

# **NO LiMiTs**

**Helping Young People  
Help Themselves**

# **Annual Report 2010-2011**

**5,000** young people using  
our services

**79%** of young people felt more  
able to deal with their  
problems

**69** volunteers helping young  
people to help themselves

**45%** of young people using our  
centres self-identify as  
vulnerable or at risk

**[www.nolimitshelp.org.uk](http://www.nolimitshelp.org.uk)**

Large print or electronic copy available on request

Charity Number: 1088835

Company Number: 4183173

## A look back over the past year

"I now feel more able to talk to my mum about my problems" (Sam aged 14)

"I got a place to live and now I'm getting help to go to college" (Joe aged 17)

No Limits has been part of the community for 18 years and with every year that passes, it is clear that children and young people who access our services

really need our help. This year has been no exception and we have expanded our services to offer more open access drop-in support as well as better access to specialist support. We have reached more young people, and heard many stories of young people struggling with the challenges they face whilst growing up, their relationships, their aspirations for the future and the way they feel about themselves. We saw many young people struggle with things that others take for granted: a roof over their head; a life free of poverty, security and stability. Our 'Have your Say' work to involve young people continued to promote young peoples' right to have a say in decisions that

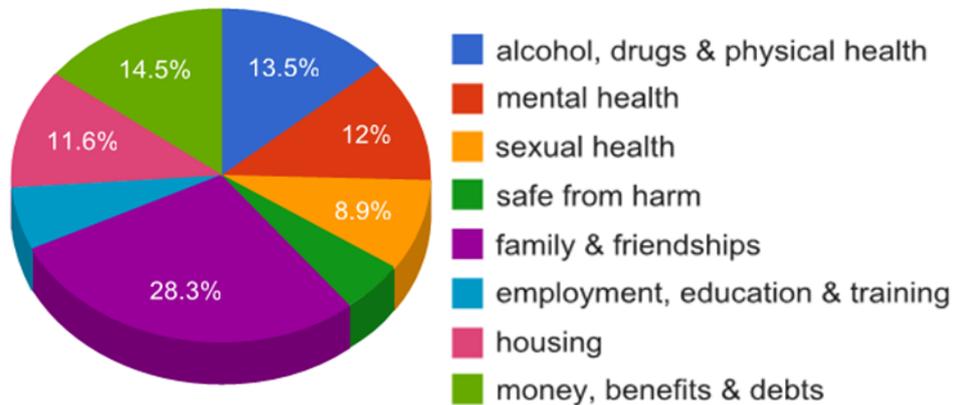
affect them. We shared decisions about recruitment and training and the development of our services. We supported 11 young people through 6 month work placements at No Limits and learned more about involving them in running and delivering our services and can report back that it was a great experience on many levels. Our team included 39 paid staff, 69 local volunteers and 24 students on placement.

We know that young people need information about their rights and impartial, non-judgemental advice, but they also need support in order to make use of the help on offer. We worked with children and young people to do just this: helping them help themselves to make their own informed choices about their lives. Although we know that we made a real difference to the young people who used our services, we also know there is much more to be done to help young people reach their full potential. This is the challenge that we have embraced, and are looking forward to working on, over the coming year.

## Reasons for visiting our services

Nearly 5000 individual children and young people used our services last year. This was a 7% increase on the previous year. 90% came from Southampton, where most of our services are based, meaning we helped over 20% of all young people in the city. We had over 30,000 contacts with, or about, young people. The main age of young people we saw was between 15 and 18, with 53% being female and 47% being male. This year, more young people than ever sought advice about economic well-being, including wanting help about education, employment, training, money, benefits, housing and homelessness.

Diagram showing where we helped young people to make changes



### No Limits drop-in centres

We offered open access drop-in support to young people through our 3 centres in Southampton which are open 6 days a week, for over 50 hours. Although we have increased access to our services since last year, young people still tell us they want us to be open more often. 40% of our contact with young people was through our drop-in centres, offering information, advice, advocacy and support on a range of issues. These young people often faced very complex problems and 45% self-identified as having a vulnerability such as being homeless, having a mental health problem, having problems with drugs or alcohol, not having a job or not being at school or college.

### Outcomes: Improving health

2070 occasions where condoms were given out  
2059 young people given advice and support about their mental health

928 given advice and support about their substance misuse  
728 referrals to health services

### Outcomes: Housing, Money, Work

£48,000 extra income gained for vulnerable young people living independently  
401 homeless young people used our shower and laundry facilities  
251 young people accommodated  
257 young people supported to look for work

## What young people say about No Limits

"a good place to get all kinds of advice; helpful and guides me in the right direction; great for advice and the workers are easy to talk to; a service in which anybody in any circumstance can approach and receive non-biased advice and information; a great support, useful, knowledgeable and a source of advice, a good listening ear; its a good place to come and get advice and help and the staff are nice and helpful; somewhere people can come for free advice"

## No Limits Specialist Projects

Offering young people specialist support when they need it improves the impact of our help and so we continued to offer specialist support alongside our open access drop-in centres.

**Counselling** in partnership with CAMHS (Mental Health Service)

Our professional counselling service continued to support troubled young people who wanted counselling. Trained staff and volunteers offered counselling from our drop-in centres as well as in 3 secondary schools.

- 352 young people attended counselling.

*"It's helpful to talk to someone who understands"*

**Health and wellbeing drop-ins** in partnership with the Contraception and Sexual Health Service

Weekly drop-in sessions in 9 secondary schools and 3 FE colleges.

