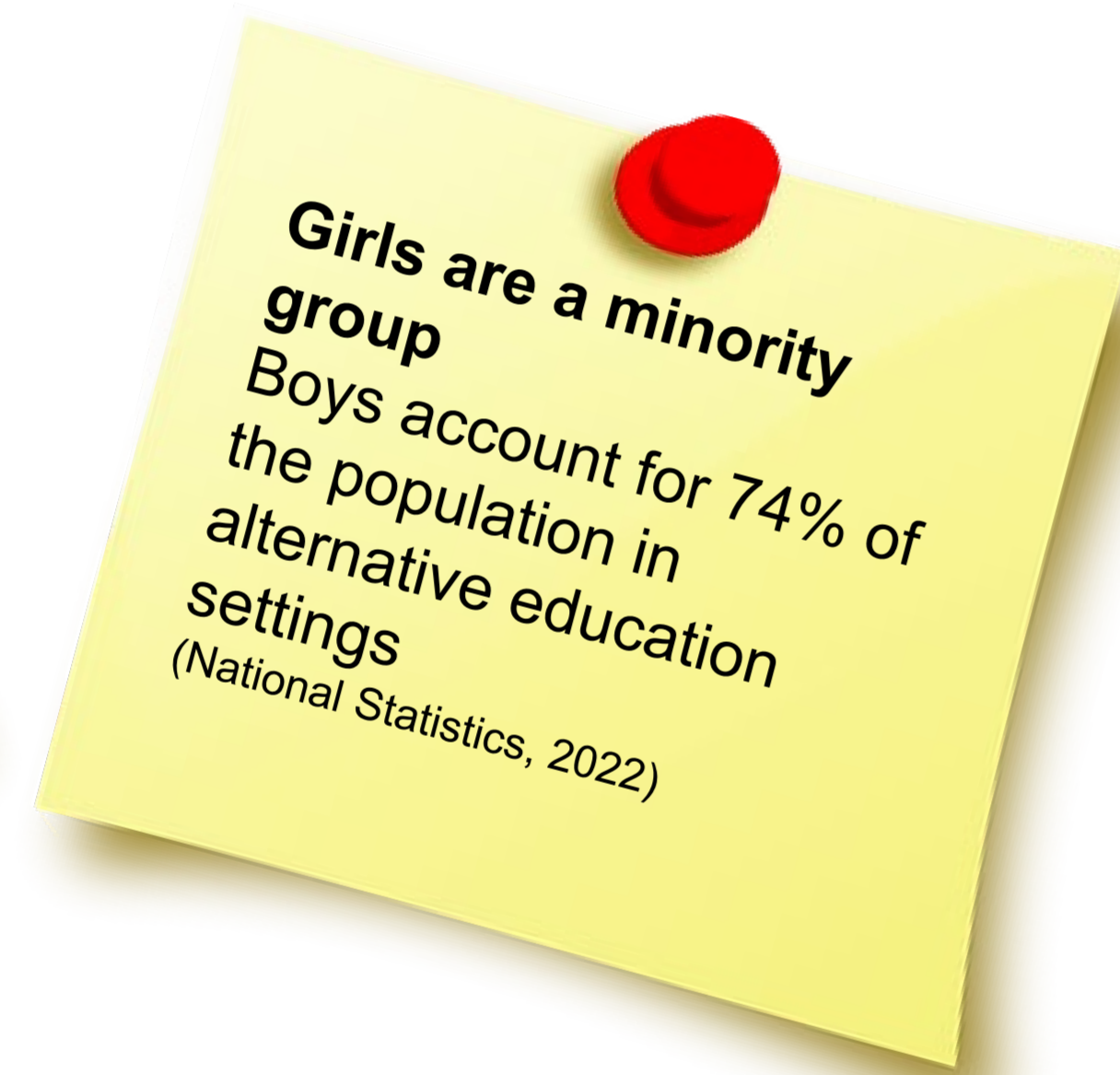




1. Early Conversations

- This project started with a chance conversation between Pam & Chrissy around experiences of working in schools
- Chrissy reflected on how alternative education providers she worked with were interested in finding out more about girls' experiences of alternative provision.
- Schools were interested in girls experiences as they are typically a minority group within alternative education

Lesson Learnt: Insights from practice provide an invaluable, up-to-date view of what is important now.



