

‘Altogether Better’ Charter Feedback Pilot Report No Limits

Introduction

The 'Altogether Better Charter' was created by young people for person-centred mental health and wellbeing services. It was published in 2017 by Youth Access, following consultation with over 200 young people from across the country.

The Charter describes what young people expect from services. It sets out seven criteria that services should meet to ensure that they are truly putting service users at the heart of their organisation.

By signing up to the Charter, services commit to:

- Treat young people with respect
- Make it easy for them to access the service
- Have all the help they need in one place, or support them in finding the help they need
- Provide a welcoming and age appropriate setting
- Provide support for young people up to the age of 25
- Have skilled workers that take them seriously
- Involve young people in decision making

The Charter Feedback Scheme

The Charter Feedback Scheme aims to make services more accountable to young people, and to put youth voice at the heart of quality improvement. It does this by helping the service to collect, analyse and respond to a range of feedback.

The pilot scheme offered the following feedback routes:

Online Feedback:

The online feedback tool allows young people to answer a series of short multiple choice questions against the seven points of the Charter. It can be accessed via phone, tablet or computer.

In-person Feedback:

Face-to-face workshops give young people the opportunity to provide more in-depth feedback on how services are performing against the seven points of the Charter. These workshops are held in the services themselves and co-facilitated by young 'Charter Ambassadors'. Charter Ambassadors are young people, supported by the service, to lead on the delivery of the workshops as part of the Charter Feedback Scheme.

Services

Three young people's services agreed to take part in the pilot scheme:

YMCA Youth Advice Centre (Brighton), No Limits (Southampton) and Young Person's Advisory Service (YPAS, Liverpool).

Between March and July 2019, young people associated with No Limits completed the online questionnaire and a group of 'Charter Ambassadors' facilitated 2 separate workshops with groups of young people.

Total number of young people who completed the online questionnaire: 279

Total number of young people who participated in workshops: 9

Summary of Feedback

Overall, young people identified No Limits as a service that met all seven of the Charter's criteria. Young people scored No Limits highly against all the criteria. Respondents scored No Limits lowest in relation to their involvement of young people with decision making. This may be due to No Limits not giving young people enough opportunity to get involved in decision making, or alternatively not promoting these opportunities widely enough within the service.

No Limits' workshops were limited in the additional information that they provided, and many young people using the online feedback questionnaire chose not to leave comments. It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions about the reasons for young people's scores. Due to a number of duplicate responses, some of the numbers included in the appendices do not tally up with the overall number of online respondents.

Treat Us With Respect

Most online respondents (97%) identified No Limits as a service that treated them with respect. Young people in the workshop identified No Limits as a service that met the criteria laid out by the Charter (see fig.1).

No Limits was seen by young people as an inclusive and welcoming service with a non-judgmental and non-patronising approach. Young people felt No Limits had staff who listened and understood them and provided valuable and wide-ranging support. One young person described the service as having given them hope when they had lost faith in therapy.

“I was listened to and received no judgement.”

Figure 1

- Value us as individuals
- Treat us as equals
- Non-judgmental
- Inclusive
- Confidential
- Value our opinions
- Trust us
- See me as a person – not a problem

At least one workshop participant felt that the service wasn't always respectful towards young people. However, it is difficult to establish the reasons for this and exactly how many other young people felt this way within the group. In the 'Circle of Respect' activity (Appendix 2.1) some of the Charter criteria were placed 'on the edge' or 'outside' of the circle, rather than inside. Some of the reasons identified for not feeling respected by No Limits were the behaviour of other young people, staff not understanding young people's problems or young people feeling patronised by staff (Appendix 2.1).

Make It Easy For Us To Access The Service

Most online respondents (95%) felt No Limits provided support at suitable times and locations for them (Appendix 1.3). Young people appreciated being able to drop in and access the service as and when they needed and felt that No Limits provided support around young people's schedules. Only one young person felt that staff didn't always provide appointments based on young people's schedules and one other identified that its geographical location could make it more challenging to access the service.

No Limits received an overall star rating of 4.39 out of 5 for the ease of accessing the service. Young people described No Limits as a service that responded quickly, was easy to be referred into and provided lots of ways to get in touch. Young people also appreciated No Limits opening times and being able to drop in. Of those young people who felt the service wasn't easy to access, only one comment was left. They explained their experience of dealing with childhood trauma made the service difficult to access.

“Received a response to my email within a couple days. Seen as soon as I entered the advice centre. ”

Workshop participants agreed that No Limits provides free services with a friendly atmosphere that is easy to use and works around young people's schedules (Appendix 2.2). A few young people were uncertain or disagreed that the service was easy to find out about. More than half of the workshop participants were also unsure about whether No Limits had a self-referral route. No further comments were recorded from the workshops to elucidate these points further.

