



# IMPACT REPORT

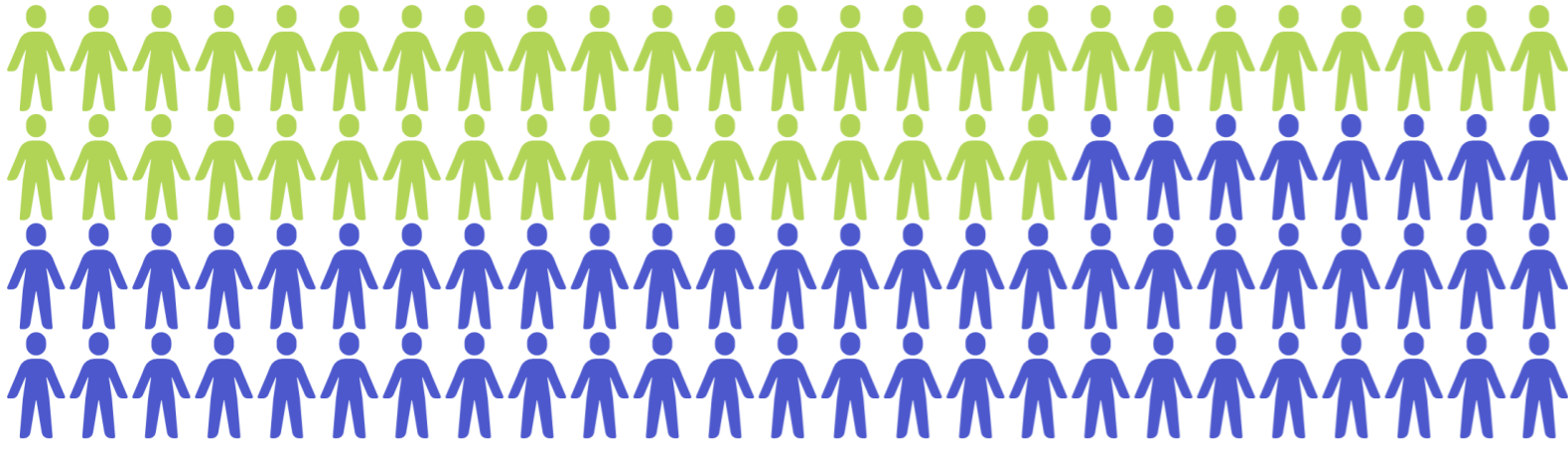
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2020 - 2021



# 8,432

Children and young people were supported by No Limits in 2020 - 2021



## 3,570

children and young people were supported through outreach

## 4,862

children and young people were supported through our services



## 3,527

children and young people accessed support through phone, email or Zoom



## 1,070

children and young people were offered counselling



## 328

children and young people were support in A&E



## 191

children and young people supported through our support groups



## 269

students were supported in schools and colleges

## 97%

of children and young people said they were treated fairly

## 93%

of children and young people said they were happy with the service they received

## 244%

increase in parents contacting us for support for their child



## 2,335

children and young people were supported with their mental health



## 306

children and young people had parenting responsibilities



## 218

children and young people were homeless or at risk of homelessness



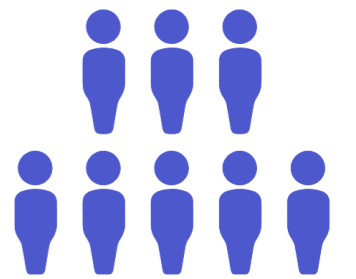
## 229

young carers were supported



## 630

young people were supported with substance use



## 215

children and young people were NEET

## 300%

increase in the number of young people using our Advice & Support Line



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Welcome to our Impact Report for 2020/21—an extraordinary year. A year where the need for our services soared and we had to double our efforts to ensure that those who needed us, could reach us. As a Youth Information Advice and Counselling Service, we continued to deliver invaluable support to children and young people across Hampshire, Southampton, and surrounding areas. We have worked hard to achieve our vision that all local children and young people are empowered to reach their potential through excellent information, advice and support.

