

OURHOUSE

Accomodation and apprenticeships: Research into young people's views

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Delivered by

GMCA GREATER
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FOREWORD

Young people today have a different future ahead.

Educational equality is still not part of the system. With a move towards technical education having parity with academic education, under the development of the Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, we are looking for the next generation of young people to have equal levels of opportunity through a technical career path.

However, although this idea will strive to achieve educational equality, it does not mean social equality unless interventions are made to reduce lack of social mobility through educational pathways. Young people currently working towards apprenticeships do not have the same 'rite of passage' of living away from home, sharing halls with their peers and learning to live independently.

Creating residential "halls of apprentice" for degree apprenticeships may offer a unique opportunity to combine the benefits of a university experience with practical, hands-on learning. By housing apprentices together, this initiative could foster a sense of community, collaboration, and shared experiences, mirroring the social aspects of traditional university life.

This approach could address the financial concerns of Gen Z, providing a pathway to higher education without accumulating student loan debt. Apprentices residing in these halls could still access quality education and also gain paid work experience simultaneously, preparing them for successful careers. This not only enhances employability but also promotes a more inclusive and diverse workforce, contributing to greater social mobility.

To explore the views of all stakeholders and commencing with young people themselves, the following research has been undertaken as the first step to ascertain whether a pilot is required and what the objectives of the pilot would be. This research was made possible 'through grant funding by The Co-operative Bank, who are committed to acting on issues, like societal inequality, that matter to their customers'

This research study builds on our commitment to ensure that young people's voices are heard through the values of co-operation, offering a stake and a say to the people it matters to the most.:

Rose Marley

CEO, Co-operatives UK



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research explores the perspectives and experiences of young people from across the UK, and of people within Greater Manchester, about apprenticeships and accommodation. It was conducted by Co-operatives UK's research function, during Spring and Summer 2025 and was supported through grant funding from The Co-operative Bank. The study was carried out primarily through online surveys targeted at young people as well as in-person sessions with young people.

"I think a lot of people are deterred by apprenticeships because they usually involve staying at home while most of your friends are off at university meeting new people and having new experiences through living in halls."

Young person, aged 18-25 who completed an undergraduate degree. During their studies, they lived in halls of residence, in a student household and with parents.

METHODOLOGY

This research provides insights on the demand, drivers, barriers, impacts, and practical considerations of apprenticeship accommodation. It was conducted in Spring and Summer 2025 and consists of:

- A UK-wide survey undertaken by YouGov, with 2,006 young people (aged between 18-25) participating.
- A Greater Manchester survey conducted via GetFeedback, mirroring the questions of the UK-wide survey and was completed by with participation of 110 young people.
- Parents' and stakeholder views.
- Focus groups with young people in Greater Manchester were held, namely, with the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority and students from Loreto Sixth Form College in Manchester
- The Manchester Evening News ran several articles on the report to ascertain general public interest and advertise the GetFeedback survey link. They have since confirmed they had strong and generally favourable responses to the report through comments and social media.

KEY FINDINGS

A substantial majority of national respondents to the survey who are currently apprentices (87%), reported living with parents, family, or guardians, underscoring the reliance of young people on the family home while studying and working.

1. There is strong support for halls of residence being available for apprentices

Young people in Greater Manchester showed particularly strong support for this:

- 75% agreed that apprentices should have the option to live in halls specifically designed for them.
- 74% believed more young people would choose an apprenticeship over university if halls existed.
- 90% of young people in Greater Manchester and 84% of young people across the UK thought that whether young people want to live independently from their parents while studying was an influencing factor on their choices to go to University.

Support was also positive, but more cautious for young people from across the UK:

- 61% believed apprentices should have dedicated halls, with only 7% disagreeing.
- 51% said more would choose apprenticeships over university if halls were available.

2. The drivers for young people to get involved are affordability, independence and social and lifestyle opportunities

Affordability is paramount:

- 85-90% across both studies agreed that accommodation costs heavily influence education and employment pathways.

Living independently from parents is also a key driver for education choices:

- 90% of young people in Greater Manchester and 84% of young people across the UK thought that whether young people want to live independently from their parents while studying was an influencing factor on their choices.

Social and lifestyle aspects were also important factors:

- In the Greater Manchester survey, the top perceived benefits of halls were living with other young people (73%), enjoying a student lifestyle and social events (69%), and meeting diverse people (67%).
- In the UK-wide survey, these were also the top benefits, with around two-thirds highlighting them.

3. There is interest for halls of residence from young people

In the UK-wide survey, amongst those **considering apprenticeships**, 14% of those who want to take a Higher Apprenticeship said they would prefer halls of residence, only slightly below the average of 16% for all young people considering any higher-level qualifications.

In the Greater Manchester survey, of those **considering any higher-level qualifications**, 42% preferred living in halls of residence, compared to 25% who preferred staying at home and 21% who favoured living in a shared student or apprentice household outside of halls.

4. Young people's practical priorities are clear - affordability, safety, and tailored support

In both surveys, respondents emphasised that halls would have to be highly affordable to be viable for apprentices, who typically have low wages and lack access to student loans and many other sources of funding.

Safety, wellbeing support, and help with independent living (e.g. budgeting, cooking) were repeatedly highlighted as important features in comments and quantitative questions in both reports.

5. Halls could broaden opportunities and build apprentice communities

Comments from both surveys suggested halls could support apprentices to:

- Develop personal independence and life skills, similar to how they do for university students.
- Build supportive peer networks and connection that benefit future careers.
- Access apprenticeships more easily by providing a safe, affordable way to relocate for work and training opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Both surveys highlight strong support for exploring halls of residence for apprentices. By addressing practical factors such as affordability, location, and appropriate support, halls of residence could increase the appeal of apprenticeships, support personal and professional growth, and help create vibrant apprentice communities.

UK-WIDE SURVEY OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

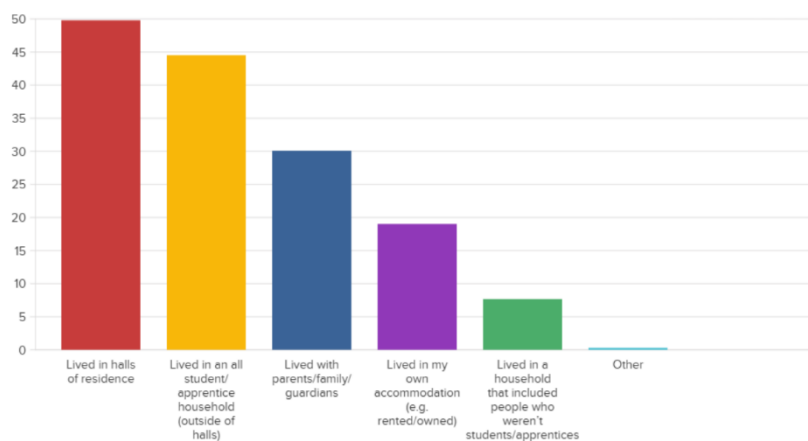
This research explores the perspectives and experiences of young people from across the UK about halls of residence for apprentices. It was conducted by Co-operatives UK using a YouGov survey targeting their youngest age band (18-25), with a total of 2,006 young people participating.

Accommodation Experiences During Higher Education

Just over half of participants (1,004) had already completed a Level 4 qualification or higher, whether through university or an apprenticeship. Graph 1 shows a diverse range of living arrangements while pursuing their qualifications:

- 50% had lived in student halls of residence
- 45% had lived in student or apprentice households
- 30% had stayed with parents or family
- 19% had lived in their own accommodation
- 8% had shared a household with people who weren't students or apprentices

Graph 1: What types of accommodation did you mainly live in whilst studying for these qualifications?
Please select all that apply.



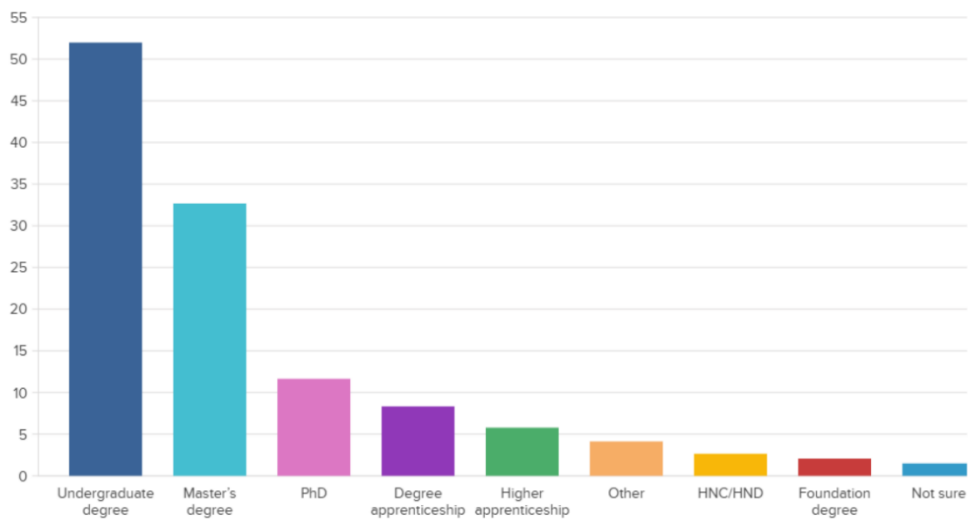
Future plans for higher-level qualifications

Sixty percent of participants reported they were either considering or already working towards Level 4 qualifications or higher.

As shown in Graph 2, the vast majority were focused on pursuing a university qualification, while only a small proportion were considering alternatives - 8% were looking at a degree apprenticeship and 6% a higher apprenticeship.

The findings point to university study as still the most popular choice for those looking to pursue higher-level qualifications.

Graph 2: Which of these qualifications are you considering or are currently working towards? Please select all that apply.

