



The Wise Group No Limits Report 2023

NO LIMITS RELATIONAL MENTORING IMPACT REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

No Limits is an early intervention Relational Mentoring service that provides invaluable support to young people who are at risk of leaving school with no positive destination.

Relational Mentoring is an approach which helps people identify and overcome multiple challenges through the relationship built with a professional mentor.

Progression is evidenced so that their journey might help inform and inspire the journey of others.

As part of the Scottish Government's Young Person Guarantee, the Wise Group provided No Limits support to 75 young people as part of a pathfinder project delivered between June 2022 and June 2023. Through Relational Mentoring, our team identified substance misuse, deprivation,

school absence and poor mental health as the key challenges holding young people back.

Through this relationship, our team of No Limits Mentors worked one-to-one with each young person and their family to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary for successfully entering and completing a Foundation Apprenticeship (FA). As a result, 89% of young people actively engaged in No Limits sustained their FA. This is well above national FA sustainment rates.

The service set out to make a sustainable impact well in every area of need, creating a safe and supportive environment for each young person to thrive. This report explores how mentoring unlocked young people's potential, and the difference it can make across their family and their future.



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INTRODUCTION

In early 2022, the Wise Group was approached by Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, and Sandy Begbie (CEO of Scottish Financial Enterprise) to address FA retention rates and to support young people from priority groups to complete a Level 4/5 Foundation Apprenticeship.

The ***Foundation Apprenticeship Provision in Scotland Review*** by Education Scotland highlighted that while withdrawal rates vary across the country, overall, on most FA programmes, learner withdrawal rates are high, ranging **between 50% and 100% of young people leaving their programme early**. In some FA programmes, around 1/3 of learners withdraw from their studies within the first three months.

However, the report also highlighted that rates of withdrawal can improve when the reasons why young people leave their FA programme are monitored, understood, and addressed early. In line with these findings, the Wise Group applied learning from our successful No Limits service to design a relational mentoring approach specifically to help 'harder to reach' young people enter, sustain, and complete a FA.

We chose Dundee and North Lanarkshire as our target local authority areas due to their high rankings on the Scottish Index of Multiple

Deprivation (SIMD) and higher rates of early FA disengagement. We had already established strong ties with schools in these areas, as well as valuable connections with key contacts at Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

Our aim was to support at least 70 young people across both local authorities to complete a FA across key industry sectors: automotive, construction and hospitality. Each young person was allocated a No Limits Mentor who provided one-to-one support throughout their No Limits journey. We also included activities and events to develop confidence, motivation, and self-esteem.

Previous No Limits delivery has highlighted that it is not only the young person who may require help, but also their family. The difficulties a young person faces can often be rooted in their home environment, such as poverty, debt, joblessness, and health issues. We therefore included 'wrap-around support' for the whole family, such as energy advice/advocacy and employability support.

The service officially launched in June 2022 and was designed to support a range of wider Scottish Government initiatives, including the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG), Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the wider remit of the Scottish Government's No One Left behind (NOLB) strategy.

THE CHALLENGES YOUNG PEOPLE FACE

The young people No Limits engaged with experienced a wide range of challenges to their potential which posed limits to their personal and professional development.

In early conversations with the 75 young people, mentors helped them identify various barriers to success. This approach is only possible within a trusting and non-judgemental relationship fostered by a mentor. Building this relationship was done through the Wise Group's Relational Mentoring approach:

"Relational mentoring helps people identify and overcome multiple challenges through the relationship built with a professional mentor. Progression is evidenced so that their journey might help inform and inspire the journey of others.

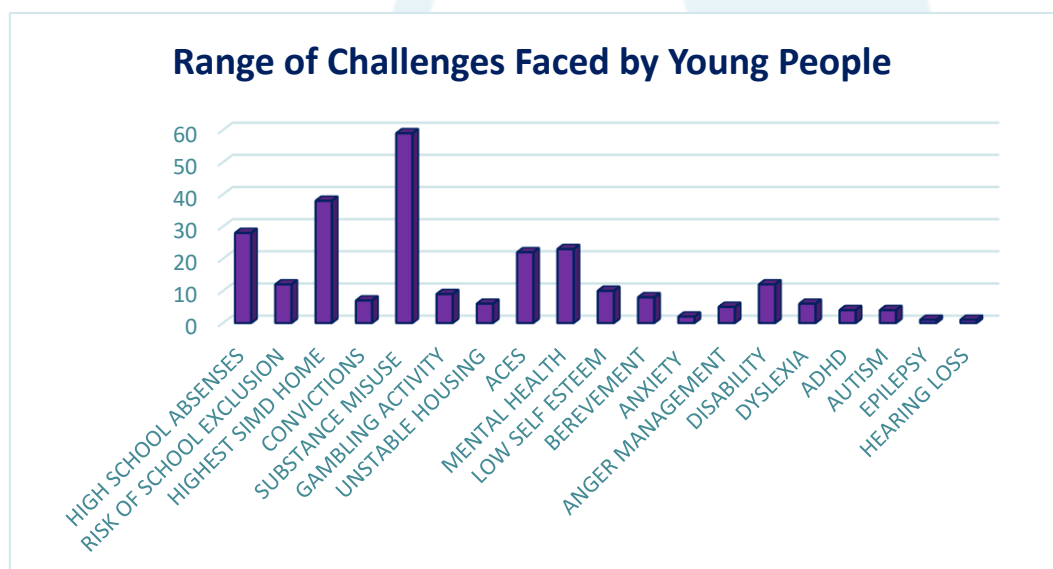
To do so, mentors invest their time, resource, knowledge and experience into **building a compassionate, voluntary relationship** whereby they can **professionally** support a person to **support themselves**. Mentors have **the belief in the potential, ability and wholeness of that individual** so that

they may guide them towards **sustainable change**.

This **broad, flexible and consistent approach to mentoring** is valuable as **addressing multiple challenges at once compounds the positive social, cultural and financial impact** of mentoring."

