

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022





CEO STATEMENT

How would you describe your time as interim CEO? What brought you to MACS?

My time with MACS has been wonderful. I came out of retirement (I'd been retired from my job in Local Government for 6 years) and loved the chance to work with such an excellent organisation. The staff of MACS are excellent and totally devoted to those young people who need their help. The Board of MACS were hugely supportive, and they and the staff of MACS made my job a pleasure. We were emerging from the pandemic and that had its own difficulties. MACS staff continued to provide support to young people throughout the pandemic, with a mix socially distanced of face to face, zoom and WhatsApp. Although a different way of delivering the work, this was carefully managed but we got through that, and things got better. The pandemic had financial impact on every organisation but as an organisation we sought innovative solutions to assist our young people with this increasing challenge.

What do you consider the biggest successes of the last year?

The biggest successes MACS has had are reflected in the continuing positive outcomes for our young people. Shared Tenancy has continued to grow and work well. The pandemic had made it difficult to help young people move into independent living and to get employment or move into education. Thankfully, we came out the other side of the pandemic and can continue to help young people get homes, get settled find their own place in the world. We continually plan. All is looking positive for the future despite the challenges. MACS will meet these in its own inimitable way. Sadly we had to temporarily close Muddy Paws whilst we work on securing funding for this unique and beneficial project.

What learning have you had as interim CEO?

I have learned first-hand about the testing times faced by those whom MACS supports. I have an even better awareness of the responsibility to ensure that young people are universally given similar opportunities. The world is an unfair place and our young people are ill-equipped to deal with it. This is wrong. The sector is underfunded and society reaps the cost of this by neglecting those who cannot help themselves through no fault of their own. Sadly, our services have seen an increase in the number of young people dying through drug use or taking their own lives. This year in particular has shown that we need specific tailored support for young people struggling with addiction and mental health problems.

What have been your personal highlights in the last year?

There have been a lot of personal highlights but a standout moment for me was when I met a young person who had been supported by our services, became a Young Leader and had just been successful in getting a job in MACS. I can't describe how happy he was and for me, it was a wonderful moment.

LED BY YOU PARTICIPATION SERVICE

YOUNG LEADER STATEMENT

If we have to sum up the last year in a few words they would be Resilience, Commitment and Flexibility. This year has seen an increased flexibility in how we conduct our meetings with Young Leaders integrating the use of Zoom and face to face as part of our way of working. As we return to normal our lives have become increasingly busy; this style of working has meant that we have still been able to contribute to Led By You.

We were keen to begin meeting face-to-face again as much as possible. Although we recognise the benefits of Zoom, such as being able to participate if under time pressure, we have also found it has certain disadvantages, these including difficulty concentrating. Certain pieces of work are easier face to face such as design meetings, and the fact that it is simply harder to build relationships through a computer screen.

That said, Zoom was a good stepping stone in helping us get through a difficult time and now that life is moving towards normality we recognise that integrating an online element to how we run has its benefits.

Even with lockdowns thankfully being a thing of the past, there has been a ripple effect on Young Leaders. During lockdowns, nothing else was going on so we had more flexibility to attend meetings virtually and with less pulls on our time we were able to put more focus into Young Leaders and keep that at the forefront. However, with things returning to normal, we are competing against other commitments such as work and study. That is not to say Young Leaders isn't a priority - it is for everyone involved and despite these challenges we have remained committed and resilient to ongoing changes.

This year in particular has seen so many changes for Young Leaders with significant life events happening for each and every one of us including dream jobs, buying our own homes or moving into our own tenancies and entering university. It seems individually we have been juggling quite a lot. Led By You has also grown as a service to include Muddy Paws and so we were not the only ones with additional pulls on our time. What worked for us was adopting a flexible approach, rolling with change and ensuring we communicated with each other throughout using our WhatsApp group and taking the opportunities to meet face to face where we could.



Our commitment to Led By You has been unwavering and we look forward to what the future holds for Led By You.

- Young People volunteered a total of 2495 hours in Led By You through Young Leaders and MACS Muddy Paws.
- Continued to produce Participation Blogs penned by Young Leaders.
- 15 Young People completed Peer Mentor Training within Led By You.
- Young people produced MACS Annual Report 2021-2022.
- 145 young people took part in consultations on issues affecting them including Housing Rota Consultation, Social Enterprise Survey, Young People's Participation, and the Housing Supply Strategy and NICCY Impact of COVID on young people research.
- Muddy Paws project supported 47 young people.
- Implemented a new Outcomes and Training Pack for Volunteers



CHAIR STATEMENT

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT BEING CHAIR? WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LAST YEAR?