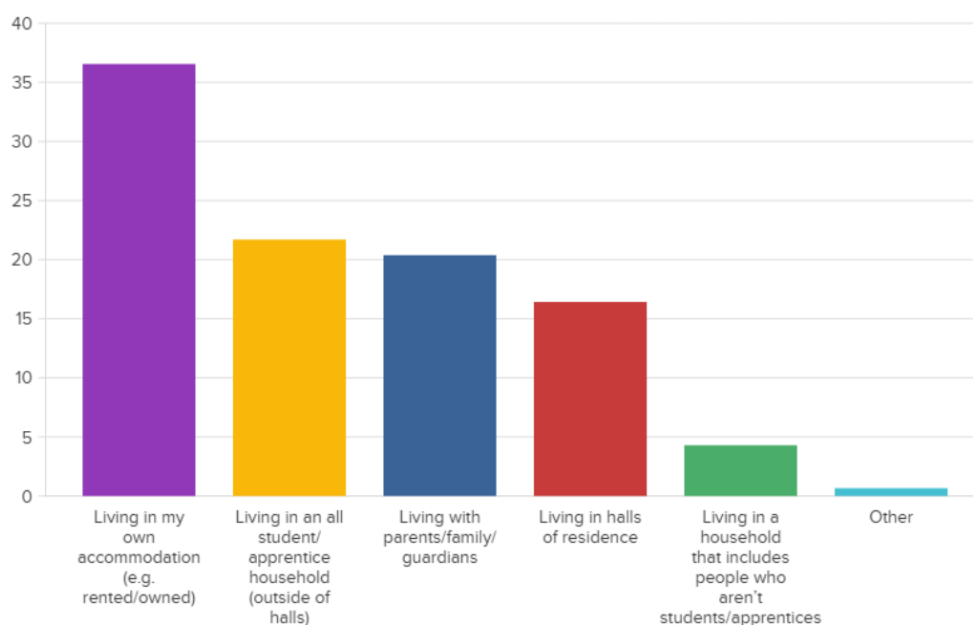


Accommodation preferences overall

Graph 3 shows that just over 1 in 6 (16%) would ideally choose to live in halls of residence while working towards a Level 4 qualification or higher, indicating this is an attractive option for many young people.

However, the most preferred choices were to live independently in their own accommodation, in a shared household, or with parents or family. For some, though, these arrangements may not be financially realistic or practical, underlining the importance of offering a range of accessible living options.

Graph 3: Ideally, what type of accommodation would you prefer to live in whilst studying?



Preferred accommodation among aspiring apprentices

Table 1 shows that among those currently working towards or considering an apprenticeship, 14% of those considering a higher apprenticeship and 11% of those considering a degree apprenticeship would ideally choose to live in halls of residence. Although these figures are slightly below the overall 16% average for all respondents considering Level 4 and above qualifications, they still indicate a notable interest - especially given that halls of residence for apprentices are not generally available.

Around a third of respondents considering an apprenticeship said they would prefer to live in their own accommodation. However, for many, this is unlikely to be feasible on an apprentice wage without financial support from family, a partner, or another source.

Similarly, about a third would prefer to live with parents or family, though this choice can limit their work and study options to areas within a reasonable commute from home.

These findings highlight the need to explore more accessible and flexible accommodation options for apprentices to ensure they are not constrained by financial or geographic barriers.

Table 1: Which of these qualifications are you considering or are currently working towards? Please select all that apply.

Ideally, what type of accommodation would you prefer to live in whilst studying?	All considering level 4 or higher qualifications	Higher apprenticeship	Degree apprenticeship
Living in my own accommodation (e.g. rented/owned)	37%	37%	33%
Living with parents/family/guardians	20%	34%	37%
Living in halls of residence	16%	14%	11%
Living in a household that includes people who aren't students/apprentices	4%	7%	12%
Living in an all student/apprentice household (outside of halls)	22%	7%	8%
Number of responses	1212	70	101

Factors influencing accommodation preferences by qualification type

Table 2 shows that the factors influencing accommodation preferences among those considering higher or degree apprenticeships were largely similar to the average for all participants planning to study at Level 4 or above. Common drivers across these groups included:

- Affordability (38-41%)
- Safe and secure accommodation (33%-39%)
- Preferring a quiet living environment (31-39%)
- Remaining close to my current friends (22%-23%)
- Develop new life skills (17% - 21%)
- Support with living independently (17%)
- Make new connections for future employment opportunities (11-15%)
- Support with wellbeing and safety (13% - 18%)
- Meet people from different backgrounds (10%-14%)
- Relocate to a new area (6-11%)

However, there were some notable differences. Those considering apprenticeships were significantly more likely to prefer staying close to family (37% vs. 19%).

While a smaller proportion of apprentices expressed a preference for enjoying a student lifestyle and social events (19% vs. 28%) or living with other young people (7% vs. 24%), this still shows that these experiences hold appeal for some.

Table 2: Which of these qualifications are you considering or currently working towards? Please select all that apply.

Why would you prefer this type of accommodation? Please select all that apply.	All	Higher app'ship	Degree app'ship
Affordability	38%	39%	41%
I prefer a quiet living environment	39%	31%	37%
To remain close to my family	19%	37%	37%
Safe and secure accommodation	39%	34%	33%
To remain close to my current friends	22%	23%	22%
Develop new life skills	19%	17%	21%
Enjoy a student type lifestyle and social events	28%	19%	19%
Support with wellbeing and safety	16%	13%	18%
Support with adapting to living independently	17%	17%	17%
Make new connections for future employment opportunities	11%	14%	15%
Meet people from different backgrounds	14%	10%	13%
Relocate to a new area	11%	6%	9%
Live with other young people	24%	7%	7%
Other	3%	1%	0%
Number of responses	1212	70	101

Factors behind preference for halls of residence

Table 3 focuses on the reasons given by those who would prefer to live in halls of residence. While these insights are valuable, they should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively small number of respondents in this group. The most common reasons across all participants included:

- Enjoy a student type lifestyle and social events (45%-60%)
- Safe and secure accommodation (30%-50%)
- Live with other young people (18%-43%)
- Affordability (36%-41%)
- Among those considering apprenticeships, there were some key differences:
- Make new connections for future employment opportunities (50% for higher apprentices and 45% for degree apprentices, much higher than the 21% average).
- Remain close to family (36% for degree apprentices and 30% for higher level apprentices, much higher than the 6% average).

Table 3: Which of these qualifications are you considering or currently working towards? Please select all that apply.

Why would you prefer this type of accommodation? Please select all that apply.	All	Higher apprenticeship	Degree apprenticeship
Enjoy a student type lifestyle and social events	55%	60%	45%
Safe and secure accommodation	50%	30%	45%
Live with other young people	43%	40%	18%
Affordability	41%	60%	36%
Meet people from different backgrounds	36%	20%	27%
Develop new life skills	27%	10%	27%
Make new connections for future employment opportunities	21%	50%	45%
Support with adapting to living independently	21%	20%	27%
To remain close to my current friends	17%	40%	9%
Relocate to a new area	17%	0%	9%
Support with wellbeing and safety	15%	10%	9%
I prefer a quiet living environment	13%	0%	9%
To remain close to my family	6%	30%	36%
Other	2%	0%	0%
Number of responses	199	10	11

Perceptions of what influences young people's decisions about their pathways

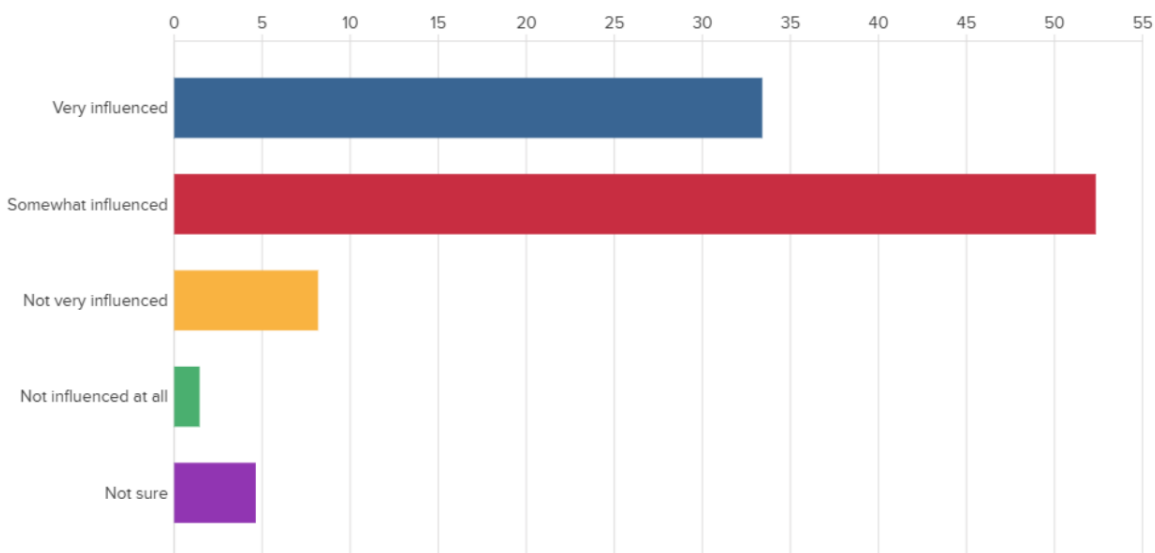
Respondents were asked to consider a series of statements to gauge how strongly they believe various factors influence young people's choices around pursuing higher education and employment opportunities (Graph 4).

Affordability of accommodation

Overall, 85% of respondents believed that the affordability of accommodation 'very' or 'somewhat' influenced young people's decisions about higher education and employment pathways.

This underscores the significant role that accommodation costs play in shaping these important life choices.