Through this, mentors identified **substance misuse, multiple deprivation, school absence and mental health** to be among the highest reported challenges, No limits mentors purposefully set out to build partnerships with key organisations which could play a significant role in supporting the young people into a sustainable future.

Below is a breakdown of some of the challenges faced, with several young people reporting challenges across multiple fields:



PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPACT

SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

Key to the success of No Limits was partnership development. We worked closely with Education teams in both local authority areas to establish the service in schools. SDS helped to further facilitate and strengthen existing connections.

Partner Schools in **Dundee** included:

- St John's High
- Baldragon Academy
- St Pauls RC Academy
- Morgan Academy
- Craigie High
- Braeview Academy
- Grove Academy
- Harris Academy
- Rockwell Learning Centre
- Saint John RC Academy

Partner Schools in **North Lanarkshire** included:

- Brannock High
- Greenfaulds High
- Cardinal Newman High
- Coatbridge High
- St Andrews High
- Bellshill Academy
- Caldervale High
- St Maurice's High

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND

Skills Development Scotland were a key ally throughout the launch and roll-out of the service. We held weekly conversations with Graeme Hendry (Senior Partnership and

Each school played an essential role in identifying young people who may not have considered a FA, were on route to leaving school with no positive destination, engaged in negative behaviour, and/or had high absence rates. Pastoral Care Teachers, Pupil Support and Guidance teachers provided the initial introduction to the service and (in most cases) informed the young person's parent/guardian of the referral.

We collaborated with local FE Colleges to ensure a seamless transition from school to higher-level courses associated with the relevant FA industry. We built relationships with New College Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire College and Dundee and Angus College, making them aware of the No Limits service. This provided our Mentors with a strong understanding of potential next steps beyond the FA.

Delivery Partner) and his team during the initial implementation phase.

Their knowledge and assistance ensured we fully understood the FA structure and

processes. We provided SDS with regular updates on any changes or developments

POLICE SCOTLAND

With a high number of young people involved in drug use, anti-social and/or criminal behaviour, we teamed up Police Scotland CID Detective Sergeants to deliver a series of 'early intervention' sessions at our Hub in Glasgow. This provided an opportunity to break-down barriers and to build trust.

The young people had the chance to ask questions and to gain a better understand of the role of the police.

Additional 'early intervention' sessions were arranged in partnership with the Scottish Fire Service, allowing young people to visit local fire stations in both Dundee and Glasgow.

EMPLOYERS

The Malcolm Group invited No Limits learners studying an Automotive FA to attend their heritage centre in Glasgow. During the visit, the young people had the opportunity to explore and experience fully operational trucks from the past 60 years and learn about their history. The Malcolm Group representatives also discussed upcoming apprenticeship opportunities with the learners, providing information about the application and interview process, as well as the skills and personal attributes they value in their workforce.

Alpha Construction in Dundee also extended an invitation to No Limits learners studying Construction FA, offering them the opportunity to visit a working construction site. During the visit, the learners gained valuable insights into the construction industry, including

that may have impacted FA outcomes for our young learners.



information about the recruitment process and a glimpse into the future of the field. This experience allowed the young people to ask questions and gain a deeper understanding of potential employment opportunities in construction

Additional employer-led sessions included a visit from a **Glasgow City Council** Child Care Professional who spoke to young people studying a Childcare FA. They inspired the young learners to seek out work placement opportunities with the support of their Mentor.

Finally, **Chocolate Films** invited a young person studying a Digital Media FA to create a portfolio of their work and to begin volunteering to gain additional experience.

IMPACTFUL DELIVERY

No Limits delivery included four key elements, all bound up within the Wise Group's Relational Mentoring approach.

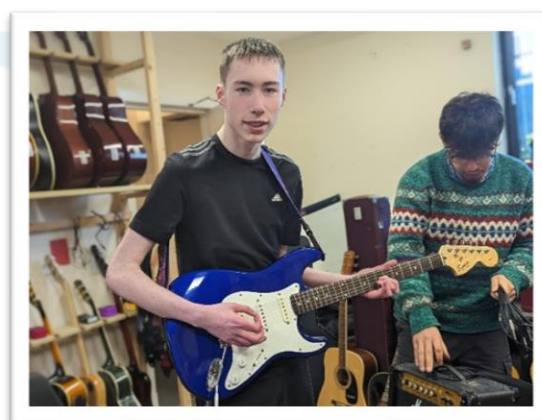


RELATIONAL MENTORING

Each young person was allocated a No Limits Mentor who was embedded in the local community, had excellent links to wider services, and a strong understanding of the challenges faced by young people and their families.

On average, each young person met their Mentor once-per week in the community (at a café, library, or community centre), at school, or at college. Meeting times were flexible to suit the needs of the young person. This often-included support in the evening and at weekends, when other service provisions were unavailable.

The role of the Mentor was to identify needs, inspire change, and be link between the young person and the necessary support services they required. As many of the young people had unmet learning support needs, we worked closely with Dyslexia Scotland, Autism Scotland, NHS



Scotland, and local authority learning support teams to progress diagnosis and to ensure suitable support structures were in place for the young person and their family.

A big part of this was developing social connections, addressing mental health, and building confidence by providing access to social activities and services. This included support to join clubs, gyms, sports teams, and exploring new hobbies and interests.

WRAP-AROUND FAMILY SUPPORT

Previous experience working with young people has highlighted that engaging the family and providing whole-family support is key to achieving positive pathways for a young person.

To achieve this, our No Limits Mentors also engaged with parents, carers, and guardians to:

- Facilitate connections to other WG services and our network of support

- organisations. This support largely centred around address concerns related to the cost-of-living crisis and child poverty.
- Support included Energy Advice/Fuel Poverty, Digital Inclusion, Employability, and access to a wide network of support organisations and contacts.