My favourite thing about being Chair is that I have the privilege of supporting and leading a wonderful group of people, the MACS Board. I have witnessed first-hand how a group of committed, passionate and focused team members can unselfishly give of themselves and their time to support and guide the Senior Management Team to enable them to do the great job that they do in their leadership roles.

My personal highlights during the past year have been working closely with Maggie and Kate to ensure that MACS have continued to grow and develop.

Another highlight relates to this being my last year as a Board member, and Chair of MACS, having completed my tenure as a Board member. This has given me cause to reflect on the role, work, challenges, and successes of the Board during my time as a Board member, and I am very proud and grateful for the tremendous efforts of my Board colleagues, past and present. I am equally proud of all the staff and volunteers who do such a fantastic job to improve the lives of those young people who need our support. I will ultimately look back on my time with MACS with great fondness and I will always be grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of the MACS family.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST SUCCESSES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS THIS YEAR?

I feel that the greatest success of the Board this year, relates to the ongoing focus on MACS governance, its long-term sustainability and the consolidation of the very important service delivery that MACS is renowned for. This was achieved against a backdrop of staffing challenges, and change, including the recruitment of new Board members and a new Board Chair. The Senior Managers, their teams and the Board all deserve huge credit for their endeavours during this time. The teamwork, passion, cooperation, and desire to support our young people made this possible.

WHAT PLANS DO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAVE FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR?

The focus of the Board this year will initially be to recruit a new Board Chair, and to welcome and embed our newest Board recruits. The Board have recently developed an action plan for the next 3-year period, which will prioritise key pieces of work for the Board, the Senior Managers and their teams. I envisage that this will be a busy and exciting year ahead and central to everything, will be service delivery and the support of our young people.

HAS THERE BEEN ANY LEARNING FROM THIS YEAR?

I think that we can all learn from the resilience, pride, friendship, and cooperation displayed daily by our young people. Even when dealing with the most difficult of circumstances, our young people persevere and strive to meet these challenges head on. I think that this 'can do' attitude has ensured that MACS, with the support of the Board, has dealt with the challenges of this year, and how it has endured for over 30 years, and how it will provide MACS with the platform to thrive into the future.

I firmly believe that MACS will become stronger in the coming years and that it will continue to be the benchmark for quality and person centred care for young people in Northern Ireland.

I want to take this last opportunity as Chair, to wish everyone connected to MACS the very best and to thank you for being part of MACS story, past and future.



WELLBEING SUPPORT SERVICE

This year was a year of winding down with our Big Lottery funding coming to an end. This was an opportunity to reflect on the impact and differences made to young people's lives as a result of the funding and programmes delivered throughout this time.

- This year we supported 379 young people throughout the service.
- Following COVID restrictions easing we were able to run 10 group programmes throughout the year on a range of different health and wellbeing related topics including social activities, mental health, healthy eating, and mindfulness.

YOUNG PERSON'S STORY

Curtis* (not his real name) was referred to the Wellbeing Service for help with his mental health. Curtis had been homeless for a period of time and going between hostels for a number of months. This impacted his mental health significantly which was manifesting in extreme anxiety, particularly in public spaces and/or dealing with people. Curtis also began to feel low and hopeless and said he felt his life was in "a downward spiral". He struggled to do basic self-care tasks such as washing and cleaning and this further compounded his feelings of low self-esteem and anxiety as he felt people viewed him as "dirty". Curtis also experienced several incidents in hostels which have resulted in him feeling traumatised. He has a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Anxiety, and Depression. Curtis also has no contact with his family and only one friend who lives over 40 miles away and whom he rarely sees in person (maintaining contact mostly through Whatsapp messages). Once the initial assessment (Getting To Know You) was completed it was agreed that he would benefit from both 1-to-1 support from the worker who will focus on coping strategies and techniques and also a volunteer mentor who will focus on building his confidence in social situations and help explore his interests of art and outdoor pursuits. Curtis is working through a support plan with his worker prioritising managing anxiety. He has also begun his match with his volunteer mentor which he feels is helping with his anxiety and generally improving his mood as he feels he has a connection and is doing activities that are getting him out of the house. One of the key aspects of mentoring that both he and the volunteer have agreed on is to gently build up his confidence in engaging with the public and also to identify and get involved in local groups and activities to help Curtis build a wider community network and build up his social circle.

