

## Community Support Services

### Befriending

We introduced 22 new relationships and trained 21 new volunteers over the year of whom 12 were befrienders and 9 worked in social support groups.

We put together in an initial assessment form with clients that we now complete with them, once on referral to the service and then once their relationship with the volunteer has come to an end. This is to try and capture information regarding the impact that the service has had on their mental well being.

#### Feedback from some of the clients over the past year:-

"Having a Befriender has helped me a lot, especially in building my confidence".

"It gave me more confidence and self-esteem".

"The service is excellent and I have gained a new friend".

Clearly those comments are testament to the hugely valuable work of the volunteer befrienders and without them we could not provide such a good and appreciated service. Thanks to them all for the time they have put in, and to our clients for showing such appreciation.

We were pleased to receive accreditation of our befriending service from the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, and we are now recognized under the national Approved Provider Standard as a quality service.

*Jo Robinson  
Befriending Co-ordinator*

### Social Support Groups

Our support groups continue to flourish and the name for the service was changed from 'Drop ins' to Social Support Groups to reflect a more up to date feel.

Numbers at the social support groups are increasing ...all running well.

Over the twelve months we delivered 248 sessions. Attendances vary depending on the activities being offered, but range from 10 - 24 clients at each session.

The Tuesday evening group moved to The Observatory and this is working well.

Singing and guitar playing is taking place at some of the groups and adds a nice relaxed feeling there.

The majority of groups have been running for 11 years now, although the Tuesday group has a very long history, being the original service offered by North Staffs Mind since 1976!

A week end in Betwsy Coed was enjoyed at the usual hostel we go to which, despite very basic facilities, everyone enjoyed.

The art group at Merrial Street (Newcastle) is established and running well.

We have liaised with Staffs Uni - they have approached us as they have funding to deliver workshops or for us to attend workshops.

All staff and a few of the volunteers attended a basic First Aid course.

Fridays new development - Matt helps to run a group in Longton in the morning.

Zhenka does reiki and hypnotherapy at The Observatory in the afternoons at the Happy Man Days group (men only).

The paid staff are supported in their work by a large number of dedicated volunteers - thanks to all who have helped out over the year.

*Carol Sutton  
Social Groups Senior Project Worker*

### North Staffs Mind Housing Scheme

Over the year 29 residents were supported to establish and maintain independent living.

The staff team was increased by one post and as a result we welcomed Lindsey to the team, allowing us to offer more support to residents.

The customer satisfaction survey from the previous year highlighted the need to update some of the furniture in communal areas, and this was done this year. Also we have carried out refurbishments in some of the properties, including new kitchen and bathrooms, to make them more attractive places to live.

Over the year occupancy rates ran at an average of 90% which was a significant improvement on the previous year.

The work of supporting residents is demanding, at times anxiety provoking when crises happen, but often fun and rewarding too. To see someone who was quite unwell when they came to us, settle in and start to live a fuller life is what it is all about. When someone moves out to live a much more independent life in the community, we may be sad to see them go, but glad they are getting on with their own lives.

*Deb Key  
Housing Team Manager*



Residents comments included:

"They help me with budgeting and medication, and encourage me to do more things"

"They will always find time to listen to me if I have any problems"

"Thank you for your support over the last four years, and helping me to find my new flat."

"Many, thanks for all your support over 10 years. Having such a sound base has helped me to change my life. Thank you for offering the floating support. I think it re-assures my mum and dad. I think you all do a fantastic job."

## Family Support Network

From April 09 we became part of the Family Support Network, and Ange Williamson became part of the multi-agency team there, offering support to parents experiencing mental distress.

The demand on her services was such that her hours were increased quite quickly, and if there were two of her it would be even better!

The Family Support Network offers support to families in turmoil and the support may be practical or emotional, and so involves workers from Citizens Advice Bureau, Adsis, Home Start as well as Mind. Our part is to help adults to regain self esteem and feel better able to cope with life and parenting.

## Partnership with First Steps Psychology Service

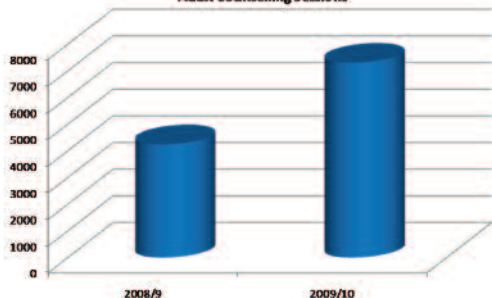
We have had a partnership with First Steps for many years, and gradually the number of staff we have had as part of that team has risen, until in 2009/10 we had 5 staff working – mainly delivering Positive Parenting Programmes, but also offering one to one support to parents whose own mental health needs were interfering with their ability to parent their children.

The work has been highly valued and the staff all enjoyed the opportunities the work gave them, and the insights gained from working in a multi-disciplinary team.