EMPLOYABILITY & LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

To introduce young people to employment opportunities related to their FA's, we collaborated with employers and educational institutes to offer workplace visits, inspirational talks, and events. Examples included:

- The Malcolm Group
- Alpha Construction
- GTG Automotive
- Chocolate Films
- GCC Child Care Services
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire Service

These visits helped to raise the young people's ambitions and strengthened their communication skills with employers and the wider community.

The insights gained from these interactions and experiences were incorporated into their CVs during employability workshops conducted by our Mentors, both in group settings and on a one-to-one basis. Workshops also covered interview skills, mock interviews, what to expect from work-life, mindset, and developing positive workplace relationships.

MOTIVATIONAL & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Our No Limits team coordinated a programme of social and motivational activities which brought learners from different schools together to help build peer to peer connections, break down barriers related to territorial issues, and to form friendships beyond the service. The activities aimed to empower and increase confidence, improve communication and problem-solving skills, build trust and leadership abilities, and introduce new experiences for the young people.



As part of our commitment to co-design, young people from each area directly participated in the programme design. This provided the chance to get creative and try things otherwise out of their reach.

The activities often included teamwork and collaboration. As a result, young people developed higher levels of communication, self-esteem, empathy, and compassion, especially for those who were neurodiverse, had disabilities, or suffered from poor mental health. The activities saw many young people set goals and step out of their comfort zones, especially during

sessions such as water sports. All sessions promoted physical and mental wellbeing.

The social programme also provided the young people with something to look forward to after school or during holidays. Some of the young people stated that these activities provided them with an alternative to isolation or anti-social behaviour.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people engaged in the service experienced **a range of long-standing challenges** which had historically prevented them from fully engaging in the school curriculum. This included unmet learning support needs and behavioural challenges related to adverse childhood experience.

To reach young people who needed this support, we worked closely with each partner

school to identify and engage them in the service. Building a relationship with the young person took time and effort; this is core to **our Relational Mentoring approach which is based on trust, compassion, and consistent support.**

Our No Limits Mentors worked closely with each young person to identify these challenges and to co-design an action plan with the young person to address them.



INDIVIDUAL JOURNEYS

RS

RS (name abbreviated at the request of the young person) has lived with a permanent foster family since 2020, alongside his biological brother. His No Limits Mentor, Laura, consistently engaged with RS and his foster carers to establish rapport and ensure that wrap-around support was available to the whole family. Her aim was to provide the right support to address RS's needs and goals.

RS was engaged in a Construction FA at Dundee and Angus College while also attending secondary school. He had a passion for music and aspired to join a band, however he lacked the confidence to take this forward.

When Laura first met him, RS was very shy, had low confidence and found it difficult to engage in conversation or retain information. Building trust took time, however Laura's consistent and caring approach ensured that he fully participated in weekly mentoring sessions and began opening about his main challenges and issues. Despite his initial reluctance, he

eventually joined group mentoring activities, including a day out to the cinema, where he confidently engaged with other young people and the No Limits team. He told Laura that he had the best time and loved meeting new people.

With his newfound confidence, Laura helped RS place an advert in a local music shop to help find a band. She also sourced and purchased a DIY Guitar pack which enabled RS to combine his passion for music alongside the skills he learned through his FA.

RS made excellent progress with his school and college coursework and successfully completed his FA. However, his engagement in No Limits has had a wider impact on his life. He has significantly increased his confidence and willingness to try new things, meet new people and think about his future. He is well on his way to achieving his dream of joining a band and feels more confident in his ability to communicate and build positive relationships with those around him.

JC

J.C (name abbreviated at the request of the young person) signed up to No Limits mentoring in September 2022. He had just started a Construction FA at Dundee and Angus College while also attending high school. His favourite part of the course was brick laying and his career goal was to eventually own a construction business.

J.C lives with his mum, stepdad, and younger siblings. His No Limits Mentor, Kaitlyn, spent time getting to know JC's family early in the mentoring relationship. JC's Mum was very keen to get to know Kaitlyn and to engage in the service alongside her son. This included weekly meetings in a local coffee shop. During these meetings, she disclosed that the family were having issues with housing and their energy bills which was causing her

severe anxiety and stress. In addition, she had just lost her part time job. This was a very challenging time for the family which was having a knock-on impact on JC and his siblings.

Kaitlyn helped J.C's mum put an action plan together to tackle one issue at a time. A digital device was sourced so Kaitlyn could help both J.C and his mum search for jobs, write a CV and apply for suitable posts. Shortly after this, J.C's stepfather, who has been out of work for a number of years, also reached out for support to updating his CSCS ticket. Kaitlyn arranged for the Wise Group's Skills Team to help him complete this via his Individual Training Allowance.

Kaitlyn submitted a referral to Home Energy Scotland who provided the family with fuel vouchers, advice, and advocacy with regards to schemes such as the Warmer Winter discount.

Kaitlyn has also signposted the family to several organisations including Citizens Advice for help with submitting PIP forms and to receive legal advice. She also put them in touch with their local Housing Office regarding moving to a home with better living conditions. Kaitlyn has delivered parcels from the local foodbanks

to support the family during challenging times.

With many of their challenges at home being addressed, J.C's attendance at school improved and his engagement in his FA increased. To celebrate his success and to encourage his other interests, Kaitlyn sourced new football gloves and a month-long trial at Dundee's Goalkeeping Academy. J.C said that he feels really inspired to work hard and can see that if he puts his mind to something, there really are No Limits to where his passions in life can take him.

GREENFAULDS HIGH SCHOOL

Four YP were referred to No Limits from Greenfaulds High School due to their involvement in criminal and antisocial behaviour. They all had a high level of absences/late arrivals and had been involved in vaping, smoking cannabis, drinking alcohol, fighting, and vandalism.

All four YP were doing an Automotive FA but were at risk of suspension from school

due to missing classes, disruption and regular anti-social behaviour.