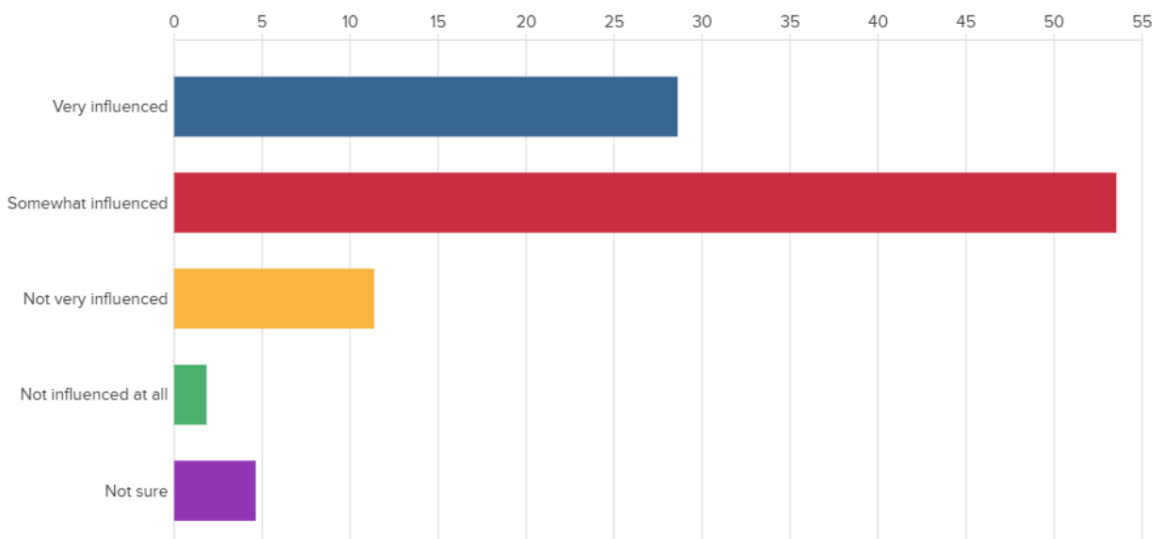
Graph 4: To what extent do you think young people’s higher education and/or employment decisions are influenced by the availability and affordability of accommodation?



Affordability of travel

83% of respondents indicated that the availability and affordability of travel either ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ influenced young people’s decisions about higher education and employment. This highlights the important role that accessible, affordable transport plays in shaping their choices.

Graph 5: To what extent do you think young people’s higher education and/or employment decisions are influenced by the availability and affordability of travel?

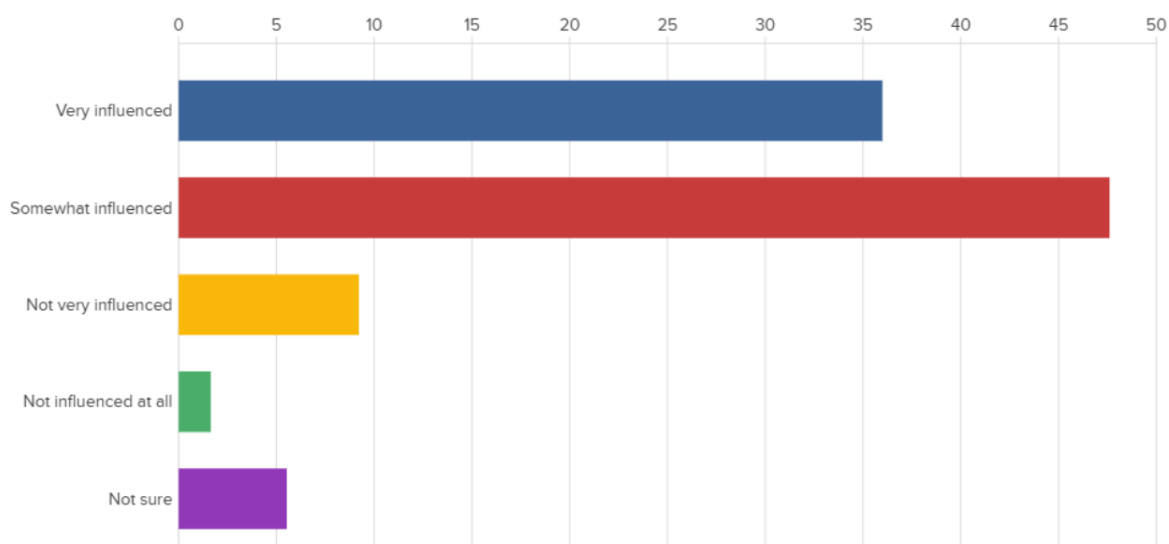


Desire to live independently from parents or family

84% of respondents believed that young people's decisions about higher education and employment are either 'very' or 'somewhat' influenced by their desire to live independently from their parents or family.

This highlights how aspirations for independence can play a significant role in shaping their future pathways.

Graph 6: To what extent do you think young people's higher education and/or employment decisions are influenced by whether they want to live independently from their parents/family?

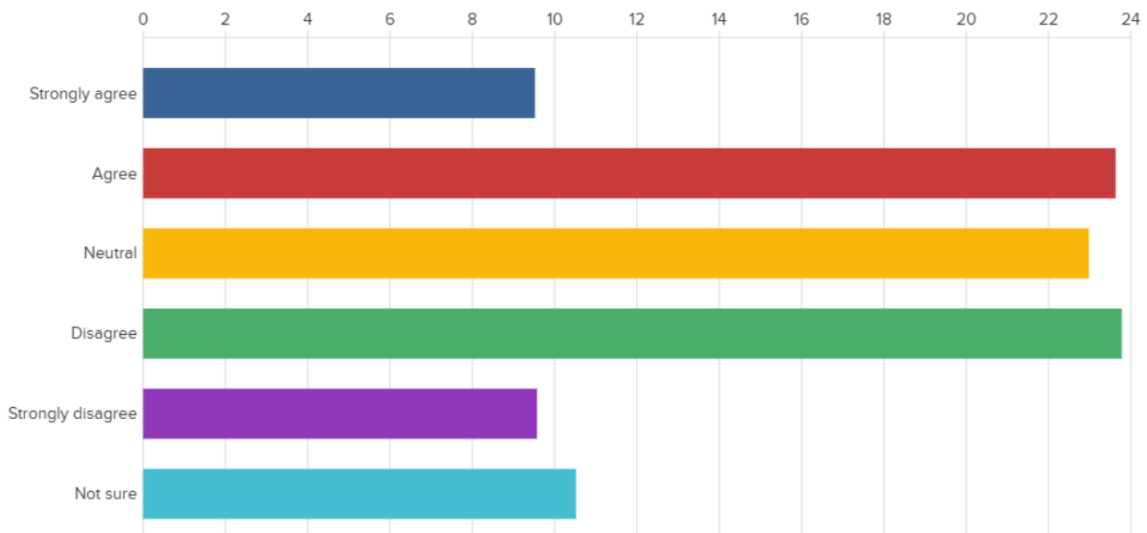


Perceptions on independent living and study routes

Just over a third (34%) of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that young people who want to live independently from their parents while studying for higher education need to choose an academic course, rather than an apprenticeship.

This suggests that, for some, academic courses are viewed as more likely to enable living independently from parents compared to apprenticeships.

Graph 7: To what degree do you agree with this statement: “Young people who want to live independently from their parents while studying for higher education need to choose an academic course, rather than an apprenticeship”?

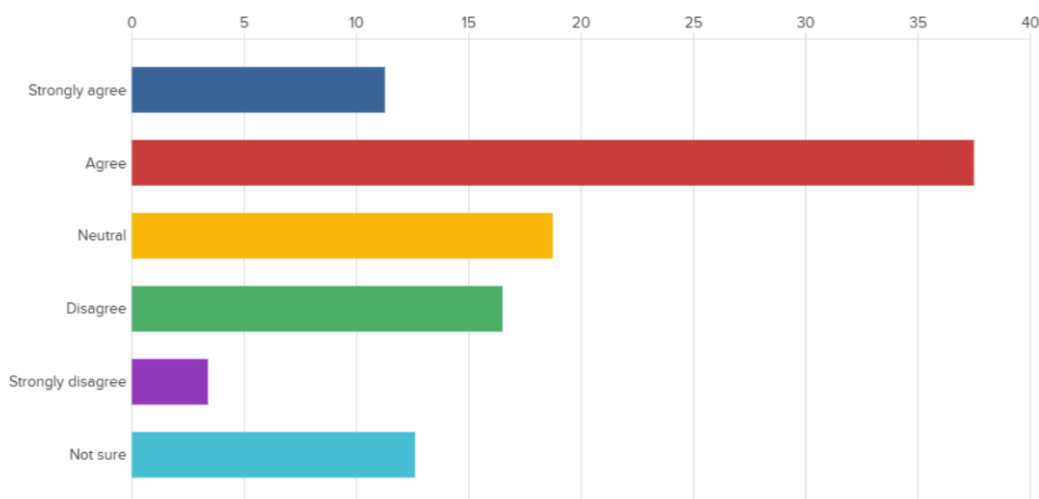


Perceptions of apprentices’ likelihood to relocate while qualifying

Almost half (48%) of respondents believed that young people who take an apprenticeship are unlikely to move away from their local area while they are qualifying.

This suggests that apprentices may either prefer to stay close to home or face constraints that limit their ability to relocate.

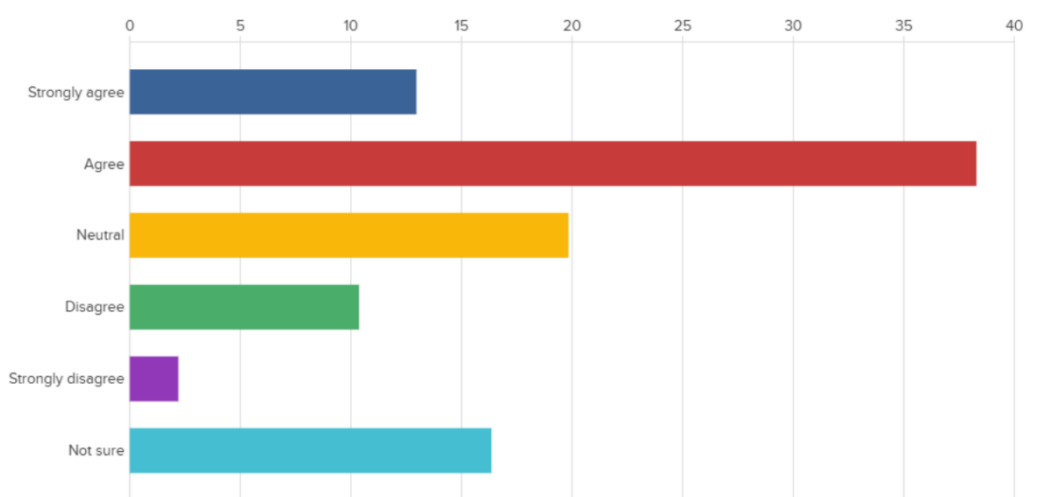
Graph 8: To what degree do you agree with this statement: “People who take an apprenticeship are unlikely to move away from their local area while they are qualifying”?