Have All The Help We Need In One Place

Overall, young people (97% of online respondents) felt that No Limits was a service that provided all the help they needed in one place and that could be relied upon for a range of support and help (Appendix 1.4). One young person also described No Limits as a service that goes 'above and beyond'. Of the 8 young people that felt that No Limits didn't provide all the help they needed in one place, only one left a comment stating that they were new to the service.

Provide A Welcoming And Age Appropriate Setting

The majority of online respondents (98%) agreed that No Limits provided a welcoming and age appropriate setting for young people (Appendix 1.5). Several stated No Limits provided a relaxed and welcoming environment and appreciated small gestures such as being remembered or being offered tea or coffee.

A few young people felt that the service wasn't a welcome or age appropriate setting with only two comments explaining their reasons. Reasons given were that the service didn't include all ages in secondary school, and another explaining they felt lonely and anxious, and weren't introduced to anyone. In the workshops, young people identified No Limits as a welcoming service with staff who made an effort to make them feel comfortable (Appendix 2.3).

Young people appreciated gestures such as staff offering them a drink. They stated that the welcoming and age appropriate setting is enhanced by having a wide range of options for support available. Workshop participants suggested No Limits could feel intimidating and that young people's mental health problems could be exacerbated by finding it difficult to access the service.

“There is so many young people here and it's like a little family. ”

Some young people identified the environmental factors environment as feeling unwelcoming such as intoxicated members of the public outside, feeling intimidated by young people using the service who might cause disruptions, or feeling anxious about seeing people they knew or had history with.

Provide Support For Young People Up To The Age Of 25

No Limits provides support for young people under 26 years. In the workshops, young people did not complete the 'Up To 25' exercise from the Charter Ambassador pack, so no further comments can be made on young people's feelings about why services should provide support up to young people up to 25 years of age.



Have Skilled Workers That Take Us Seriously

Online respondents mostly agreed that No Limits had skilled workers who took young people seriously (Appendix 1.6). Overall, No Limits workers received a star rating of 4.82 out of 5. Most online respondents felt No Limits workers were good listeners, knowledgeable, professional and understanding. Young people also felt No Limits workers were non-judgmental and non-patronising.

“
Never interrupt
me or be
condescending.”

Workshop participants also identified No Limits workers as mostly meeting the qualities listed within the Charter Ambassador Pack (see fig.2). However, some workshop participants did not feel workers at No Limits were always professional or honest (Appendix 2.4). Some young people also felt staff weren't always knowledgeable, or that staff acted professionally depending on who they were speaking to. Some commented that some staff, for example during counselling, were not straightforward and would 'skip around the answers'.

Figure 2

- Treats you with respect
- Care about young people
- Non-judgmental
- A good listener
- Professional
- Knowledgeable
- Honest
- See me as a person – not a problem

Involve Us In Decision Making

Overall, young people (89% of online respondents) felt that No Limits was a service that involved them in decision making. Young people identified opportunities to give face to face feedback and suggestions on how to improve the service, completing surveys and forms and being supported to make decisions about rules within the service too (Appendix 1.7). Approximately 9.59% of young people did not feel they were given opportunities to be involved in decision making, with most choosing not to comment further.

Some comments suggested young people were not asked, or informed about opportunities and one young person felt that decisions were left to 'higher ups'. Some of those who also checked 'doesn't apply' identified being uncertain or unsure if there were opportunities to be involved in decision making (Appendix 1.7).

“
Never been
asked.”

Recommendations

- Given the above, it is recommended that Charter Ambassador's award No Limits with the Charter Mark.
- Most young people found No Limits an easy to access service. There may be further benefit in ensuring No Limits promote the service more widely, and also helping young people to be more aware that they can self-refer.
- No Limits was generally viewed as providing an age-appropriate and welcoming setting for young people. However, some young people identified factors that made the service feel less welcoming. A focus group might help to understand how to further enhance an age-appropriate and welcoming setting for young people.
- Overall, young people felt No Limits provided a welcoming and age appropriate setting. However, some young people mentioned factors that might make it feel less welcoming e.g. drunk members of public outside, other young people's behaviour.
- No Limits is regarded as a service that listens to young people and involves them in decision-making. However, some young people may not be aware of these opportunities and No Limits might want to further promote participation opportunities to young people.
- Further consultation, including more focus groups might help No Limits to explore and further understand some of the issues raised by young people in their feedback.



Championing advice and counselling