The last year has been a challenge for everyone. All young people have faced isolation from their peers, school closures, loss of motivating extra-curricular activities, an increase in the use of social media and a lack of control. For children who were already facing disadvantage - as many of those we support do - these challenges have been even greater.

Across the staff team and together as an organisation, we rose to the challenges with determination and commitment and I'm so proud of what we achieved. I'm grateful to everyone at No Limits for everything that they've done in enabling our support for children and young people to continue. I am also grateful to funders who provided us with the

emergency funds to meet these challenges, including taking on additional detached work to reach the most vulnerable, adapting our Advice Centre to make it Covid-safe and providing additional mental health support for young people. As always, safeguarding has been a priority for us, even more so during the pandemic.

When looking at our impact, it is easy to focus on numbers. But behind each number is a very real young person. We are driven by the needs of young people and our approach has young people's rights at its heart. Our youth workers and counsellors go out of their way to ensure that we support each young person in the right way for them. I hope some of the young people's journeys included in this report give a flavour of how much our staff care and the difference we make.

Looking forward, we will take the learning from this year and integrate our remote support into our wider offer. We are well placed to meet the rising demand and will work hard with young people, partners, and funders to ensure we provide the best possible service for all children and young people as they navigate the post-Covid world.

Natalie Webb  
CEO

# A MESSAGE FROM A YOUNG PERSON



I came to No Limits initially for help to decrease my marijuana use. It had become a dependence and was a more regular habit than I was comfortable with. I have had a youth worker, Gina, help me work through this habit, by aiding me in making a plan, and supporting me in following through with it. I also attended a 10-week course in Emotional Resilience that was run by two other No Limits workers, Flora and Jen. This taught me lots of helpful coping mechanisms including combatting negative self-talk and made me feel much less alone, as we discussed personal issues and I realised that other people felt similarly.

The youth workers are understanding and empathetic, and although I had previously used other services, I have never felt able to be as honest and vulnerable as I can with No Limits, which has allowed me to process things that had encouraged my substance use, that I never dreamed I would have been able to discuss.

Thanks to this help from No Limits, I have successfully cut down from heavy daily usage of marijuana, to almost 5 months of sobriety from it. This is something I never thought possible before the help of No Limits, as I had previously had this habit for years. I have also decreased my reliance on alcohol, which I had previously normalised as part of student culture, but was in fact having a negative impact on my mental health.

Decreasing my use of these substances through drug and alcohol help allowed me to focus on the areas of my life that needed work, and areas I was actively trying to numb and ignore. This allowed me to develop my emotional growth, take care of myself better, and heal from personal issues.

I can't begin to imagine where I would be now and what the past year would have looked like if I had not been able to turn to No Limits for help.

I would actively encourage any young person to turn to No Limits for help, and I am so grateful to Gina and the other No Limits youth workers who have helped me turn my life into something I am proud of, instead of something I felt the need to regularly escape from.



Olivia  
21





## COVID 19

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The pandemic, resulting lockdowns and ongoing social restrictions have had a huge impact on the children and young people we support, particularly those who were already dealing with challenging lives. The impact on employment, increased housing insecurity, digital exclusion, concern for family members, and loss of support networks have all lead to increased anxiety and social isolation.

As an organisation trusted by young people, our role had never been more vital, but our services, like everything else, were forced to close. We moved swiftly to provide remote support, expanding our Webchat, introducing Zoom, providing counselling via telephone. Throughout the year we supported, on average, 700 children and young people per month – 20% face to face (once possible), 31% by phone, 15% by video chat, as well as email, text and webchat. All our case-held young people were offered support through Zoom and our support groups also made a successful transition to Zoom, with strong engagement. We also focused on providing resources to support young people via our social media and website.

With emergency funding from various funders, we adapted the Advice Centre so that it was safe to open as soon as allowed, introduced detached work to engage with the most vulnerable and increased our mental health support.

