

**Impact Report
2009/2010**

alone
in london 
preventing youth homelessness



Foreword

Welcome to Alone in London's 2009 - 2010 Impact Report. Alone in London is a youth homelessness charity that provides a range of services including crisis intervention, family mediation, homelessness prevention workshops and training and employment.



This year, we have continued to respond to young people's needs by providing a range of services aimed at engaging, empowering and supporting young people, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Against the backdrop of a difficult economic climate, we saw a rise in the number of young people contacting us in crisis and an increase in the numbers of young people with multiple support needs.

It has also been a time of change as we welcome Stephanie Simmonds, our new Young People Services Manager. Stephanie comes from a background in housing and community regeneration and brings with her a wealth of experience in delivering youth programmes.

The work we have done with young people has been substantial. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody involved in our work this year including staff, volunteers, supporters and, last but not least, the young people we work with.

With best wishes,

Anne Anketell – Managing Director

Overview of the year 2009/2010

This year has seen a number of exciting new developments at Alone in London. In September, we launched our prevention of youth homelessness teaching resource, which comprises a DVD and handbook.

This has been designed to enable teachers to deliver workshops to 14 and 15 year olds in Personal Social Health Education (PSHE). The DVD outlines the causes of youth homelessness by following the stories of a group of young people, all experiencing issues that can lead to homelessness. The launch was held at City Hall where the teaching resource was praised by everybody, including James Cleverly, Ambassador for Young People. We are very proud of this DVD as it was made by young people for young people.

This year has also seen the development of our projects, to ensure that we can provide the most effective and responsive service possible. We consulted with young

people to identify their needs and what would make a difference in their lives. This has driven our development programme and has resulted in some new youth-led projects. One of these is our specialist Family Mediation service, which focuses on supporting young people coming out of prison or custody. We have secured some funding and are now looking forward to taking this through to fruition in the coming year.

Next year, we face a range of challenges. An emphasis on cuts in the public sector means that young people's services and homelessness charities across the board need to brace themselves for reductions in funding. We also look forward to working with our partners and using our existing resources to face these challenges while continuing to provide much needed support to the most vulnerable and excluded young people in London.

Information Advice and Guidance:

What we did:

1103 young people received telephone advice and support on a range of issues

552 young people received advice on accommodation and were provided with options

348 young people were supported into safe and appropriate accommodation

30 young people were supported into statutory accommodation

How we did it:

Our Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) team runs an advice centre in Hackney, which is open to young people anywhere in London. Young people can call our helpline and get telephone support, advice and signposting. They can also attend our drop-in sessions where they receive a one to one assessment with an advisor. This advisor talks them through their options and provides them with information on their rights and benefit entitlements. They also advocate on young people's behalf to ensure they can access safe and appropriate accommodation. Where necessary, they will refer them to other services. Once they are in a stable position, they can then access our Training and Employment service.



Impact - Case Story:

Mandy called Alone in London from a public payphone, distressed, disorientated and scared. She had just £1 and a plastic bag with a few clothes. She had not eaten or drunk anything all day. She had a number of issues including substance abuse, which made it hard for her to focus and talk to us about the trouble she was in. After a number of long silences, she told us that her father was currently in jail for abusing her and her mother was in a mental health hospital. She had no friends and nobody she could trust.

Mandy was only 17 and for the last two years had been under the control of a pimp, who was using drugs to keep her tied to a life of sexual exploitation. Mandy had tried to escape but was scared that he would find her. She made a desperate request to us, saying:

"...I have to take drugs now ...He gives them to me and it's the only way I can get through it...I've got nowhere else to live...Can you help me?"

By talking and listening to her, we were able to understand her immediate needs. We then identified five agencies in her area that could help - Domestic Violence Unit, Victim Support, Social Services, NHS and Sapphire (support for people experiencing sexual exploitation). Mandy got the crisis support she needed and was able to secure safe accommodation. She is making good progress now in coming to terms with the difficulties she has experienced and is taking steps to build a new life.