VOLUNTEER STORY

My name is Sarah-Jane and I have been a volunteer mentor with MACS for 18 months. I have absolutely loved every second of it! I feel like I would have benefited from these services as a child so it means that much more to me now to be able to provide effective and empathic support for all the young people I come across. MACS has helped my confidence and has helped me to look at the world in a different light whilst also allowing me to meet some amazing people. My advice for any one (CHANGE TO ANYONE) interested in volunteering is to take the leap! It allows for lots of new experiences and plenty of exciting times through meeting new people, making a difference and enjoying fun activities and events together.



BELFAST FLOATING SUPPORT

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Success and growth of the Belfast Floating Support Team, we received additional funding for additional workers, meaning, that we are now able to support 127 young people in the Belfast area alongside Prison Resettlement and Shared Tenancy.
- Successfully passed our Supporting People Quality Monitoring Inspection with no recommendations.
- The team took part in several consultations throughout the year including; NIHE's Action Plan for Temporary Accommodation, the Homelessness Strategy, the Homelessness Reset Plan, and Department for Communities Housing Supply Strategy.
- Represented the sector on the Project Advisory Group for the NIHE research into Youth Homelessness and Impact of Chronic Homelessness on Women.
- Assisted the Homeless Prevention Forum to develop a Homeless Prevention training tool, to educate and promote homeless prevention throughout the sector.

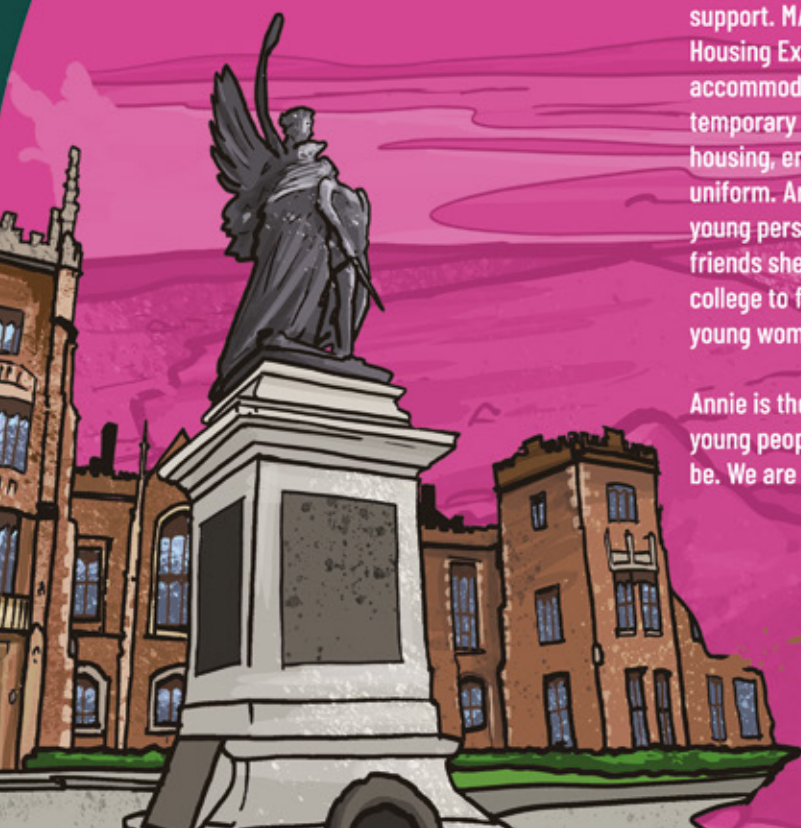
YOUNG PERSON'S STORY

Annie referred herself to MACS Floating Support Service and was immediately accepted due to her age (seventeen) and the priority need of her situation. She then explained that she could not return to the family home because her mum found birth control pills in her purse which resulted in her sofa-surfing with her boyfriend's family.

Annie disclosed prolonged emotional and physical neglect while living in the family home; this has caused Annie to have issues with sleeping and often suffer low mood and anxiety at several periods throughout her life. As a result, a referral was put into Social Services.

She was engaged with the Trust until she was 18 at which point they ceased support. MACS continued to assist Annie in attending the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to present as homeless and in need of emergency accommodation. The NIHE and MACS worked with Annie to establish emergency temporary accommodation. During her support, Annie maintained temporary housing, enrolled in school to complete her A levels, and got her very first school uniform. Annie is now 19 years of age, is settled, and living with another MACS young person in a Shared Tenancy property. Annie has a supportive circle of friends she can rely on. Annie works hard in a restaurant and is due to return to college to further her studies in September. Annie is a motivated and independent young woman with a bright future ahead of her.