All four families live in low SIMD areas and have large families with an average of four children under 16. Kelsey, their No Limits Mentor, regularly engaged with all four families and offered them wrap-around support.

Kelsey met with each YP at least once per week throughout the year, offering one-to-one support based on their individual needs and goals. Regular communication with families highlighted that the cost-of-living crisis was causing high stress levels at home.

Kelsey submitted a referral for each family to Home Energy Scotland who then provided family fuel vouchers, advice, and advocacy with regards to schemes to help alleviate their struggle. Families also received a Festive Family Pack to help during the winter which included a blanket, chocolates, hot drinks, hot water bottle, candle and a £10 ASDA voucher.

As a group, the young people attended events at local employers and at The Wise Group where they met with people in their chosen industry to learn about their journey to success.

Identifying goals to work towards is a key part of Relational Mentoring. One YP was keen to take up football again, so Kelsey found a local club and purchased kit to get them started. He is now attending regularly and feels fitter, healthier and less likely to take part in the negative activities he was previously engaged in.

Kelsey also helped them to join the local gym after engaging in a series of talks with partner health and wellbeing provider More Than Fitness. From this, Kelsey was able to openly discuss their destructive behaviour and the wider impact on their health and their future. All four young people now recognise changes in their attitude, health and wellbeing. This includes a significant reduction in drug and alcohol consumption and an increased attendance at school.

All four young people avoided suspension from school and completed their FAs. They are now looking forward to a more positive future.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

To monitor the impact of the service, we implemented a robust monitoring & evaluation process which is evidence-led and customers focused.



Our main indicator of impact was the 'distance travelled' by each young person. To monitor this, each young person completed a series of self-assessments which focused on 10 key areas of support. These were repeated at intervals (every 3 months).

In total, 75 Young People were referred to the service:

- 30 engaged in the service and completed 3 or 4 assessments
- 31 engaged in the service but did not complete regular assessments
- 10 young people were no longer eligible as they didn't sign up for a FA on time or left school before engaging in the service
- 4 disengaged early due to personal circumstances

The ten areas of support identified by the Assessment were:

- Foundation Apprenticeship Coursework
- Access to Digital Equipment or Devices
- Online Digital Skills and Experience
- CV, Employer or CV Activities (Job skills)
- Self Confidence
- Aspiration & Motivation
- Wellbeing and Self Esteem (Mental Health)
- Social Skills (communicating with others)
- Accessing Support Services
- Stability at home (family support)

For each area, the young person was asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 4:

1	I find this really difficult
2	I am sometimes OK, but I often struggle
3	I am quite good at this
4	This is a strength of mine

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRESSION BY AREA OF NEED

For each area of need, we have provided a table which shows the combined results for the 30 young people who completed 3 or 4 assessments.

1. Foundation Apprenticeship Coursework

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Foundation Apprenticeship Coursework	16	1	1	0	12	30
	53%	3%	3%	0%	40%	100%

18 young people (60%) saw positive progression towards completing their Foundation Apprentice Coursework.

2. Access to Digital Equipment or Devices

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Access to Digital Equipment or Devices	10	5	2	0	13	30
	33%	17%	7%	0%	43%	100%

17 young people (57%) saw positive progression in Accessing Digital Devices or Equipment.

3. Online Digital Skills and Experience

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total

Online Digital Skills & Experience	11	6	0	0	13	30
	37%	20%	0%	0%	43%	100%

18 young people (60%) saw positive progression in their Online Digital Skills and Experience.

4. CV, Employer or CV Activities (Job Skills)

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Job Skills	9	11	3	0	7	30
	30%	37%	10%	0%	23%	100%

23 young people (77%) saw positive progression in Job Skills.

5. Self-Confidence

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Self-Confidence	12	10	0	0	8	30
	40%	33%	0%	0%	27%	100%

22 young people (73%) saw positive progression in their Self-Confidence.

6. Aspirations and Motivation

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Aspirations and Motivation	15	6	0	0	9	30
	50%	20%	0%	0%	30%	100%

21 young people (70%) saw positive progression in with their Aspirations and Motivation.

7. Wellbeing and Self-Esteem (Mental Health)

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Wellbeing and Self-esteem	20	6	0	0	4	30
	67%	20%	0%	0%	13%	100%

26 young people (87%) saw positive progression with their Wellbeing and Self-esteem.

8. Social Skills (communications)

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Social Skills	17	5	1	0	7	30
	57%	17%	3%	0%	23%	100%

23 young people (77%) saw positive change in their Social Skills.

9. Accessing Support Services

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Accessing Support Services	5	6	1	0	18	30
	17%	20%	3%	0%	60%	100%

12 young people (40%) saw positive change Accessing Support Services.

10. Stability at Home (family support)

Area of Support	No. YP increased by 1 point	No. YP increased by 2 points	No. YP increased by 3 points	No. YP increased by 4 points	No. YP reporting no change	Total
Stability at home	11	2	0	0	17	30
	37%	7%	0%	0%	57%	100%

13 young people (43%) saw positive change in their Stability at Home.

SUMMARY

As a result of No Limits, we saw the **most significant improvement in:**

- **Wellbeing and Self-esteem**
- **Job Skills**
- **Social Skills**
- **Self Confidence**

The following table provides a summary of progress across all ten areas of support.

Support Area	% positive change
Foundation Apprenticeship Coursework	60%
Access to Digital Equipment or Devices	57%
Online Digital Skills and Experience	60%
CV, Employer or CV Activities (Job skills)	77%
Self Confidence	73%
Aspiration & Motivation	70%
Wellbeing and Self Esteem (Mental Health)	87%
Social Skills (communicating with others)	77%
Accessing Support Services	40%
Stability at home (family support)	43% (47% rated highly at start)

The Wise Group will continue to revisit each young person who engaged in No Limits over the next 6 months. During this time, a full data set relating to the service will be available which we are confident will show increased progression across all ten areas.