- 1433 young people were supported and advised about their health and well-being

*"I got to speak to someone about contraception and now I'm not embarrassed anymore"*

**Floating Support**

Our Floating Support team worked with young people to help them maintain their private tenancies.

- 566 appointments attended by young people

*"I'm paying my rent on time now and I'm not being threatened with eviction"*

**DASH** run in partnership with Solent NHS

Supporting under 19s with substance misuse issues

- The number of young people in treatment increased to 106

*"I don't take drugs any more and now I'm looking for work"*

**Teen Safehouse** delivered in partnership with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Youth group for under 18s with mental health issues.

- 23 young people attended the weekly group

*"I feel like I've got some friends now"*

**Miss-U and U-Turn** in partnership with Barnardos

1:1 support to young people about safer relationships, sexual exploitation and going missing.

- 85 young people referred
- 1147 contacts made with or about young people

*"I've been happier and more like my old self and I've sorted a lot of stuff out at home so I don't run away anymore"*

**Money Advice (No Limits Xtra)**

5 sessions a week were offered to young people to give them easy access to specialist money, debt and benefits advice.

*"I can manage my money better and I'm not in as much debt"*

**Anger Management**

4 groups were run during the year with demand continuing to be to be high.

- 32 young people took part in anger management groups

*"I feel more confident and able to open up I don't lose it so much"*

**A2T (Access to Tenancy)** in partnership with YMCA, Chapter 21 and Solent Credit Union

Supporting young people into private rented accommodation through training, savings and rent bonds.

- 49 young people took part in A2T pre-tenancy training

*"I found a really good landlord and got a deposit to move in"*

## Did we help young people make changes?

We helped lots of young people to make changes in their lives and measured whether we had made a difference. We found that, as a result of the help we gave, children and young people reported that their lives had got better.

## Making changes to lives

89% of children and young people told us their knowledge of where to get help had improved

81% told us their levels of stress had improved

79% felt more able to deal with their own problems

78% had a better understanding of their rights

76% felt better about their future

74% felt more in control of their lives

70% felt their confidence had improved

Although more young people than ever came to us for help looking for work, education and training and also for help with money problems (including debt and benefits advice), we want to have more of an impact on helping young people with these issues. The current economic climate, including cuts to public services, meant it was a hard year for young people. With fewer jobs available, rising living costs and high interest credit schemes often the only option to young people living in poverty, we saw an unprecedented number of requests for emergency help from our 'urgent social needs' fund.

Next year, we want to expand our service and look for more ways to help young people help themselves, particularly about getting into work and training to increase opportunity and improve lives.

## What young people say about No Limits

*"I think that*

*No Limits is a great organisation and I think they should have more credit for the work they do; its a great place to come for advice and to use their computers; No Limits is a good place to get help when you are having problems or just need someone to talk to. They are helpful and confidential and they can be trusted; good and helps you a lot. It is confidential which is great; very helpful and understanding. Helps me out a lot; good place to come if I need help"*

## One young person's story: *Get involved if you want to support us to help young people like Claire*

*"I was on self-destruct and No Limits helped me when I felt I couldn't carry on. They gave me a place to talk about my feelings. With their support, I am able to stand on my own feet"*

A major event such as a relationship breakdown can sometimes tip someone over the edge and cause feelings of desperation and isolation. This can lead to vulnerable young people being exploited by others and that's what happened to Claire. Life was a blur and drinking was the only way she knew how to cope with her feelings; it gave her the confidence that she needed although she often found herself blacking out and waking up in hospital or strangers' beds, not knowing how she had got there. Her life was on a downward spiral and it was at this point that a friend told her about No Limits and took her to one of our drop-in centres. Over time, she built up enough trust to talk to us about her life. We encouraged her to use our centres, giving her the support she asked for and putting her in touch with others who might help.

We offered her counselling and Claire began to talk about the things that had happened to her. She began to take back control of her life. Her counsellor listened to her and helped her rebuild her self-esteem and eventually Claire began to build a new life. She has since moved into her own flat, attends college and has a part-time job.

No Limits relies on the support of others. If you would like to make a real difference and help young people help themselves, then there are many ways in which you can get involved. We wholeheartedly believe that supporting young people today creates a better world for us all tomorrow and there are lots of ways that you can get involved and help.

Whether you are a person who can donate money, work for a business that could help our work or someone who has time to work directly with young people, then No Limits would welcome your support.

**Visit [www.nolimitshelp.org.uk](http://www.nolimitshelp.org.uk) for more information or to donate.**

## About No Limits

No Limits is a charity offering information, advice, counselling, advocacy and support services to children and young people in Southampton and Hampshire who are under 26 years old. Established in 1993, we have been delivering high quality, innovative and award winning services through our drop-in centres and in the community, reaching out to young people who historically find it hard to access services. We work in partnership with local volunteers, businesses and our funding bodies and aim to support young people by:

- offering a caring, supportive environment where young people explore issues affecting their lives
- providing accurate and up-to-date information relevant to their needs
- enabling young people to solve problems and make informed decisions.

We are passionate about promoting the health and well-being of young people, helping them to understand their rights and to make real progress in improving their lives. We work within local Safeguarding policy, procedures and practice, ensuring that our staff are well trained and achieve best practice around safeguarding issues. We have won various awards for our work and were shortlisted for the Children and Young People Now Advice and Guidance Award in 2010. No Limits meets several quality standards such as the Youth Access Quality Standards (for Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support Services), the BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) standards, the General Help level of the Legal Services Commission Quality Mark and QuADS (Drugs and Alcohol Service Quality Standards). Copies of our audited accounts can be obtained from our registered office, see our website for details of how to get in touch.



# NO LIMITS