Annie is the epitome of everything we strive for at MACS, where our staff and young people lead and work together to get them to where they need and want to be. We are proud of Annie and all she has achieved and know she will go far.



BELFAST HOUSING ACHIEVEMENTS:

COVID was challenging for all our young people. In our Belfast House we have 18 young people living in individual flats but in one building. This meant the young people and the team had to constantly navigate the COVID dynamics of this period which was certainly challenging. However, the young people and the team took the challenge on, working through guidance from the Public Health Agency and supporting young people to maintain contact safely with others through online contact and maintaining safe social distancing. Our young people also engaged in programmes such as Isom8 to help them manage feelings of loneliness and boredom during lockdowns. We are both thankful and proud of our young people for adjusting in a shared living space in a way that helped keep everyone safe.

YOUNG PERSON'S STORY

David moved into Belfast Housing just before Christmas 2020. When we first met David, he was struggling with addiction, low mood, no self-esteem and he felt isolated from his family. David was quiet, shy, and feeling hopeless. He describes this as one of the darkest times in his life.

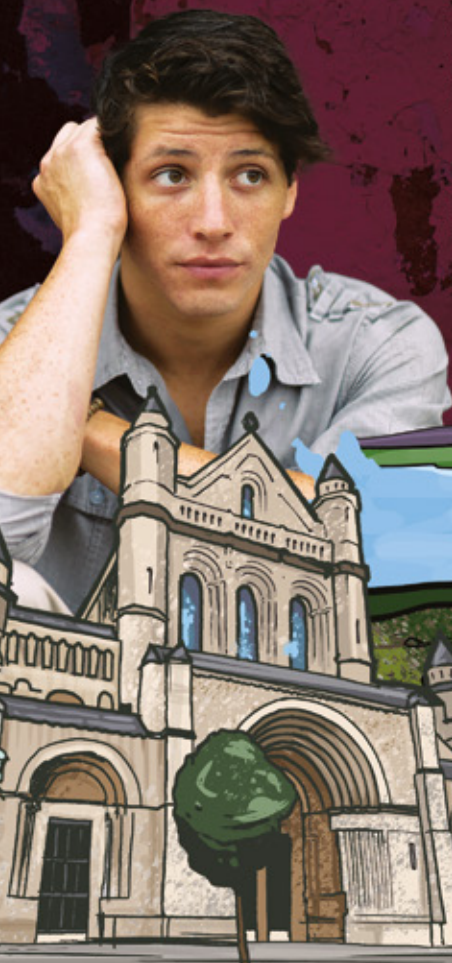
During the move-in process, David began to trust in the support around him and became fully invested in making his flat a home. And what a home he made! His flat was stunning!

David worked hard with the MACS team on his support plans. Sometimes it was easy and sometimes it was very tough. But through it all, David stuck with us and we stuck with him.

What MACS can't take credit for is the sheer determination David put into working through his issues, facing them head-on to make positive changes in his life. He never gave up despite many opportunities to slip into old habits.

While all this was happening, David developed his tenancy-ready skills, maintained his flat, applied for the correct benefits, and focussed on rebuilding relationships with the important people in his life.

In 2022 David was successful in being allocated his own property with the Housing Executive and moved on from our Service, fully encapsulating MACS' Housing ethos of "Move in to Move on". When David talked to me recently about his time at MACS he said "I moved in as a boy, but left a man". His new home is a credit to him and we all wish him the very best for the future.



SHARED TENANCY



The Shared Tenancy Team has had a productive year. We were able to secure 6 new properties in Belfast, giving 12 young people a home with their chosen housemate. This is a major achievement for all young people involved. We had a lot of fun helping young people kit out, move belongings, and set up home together, while building positive relationships with us and each other.

- Working in partnership with the Housing Executive we have 13 properties in Belfast and provide ongoing support for 39 young people through MACS Floating Support. We restarted our Steering Group, which enabled us to link in with funders and other service providers. Feedback was positive and provided valuable learning and aided relationship building for the future.
- We have seen a steady increase in referrals to Shared Tenancy and have continued to build on existing relationships with the Housing Executive and private landlords in Lisburn and Downpatrick to secure tenancies for young people on our waiting list.
- Our team held two fundraisers through the year for Shared Tenancy for unrestricted funds to support our young people – a 90's disco and a Camino of St Patricks Trail in partnership with Belfast Floating Support.