## Adult Counselling Service

This was a momentous year for us, as finally after years of struggling on with minimal funding, we were allowed extra funds from Stoke PCT to increase the numbers of people we see, and the numbers of sessions we could offer. One of the main drivers of their decision was the recognition that we would never be able to reduce waiting lists to reasonable figures while we were so under-funded and demand was so high. So, finally, by Sept 2009 we were able to

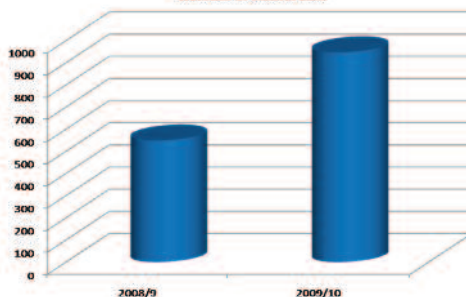
Adult Counselling Sessions



increase our unpaid staff from the equivalent of 3.5 full time staff to 5.5 full time equivalents, which does not sound a huge number, but makes a significant difference to our ability to offer client services. Our qualified volunteer team and trainee placement counsellors add value to our service by a conservative figure of nearly £100,000 worth of counselling delivery. Year on year the team of unpaid staff increases, as volunteers tend to stay with us for several years, and each new intake of trainees builds up the team. Put together this meant that by the end of the year we had reduced our waiting time from 18 weeks to around 8 weeks, and seen an increase in new clients seen by 72 %, and sessions offered increased by 40%. Given that the new paid staff were only in place for half of the financial year, we are optimistic that in a full year 10/11 we will achieve our aim of having a waiting list of around 4 weeks, assuming demand does not increase dramatically.

One of the new staff posts is a Senior Counsellor post, and we welcomed Rachel in Oct. Much of her work focuses on support for volunteers and staff, which has become increasingly difficult to offer over the years as the agency grew. She has also spent a considerable amount of time putting together our bid to become a British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Accredited Service. Hopefully we will be able to report next year that we achieved this.

Number of Clients seen



We have embedded evaluation tools into the way we work, and changed feedback forms to record more details of how counselling helps people. We can now demonstrate in quantitative, as well as qualitative terms, that our service makes a difference to people's lives in very real ways.

*Diane Collingwood*  
Counselling Services Manager

Relationship with Counsellor	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
	74%	25%	1%	0%
Counselling helped resolve difficulties	Greatly	Partly	No answer	
	73%	26%	1%	

Counselling Helped in the following areas:

Self confidence	61%
Learned coping strategies	73%
Able to ask others for what I need	55%
Improved relationships	49%
Anger	38%
Return to work/training	15%
Reduce medication	12%
Manage stress	57%
Deal with issues from the past	71%

## MindZone

**It has been a very successful year for Mindzone!**

Mindzone is an out of hours drop-in project for 11-18 year olds who are in need of mental health support. The great thing about this project is that young people can just drop-in, without a referral and speak to a qualified counsellor immediately in either a group situation or 1:1. We run from WRVS building in Hanley on Monday evenings, and from 90 King St in Newcastle on Weds evenings.

Mindzone has had some big changes this year - with a change in staffing and also a change in structure. We now offer group support time 5.30 - 7.30 and a drop in 1:1 urgent need hour 8pm - 9pm. This has enabled young people to discuss urgent issues that they feel are not suitable for a group environment.

An exciting change has been a move of our Newcastle group to Evolve YP at 90, King Street. The building is great for doing craft activities and is easier for young people to find as it is nearly next door to our Newcastle Younger Mind building!

The young people love it, as we have a workshop, a group room, chill out room and a kitchen area to do cooking! The change in venue has led to an increased number of young people coming along, which is usually between 6-10 young people per session.

The Hanley group is ever evolving and one week we had 24 young people all come along for support!! The high numbers just go to show the importance of the work we do and the need for this service in the city!

In February we held a Mindzone celebration event which was a great success! We offered lots of creative

activities such as jewellery making, African drumming, art, chill out zone, face painting, henna tattoos, a scream zone where young people could vent their anger and also there was a focus on how food can affect mood. We ended the evening with a local band playing music and some young people performed a dance! The event was enjoyed by all and did lead to an increase in awareness of the Mindzone service!

All in all, a lot of change has happened this year, but the success continues....

### MindScape

The Stoke on Trent area suffers from deprivation in many ways, and one of the results is that we have a large proportion of young people who are described as "Not in Employment, Education or Training" or "NEET" as often seen in government documents. Many such young people end up estranged from families, and in fact are often NEET because of chaotic family lives. They may lack support and aspiration and struggle with their mental health. The Local Authority and the Primary Care Trust for Stoke recognized this, and through the Joint Commissioning Unit we were commissioned to provide a very tailored service to some of these young people in the 16/17 year old age group. From Sept 2009 we were able to employ a part time worker (Gemma) to offer one to one support, including meeting young people on their own territory if preferred. The worker could offer practical as well as counselling support, and could put young people in touch with agencies who could help them with practical problems such as debt, housing etc. Alongside that we could work with them to identify the roots of distress and find ways to help them develop coping and problems solving skills which they may never have had before. Over the first 6 months of the service, 36 young people accessed it.