Family Mediation:

What we did:

126 young people received the support of a family mediator to help them manage their home situation and their relationship with their family

34 young people were supported to return or remain with their families

109 parents were supported in resolving their conflict and rebuilding their relationships

92 young people reported improved family relationships since receiving support

95 young people and parents reported improved conflict resolution and communication skills

136 young people and parents reported knowing now where to go to seek help if they find themselves unable to cope

How we did it:

Our Family Mediation team provides outreach support to young people who are at risk of becoming homeless due to family conflict. We talk to them on a one to one basis about a range of issues including anger management and managing the relationship with their families. We also provide full mediation to the whole family, which involves building mutual respect and setting ground rules. This reduces the chances of young people leaving their home in an emergency and finding themselves sleeping rough or staying in unsafe accommodation.

For young people experiencing mental health difficulties, we provided access to our specialist Mental Health Mediation service, which focuses on the effect the young persons condition has on their relationship with their families, as well as refer to whatever specialist support they may need. Last year, 38 young people benefited from this support

Alongside this, we also run a mediation project in Brixton called the Crash Pad. It provides temporary accommodation where young people can have respite from their family home. During this time, they undergo mediation to repair the relationship with their family. Last year we provided intensive mediation to 32 young people. This service is delivered in partnership with Lambeth Council and Look Ahead.

Impact - Case Story:

Paula came to us through our drop-in centre and was referred to our Family Mediation team.

Following her mother's death two years ago when she was just 16, Paula was living on her own and the only family member that lived in the area was her aunt, Leanne. Sadly, the relationship between the two had broken down and they were not talking. Paula told us that her mother had left her savings to Leanne, on the understanding that she would support Paula financially. However, Leanne had not supported her and refused to give Paula any of the money.



Paula had got herself into debt and was at risk of becoming homeless. She was receiving letters from bailiffs and debtors on a daily basis. She talked about having to survive sometimes on 70 pence a day.

After speaking to Leanne, we discovered that she would like to have a relationship with her niece. She said that the reason she had withdrawn financial support was because she wanted Paula to get another job and learn to budget her money better.

We went back to Paula with an offer of staggered support from Leanne, which was refused. However, after some mediation an agreement was reached.

This improved Paula's crisis situation, but the emotional relationship was still in tatters. After a number of challenging and delicate sessions with our Family Mediator, they agreed to talk on the phone every week. This led to them meeting up. By the end of the process, Paula and Leanne established a positive and supportive relationship. They spent time together every week and Paula is on track looking for another job.

They both told us how much it meant to them, to have turned their relationship around and that it was only a neutral person who could have helped them to do this.

Paula said: *"After nearly two years I am talking with my family again. Yes, this mediation has helped a lot and I think we will be able to talk in the way you have taught us from now on. Thank you!"*



Schools Work:

What we did:

652 young people attended the prevention of homelessness workshops and had the opportunity to explore and discuss the causes of homelessness, how to prevent getting in that situation and where to go for help

86% of young people reported an increased knowledge of how to deal with conflict

89% of young people reported an increased understanding of the causes of family conflict

91% of young people involved in our feedback survey, reported that they now know where to go for help if they become vulnerable to the risk of homelessness

How we did it:

Most young people have their first experience of homelessness while still at school. The three key triggers for running away are: family, school and personal problems. Our schools work project engages with young people at the time when many young people are at their most isolated and most at risk of experiencing homelessness. We deliver workshops, which allow young people to understand and explore the causes of homelessness, develop key tools to minimise their risk of homelessness and crucially let young people know where to go if they need help.

Impact - Case Story:

We have delivered our services to a number of schools in deprived areas of London for many years and have frequently been asked if we could deliver more. In response, this year, we produced a DVD and Handbook teaching resource which enables teachers to deliver the workshop. This can now be replicated all over London.

This DVD was developed with young people at one of the schools we visited. The result is a very realistic insight, which makes a significant impact on young people watching it.