IMPACT INTERVIEWS

To discover more about the impact of No Limits, 6 interviews were conducted with young people engaged with the service. They were asked a range of questions, including what difference having a No Limits Mentor in their life had made to them.

Key outcomes taken from their responses include -

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE & SUPPORT

"I really like being able to speak to someone that can help right away. Someone that takes action when they say they are going to do something".

"The best thing is having a Mentor to help me and give me their time to learn new things. My Mentor had a lot of useful knowledge that I wouldn't have known about or learned without her".

"I now have a CV, and have applied for my first part-time jobs, I know I have support

if I need it for school/anything, I know I can ask if I'm struggling with something or need something. It has really helped me understand and realise my potential."

"There's no pressure about what we 'should' do. She listens and gives me good advice or takes me to get support where I need it. It has improved my confidence and I have made new friends who I now spend more time with."

IMPROVED EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND INCREASED ASPIRATIONS/MOTIVATION

"I now have a CV and have applied for my first part-time job. I know I have support if I need it for school/anything and I know I can ask if I'm struggling with something or need something. It has really helped me understand and realise my potential."

"The best thing has been helping me understand how to make a CV and what is needed for applying for job roles..."

"I was struggling to find information for part-time jobs and didn't know how to prepare for employment. I want a job, but I had no idea where to start. I didn't even have a CV. I was also really worried about my exams so needed some help there as well. No Limits gave me all of this."

"I got some really great advice for what I do next. Creating a CV, applying for jobs and improving my interview skills"

"Finding part-time employment, creating a CV, not making good use of my spare time. I couldn't get a job before".

"Thinking about how and what to do next. This has helped me make a plan to go about achieving my goals for college and helped make it clearer about how and where to go to do it."

"No Limits really helped with everything. My Mentor has really supported my Mum and it has been good to understanding what a CV is and making one for any future jobs I am going to apply for when I turn 16. I really appreciate their support."

IMPROVED CONFIDENCE AND INCREASED SOCIAL INCLUSION

"There's no pressure about what we 'should' do. My Mentor listens and gives me good advice or takes me to get support where I need it. It has improved my confidence and I have made new friends."

"My mental health has really improved; I feel more confident and know what I want to do next".

"I didn't think I had much to offer an employer, but my Mentor has helped me with learning about what skills and qualities I have and the confidence to put myself forward for things."

"I feel like I have someone to really help me to address my main issues, I definitely feel more confident."

"I have also started getting out the house more and have new interests that keep me busy."

"It has made things easier in terms of applying for jobs and building a CV. I have also started getting out the house more and have new interests that keep me busy."

"I have met some really nice people who I wouldn't had had the chance to meet without this. Going on trips together with people from other schools has been amazing".

REDUCED STRESS

"It's helped me figure out what to do and how to do it without stressing so much."

"Everything, from the trips we have been on, to the pressure-free environment to talk about my plans for the future."

Spending more time doing fun stuff and my weekly meetings with my Mentor has helped me deal with my stress. The best thing has been able to have new experiences."

FOUNDATION APPRENTICESHIP RESULTS & SOCIAL VALUE

Results for 2022-23 FAs are yet to be released, however early indications show that of the **75 young learners referred to No Limits:**

- 65 Enrolled in a FA
- 58 Actively engaged and worked closely with their No Limits Mentor while completing their FA training of which:
 - 30 Achieved all components of their FA or pilot FA group award.
 - A further 28 completed their FA but are awaiting final results.

The FA retention rate for young people actively engaged in No Limits was 89%.

SOCIAL VALUE

To discover the social value of No Limits, we are in the process of applying Social Return on Investment methodology (SROI). SROI is a framework to measure changes to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It captures social value by putting a monetary proxy (approximation) value on outcomes.

The result of a SROI evaluation is a ratio. The ratio put simply, is the sum of all the outcome values divided by the investment into a service. A ratio of 3:1 indicates that an investment of £1 delivers £3 of social value.

SROI requires consultation with all key stakeholders to discover the outcomes that are material to them and to consider the counterfactual.

This is significantly higher than findings reported in the ***Foundation Apprenticeship Provision in Scotland Review*** by Education Scotland which found that **overall, on most FA programmes, learner withdrawal rates range between 50% and 100% of young people.**

In addition, No Limits also supported:

- 18 young people to write and update their CV in preparation for employment.
- 15 young people to successfully apply for college.
- 15 young people to move into employment or work experience.
- 7 young people decided to stay on at school who previously intended to leave after S4.

We are currently consulting with key No Limits stakeholders, so a full SROI evaluation is not yet available. However, to give an indication of what we can expect, below are the following provides proxy values¹:

- **Improved employability skills** - estimate value per individual £1,515
- **Improved confidence** – estimate value per individual = £9,455
- **Improved mental health** – estimate value per individual = £11,819
- **Increased social inclusion** – estimate value per individual = £1,850

¹ HACT Value Calculator v4 <https://hact.org.uk/>

INSIGHT & RECOMMENDATIONS

To gather insights from the No Limits Pathfinder and to help shape the next phase of development, the Wise Group used Service Design tools to co-design No Limits going forward.

This included a series of interactive and engaging workshops with young people, their families, schools and partners designed to offer structured engagement in the No Limits design process.

Service Design enabled us to better understand the challenges young people face at a pivotal time in their lives. This included:

- User Research: interviews with teachers, parents, young people and delivery partners, to better

understand the challenges and barriers that prevent disadvantaged young people from fully participating in the education system (including FAs).

- Co-design workshops which identified what young people **LIKE, WANT, AND NEED** from No Limits as well as creative solutions to some the challenges they face.
- Service Design workshops with No Limits Mentors and partners.

From this work and from the data gathered during the pathfinder, we know that:

- **Young People want and need a trusted adult, who is not a teacher or an authority figure, to provide guidance and support.**

"I know my Mentor is there speak to me when I need it. She is someone who actually takes action when they say they are going to do something."