Support for apprentice halls of residence

Just over half (51%) of respondents believed that more young people would choose an apprenticeship over a university course if halls of residence were available specifically for apprentices. This highlights how dedicated accommodation could make apprenticeships a more attractive option.

Graph 9: To what degree do you agree with this statement? “More young people would choose an apprenticeship, rather than a university course, if there were halls of residence available for apprentices?”

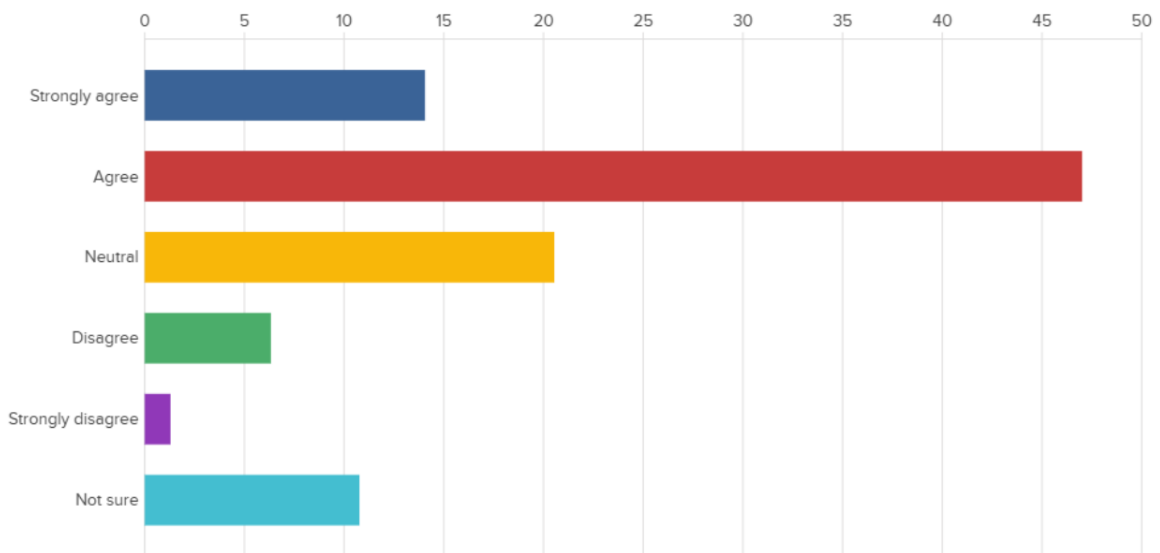


Should apprentices have the option of dedicated halls of residence?

Almost two-thirds (61%) of respondents believed that apprentices should have the option to live in halls of residence designed specifically for them, while only 7% disagreed. Around a third were either neutral or unsure.

This indicates broad support for expanding dedicated accommodation options for apprentices.

Graph 10: To what degree do you agree with this statement? “Apprentices should have the option of living in halls of residence that are specifically for apprentices?”



Perceived benefits of halls of residence

The main benefits young people associated with halls of residence were:

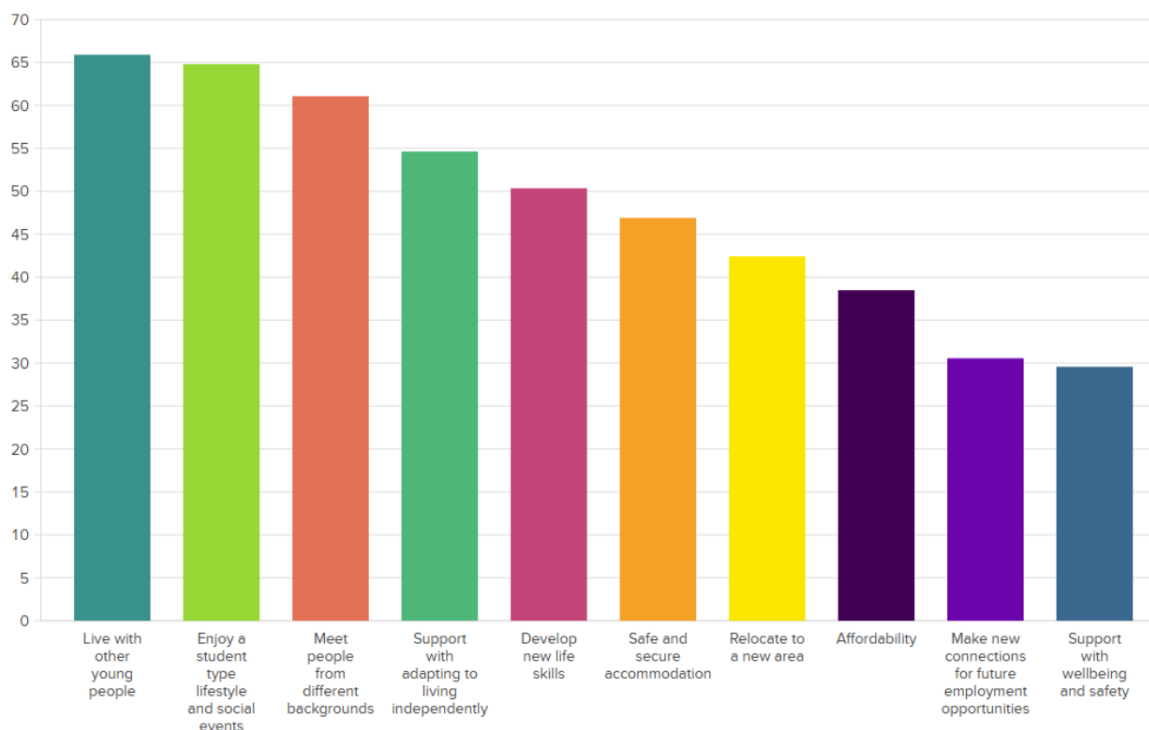
The opportunity to live with other young people, enjoy a student type lifestyle and meet people from different backgrounds (each identified by two-thirds of respondents).

Support with adapting to independent living, developing new life skills, having safe and secure accommodation and being able to relocate to a new area (each identified by about half of respondents).

Affordability, the opportunity to make new connections and support with wellbeing and safety (highlighted by approximately a third of respondents).

These findings show that young people see halls of residence as offering a wide mix of social, personal, and practical benefits that extend well beyond simply providing a place to live.

Graph 11: Which of these do you think are benefits that halls of residence can offer young people?
Please select all that apply.



SUGGESTIONS AND FEEDBACK ON HALLS OF RESIDENCE FOR APPRENTICES

Young people were invited to share their own comments and suggestions to help shape the pilot. More than 600 of the 2,000 respondents chose to provide additional insights, offering valuable perspectives on what dedicated halls of residence for apprentices could look like.

Support for halls of residence for apprentices

Nearly 120 respondents offered general comments expressing their support for the idea of halls of residence dedicated to apprentices. Many saw it as both positive and overdue, with remarks such as:

- *"It's a good idea that I'm surprised hasn't been thought of sooner!"*
- *"Seems like an innovative way to think."*

General challenges raised about halls of residence for apprentices

A total of 52 people questioned the benefits and demand for apprentice halls of residence. Their comments have been summarised as:

- 19 felt the idea was generally not worthwhile.

- 14 questioned the demand, noting the smaller number of apprenticeships and the fact that many apprentices continue living at home.
- 10 believed such halls would not be financially viable or worth subsidising for apprentices.
- 8 doubted whether apprentices were interested in a typical student lifestyle.

Developing the model for apprentice halls of residence

More than 100 comments and questions focused on how apprentice halls of residence could be designed and operated. Key points included:

- Questions about funding and management, including whether costs would be covered by employers, government, local authorities, or universities and colleges.
- Suggestions that apprentice halls could mirror university halls but offer a quieter environment, recognising that apprentices must balance work and study.
- Recommendations to build strong links with universities, enabling apprentices to access social opportunities and facilities like sports clubs.
- Proposals for essential facilities and support, such as reliable Wi-Fi, laundry services, cleaning, subsidised meals, communal spaces for socialising, staff to support mental wellbeing, careers advice, and help with independent living skills like budgeting.

Affordability

Affordability emerged as one of the most frequently raised concerns, with over 100 respondents emphasising that halls of residence would need to be realistically priced for apprentices. Many highlighted that apprentices typically earn low wages and do not have access to student loans or other financial support available to university students.

Comments included:

- *“They would have to be very, very affordable as apprentices earn very little money while working and learning. These halls would either have to be cheap or heavily subsidised to ensure they are accessible for people from lower income backgrounds.”*
- *“Be affordable! Apprentice wages are typically low and there aren’t the same loans available as for students”*
- *“I think it’s a great idea, however acknowledging that apprentices do not make a lot of money while studying, they would have to be affordable. My student accommodation at university took up most of my loan.”*
- *“Halls of residence are currently too expensive. They are being run like businesses rather than to support students.”*

Apprentice communities

Nearly 80 young people shared comments on how dedicated halls of residence could help build a strong apprentice community. They saw this as a way to support both personal and professional growth, while also offering opportunities to live and socialise with other young people. Comments included:

- *"Halls of residence for apprentices foster growth and healthy relationships between young people who have a common goal. It gives them this feel of being in a learning institution and enables them to become independent leaders of tomorrow."*
- *"Having halls of residence for apprentices could really help create a sense of community and support. Plus, it could make it easier for them to connect with others in similar fields and share experiences."*
- *"I think it's a great idea to help young people meet others outside their work environment and gain independence."*
- *"It may allow apprentices to make new connections and network for potential careers in the future."*

Encouraging more young people to choose apprenticeships

35 people suggested that providing halls of residence could make apprenticeships a more appealing option, encouraging young people to consider them over the traditional university route. Comments included:

- *"I strongly support the idea. If it had been available when I was 18, I would have considered doing an apprenticeship rather than going to university and things would be a lot different now and potentially better."*
- *"I think it would encourage people who would otherwise feel as though university is the only path in which they can start an independent life to strongly consider apprenticeships that may be more suitable for their career goals."*
- *"I think a lot of people are deterred by apprenticeships because they usually involve staying at home while most of your friends are off at university meeting new people and having new experiences through living in halls."*
- *"I think that's a great idea, so many people go to university for the "experience" which is the complete wrong mindset and they end up really struggling. Having apprenticeships that offer an "experience" means people make more informed decisions about what suits them without worrying about missing out."*

Location

28 respondents highlighted the importance of choosing the right location for apprentice halls of residence. Key factors they identified included:

- Being conveniently located for work, to minimise commuting time and costs
- Easy access to study facilities
- Proximity to train stations and public transport
- Close to city centres, offering public services and opportunities for socialising
- Near other students to build a broader community
- These highlight that apprentice halls need to be not only affordable but also well-located to support daily needs and provide broader social and professional opportunities.

