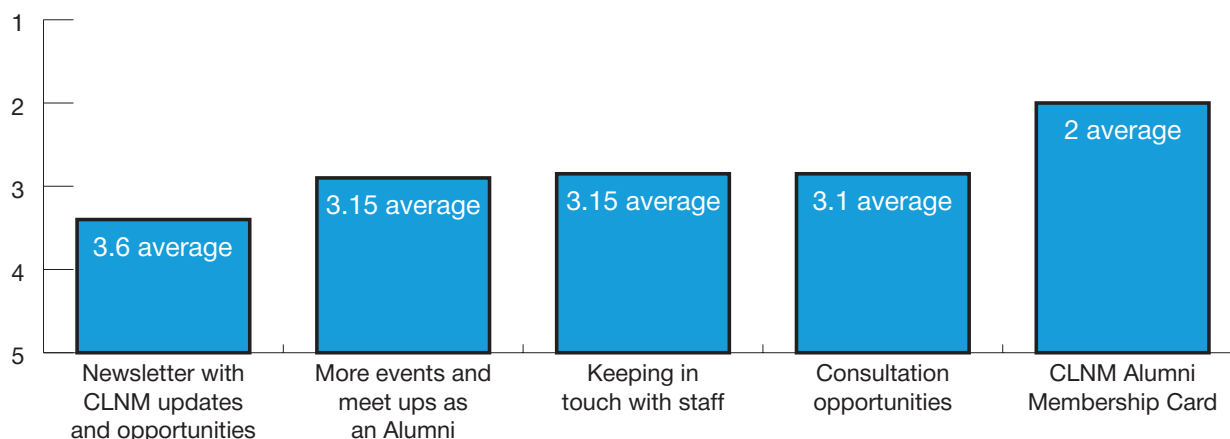
The last aspect of CLNM this research looked at was the Alumni offer, expressly what could be offered to CLNM reps after they finish their time as a rep to foster a wider sense of community across CLNM reps past and present.

**Part of the importance of having a strong Alumni offer is to prevent a feeling of drop off when the time as a rep comes to an end.** The sense of community, and strength of relationships built during their time as a CLNM rep can make moving on difficult for some reps.

*"You make so many friends...so that's the most difficult part, saying goodbye to everyone. Yes, you'll see them again eventually and you can see them in personal time sometimes, but it's not always the same. Because when we're meeting here, we're doing it for a different purpose than just socialising."*

Currently, CLNM reps join a CLNM Alumni with regular updates via an Alumni newsletter. There are plans to expand this, with this work looking to ask what people would like to see from an Alumni offer going forward. **We asked reps to rank a range of options, co-designed with current reps, based on what they would most want to see offered to CLNM Alumni.**

**Ranking of which CLNM reps want to see the most from an Alumni offer, with one being the one they most wanted to see, and five being the one they least wanted to see**



**The highest ranked option, with an average rating of 2 out of 5, was a CLNM Alumni Card.** This membership card would be offered to all CLNM Alumni, with many reps suggesting this should come with additional benefits.

*"Membership card sounds literally so ideal.... things like that help you remember like you're not like completely gone you can still be part of something I guess."*



The second highest rank option, with an average rating of 3.1 out of 5, was more consultation opportunities. Consultations are opportunities for young people to contribute to research that makes a difference to the care system. Consultation for which reps are paid sessional expenses have been a far more recent, but popular, opportunity for CLNM reps.

*"I think the impact of speaking to people like that is it kind of it often makes you feel a bit more like you're involved in things."*

Joint third and fourth ranked options, with an average rating of 3.15 out of 5, was keeping in touch with staff and more meet ups and events as an Alumni. This reflected the desire of CLNM reps to maintain those relationships built with staff and other reps, through in-person or online meet ups.

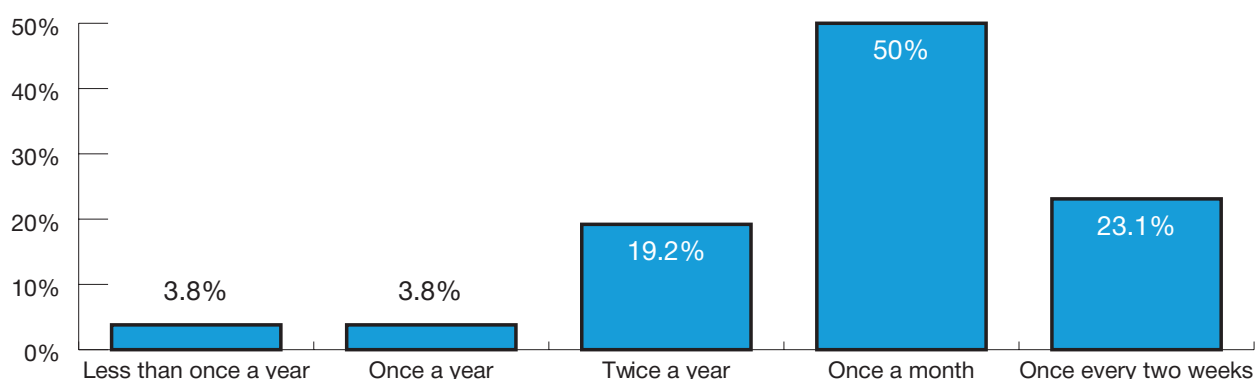
*"I do miss alumni. I do miss a lot of the people who've been part of this...I've met so many young people, so many wonderful memories and experiences with them. And I just hope we can still stay in some relative contact."*

*"I get pretty bored quite easily...So I mean, as an Alumni, to be invited to events more often would be pretty helpful."*

Lastly, the lowest rated option, with an average ranking of 3.6 out of 5, was for a newsletter with CLNM updates and opportunities. This partly could be seen as a reflection of the newsletter already being offered, and partly on reps' desire for more tangible offers over digital emails.

**We also asked reps how often they would like to engage with CLNM as Alumni. We found that most commonly (50%) reps wanted to be engaged every month,** followed by once every two weeks (23.1%), twice a year (19.2%), less than once a year (3.8%), and once a year (3.8%).

**How often would you like to engage with CLNM as an Alumni?**



We can see that CLNM reps preferred a higher frequency of engagement, with very few wanting to be engaged once a year or less. This speaks to the appetite of CLNM reps to continue to be involved, in whatever way offered.



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