"Its great to have a friendly, non judgemental person to talk to."

- **No Limits provides valuable support to a Young Person at a pivotal time in their life.**

"When my son started down a negative path, I was really worried about what I would do. Although he isn't a 'bad boy' as such, he was choosing tough people to hang around with and he was doing things he shouldn't be doing. I wasn't sure what to do; it's hard for parents as often they don't want to listen to you. So, when No Limits came about, I was so happy that finally he was getting someone positive in his life to get him back on track."

It has changed his path and his dynamic has completely changed. He would totally swear on that himself; it's not just me that has noticed this. It came along at just the right time."

- **Our relational mentoring approach is working for both the young person and their family.**

"I'm keen to get back into work so Kelsey (No Limits Mentor) has offered to help me with this and even give my other son some advice. He was interested in mechanics and was doing a course at the school. He wasn't giving it his all though so when Kelsey came along, she got him to really focus and commit to it. Without the support from

Kelsey, I think to be honest, he would have got bored of it and packed it in earlier. I appreciate it so all so much."

- **No Limits is filling a much-needed gap in provision.**

"As far as we are aware, there is nothing similar or like this in North Lanarkshire so there is a definitely a massive gap; especially for the age group S3/S4 and for young people with additional support needs.

One of our YP who is part of No Limits now has access to things that he just wouldn't have had otherwise. This has really opened his world in a way that I don't think would have been possible without No Limits. I think that has given him such a boost."

Pupil Support Teacher

However, to have a bigger impact, we need to:

- **Include wider positive destinations for vulnerable young people who may not be ready, interested, or eligible for a FA.**

"Almost all Young people need this now. Targeting FAs is really good and needed but there is also a lot of young people who won't reach FA stage within education and then there are young people in care, affected by disability, engaged in the justice system and with conditions like social anxiety who are increasingly becoming marginalised and forgotten."

Partner

"We actually have lots of pupils who would really benefit from the type of support No Limits is offering but we can't refer them at the moment because they are not doing or are not ready for a FA. Because it is so limited, they are really missing out"

Pupil Support Teacher

- **Diversify who No Limits is for by working with more referral partners. This will enable us to support the most vulnerable young people in Scotland, including those who are:**

Care experienced (**#KeepThePromise**)

Living in Poverty (**Tackling Child Poverty Plan/Best Start, Bright Futures**)

Neurodiverse and have additional support needs that are not being met (**GIRFEC**)

Already engaged in or at risk of engaging in criminality (**Vision for Justice in Scotland**)

A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

No Limits had a profound impact on the lives of the young people engaged in the service.

The FA retention rate for young people supported by a No Limits Mentor was **89%**. In addition, young people also reported **increased wellbeing, self-esteem, social skills, confidence, and employability**.

The pathfinder also highlighted the role of the Wise Group's Relational Mentoring approach in helping harder to reach young people and their families improve their lives for the better. In doing so, we can support

the Scottish Government achieve national targets and plans including:

- Tackling Child Poverty Plan
- Getting it Right for Every Child
- Increased achievement of the Curriculum for Excellence
- No One Left Behind

We welcome opportunities to discuss our learning and explore further No Limits development with partners and key stakeholders.

Insight from services like No Limits is the catalyst for change in the lives of young people and their families across the country. When deep and systemic barriers to an individual's potential are lifted, your ambition can be limitless.



APPENDIX

- 1) Parent Insight
- 2) Partner Insight
- 3) Mentor Reflections

PARENT INSIGHT

To understand the impact of the service from the perspective of a parent or guardian, we interviewed Kirsty Rice, mum to one of our young male customers. Kirsty consented to her name being used in this report.

Can you tell me about your experience of No Limits so far?

“The support we have been offered is outstanding. From the perspective of my son, he has changed so much in the last few months. There was a time for a while, when he, like many teenagers was going down a tough path. When he started working with Kelsey, he was apprehensive but now he is always looking forward to meeting with her, he is always talking to me about it. He has a great bond with her, and she is good at communicating with him in a way that I can’t as his mum. She keeps me informed as well so I know what support he is getting and what their plans are. I’m kept in the loop. Being part of this relationship is important to me as a parent.

Can you tell me a bit more about the positive changes you mentioned?

“When I first noticed that he was acting up, not listening, getting into trouble, there was no support for me as a parent. It is tough here; always has been. For me too, I went down a tough road when I was a kid. I dropped out of school in 1st year; there was nae kind of help available for me. Eventually a social worker got me into a safe place, a centre for young people. I have since found out that this place has closed. It was a lifeline for so many people and now it has gone like so many other places. There isn’t anywhere similar; had it no been for that place, who knows where I would have ended up.

So, when my son started down that same path, I was really worried about what I would do. I just didn’t want him to have to go through what I did. Although he isn’t a ‘bad boy’ as such, he was choosing tough people to hang around with and he was doing things he shouldn’t be doing. I wasn’t sure what to do; it’s hard for parents as often they don’t want to listen to you. So, when No Limits came about, I was so happy that finally he was getting someone positive in his life to get him back on track. It has changed his path and his dynamic has completely changed. He would total swear on that himself; it’s not just me that has noticed this. It came along at just the right time.”

With regards to his FA, has No Limits had an impact on his progression?

“He was interested in mechanics and was doing a course at the school. He wasn’t giving it his all though so when Kelsey came along, she got him to really focus and commit to it. Without the support from Kelsey, I think to be honest, he would have got bored of it and packed it in earlier.

Before he wanted to leave school as soon as possible but now he understands that if he wants to do his mechanics, he needs to stick in and get the right qualifications to do that. So, he has agreed to stay on a bit longer. She has given him an insight into what is possible for him if he just sticks in; stay in school at least until the end of September to get his exams. I’m so pleased because that wasn’t the path I wanted him to take.