2. Funding Call

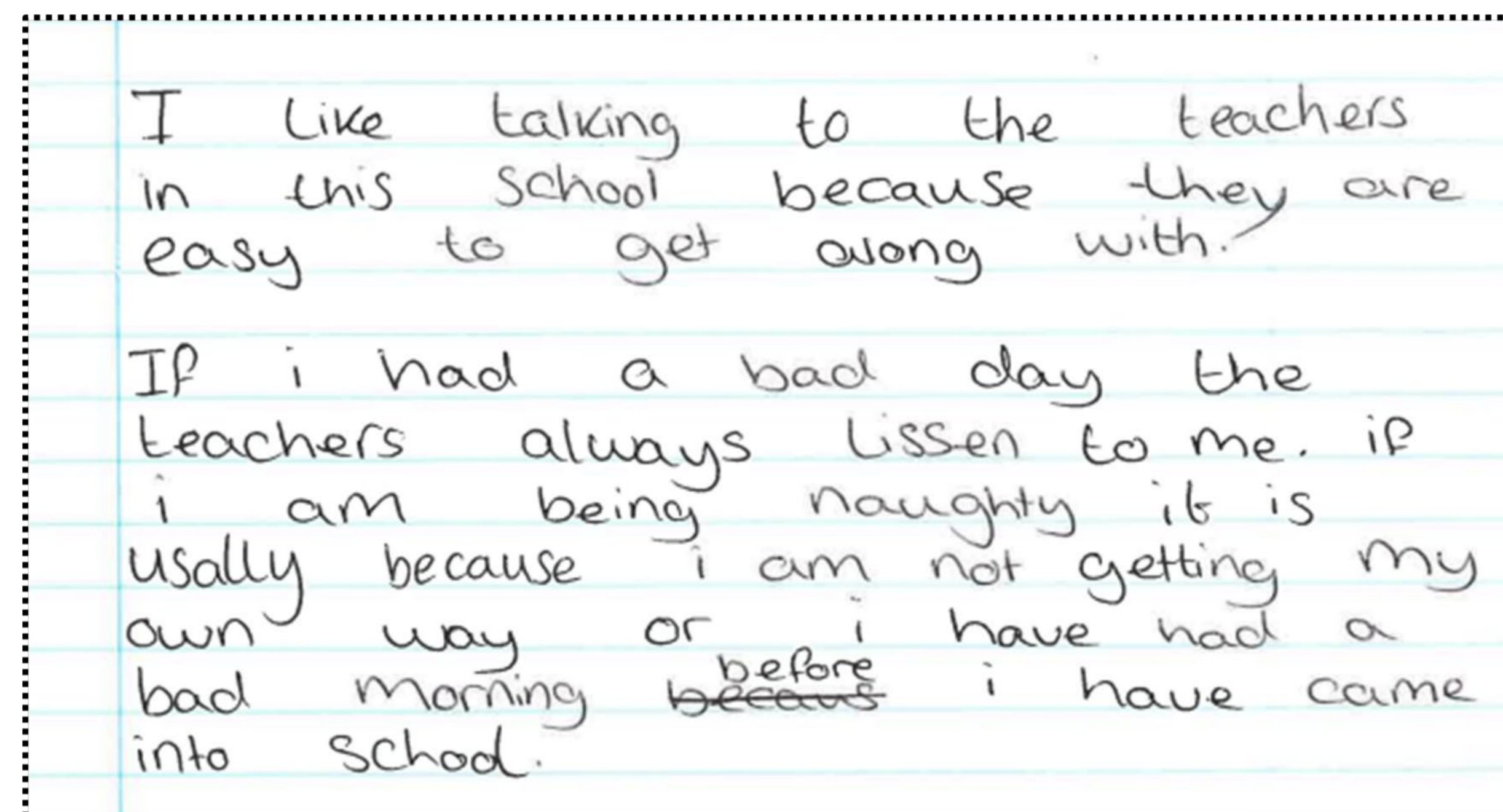
- We developed a project focussing on girls' experiences of mental health and wellbeing support in alternative education
- The project was developed in response to a rapid funding call so time was very limited
- With limited time we used the information we had available to us at that stage to inform aims and methods

Lesson Learnt: More input from school staff & young people would have been useful before bid submission. Challenges such as sporadic pupil attendance were not considered by us in these planning stages.

3. Involving School Staff

- As a trusted point of contact for the young people we worked with, school staff were essential to the success of this project
- Staff discussed the research with young people in the first instance to determine interest and preferences e.g. focus groups vs interviews, which directed our approach
- Staff supported us to work through changing COVID restrictions and to find suitable days/times/spaces to work with young people in schools

Lesson Learnt: positive, collaborative relationships are key. Staff have knowledge about their school and their pupils that goes beyond anything you can read on the school website



4. Working with Young People

- As well as conducting interviews, we worked with young people to develop an online resource to share their experiences of alternative education focussing on what works, what does not work and what needs to change
- Young people decided what should be shared and approved the resource before it was shared publicly

Lesson Learnt: Young people enjoy and excel at different activities so offering opportunities for different forms of expression was essential to this task. We wanted young people to share their views without restricting what this should look like.



5. Feedback Loop

- In the planning stages of the project, Chrissy highlighted the importance of feeding information back to young people and school staff at the end of the project
- Young people visited Northumbria University where we discussed the research findings and dissemination plans. The young people also had a campus tour, lunch and a chat with some inspirational female academics who had experienced various routes through education
- We shared and discussed the research findings with staff from participating schools
- Additionally, we ran an online seminar for schools, Local Authorities and other interested organisations to discuss the research findings

Lesson Learnt: These activities stimulated further useful discussions, facilitated new collaborations and led to plans for future research



www.tinyurl.com/GirlsInAltEd

Contact: p.l.graham@northumbria.ac.uk