YOUNG PERSON'S STORY

Heaven and Frehiwet were keen to share the positive impact MACS Shared Tenancy has had on them both. After arriving in Northern Ireland separately seeking asylum, both girls had been placed in Foster Care and Supported Accommodation. They were matched together through the Shared Tenancy process and were soon allocated a property through the Housing Executive in June 2022.

From then both young people secured jobs, one through Belfast Trust Employability Scheme, and one restarted education. Both say sharing together has positively impacted their overall well-being, expanded their social circle, and helped them gain their independence. Both girls love their new home and take pride in looking after it together, learning lifelong tenancy-ready skills. It has been wonderful watching both young people flourish and achieve their potential.



LISBURN INTEGRATED



- MACS were chosen alongside ADD NI as the official Lisburn and Castlereagh Mayor's Charity of the Year, this was an amazing opportunity for MACS. MACS Lisburn worked very closely with the Mayor and his team throughout the year participating in various fundraising events and building new relationships. The Lisburn team and young people got to work closely with the Mayor to create promotional videos and this was a lovely experience enjoyed by all, particularly the young people who starred in the video! The year finished with the Mayor's Dinner which celebrated MACS, ADD NI and all the achievements of the year.
- COVID was difficult for our young people across MACS' services, a lot of young people were isolated. When restrictions were lifted across NI, the staff and young people in MACS Lisburn were extremely excited to come together once again to enjoy a group activity. The young people were treated to an Escape Room activity alongside workers Aoife and Jack. Everyone was very appreciative of the opportunity to be together again and it marked the way for plenty more group activities to come.
- Lisburn MACS' biggest accomplishment over the year is our young people. We have had some lovely positive stories of new jobs, new courses, new friendships, and new homes! We have had some lovely move ons and the young people continue to do well in their new homes. COVID had cast a shadow over the past few years, however our young people pushed through and were able to shine!



YOUNG PERSON'S STORY

Skylar had found herself in a hostel following a difficult period in her life. When living in the hostel, Skylar was subjected to transphobia by other residents and felt that she wasn't safe. Skylar came to Lisburn MACS in October 2020 and never looked back. Skylar was anxious at first as she didn't know what to expect with MACS and she stated that she wanted a safe space where she could "be herself". Skylar is very honest of her MACS experience and how she had some "bumps in the road". Skylar said that she learned a lot while at MACS, particularly from the relationships she formed with staff and other young people. Skylar was given an iPad tablet through the MACS and End Youth Homeless fund, with this help Skylar began to apply for jobs in the local area. Skylar commented on how her confidence sky-rocketed once she was in employment and credits this to the support received from both MACS staff and her grandparents - who have both been Skylar's biggest supporters throughout her journey. Skylar said that she was grateful for MACS as it allowed her stability and the opportunity to rebuild the relationship with her grandparents; a relationship that is extremely important to her. 18 months on, Skylar is now in her own home in the community, engaging in MACS Floating Support and in full time employment. Skylar has a loving support network around her and is focusing on her future goals of obtaining her motorcycle license with the help of her grandparents. Skylar said that she feels comfortable and content, reflecting on how everything "fell into place". We at MACS Lisburn are all incredibly proud of what Skylar has overcome and it is an absolute joy to see her content and happy in her own place!



DOWNPATRICK

INTEGRATED SERVICE

We have seen an increase in the use of the assessment flats for Unaccompanied Minors and continued to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders, ensuring we communicated effectively and planned appropriately to meet the needs of young people. Working with these young people has given us an insight into the intricacies of the legality and care needed for the young people who are seeking asylum.

It has been a pleasure to learn about each young person's individual culture, experiences and to watch them develop new skills such as cooking.

As a result of the positive outcomes for young people using these assessment flats, we are exploring the potential for this to become temporary accommodation solely for unaccompanied minors.



ACHIEVEMENTS:

Throughout the past year the service has been managing through the pandemic. With this brought creativity and innovative working. Whilst contact had to be reduced, the team were able to stay in touch and support the young people in many ways. From having house catch ups round an outside fire with hot chocolate to providing comforts packs and delivering food bank parcels. Ensuring that interaction and contact was maintained was of the upmost importance when young people were struggling with isolation.

