



APPENDIX 4

Outline of services delivery

No Limits is an information and advice service for young people up to the age of 26. No Limits are a member of Youth Access. Youth Access is the national membership organisation for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services (YIACS). YIACS operate under the following core principles:

- Young people are central to the service and member agencies are committed to responding to their needs.
- Member agencies believe that young people have a right of access to quality information, advice and counselling services.
- The basis on which young people are able to make use of a service is made clear to each of them individually and a contract is agreed where appropriate.
- Member agencies of Youth Access aim to empower young people and treat them with respect based on an understanding of their individual culture and background.
- In all aspects of their work, member agencies of Youth Access aim to counter the oppression and discrimination faced by young people.
- Member agencies of Youth Access are working towards equality of access for all young people for whom their service is designed.
- Member agencies of Youth Access take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well being of young people and workers in an agency.
- Member agencies of Youth Access are committed to ensuring their workers are competent to perform the range and depth of duties offered by the agency and provide a framework for staff development that includes support, supervision and training.
- Member agencies of Youth Access are committed to establishing and maintaining procedures for monitoring and evaluating the service they provide.

No Limits has three drop-in centres across the city and also provides a drop-in service in 8 secondary schools and the 3 colleges. In addition to the drop-in there are a number of specialist support services providing one to one support on a range of issues including housing, tenancy support, substance use, sexual exploitation, young offenders, care leavers, young carers and LGBTT young people.

The support around housing includes mediation with families, referrals to supported housing and the local authority, floating support with tenancy maintenance and access to the private rented sector (A2T). There is also practical support such as use of a shower and laundry, clothes, food, sleeping bags etc. The support offered is always holistic and will consider mental and physical health, budgeting, benefit and debt advice, family, relationships and legal advice.

Client profile and health / housing needs & inequalities (can be supplemented with 1-2 case studies)

About a third of young people accessing No Limits have housing concerns (approx. 2000 a year) many also have a number of vulnerabilities, e.g. mental health, debt, offending history. Some are homeless due to a breakdown in family relationships, some have been in supported housing and been evicted, or have been evicted from the private rented sector, usually for rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. Some are housed but struggling with feelings of isolation, living on a low income or properties being in a poor condition. Welfare reform, particularly sanctions has increased these issues. Young people in receipt of housing benefit are only entitled to the LHA rate for a room in a shared house which can be difficult for some to manage. Landlords would often prefer not to house young people or people on benefits or those without a large deposit and references.

Case study

VJ first came to No Limits looking for housing advice as she was homeless. VJ had been sofa surfing for 3 months after being evicted from Housing association accommodation due to rent and council tax arrears. VJ had lived with her boyfriend. However the relationship turned abusive and violent involving drugs and alcohol. VJ's boyfriend has been convicted of Supplying Illegal substances. VJ is unemployed and not in education, training or employment. She wants to be a carer.

VJ successfully completed A2T (pre-tenancy training). VJ is now housed in the PRS in a shared house with 12 weeks housing support. She is applying for a course in Health and Social Care. VJ has started to address her debts. She is having counselling to address her levels of anxiety resulting from her relationship breakdown and period of homelessness.

Case study

17 year old living in the family home and struggling with a chaotic family life, Dad is disabled having suffered with arthritis and strokes, and Mum suffers with Crohns disease and has left the family home as it was too stressful for her. The client has two brothers and a sister. All family members drink alcohol to excess on a regular basis. The client had been drinking virtually daily which resulted in risky sexual behaviour, inappropriate relationships and not attending college. The client was self-harming and had attempted suicide in the past. She was unable to sleep and feeling distressed.

The young person received support on the drop-in and through counselling over a twelve month period.

The client rarely drinks now and when she does it is not to excess and in a safe environment. She started attending college regularly and passed her hairdressing NVQ level 1, she is now studying for a level 2 NVQ. She has also recently got a job as a waitress. Relationships with her family have improved and she generally feels happier and more able to cope. She has had the same boyfriend for three months. She is not feeling distressed, is sleeping well and less anxious. She has remained in the family home which has prevented her from becoming homeless.

Key client solutions

- Early intervention to prevent homelessness where possible.
- A variety of options to suit the need of the individual.
- A holistic approach looking at all the needs of the individual not just their housing.
- Appropriate level of support which can be reviewed and last until there is no longer a need.

- Skilled and trained work force.
- Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support (YIACS) model of a drop-in backed up with specialist support.
- Emergency access into supported accommodation.

Main areas of concern

- Welfare reform, particularly sanctions.
- Difficult to find landlords willing to house young people.
- Lack of access to support with mental health/emotional wellbeing (No Limits have over 90 people on the waiting list for counselling)
- Rising debt and poor quality housing in the PRS resulting in health concerns like poor nutrition, anxiety, depression and self-harm.
- Local Housing Allowance is set very low meaning it is difficult to source good quality accommodation in the Private Rented Sector.

Potential solutions / changes that would make the most difference

- Local Housing Allowance rates to be higher.
- Young people to receive support when starting a tenancy to ensure they are registered with a GP and know where to get support to avoid inappropriate use of emergency services like the emergency department.
- Greater access to counselling, particularly for 19-15 year olds.
- Private rented access scheme to be part of the local authority response to homelessness. (Currently funded by national funding secured by No Limits.)