Independence

22 respondents emphasised how halls of residence could help apprentices gain independence. Their comments highlighted the chance to develop essential life skills and experience living away from home - opportunities often associated with going to university. Examples included:

- *"Gives them the opportunity to gain independence like other people their age who have opted for university."*
- *"I loved living in a halls of residence and it's the best way possible to transition from living at home to moving out for good."*
- *"My brother started his apprenticeship a little bit later at 20 and he's desperate to move out of my parents' house but cannot afford it on apprenticeship wages. He should be able to experience living with people his age and develop those life skills before joining the workforce."*

Safety

17 respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that halls of residence are safe and secure, especially for female apprentices and those who are younger or more vulnerable.

These insights highlight that for many, providing robust safety measures is essential to making apprentice halls both welcoming and reassuring. Comments included:

- *"It should be a well monitored one and home away from home."*
- *"Should be secure and have 24/7 staffing as young apprentices could be vulnerable to criminals."*

Relocation

12 respondents commented on how halls of residence could enable young people to pursue apprenticeship opportunities beyond their local area. They noted that dedicated accommodation would make it easier to relocate for work and experience life away from home. These insights show how dedicated halls could open up wider opportunities and make relocating for apprenticeships more practical and appealing. Comments included:

- *"I think it would be a good idea for people who want to do an apprenticeship away from home and who want to live the typical student life."*
- *"Think it would be a good way to make it possible for people to do apprenticeships which aren't based in their hometown."*
- *"Offers young people more opportunities to move from their home town and greater access to different jobs."*
- *"Halls of residence can reduce the need for apprentices to drive far away from home and reduce carbon emissions or car accidents from tiredness."*

Diversity and social mobility

5 respondents highlighted how halls of residence for apprentices could promote diversity and improve social mobility. They felt this type of accommodation would create opportunities for young people who might not see university as the right path but still want the chance to grow socially and professionally. Comments included:

- *"Fantastic idea that would help a lot of people, especially those that uni isn't right for."*
- *"It would get a lot of young people more motivated to do an apprenticeship and then get into employment. They just feel trapped or unsure what to do and just have to live unhappy at home and go onto benefits."*
- *"Think it will open more doors to those who want the social aspect but are not suited to university."*

Wider suggestions

Respondents also offered broader ideas beyond dedicated apprentice halls, including:

- Allowing apprentices to live in existing university halls alongside students, especially in areas where demand for standalone apprentice accommodation may be too low.
- Extending similar housing options to graduate trainees and student nurses, who face comparable challenges.
- Addressing wider structural issues, such as improving the overall housing system and increasing apprenticeship wages, to ease the financial pressures young people commonly face.

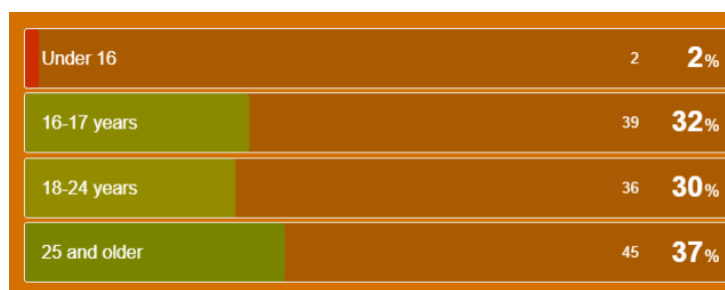
GREATER MANCHESTER SURVEY OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

This part of the research was undertaken to capture the perspectives and experiences of people from Greater Manchester about halls of residence for apprentices. It was conducted using the GetFeedback platform, with 122 respondents.

Age profile of participants

There was small representation from those under 16, while the remaining respondents were relatively evenly distributed across the other age bands, with roughly a third in each (Graph 12). 64% of respondents were 24 and under.

Graph 12: Which age group are you?



Participants under the age of 25 were asked further questions **regarding** their recent educational attainment, **intentions to pursue** further qualifications and preferred **living arrangements**.

All participants were invited to respond to a series of questions exploring their perceptions of the factors influencing young people's pathways, as well as sharing any further feedback they wished to provide.

Educational attainment of respondents

Of the 77 participants under 25 years old, the majority (61%) reported holding a Level 2 qualification, typically five or more GCSE passes or an equivalent, including intermediate apprenticeships. Around one in five (19%) had progressed to Level 3, such as A Levels or an advanced apprenticeship, while 12% had achieved a Level 4 qualification or higher, including degrees and higher apprenticeships (Graph 13). A small proportion (6%) indicated they had no formal qualifications, and just 1% held only a Level 1 qualification.

Graph 13: What is the highest level of education qualification you hold?

No formal qualifications	5	6%
Level 1: One to four GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) and any other GCSEs at other grades, or equivalent qualifications	1	1%
Level 2: Five or more GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) or equivalent qualifications, Intermediate apprenticeship	47	61%
Level 3: Two or more A Levels or equivalent qualifications, Advanced apprenticeship	15	19%
Level 4 or above: Undergraduate/Foundation degree, HNC/HND, Higher apprenticeship, Degree apprenticeship, Master's degree, PhD	9	12%
Not sure	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Other	0	0%

Current living situations of participants

A substantial majority (87%) reported living with parents, family, or guardians, underscoring the reliance of young people on the family home while studying or working (Graph 14). Only small proportions were living independently, with 3% in halls of residence, 5% in shared student or apprentice households outside of halls, and another 3% either living with non-student housemates or in their own rented or owned accommodation.

Graph 14: What are your current living arrangements?

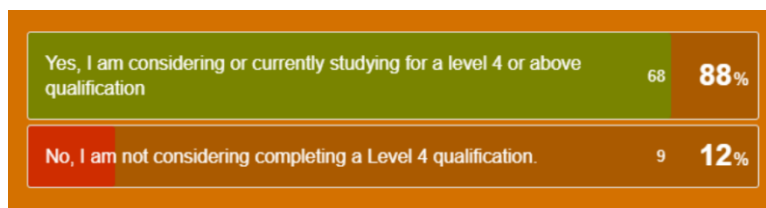
Living with parents/family/guardians	67	87%
Living in halls of residence	2	3%
Living in an all student/apprentice household (outside of halls)	4	5%
Living in a household that includes people who weren't students/apprentices (for example, young professionals)	2	3%
Living in my own accommodation (e.g. rented/owned)	2	3%
Other	0	0%

PREFERENCES OF THOSE CURRENTLY PURSUING OR PLANNING TO PURSUE LEVEL 4 OR ABOVE QUALIFICATIONS

Future plans for higher-level qualifications

A large majority (88%) of participants indicated they are either considering or already studying for a Level 4 qualification or higher, such as a degree or higher apprenticeship (Graph 15). Only 12% reported having no plans to pursue qualifications at this level.

Graph 15: Are you planning to complete any level 4 or above qualifications in the future?

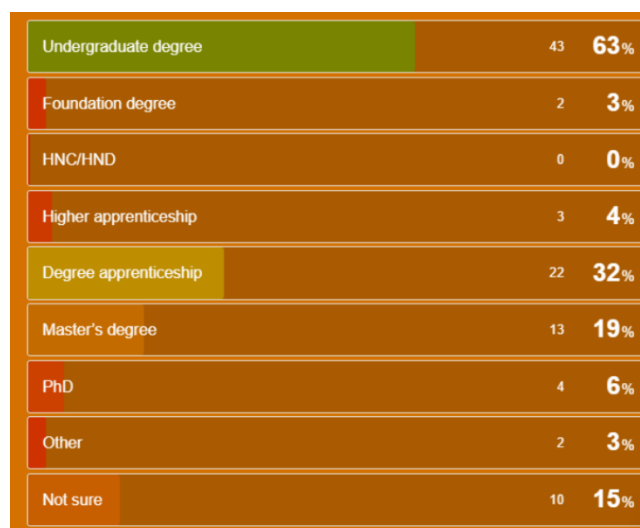


Qualifications participants are considering or pursuing

Graph 16 sets out the specific qualifications participants are considering or currently pursuing. Participants were able to select all the routes they were considering:

- Nearly two-thirds (63%) reported planning to study for or already undertaking an undergraduates degree.
- Degree apprenticeships were also a significant option, considered by almost one in three (32%).
- Smaller proportions were looking at a master's degree (19%) a PhD (6%), higher apprenticeships (4%), foundation degrees (3%) or other qualifications (3%).
- Notably, 15% of respondents were unsure about their next steps.

Graph 16: Which of these qualifications are you considering / currently studying for?