- Use of the outside space to ensure contact was maintained with young people during periods of isolation.
- We supplied comfort packs and food bank parcels struggling throughout the pandemic.
- Staff have upskilled and developed their knowledge to support unaccompanied minors accessing our services.



YOUNG PERSON'S STORY - FLOATING SUPPORT

Jordan was referred to MACS Downpatrick Floating Support at the age of 16. At this stage he was homeless and sleeping on a family member's sofa. Jordan spent 10 days in MACS Assessment flat before being placed temporarily with a relative who was and still is a great support to him. Jordan was struggling financially as he was not entitled to benefits as he was in full time education at South Eastern Regional College (SERC).

Jordan's basic needs were not being met and this was having a negative impact on his mental health. Jordan's Floating Support Worker worked closely with him to help him access the correct benefits and to help him maintain his place in his relative's home. When he turned 18, Jordan was then supported to register with the Housing Executive and helped to apply for relevant grants to cover travel costs to ensure he could continue with his studies.

After registering with the Housing Executive Jordan was eligible for a flat in MACS Supported Housing Service which he accepted. Jordan immediately made his new flat a home and engaged really well with staff and other tenants.

During his time in Supported Housing Jordan's motivation fluctuated and he eventually left his SERC course. He was very pro-active in gaining employment and worked in various jobs, showing a great work ethic and a desire to be self-sufficient, eventually gaining full time employment.

Jordan was supported to get a permanent home of his own through the Housing Executive. Within a week of moving in, Jordan had painted every room in the house by himself and also got a cat and a dog! He was also able to furnish his new home thanks to a grant applied for with the help of his Floating Support worker.

Since moving to his new home Jordan has also progressed in his job and taken on additional responsibilities and with it an increased salary! With Jordan now well settled in his new home and job and much more financially stable his Floating Support closed in August 2022.

Throughout his time with MACS Jordan showed incredible emotional resilience, perseverance, and determination to get to where he wanted to be and was a pleasure to work and spend time with. We have no doubt that he will continue to progress and grow in all areas of his life.

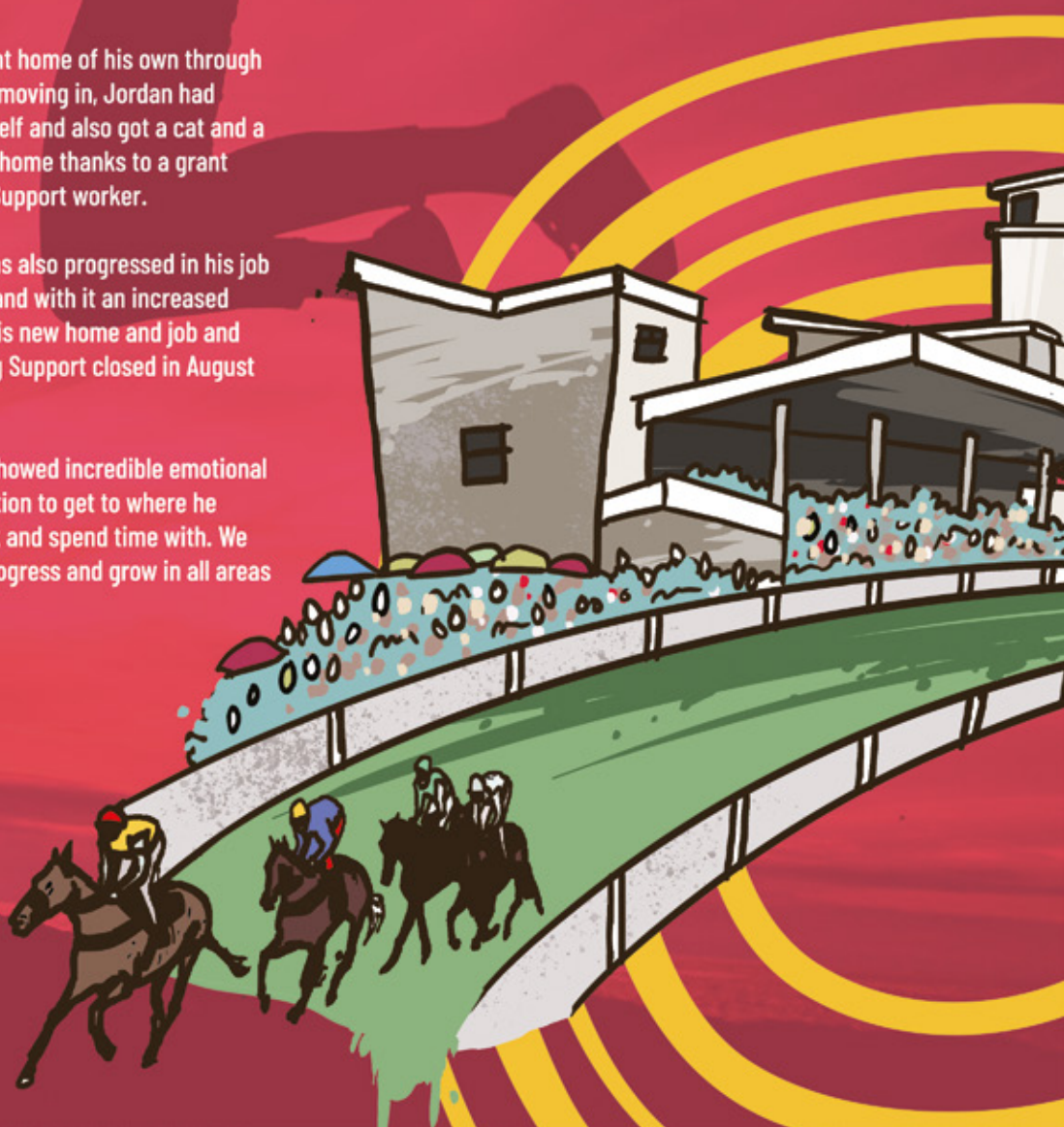
YOUNG PERSON'S STORY - SUPPORTED HOUSING