To highlight the plight of young people in the pandemic, we engaged as many of our service users as possible in two surveys during the year – in May and November. Both surveys showed worsening mental health, anxiety, isolation and concerns for the future, with one third of children feeling their mental health deteriorated further upon the return to education in September. We shared these reports widely, helping shape the wider system's response to Covid.

Looking forward, we are well placed to build on the innovations of lockdown to offer a blended model of service delivery that offers face to face support alongside the innovations developed last year, supporting children and young people towards a rights-based recovery from Covid-19.

“ Without No Limits I wouldn't be here; you are all so lovely and helpful. I have friends but it's not the same. ”

## NEW PROJECTS

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During the year we have responded to the increased need amongst children and young people in a number of ways – creating new services, new partnerships and expanding existing services across wider geographical areas.

- We worked with Barnardo's on its **SEE, HEAR, RESPOND Programme**, offering rapid, early intervention to **2,219** children and young people who needed urgent practical or emotional support during the pandemic, including intensive support to re-integrate into school, group support and counselling.
- We introduced a co-located No Limits youth worker, working within the **111 Mental Health Triage Service** and No Limits, to support children and young people who contact NHS 111 in a mental health crisis and/or with emotional or mental health needs.
- With funding from the Youth Endowment Fund we ran a one year project with Youth Options to provide **transitions support** to vulnerable young people moving from primary to secondary school during lockdown, through workshops and outdoor activities.
- We opened a **Safe Haven** for NE Hants and Farnham, enabling young people to access out of hours emotional and practical support with their mental health, providing them with the tools and techniques to enable them to be as safe as possible and make positive changes.
- We re-started our Women's Group – **SHINE**, providing a safe place for young people to meet for support, as well as opportunities to make new friends, have fun, develop skills.
- Following the success of our youth worker service in University Hospital Southampton's **Emergency Department**, we started a similar service at Queen Alexandra in Portsmouth.
- We are providing a youth worker to sit within Southampton City Council's new **Youth Employment Hub**, to engage young people with additional support as required.
- During Covid, we re-branded our phone line as the **Advice and Support Line**, promoting it widely to ensure all young people knew how to access support during lockdown.





## PROVIDING QUALITY ADVICE

We offer open access, drop-in support available through our **Advice Centre** and secondary schools/colleges in Southampton. This universal service acts as a gateway to our targeted support. Our Advice Centre in Southampton High Street, a friendly, accessible space, is usually open for over 40 hours per week, including evenings and weekends.

“*Thank you for seeing my daughter last Friday. She found it really helpful. She said it was good to speak to someone who got it and she felt she could say anything and not have to try to explain herself. She has asked me to contact you to book her in for a counselling assessment.*”

By April 2020, we had been forced to close the Advice Centre completely and all support was being offered over the phone, email, webchat and Zoom. Many of the most vulnerable young people we support weren't engaging without the drop-in and, as soon as possible, we opened on an appointment-only basis as well as starting targeted, detached youth work across the city and Hampshire. We continued to run drop-ins in schools/colleges for the key worker and other children attending.

- **1329** young people were supported through our Advice Team
- **57%** of young people supported by our Advice Team were considered vulnerable
- **3,570** young people supported through detached work
- **286** young people were supported with health and wellbeing through schools

## Becci's Journey

I came to the Advice Centre because I was having friendship issues, was stuck in an unhealthy cycle with my ex, and had a strained relationship with my parents, always arguing. I was also unsure of my future options surrounding work and college. My youth worker talked to me about family, relationships, coping strategies, future options, talking about positive communication methods, toxic relationships and alcohol. After several visits, I'm in a much better place. I had a nice day out with my mum, have broken off from my ex completely and have been going for long walks at the weekend when I'm feeling stressed.



## PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS

Our **drugs and alcohol service (DASH)** supported **288** young people throughout the year, with a further **368** supported with their substance misuse across our other services. All case-held young people and new referrals were supported by telephone, zoom or online, depending on what worked best for each young person. Our workers provided information, advice, support and online groups, plus a variety of treatments including harm reduction and needle exchange.

### Adelle's Journey

I used substances from an early age and had bad experiences with social services and mental health services. I came to No Limits to get support from their DASH service having found out I was pregnant. They supported me to have regular drug tests and reduce my methadone dose. They also came with me to appointments with the social worker and helped me talk to the mental health team. As well as supporting me with my substance misuse, they also referred me to another No Limits service, Bright Beginnings, to support me throughout pregnancy and with parenting. I've had my baby now and am still being supported by Bright Beginnings and DASH. My relationship with my family has improved after consistent negative results of my drugs test. I couldn't have got here without all of your support I'm so thankful and just want you all to know you have made me and my baby so happy never stop helping people as you have made the biggest difference in my life. Thank you for not giving up on me and helping me bring my beautiful baby into the world and to have a life I never saw for myself.



“*I am abstinent from alcohol currently and don't think that I would be fulfilling the career path that I am at the moment without the support.*”

We deliver **sexual health information**, advice and support throughout our services, including distribution of condoms, C-Cards, chlamydia screening and pregnancy testing. Our sexual health clinic hasn't been able to operate for much of the year and our work in schools has been severely restricted. However, our sexual health workers have spoken to 951 children and young people through targeted outreach work.





## SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

We offered **counselling** to **1070** children and young people aged 5-25 in Southampton and across Hampshire, through our HYA partners. Following guidance from BACP, we trained our counsellors on providing support via Zoom. We found this and telephone counselling worked very well for some young people and will be retaining this offer going forward. We also supported **61** young people with specialist counselling via the **Frankie service**, including play therapy.

Our **Primary Mental Health** workers supported **248** young people experiencing mental health difficulties that did not meet the specialist mental health services (CAMHS) criteria, including anxiety, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, low mood, body image, self-esteem, self-worth and bullying, helping to minimise the impact of negative life experiences.

We have opened a new **Safe Haven** for NE Hants and Farnham this year. Our three Safe Havens offer a safe space for young people in emotional crisis. We have provided online support throughout the year and have opened our three venues for support through appointments as soon as allowed, supporting **104** young people with emotional and practical support.

*“Space 4U (Safe Haven on the Isle of Wight) has made such a difference to me. I know that I can get help when I need it and I feel comfortable to talk about anything. This has helped me to deal with my past.”*

Our new youth worker service in University Hospital Southampton’s **Emergency Department** had just become operational in February 2020 when staff were taken out of the hospital for most of the first lockdown, not returning until July 2020. Since then, the service has supported **328** young people who are in ED as a result of mental health issues or violence, with **68%** of young people experiencing a meaningful positive change in their wellbeing. The percentage of young people returning to ED after being seen by a No Limits worker was **30%** compared to **64%** of those not seen by a youth worker.

No Limits is in the unique position of being able to offer a wide range of services to young people from a single point of access. Many young people presenting in ED lead chaotic lifestyles and struggle with multiple issues often requiring multiple assessments and appointments with different services. No Limits’ model enabled **87** young people to be seamlessly referred into other services within No Limits, increasing the likelihood of young people accessing ongoing support.

*“I can’t believe how invaluable this service is, we have fought for years to get it and how we have it, it is utterly amazing!!”*

Senior Sister in Children’s A&E at University Hospital Southampton

Young people themselves feel that the service has had a meaningful positive impact for them:

- **85%** said they were helped to think about their options
- **77%** said they felt better about themselves
- **77%** said they had found new coping strategies
- **70%** said they felt more positive about the future

*“The worker helped me to understand what was going on and kept me calm. She helped me to say what I felt to the staff and to make myself heard at the meeting. I don’t think I could have done it without her.”*

## Adam’s Journey

I met the No Limits youth worker when I was admitted to A&E at a very low point in my life. I’d lost my job, was in a bad relationship and was losing access to my child. Looking back, I was often behaving in a risky way and had been feeling low and suicidal for some time. The youth worker listened, didn’t rush me and provided practical help as well as support for how I was feeling. She told me how to get legal advice, where to go for employment support and how to get help with my substance use. I would never have thought to see Youth Workers, and I suppose I didn’t know how much help was available or how many problems I had, it’s all the small things that add up that make you feel so bad. Thank you for staying with me.