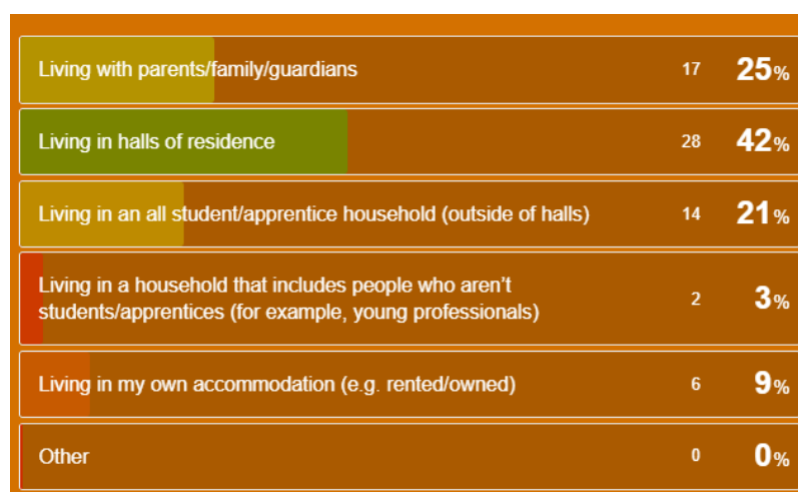


Preferred accommodation while studying

Graph 17 explores young people's preferred accommodation options while studying. Living in halls of residence emerged as the most popular choice, selected by 42% of respondents.

A quarter (25%) said they would ideally live with parents or family, while just over one in five (21%) preferred an all student or apprentice household outside of halls. Smaller proportions opted for living independently in their own rented or owned accommodation (9%) or in mixed households with non-students (3%).

Graph 17: Ideally, what type of accommodation would you prefer to live in whilst studying?

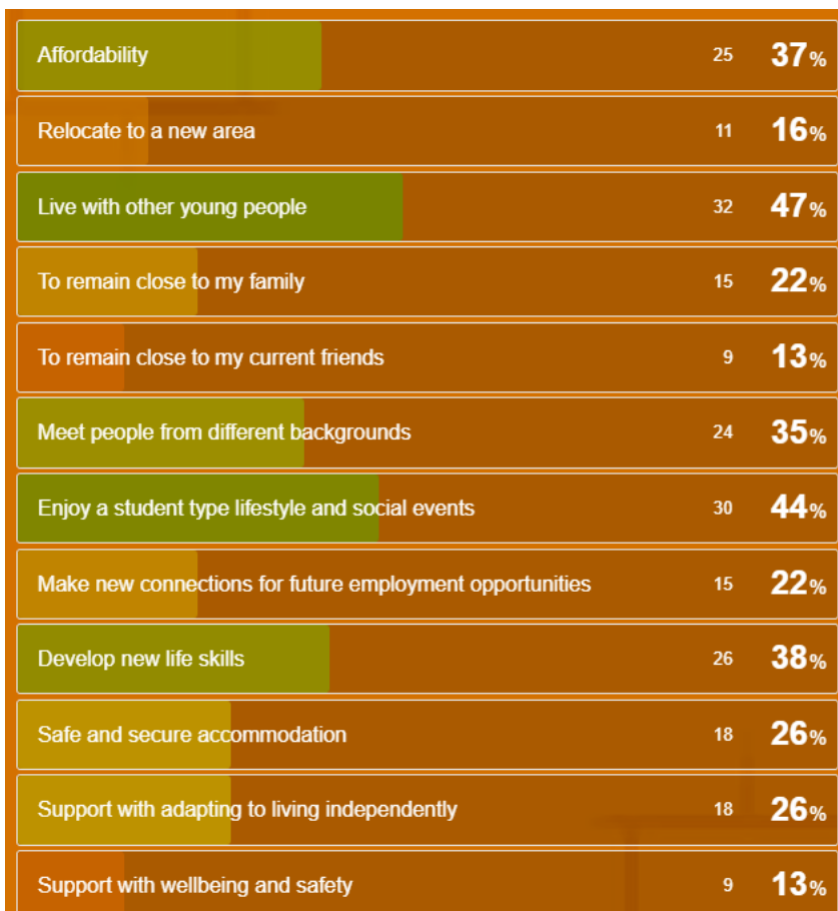


Factors shaping accommodation preferences

Graph 18 shows the factors influencing young people's accommodation preferences. Living with other young people (47%) and enjoying a student-type lifestyle with social events (44%) emerged as the key drivers, followed closely by the opportunity to develop new life skills (38%) and affordability (37%). Many also valued meeting people from different backgrounds (35%) and having safe, secure accommodation (26%).

Other considerations included staying close to family (22%) or existing friends (13%), relocating to a new area (16%), and gaining support with adapting to independent living (26%) or maintaining wellbeing and safety (13%). The relatively broad spread across these factors highlights the diverse priorities young people weigh when deciding where and how they want to live during their studies.

Graph 18: Why would you prefer this type of accommodation?



PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT INFLUENCES YOUNG PEOPLE'S PATHWAYS

All participants, including stakeholders over the age of 25 years old, were invited to answer a series of questions exploring their perceptions of the factors influencing young people's pathways.

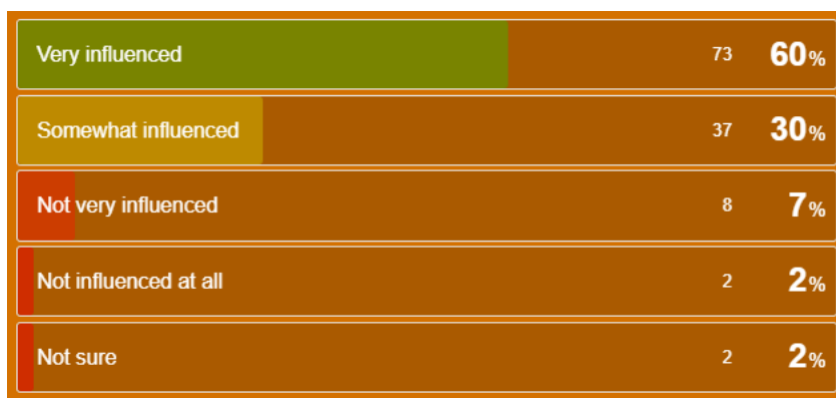
Impact of accommodation affordability on education and employment choices

Graph 19 examines perceptions of how affordability of accommodation impacts young people's education and employment decisions.

A large majority - 90% overall - believed affordability plays a role, with 60% saying decisions are very influenced and a further 30% somewhat influenced. Only a small minority felt affordability had limited impact, with 7% saying not very influenced and just 2% each selecting not influenced at all, not sure, or extremely influenced as a distinct category.

This highlights the importance of affordable accommodation in shaping pathways to higher education and employment for young people.

Graph 19: To what extent do you think young people's higher education and/or employment decisions are influenced by the affordability of accommodation?



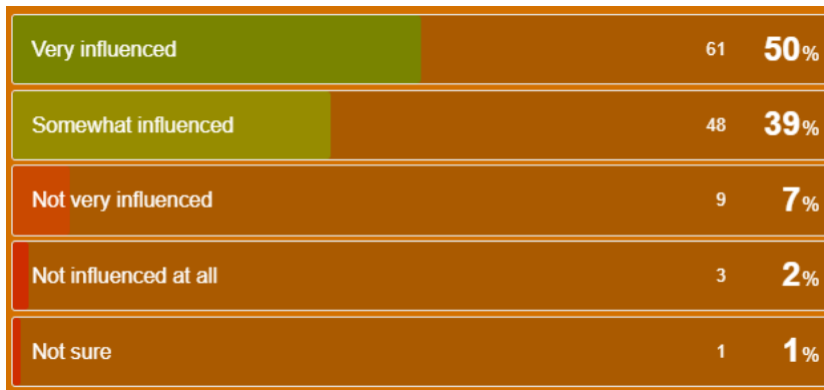
Influence of travel costs and availability on education and employment decisions

Graph 20 explores how the availability and affordability of travel influence young people's education and employment decisions.

Overall, 89% felt travel considerations play a role, with half (50%) saying decisions are very influenced and a further 39% somewhat influenced. Only a small minority saw limited or no impact, with 7% saying not very influenced, 2% not influenced at all, and just 1% each not sure.

These findings highlight that accessible and affordable travel remains a key factor in shaping young people's choices about where and how they pursue further education or employment.

Graph 20: To what extent do you think young people's higher education and/or employment decisions are influenced by the availability and affordability of travel?



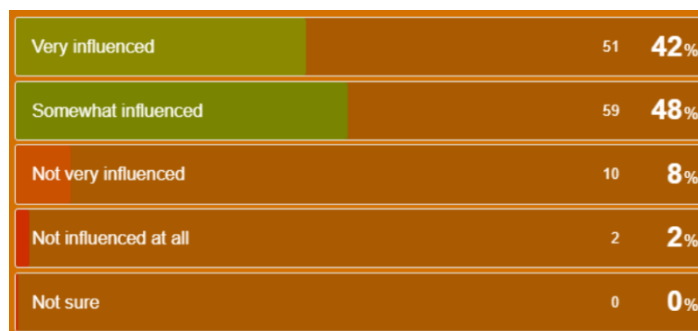
Influence of independent living aspirations in education and career decisions

Graph 21 looks at how the desire to live independently from parents or family influences young people's education and employment decisions.

Nine in ten respondents (90%) believed this factor plays a role, with 42% saying it very much influences decisions and 48% saying it somewhat influences them. Only a small proportion felt it had little impact, with 8% responding not very influenced and 2% not influenced at all.

These findings highlight the significant part that the aspiration to move out of the family home plays in shaping young people's choices about higher education and career pathways.

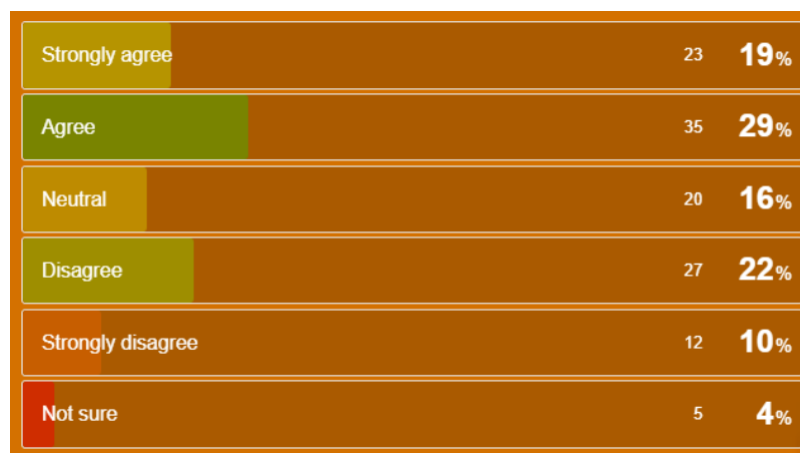
Graph 21: To what extent do you think young people's higher education and/or employment decisions are influenced by whether they want to live independently from their parents/family?