Bobby moved into MACS Downpatrick in August 2020 following a 10 day stay in MACS Lisburn Assessment Flat. Bobby is originally from Belfast and found the move to a new area very difficult, especially having to follow COVID travel restrictions. Bobby adjusted well to his new surroundings and soon settled in to his new flat. When Bobby moved into MACS his mental health and motivation was very poor. Bobby was supported to engage in support services available to help improve and sustain his mental health.

As Bobby's confidence increased, he began to make new friends and they eventually went on a group holiday to Spain. Bobby began to look towards the future and set a clear path to achieving his goals. In February 2022, he accepted a Housing Executive property in Belfast which was closer to his family. It was so good to see Bobby starting a new, exciting chapter in his life.

With the help of available grants, Bobby was able to furnish his flat and make it feel like home in his own personal style which he is very proud of.

Bobby is now able to look after his physical and mental health and has set his sights in getting back into education or employment in the future. Bobby is perfect example of how hard work, determination and resilience can help achieve goals and dreams and settle into a place called home.



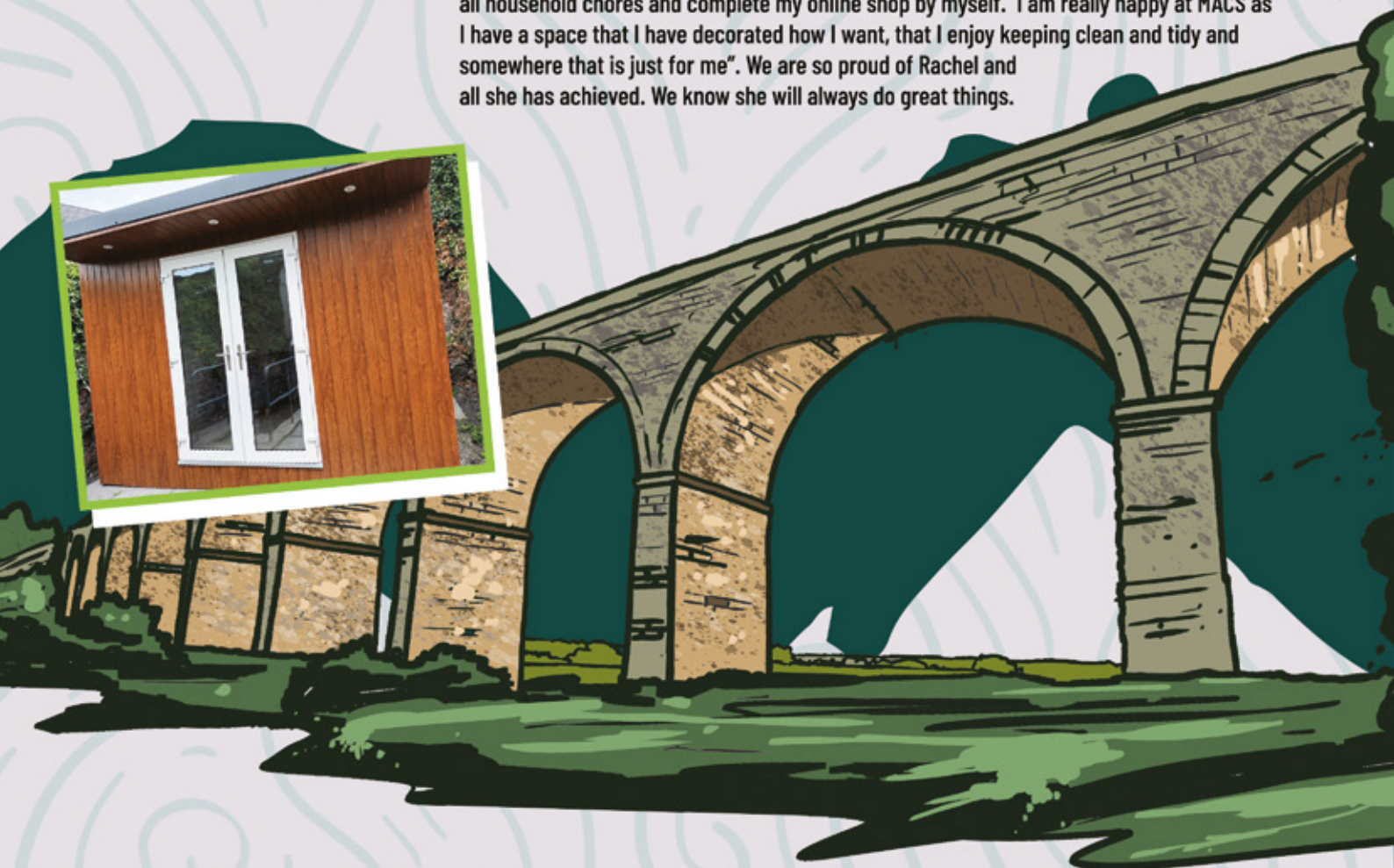
NEWRY INTEGRATED SERVICE

- Newry is a cosy little building which was lacking a group space for young people. With generous funding from B&Q and Supporting People, we were able to install a garden room that is insulated, decorated, and wired. The space has been furnished and is a lovely addition to our current space.
- Newry Floating Support is a new and developing service and we are focussing heavily on networking. This year we developed new fundraising and donation partnerships with Norbrook and Community Advice who generously donated support packages to young people using our services.



YOUNG PERSON'S STORY