The other stuff they do with Kelsey is just fab. His attitude is different. As I said, he isn’t a ‘bad boy’; he has always been very respectful and a

great boy but there was a wee change about a year ago when things seemed to be going downhill; he was getting into a lot of bother. But you know what I think the main change is, he seems much more mature since he started doing this. I was talking to my partner about this, and he can see it as well. It's been brilliant to watch.

The young ones growing up here in the schemes; I feel so sorry for them because they haven't got much and nothing to do. They are not destined to do much and it is such a shame. The only thing for them to do is go out at the weekend get drunk and do whatever. They end up hurting themselves or others and even in the jail. That's what I see happening. That is not the choice I want for my wean. I want him to have a positive path set out before he leaves school – something set in stone, so he is focused and doesn't end up like that. I just wish the help he is getting from Kelsey was available for all the young ones around here."

Have you, as a parent, benefited in any way from the service?

"The other thing is the help Kelsey has given me. I'm keen to get back into work so she has offered to help me with this and even give my other son some advice. She is helping him as well, to give him a push because he has already left school and doesn't know what he is going to do next. He is a lot more standoffish, so she is taking it gently with him to eventually build a bridge. I appreciate it so much.

I know if I ever need anything from Kelsey, all I have to do is pick up the phone and call her. The other thing is, she isn't judgemental. That gives me confidence that she will do whatever she can to help us as a family. I was always so embarrassed as a young person because of what was going on in my household. I bottled all that up because there wasn't anyone to talk to who I felt I could trust. It is only now that I have started to talk about this and come to terms with it. I really wish I had had a Kelsey in my life then. I know both my son and I could

tell Kelsey anything and I know she isn't going to look down on us."

Is there anything we could do to improve No Limits?

"If I could suggest some changes I would say, it would be good to have some activities and things for them to do at the weekend. This is a difficult time for most young people and even their families. Things happen and if the young person doesn't have someone to reach out to, that is when they make bad choices. Even if just a phone call. What I have noticed with Kelsey is, the relationship and trust. They will tell her things they wouldn't tell a teacher or a parent. They open up to her and then she knows what help they really need. They have confidence in her.

If someone like that was available at the weekend, or if they had some activities to do, I think a lot of trouble could be avoided. Same with the school holidays. It also needs to be longer-term. I do worry what will happen when that help is no longer there for my son and his pals. The minute they turn 16 or 18 there is so little support for young people; they are left to their own devices but are still so young and vulnerable to making bad decisions.

Maybe also some help at a younger age – when they go to secondary school is a really hard time. My youngest just went through this and I saw such a change in her. Her attitude, everything, it was daunting. She was mixing with all these new people and was out of her comfort zone. If she and her pals had some help, one on one, to address what they were feeling and experiencing, that could make all the difference as there just isn't that help in the school. The school tries but there are just too many young people to help and they just won't open up to a teacher.

I also didn't get any information from the school when he first got involved in No Limits. It was only when Kelsey text me to introduce herself that I found out about it. Some pre-warming and info from the school would have

been nice so I understood what it was all about.”

PARTNER INSIGHTS

To understand the impact of the service and to provide additional insight into the development of No Limits, we interviewed two teachers from Cumbernauld High School in North Lanarkshire. As Head of Pupil Support in S3 and S4, both teachers support young people towards positive destinations.

We started by discussing their involvement in the service so far:

“We currently have three pupils engaged in the programme. One is really engaged and attends a range of support sessions both during school and outside of school. The other two spend time with their Mentor but choose to do this mostly on a Friday afternoon in school time.

We actually have lots of pupils who would really benefit from the type of support No Limits is offering but we can’t refer them at the moment because they are not doing or are not ready for a FA. Because it is so limited, they are really missing out.

We have a lot of very vulnerable young people in 3rd year – we think that should be the main focus for you and No Limits. Many of our YP at this age are really struggling and that is when we lose them. Someone like Kelsey who can offer that one-to-one support that we just don’t have the capacity to provide would make all the difference to their outcomes.”

From your experience, what are the main challenges young people in 3rd year are facing?

“Kids are very vulnerable at this stage; they are going through lots of change. Some of the kids are doing exams, but many others are not due to their ability or learning stage. They are the ones that are at risk of disengaging.

Also, their social opportunities are very limited outside of school due to their homelife. One of our YP who part of No Limits has had access to

things that he just wouldn’t have had otherwise. This has really opened his world in a way that I don’t think would have been possible without No Limits. I think that has given him such a boost.

As they approach 4th year, the pressure really kicks in because they have their exams and the anticipation hanging over them – whether they are planning to leave school or not. That combined with their hormones, puberty, stuff going on at home. It’s like a melting pot of emotions.

Those who have slipped the net then leave and there is no more we can do to help them. That is so hard. So, we need support like No Limits to help catch them before they totally disengage with no positive pathways in sight. We could really help you target those who need this the most when they first start 3rd year so they don’t end up like that. Kelsey can also help the families of the young people. I’m not sure how much our YP families are involved but this is a really important part because we have very limited contact with our most vulnerable YP and their families.”

Regarding developing a relationship between the school and the No Limits team, what could or should we do better to help improve this?

“It would be good to have had a presentation or meeting with the Mentors before the project started so we could have known more about it. The info was kind of passed down to us second hand. I think that is an issue with school communication, because we are so big, sometimes communication can be hard.

We also need more time to identify the young people who need this the most. If you could come in earlier – say May/June time, we can get introductions done, links made etc. So you

can started with each young person in August as soon as they are back from holidays.

It would also be great to have some sort of update from Kelsey on a regular basis about what she is doing with each young person. Like a monthly update so we are aware of the support they are getting outside of the school. It is really hard for us to catch up with each young person on a regular basis."

Have you noticed a change in the young people who are engaged in No Limits?