A vital part of the Emergency Department work is the link with our **social prescribing** project, providing one to one support to help young people engage with their own communities, supporting them to pursue their interests and take up new hobbies, connecting with peers. We supported 37 young people through this project.

*“It’s changed so much, they help me with everything, give me feedback with what’s happening, they have helped me with schoolwork, made my future kind of changed.”*





## HELPING VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

Many of the young people we support live in insecure housing or unsafe households and their situations have worsened dramatically during the pandemic. Through our specialist **housing and homelessness** project we have supported **218** young people who are homeless, sofa surfing or at risk of either. This includes providing support with tenancies, income, benefits, bills, debts and budgeting through our **Community Support** project.

*“ I feel so relieved since talking to you about all my worries. I am now paying my bills and not hiding from them which is making me so much less anxious. ”*

**No Limits Xtra** offers one-to-one support to young people, helping them with anything they would like support with. No Limits Xtra continued to help with budgeting and debt during the pandemic, supporting **20** young people intensively over a number of months by telephone and email.

Our work with young offenders continued through our **Gateway Navigators** and our **Next Steps** project. Our Next Steps worker supports young offenders on a one to one basis for six months to reduce their chances of re-offending, including providing help with housing, finances, relationships. All our youth workers are known to go the extra mile to help each young person and our Next Steps project is no exception.

Our **Bright Beginnings** project provides specialist support to young parents through our Advice Centre and mentoring to those young parents who lack adult support in their lives. We offered advice and support to **306** young parents over the year as well as providing one to one support for those most isolated and in need.

*“ I couldn't have got here without all of your support I'm so thankful and just want you all to know you have made me and my baby so happy never stop helping people as you have made the biggest difference in my life. Thank you for not giving up on me and helping me bring my beautiful baby into the world and to have a life I never saw for myself. ”*

We provide one-to-one support for **young carers** as well as weekly groups giving young carers the opportunity to come together, provide peer support, gain knowledge, confidence and skills and have fun. We supported **229** young carers this year through remote one to ones and Zoom groups.

## Agnes's Journey

Even before lockdown, No Limits supported me with issues of debt, benefits and rent arrears. They helped me to sort the problems out by talking to my landlord and universal credit - now everything is sorted. My mental health was really bad during lockdown due to being in an abusive relationship. They supported me through this and helped me to safely leave the relationship and helped to put support from other agencies in place for me. Regular phone calls throughout lockdown from No Limits helped me massively - just having someone to speak to was so important.



## DELIVERING SUPPORT GROUPS

No Limits delivers a range of groups, courses and learning opportunities for children and young people through schools and colleges, our Advice Centre and in partnership with venues across Hampshire. All of these groups moved online during the pandemic and operated a blended mix of support when possible. **191** children and young people engaged with our groups over the year, many of them attending weekly.

**Teen Safe House** is a weekly youth group for 13 -18 year olds who may need support with their mental health, and **Safe House** offers facilitated peer support for young adults aged 16-25. **Time 4 U** is a support group for young people aged 11-18 who have a learning disability. **Young carers** offer weekly support groups for those who have caring responsibilities for a parent or sibling. **COSMO** provides support for children living with someone who is a substance misuser.