### Younger Mind Hanley 2009/2010

The team consists of a small number of paid staff and some support at various times from volunteer counsellors.



Although we are consistently under pressure, sometimes massively so, the whole team work together in a dedicated way so that we are able to offer a creative, flexible and young person friendly service. Often counselling suffers from stigma amongst young people, but many of our young clients look forward to attending and get lots of enjoyment from coming.

Over the year our workload included providing 2100 sessions to 431 young people. The demand was such that at

times the waiting list for counselling and even initial sessions was far too long for our liking, however juggling the demand with the small number of staff available to provide a service is always an issue. We have looked hard at what we do, and tried to find ways to deliver a faster but still quality service. This is an ongoing process and we are far from complacent.

Our clients give us lots of feedback:

**"I really enjoyed it", said one young client, "I find it really helpful and have loads from it. I had anger problems and have calmed down now. I love coming. I have enjoyed it loads"**

On one of our client feedback forms a client told us, **"This counselling has helped me a lot with how I feel and how I treat people. Counselling has made me the person I want to be."**

More recently we were very happy to receive feedback that our counselling **"clears the mind and relaxes the person"**.

One young person even told us that our service helped her **"feel the best she has ever felt"**.

Another said **"I fell down but now I know how to pick myself up"**.

*Gareth Williams*

*Senior Counsellor Younger Mind Hanley*

### Cluster 4 Schools Work

We have been operating in schools in Stoke's Cluster 4 area since 2008, and we were commissioned to a full year in 2009/10. This allowed us to place a counsellor in each of 5 High Schools for 1 day per week, and in many of the primary schools for half a day each fortnight.



Over the year we supported 249 pupils at school and the counsellors offered support to staff and parents along the way. This way of working demonstrated results, as the counsellors although not employed by the schools, came to be seen as an integral part of the school and so added value to what the schools were doing. As a result the work has been re-commissioned by many of the schools who took part for 2010/2011.

### Staffordshire Schools

After a small pilot project in 2008/09, we were commissioned to provide counsellors to six secondary schools and two primary schools in the Staffordshire area – funded by the Community and Learning Partnerships. Feedback from schools has been extremely positive, and this work is still being supported in 2010/11.

## Younger Mind Service – Newcastle Office.

Due to increased funding from North Staffs Primary Care Trust, we were able to expand our work in the North Staffs area for clients living outside the Stoke on Trent catchment area. We found a suitable office base in King St in Newcastle, and the staff team put lots of effort into getting it ready for use. This transformed it from a rather dark and dingy solicitors office, to a bright, airy and welcoming venue for young people. We began service delivery from the new premises in May 09.

Promotion of the service was a major part of the first few weeks, and since opening we have seen a steady increase in the number of referrals received each month. By 08.04.10 we had achieved the 300 young people target figure set for us by North Staffs Primary Care Trust for our first 12 months of operation.

The demand on our service is beginning to outweigh resources, despite the fact we have recruited two cohorts of volunteer counsellors (all qualified). We are particularly experiencing a high demand for evening appointments.

As well as the work we are doing in our outreach schools ( in Biddulph, Newcastle and Leek), we are beginning to offer workshops in schools, and have done some work with trainee teachers to highlight the importance of teachers and schools on young people's mental health.

*Julie Brunt*  
Senior Counsellor  
(Younger Mind Newcastle)

## Younger Mind Newcastle Client Comments

As well as formal evaluations that we do with clients, clients, parents, visitors and other professionals are free to make any comment they wish about our service in our Guest Book. Some examples are:

"Thank you, [my son] has really enjoyed coming and it has helped him a lot with all the issues he came with. He has really loved the time he has spent with J. and I'm sure he will remember these times fondly. I know he would have liked to have continued coming as he has enjoyed it so much.

## Younger Mind case study

**Presenting issues:** Anger and violence.

**Referrer concerns:** Recent violent incident involving young person.

**Young person's desired outcome:** To feel calmer and able to deal with their anger in a more productive way.

**Process:** We supported the young person to look at an incident which had happened and its impact and to recognise responsibilities and more effective ways to express their anger.

**Session process:** We looked at ways of dealing with anger and alternative ways in which to express it, alongside coping techniques to remain calmer in trigger situations.

We explored underlying feelings around the anger and helped the client to understand where these feelings were coming from and the impact they had on self and others.

We facilitated the young person's exploration around moving forward and future situations.

**Sessions attended:** 4 sessions were offered and attended by the young person.

**Other people involved:** Mother.

**Outcome:** Young person gained a clearer understanding of themselves and others, particularly looking at anger. The client became calmer, more confident and better able to express feelings.

He is also now talking and sharing his worries more at home."

"Since my daughter has been coming to Mind she has definitely gained a lot more self confidence. J. has really helped her to deal with minor and major issues which she was unable to cope with at the beginning. Thank you for all your help."

"Thanks for everything D., you're really helping me by believing in me with a lot of encouragement. Thank God you're in this world, you're amazing."