Perceptions on academic routes vs apprenticeships for independent living

Graph 22 captures views on whether young people who want to live independently from their parents need to pursue an academic course rather than an apprenticeship. Nearly half of respondents agreed with this statement to some extent, with 19% strongly agreeing and 29% agreeing. However, opinions were clearly mixed - 22% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed, while 16% were neutral and 4% not sure.

Graph 22: To what degree do you agree with this statement? "Young people who want to live independently from their parents while studying for higher education need to choose an academic course, rather than an apprenticeship."

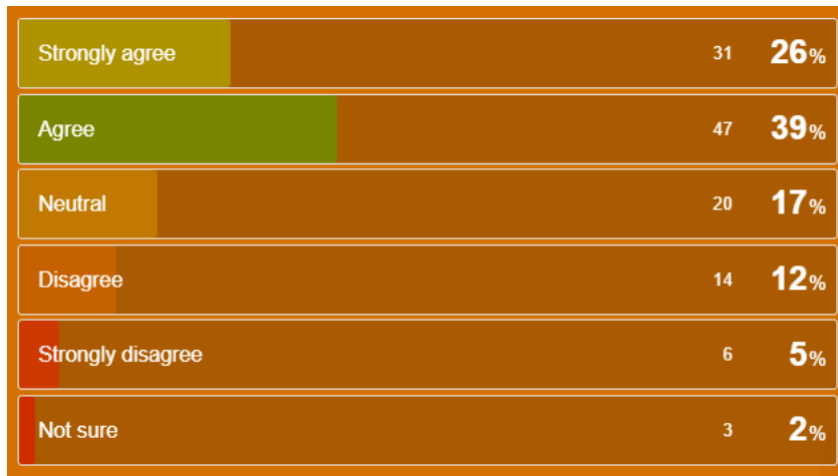


Perceptions of apprenticeships and staying close to home

Graph 23 explores agreement with the statement that apprentices are unlikely to move away from their local area while qualifying.

Most respondents supported this view, with 26% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing, making a combined 65% overall. Meanwhile, 17% were neutral, and a smaller proportion disagreed, with 12% disagreeing and 5% strongly disagreeing. Only 2% were not sure.

Graph 23: To what degree do you agree with this statement? "People who take an apprenticeship are unlikely to move away from their local area while they are qualifying."



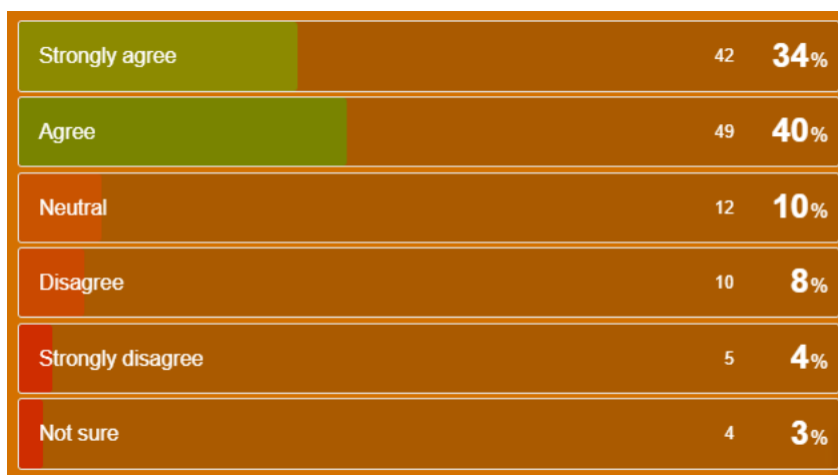
Could halls of residence increase the demand for apprenticeships?

Graph 24 explores perceptions of whether more young people would want to take up an apprenticeship over an academic course if halls of residence were available for apprentices.

Three-quarters of respondents (74%) agreed with this statement to some extent, with 34% strongly agreeing and 40% agreeing. Meanwhile, 10% were neutral, and a smaller share disagreed — 8% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed. Only 3% were not sure.

This suggests a clear recognition that the availability of halls of residence could make apprenticeships a more attractive and viable option for many young people.

Graph 24: To what degree do you agree with this statement? "More young people would choose an apprenticeship, rather than an academic course, if halls of residence were available for apprentices."



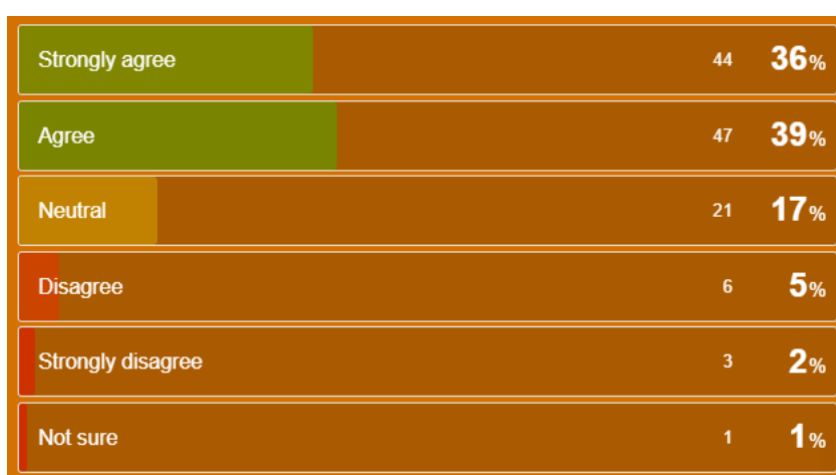
Support for dedicated halls of residence for apprentices

Graph 25 examines agreement with the statement that apprentices should have the option of living in halls of residence specifically designed for them.

Three-quarters of respondents (75%) supported this concept, with 36% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing. Around 17% were neutral, while only a small minority disagreed (5% disagreeing and 2% strongly disagreeing). Just 1% were not sure.

These findings underline broad support for dedicated residential options for apprentices, suggesting that such provision could be a valuable addition to the apprenticeship landscape.

Graph 25: To what degree do you agree with this statement? "Apprentices should have the option of living in halls of residence that are specifically for apprentices".



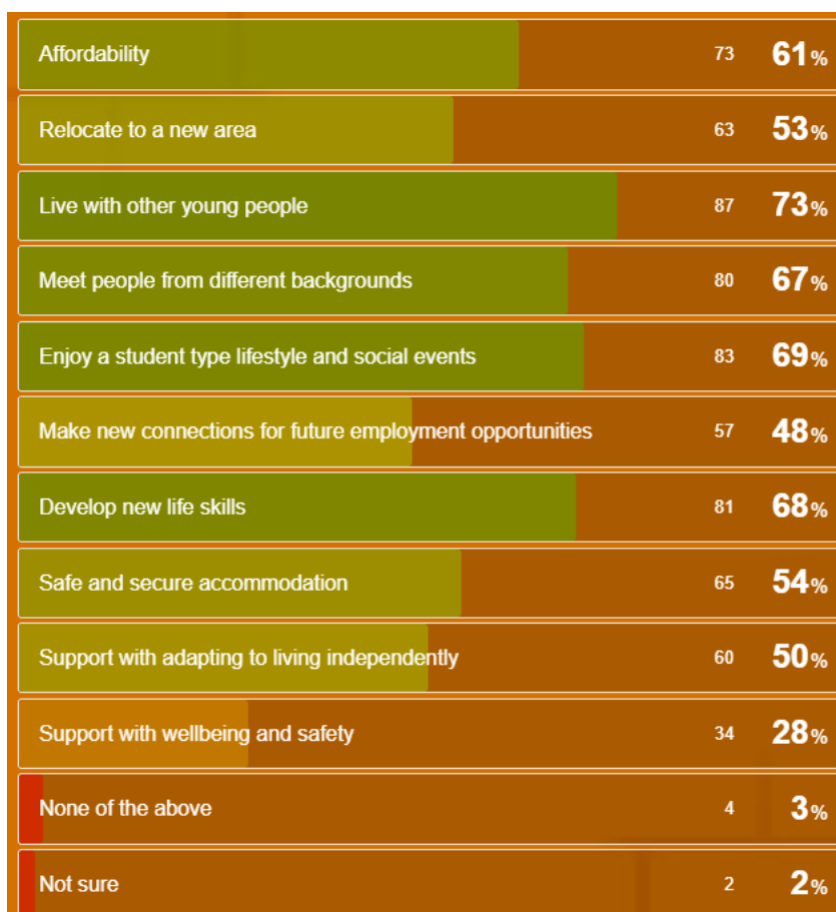
Perceived benefits of halls of residence for apprentices

Graph 26 highlights the benefits young people believe halls of residence can offer. The most frequently identified advantages were opportunities to live with other young people (73%), enjoy a student-type lifestyle and social events (69%), and develop new life skills (68%). Many also valued meeting people from different backgrounds (80%), affordability (61%) and safe and secure accommodation (54%).

Other important perceived benefits included the opportunity to relocate to a new area (53%), support with adapting to independent living (50%), and making new connections for future employment opportunities (48%). Smaller proportions recognised support with wellbeing and safety (28%), while very few selected none of the above (3%) or were not sure (2%).

These findings highlight that young people see halls of residence as offering a broad mix of social, personal development, and practical benefits that extend well beyond simply providing a place to live.

Graph 26: Which of these do you think are benefits that halls of residence can offer young people?



SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Stakeholders were given the option to add their own comments or suggestions to inform the pilot. 32 chose to provide additional insights and ideas, which are represented below:

Affordability

- *“If the apprentice wage is low, maybe it could be subsidised by their employer / the government otherwise this may mean some young people miss out.” (stakeholder aged 25 and older)*
- *One person voiced concerns about apprentices being exploited for profit, similar to how they believed students in halls of residence were being treated. (stakeholder aged 25 and older)*

Safety and support

- *“Halls of residence are a safe supportive environment, which is essential for a first year student and this should be offered for apprenticeships. (stakeholder aged 25 and older)*
- *“Fantastic idea however would need to be managed and governed as effectively as university halls (i.e. with onsite security / hall committees, etc) to guarantee the safety of*

young people co-habiting for the first time. Is this something that can be guaranteed with fluctuating and strained council budgets?" (stakeholder aged 25 and older)

- *"Somehow they need to be kept secure so that only genuine apprentices have access to them and not being used as cheap accommodation." (stakeholder aged 25 and older)*
- *"Pastoral support and wellbeing centre within the halls". (stakeholder aged 25 and older)*

Encourages more people to choose apprenticeships

- *"Amazing idea and a perfect solution to encourage both independence and personal growth. Why has no-one thought of this before! I really hope my 18 year old is able to benefit from this scheme. Uni has always been about so much more than obtaining a degree and it's fantastic that living with peers will be available to those who wish to pursue an apprenticeship." (stakeholder aged 25 and older)*
- *"This would make it another equal option for young people rather than choosing university so they can experience being independent from family. I have lived in student halls." (stakeholder aged 25 and older)*
- *1 person said it would give young people the opportunity to gain the life skills they need for independence. (stakeholder aged 18-24)*
- *"I think it's a really good idea as I didn't go to university due to the stress of debt." (stakeholder aged 18-24)*

Relocation

- *"It would make the apprenticeship route much more accessible. I wanted to move away from home (London) but I thought my only option to do that was through a university degree. I would have done an apprenticeship if there was accommodation available." (stakeholder aged 18-24)*
- *"I think it's the best idea since sliced bread. I moved to Manchester from Liverpool for my apprenticeship, and I only know people from work which has left me lonely and sometimes affects my mental health. It's hard to put yourself out there when your only roommate is twice your age since it's so hard finding affordable living. And living with students is great except they don't pay council tax and you do and working a 9-5 isn't very conducive to the university social life. It's hard. Halls of residence for apprentices will support and empower more young people to seek independence and choose apprenticeships." (stakeholder aged 18-24)*

Other suggestions

- 3 stakeholders suggested apprentices and students share halls of residence.
(stakeholders aged 25 and older)
- *“Could we think about having a student/apprenticeship union for them too. Also something that would be ongoing after they finish - a network to connect with. Also could they be connected up with the local higher education institution so that they would also have social events and some trainings with those pursuing a more academic education.”*
(stakeholder aged 25 and older)
- *“Apprenticeships need to have a better image generally as they are considered a major step down for anyone doing at all well at school. University is still seen as the option with credibility even when you struggle academically.”* *(stakeholder aged 25 and older)*

PARENTS' AND STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

As part of the Greater Manchester study, parents and stakeholders were able to share perceptions of what influences young people's pathways (Graphs 19-26) and offer their comments, which included:

- *"Having a son that is in Yr 13 and looking for an aerospace apprenticeship, his choice is limited to several companies in the North West. He is not able to look at national opportunities, working for example the MoD, AirBus, Rolls Royce, as affordable and safe accommodation for 18 yr olds is not available if you are not in HE. When companies are now working remotely and in a hybrid way, why is choice restricted for young people, surely this also impacts the talent pool for businesses too. I cannot understand why companies aren't partnering with HEIs to offer apprentices accommodation, enabling them to mix and gain support from peers when studying in a professional work environment."*
- *"I currently work in a large sixth form in the North East and my students feel forced to either stay at home or not pursue their passions due to the lack of affordability and security that halls of residence offer students opting for traditional academic courses."*
- *"How does it become affordable as at the moment lower middle class households are struggling to help their children to get to university as the cost is so high?"*

FOCUS GROUPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Social connection

- *"Doing an apprenticeship you might feel isolated with people who might not be familiar and having similar experiences."*
- *"People on apprenticeships often feel lonely as they go into university or college rarely, and they spend most of their time in their employer. This is even more the case now more people work from home. So apprentices can feel lonely and miss out on friendships, and connections with other people doing the same thing."*
- *"My cousin moved from Manchester to take a law apprenticeship in London. It was an amazing opportunity in a really difficult industry to get into and it's been really good for her. But the social side has been really difficult she hasn't got a big group of friends, doesn't get socials and isn't able to join societies. She has joined a gym but this is priced for somebody on a full wage and so is ridiculously expensive for her on her apprenticeship salary."*

Cost

- *"It would be more expensive to live on your own as an apprentice rather than a student as you're less likely to share costs with other people."*
- *"People who take apprenticeships are less likely to move away from home as cost of living is too high. Halls or dorm funding maybe beneficial for those who want to live more independently. It will be difficult for apprentices as they have low wages."*
- *"People who don't go to uni can't afford to move away from home."
"Moving away on an apprenticeship salary is difficult as renting is more expensive than student halls, and apprenticeship wages are not as much as student loans."*
- *"This all comes down to affordability. It's a nice idea but pricing it right is essential."*

Problems with getting apprenticeships

- *"Make more apprentice opportunities in general, accommodation isn't the biggest issue. Apprenticeships are really hard to get, lots of people apply for just one apprenticeship at the moment. So where apprentices live doesn't matter, if we can't get an apprenticeship in the first place."*
- *"If this makes more people apply for (degree) apprenticeships the chances of getting accepted by companies will most likely decrease."*
- *"Getting an apprenticeship is like gold dust. And I am worried that this game will make it even harder to get one, as even more people will move to Greater Manchester for apprenticeships. How is this going to help people from my area get an apprenticeship? That's the real issue."*

Other

- *"I'm not sure how this is going to work as apprentices are all ages and there are lots of older people doing apprenticeships."*
- *"Apprenticeships are an unfamiliar route so young people taking them may want to stay somewhere secure."*
- *"There is a wider age range on apprenticeships and it's not just young people who take them."*
- *"Council tax always something you need to look at as apprentices are not exempt at students are."*

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate strong support among young people and their parents/carers for the concept of dedicated halls of residence for apprentices, with many recognising their potential to enhance both the attractiveness and accessibility of apprenticeship pathways, particularly for those who may otherwise be deterred by the lack of independent living options.

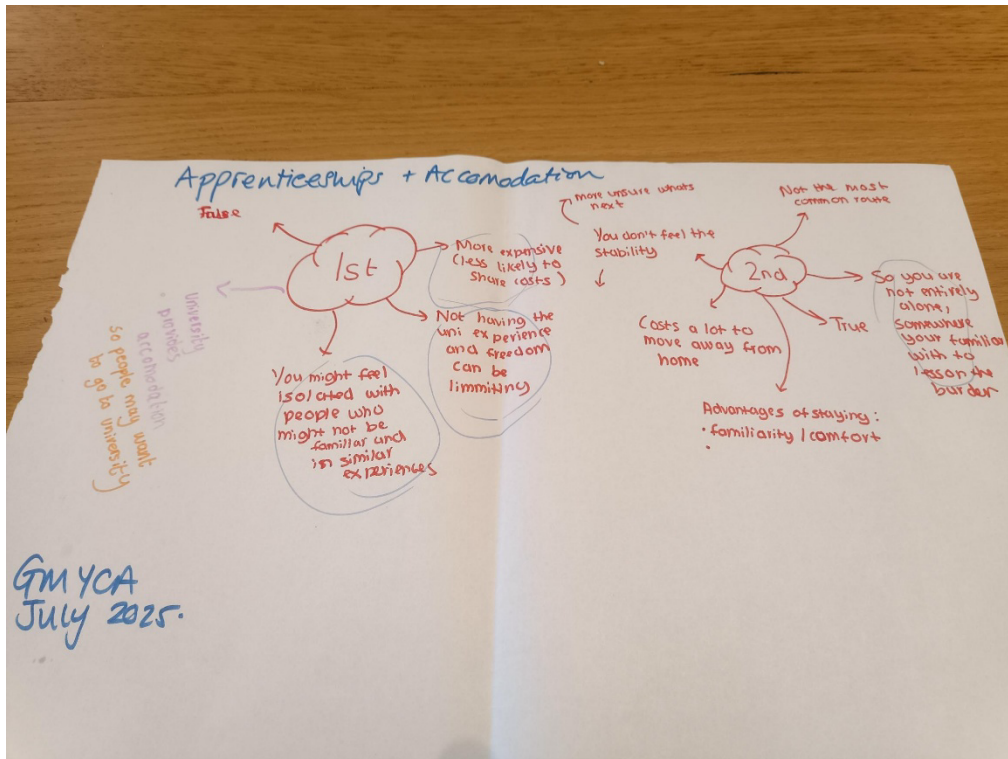
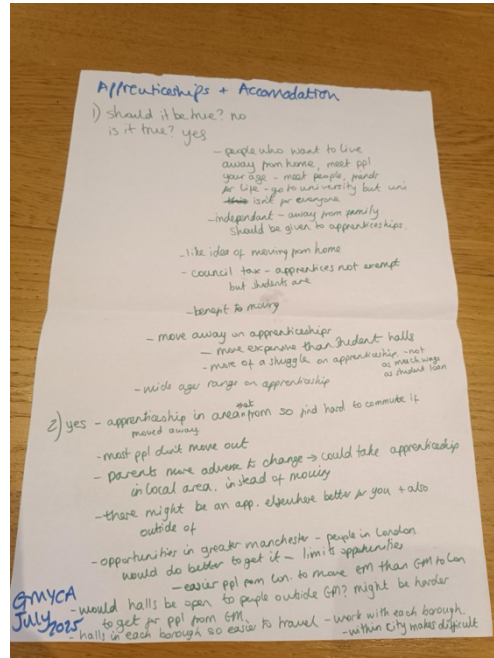
The research underscores how important factors such as affordability, opportunities to live with peers, and the ability to develop independence and new life skills are in shaping young people's education and employment decisions. It also highlights the importance of having safe, supportive accommodation available.

Many stakeholders identified the broader benefits of creating vibrant and diverse communities of apprentices, fostering personal growth and building networks that support future careers.

While some concerns were raised around financial viability, demand and security, the overwhelming majority expressed enthusiasm for this and highlighted a wide range of benefits that could transform the apprenticeship experience - helping young people to live independently, develop essential life skills, and build connections that enrich both their personal and professional futures.

APPENDIX

Further details from the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority workshop



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