"It was really good. I learned more from Alone in London than I could from a teacher." Jasmin - 13



Volunteers:

What we did:

5591 hours were contributed by 30 volunteers to our work - the equivalent of over three and a half full-time members of staff

Over two thirds of our volunteers worked with us for longer than four months, providing much needed additional support to our service users

How we did it:

We have a rolling programme of volunteers, who are recruited, trained and supported in-house. Our volunteers are very much part of the Alone in London team and make a considerable contribution to our services.

Our Volunteer Service holds the 'Investing in Volunteers' quality mark. Volunteers are provided with a structured placement that allows them to achieve their own personal goals. In return, Alone in London is able to demonstrate greater diversity and value for money. More importantly it is able to provide young people with more listening time and improved outcomes. Volunteers are involved in every aspect of our project work, from taking telephone calls to supporting our schools work project manager.



Impact Case Story:

Brenda had been working as a part-time administrator for the CAB before joining Alone in London as an Advice Volunteer in April 2009. After volunteering for two days a week for over 12 months, she eventually left us for temporary work as a Student Liaison Worker with a further education college, and has since moved on to a permanent role as a Mental Health Worker with the St Marylebone Project. Like many of our volunteers, Brenda had a passion for this type of work and just needed an opportunity to gain relevant experience and prove to herself that she could do it.

“My time with Alone in London has been so valuable. Volunteering helped me realise what many young people are up against. Supporting them is not easy. But all the difficulties you face are worth it when you can help someone get themselves on the right track.” Brenda Cuffy (Advice Volunteer)

Financial Information for 2009 - 2010

£451,927 income generated to deliver Alone in London services across London

50% came from statutory grants (London Councils, Look Ahead - Supporting People and the Hardship Fund) and the rest was raised from Charitable Trusts, individual donors, events and corporate donations

64% was fully restricted income and **36%** was semi restricted or unrestricted income

£466,105 was spent directly on providing services for young people

For further information, please see the accounts of our parent charity, EPIC Trust



Thank You

We are most grateful to all of the following for their support:

Albert Hunt - Alistair Berkley Charitable Trust - Anglo American Group Foundation - Ashcroft Charitable Trust - Basketmakers Lodge - The Chelsea Square 1994 Trust - Circle Anglia Ltd - City Bridge Trust - Comic Relief - Confraternity Lodge - Cooper Gay - Charitable Trust - Creflo Dollar Ministries - Deloitte - Denton Wilde Sapte - Doughty Hanson Charitable Foundation - EPIC Trust - Garfield Weston Foundation - Constance Green Foundation - G M Morrison CT - Hackney Parochial Trust - Hanley Charitable Trust - Hardship Fund - Home Trust - Hyde Park Place - Jardine Lloyd Thompson - Johnson Matthey PLC - Land Securities - London Councils - Lookahead Supporting People - Mackintosh Foundation - Management Futures - Michael Davies Charitable Settlement - Mr & Mrs J A Pye's Charitable Settlement - Multithon Trust - Radley Charitable Trust - Reed Elsevier - Sandra Charitable Trust - Schroder Charity Trust - Streetsmart - The Anson Charitable Trust - The Company of Actuaries CT Fund - The Mishcon Family Charitable Trust - The Rofeh Trust - The Scotshill Trust - The Sir James Roll CT - Woodland Trust - Worshipful Company of Horners - Worshipful Co of Insurers - Worshipful Co of Cutlers - YRM Ltd

Individual Supporters:

We are extremely grateful to the many individual people who have supported us for many years. Their commitment is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

London Marathon in 2009 and 2010:

Each year, we have 10 places in this, the most iconic of marathons. Our thanks to 'Team YRM', who, in 2009, between the four members of staff who took up the challenge, their colleagues, and YRM's match funding, raised a magnificent £8,000. Substantial sums were also raised by people from Deloitte, Mace and Minerva. Altogether, each year, this event secures over £20,000 for our crisis support services.

We are also very grateful to those who committed to running the 2010 London Marathon for us. At Anglo American - Liana Hitchings and Mattias Johannson; at BSkyB - Charlotte Deane; at Deloitte - Colin Aidoo, James Cooke, Kathryn Hogg, Chris Huey and Caroline McDonnell.

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