

Overview of The ORCHIDS Framework

ORCHIDS is the psychologically informed practice framework that utilises the energy, experience and creativity of young people to enable them to find the solutions to the challenges they face. The framework has been developed with staff from the NHP, a clinical psychologist and everyone involved in Local House Projects including young people.

The framework is based on young people:

1. Taking **Ownership** for decisions affecting their lives, their property and the development of their project.
2. Taking **Responsibility** for keeping themselves safe, looking after others and the project.
3. Building a **Community** of support for as long as they need it.
4. Having their own **Homes**.
5. Becoming **Interdependent** and developing the skills to cope emotionally and financially through accessing support when needed.
6. Gaining a sense of **Direction** and having a purpose in their lives.
7. Having a positive **Sense** of wellbeing.

The ORCHIDS framework is underpinned by the psychological theory of self-determination as outlined by Ryan and Deci (2000) who say that in order for anyone to maintain psychological health, three key areas need to be met:

1. Autonomy (having choice and control over your own decisions)
2. Competence (feeling like you are good at doing things)
3. Relatedness (the need to feel a sense of belonging and attachment to other people; feeling attached to and supported by others)

So, what does this mean for children in care?

1. Autonomy - children in care generally feel that they have no control over their lives - who they live with, where they go to school, who they see in 'contact'.
2. Competence - Their education has been disrupted due to changes in placement and so they often fall behind in school
3. Relatedness - their relationships with carers have often been disrupted and it is hard for them to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to other people.

The House Project works with young people in a way that addresses these three important areas. House Projects give young people choice and an opportunity to be part of making decisions about their own lives. They develop their competence by working in a way that enables them to learn new skills, gain qualifications and become more confident. Young people



work together in small group of between 8 and 12, developing relationships with staff and each other. They make friends, have support that they can rely on, and have the opportunity to repair relationships when they have fallen out with each other.

The ORCHIDS practice framework underpins everything that happens in the House Project. Staff operate on the principle that every interaction matters, and that young people should be valued and respected at all times. All young people in the project will have been impacted on by trauma and staff are all trained in trauma informed practice. The question they always ask is not what is wrong with a young person but rather, what has happened to them. Understanding the young person's story is vital to understand how to work in the most helpful way with them and enable them to achieve their ORCHIDS.

The ORCHIDS framework also underpins the House Project Programme (HPP). Every module of the HPP involves a review of the young person's ORCHIDS and collation of evidence against the ORCHIDS framework ensures that young people have a clear record of the progress that they are making towards securing their own home.

Most importantly, working to this framework enables young people to be the authors of their own future and allows them to take control and responsibility for their own lives.

Whilst the ORCHID framework outlines the outcomes for young people, it is also used to measure the organisational outcomes for the National House Project overall.

The framework will also be used as the baseline for annual peer reviews conducted across all Local House Projects and forms the basis of the overall evaluation of the project.