"There has been a massive difference. Especially for one of the young boys who is also Autistic. His confidence has noticeably increased, he is trying new things which he would have avoided before, like he is now learning how to play guitar. He is so proud of this and takes it to school to show his friends and teachers. For him, his social issues are being addressed."

What could we do to improve No Limits from your perspective?

"Allowing referrals for young people not doing a FA. We have so many ASN young people, there is a massive gap there and more young people are getting diagnosed every day. Unfortunately, they are slipping through the net. The chance to get out and about, try new things, think about their future is something they just don't get at the moment. We would

MENTOR INSIGHT

Three No Limits Mentors supported young people across two local authority areas. To gain further insight into the impact of the service, they each reflected on their own No Limits experience:

Kelsey Admins

Q. Overall, can you describe your No Limits experience?

"The project was amazing to be a part of and something I feel is very much needed. It really opened my eyes to the lack of support a lot of young people have in school and how easily young people were labelled as 'bad' and then essentially forgotten about. Being able to delve

easily have 40 + young people and their families who would really welcome the opportunity to be part of No Limits. I know that mums, dads, carers etc would be very open to working with you.

Girls would also really benefit as well. Because the FAs we offer are mainly mechanical, we have very few girls who can be part of No Limits. However, we have some very vulnerable young women who are very disconnected from the curriculum and have very few positive influences in their lives. It is very hard to support them but something like No Limits would be ideas because it isn't coming from a teacher or a social worker; it's an adult who they can talk to confidentially about what is going on in their lives, get the right help and advice and hopefully work towards some sort of positive future.

For these young people who are not working towards challenging exams and struggle full time at school, we could offer much more flexibility in terms of when we can release them.

As far as we are aware, there is nothing similar or like this in North Lanarkshire so there is a definitely a massive gap; especially for the age group S3/S4 and for young people with additional support needs."

deeper into the reasoning behind the anti-social behaviour and help prevent young people from continuing this behaviour by offering support, being a listening ear and helping with mental health."

Q. What did you learn about customers above and beyond the FAs? (Other needs that

customers have such as neurodiversity, criminal behaviour etc)

"A lot of the young people I worked with involved in criminal behaviour were neurodivergent and had not been getting support for this. Some wanted to join the gym, play an instrument, get creative and play sports but did not have the funds to pursue these opportunities. No Limits supported with this. All of the young people I worked with also vaped and this was unexpected when I started working on the project, a few smoked marijuana and the majority of them drank regularly."

Q. Any surprises or positive results you didn't expect?

"I was able to help get a dyslexia diagnosis for one of the young people which ensures she will get the support she needs from now on in her education and life out with. I wouldn't have been able to do this without gaining trust with one young person and their mother and partnering with Dyslexia Scotland.

So far, all the young people I worked with have completed their FA which is an amazing result as they were expected to drop out or fail, so were referred to the service."

Kaitlyn

Bartlett

Q. Overall, can you describe your No Limits experience?

"I found the project a real eye opener for multiple reasons. It's broadened my awareness on what services are out there to help young people and how much support still needs to be created to help young people more. I found it interesting to have the opportunity to work with the young people, schools and organisations within my local area as it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of my own community. This project has made me more passionate about helping others in my job roles and how important it is to have a positive impact on others' lives who need it most. This

was my first role as a Mentor and it was great to experience different and new challenges that have helped me grow and become a better Mentor."

Q. What did you learn about customers above and beyond the FAs? (Other needs that customers have such as neurodiversity, criminal behaviour etc)

"I think it's very easy for the general public to view teenagers from more challenged areas as 'bad' and it was refreshing and really lovely to actually get to know the young people as individuals and to connect with them, get a sense of their personalities and having more in-depth conversations to help them with whatever struggles they were going through at that moment in time. In terms of other needs, I think there is a need for young people to have 'Mentor' relationships especially at the ages they were due to having bigger, more impactful decisions to make such as going to college or continuing education. It can be difficult for teachers to give more time and space for everyone so having Mentors present can benefit the young person with making more informed choices and having someone who has dedicated time and space for that young person to express worries or problems they need support in solving."

Q. Any surprises or positive results you didn't expect?

"Watching where the young people and their families were at in the beginning stages of the project compared to the end was extremely rewarding and I felt a real sense of pride in the young people as they had grown in different ways and accomplished goals they set their minds to. Being a Mentor on the No Limits team was very rewarding."

Laura Wardlaw

Q. Overall, can you describe your No Limits experience??

"In my opinion, the No Limits project was an amazing opportunity for both the staff and the young people and families involved.

I really could see the need for 1-2-1 and small group activities that help to build up self-esteem and confidence in the young people. Young people deserve the time to discuss their future and be made aware of all of the services and tools that they can use to develop life skills and gain the knowledge the need to build a positive foundation for their future, and I feel that No Limits provided this in a relaxed and fun manner.

The timescales at the beginning of the project were tight, which caused a bit of difficulty with engaging education staff and networking, with the right support and engagement from schools and staff No Limits could be even more effective than it was."

Q. What did you learn about customers above and beyond the FAs? (other needs that customers have such as neurodiversity, criminal behaviour etc)

"Many of the young people had little to no knowledge of how to construct CVs, cover

letters and employability processes which I feel is crucial in the transition stage when leaving school.

There were a couple of care experienced young people within my caseload; one in particular who was great at engaging and really welcomed the opportunity to connect with other young people and develop new friendships."

Q. Any surprises or positive results you didn't expect?

"Receiving the feedback from young people that they had hoped No Limits support would continue into their next academic year is a brilliant yet difficult response. However, it absolutely highlights just how valuable and impactful the No Limits project has been.

Although as a team, No Limits did a great amount of networking with other services and agencies in the local authority areas, I was surprised that another main mentoring service such as MCR Pathways could not work with pupils with under 70% attendance, potentially resulting in many young people who could benefit from guidance and mentoring missing out."

No Limits Relational Mentoring Impact Report

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