*“ It was good to see my son so interested and enthused after yesterday's zoom Safe House. He needs to 'see' other people and take part in stuff with people outside the family and nearer to his age group - lockdown stopped his swimming club, language school, volunteering, library etc etc. He's been very isolated and hasn't bothered much with contacting anyone socially. He used to be in various choirs and singing groups and play guitar in front of lots people before he got bullied at school but now he is very hesitant to share music with anyone he doesn't know/trust. It's so impressive that you broke through that and make him feel he wants to take part. Thank you!! ”*





## ADVOCATING FOR YOUTH RIGHTS

No Limits puts the voice of young people at the heart of all it does and aspires to ensure that all our services are shaped by them. Young people are encouraged to contribute to service developments through a range of participation methods including our bi-annual consultation, comments boxes and participation in our Youth Ambassadors programme. The results of our bi-annual 'Have Your Say' consultations also inform development and priorities for the organisation, recognising when we could deliver better for young people. Our experience has shown that young people being involved in this way benefits the organisation and the young person.

Our **Youth Ambassadors** meet each week and support the charity by helping with staff interviews and training, service development and future vision. Our **Youth Advocates** project has received continuation funding to continue their campaigning work around employment and housing. They celebrated a huge success during the year when Southampton City Council agreed to adopt a Housing First model, a key part of the Youth Advocates' campaign.

In addition, we have consulted with all the young people we support several more times this year, through our groups and online. In addition to our bi-annual Have Your Say consultation with our service users, over 700 young people told us how they were feeling during and after the first lockdown, resulting in two reports which were shared widely with other professionals in the city and helped to shape the services we offer.

Young people have advised us on how to ensure Covid information is engaging for young people. We have engaged a small group to help us design suicide awareness training and have benefitted from some young people taking part in media interviews highlighting the needs of young people in the pandemic. In addition, we have offered focus groups for young people to look at our draft three year strategy and help shape our future.

**“ I feel so honoured to advocate for young people in Southampton on issues that mean a lot to me. We have already made a big impression on Southampton City Council and other decision-makers in our local area. We have helped shape the future of young people's housing within our city. Young people are often an abandoned demographic, and it's time we made our voices heard. ”**

## THANK YOU

None of our work to support children and young people would be possible without our volunteers and supporters. This year has been a particularly challenging one and we are grateful to our loyal volunteers for continuing to engage with us despite a lack of opportunity to be physically involved. We look forward to welcoming you all back now that life is returning to normal.

With opportunities for community fundraising non-existent for most of the year, we are very grateful to those funders who have provided us with emergency funds and our existing funders who have been so understanding of the challenges we face. In addition, our thanks go to those local corporates and individuals who have continued or started to support us during the year. We simply couldn't do the work we do without you.

We'd like to say a special thanks to Murdered for Money, Mitchell & Stone, Collabor8 Members, The Gregg Schools, King Edwards school, Mayfield Bowling Club, Personal Best Education, and St James Methodist Church for your support over the last year.

**“ I chose to support No Limits because I've had help from them the last 3 years and a half years. Now I'm turning 25 and I'm no longer allowed to use this service, I wanted to give something back by fundraising for them. No Limits has helped to put me back together piece by piece. In last three years I've had 1 to 1 therapy, I've done a self-harm coping strategy course, CPTSD course, emotional coping course, as well as seeing a drug and a alcohol youth worker for the last 3 years. I managed to stop self-harming (2 years clean this December). I cut down drugs and alcohol, and I no longer feel suicidal. No Limits got me support from the mental health team, meaning I finally have the metal health diagnosis I finally deserve. ”**

## WITH THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS





## MORE INFORMATION

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If you would like to know more about No Limits and how you can help us to provide more support to more young people, please contact us:



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



[enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk)



02380 224 224

## WHERE TO FIND US

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### Registered Office

No Limits Head Office  
35 The Avenue  
Southampton  
SO17 1XN

### Advice Centre

No Limits Advice Centre  
13 High Street  
Southampton  
SO14 2DF

## TO MAKE A DONATION

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**Phone:** 02380 224224

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

Or send a cheque made payable to  
No Limits to our registered office.

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We're proud to be a  
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Photos by: Three7Evens

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