Rachel (not her real name) moved to MACS Newry just after her 18th birthday. She said, "I was quite nervous about the move as I was very comfortable in the residential home I was living in. In the run up to my move I, met with my new Housing Worker for ice creams and sunny drives in the countryside, came to MACS for visits and picked colours of paint for my flat which made me much more comfortable with my move in. When I first moved to MACS, I needed support with most tasks around the house as I had never done them before. The staff in MACS supported me to develop my independent living skills and now I can do so much for myself which makes me feel really proud of how far I've come. It also gives me so much more freedom as I can just go ahead and do things for myself. Now, I can do almost all household chores and complete my online shop by myself. I am really happy at MACS as I have a space that I have decorated how I want, that I enjoy keeping clean and tidy and somewhere that is just for me". We are so proud of Rachel and all she has achieved. We know she will always do great things.



HR AND FINANCE

- Maintained Investors in People Gold Award.
- Implemented MACS Health and Wellbeing Plan in conjunction with staff Health and Wellbeing Group.
- Recruited 27 new staff across all services.
- Recruitment Working Group reviewed and explored new ways of recruiting and retaining staff.
- Undertook an external IT Cyber Security Audit and continue to implement recommendations to improve and enhance IT & Cyber Security.
- Increased staff awareness in relation to Cyber Security by introducing an awareness training and phishing programme to all staff.
- Employed two new staff members specialising in HR Admin and Office Administration.
- Enhanced Data Protection knowledge by undertaking GDPR Practitioner Foundation Accreditation.

ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES

- MACS supported 1079 young people
- 80 young people accommodated in our Supported Housing Services
- 525 young people supported to find or maintain their accommodation in the community with Floating Support
- 410 young people were supported to improve their mental health and wellbeing
- 282 young people participated in our bespoke school's programme promoting positive wellbeing
- 100% of young people and stakeholders surveyed indicated that they received a good or excellent service
- 78% of young people found accommodation
- 88% of young people maintained their own tenancies
- 79% of young people improved their mental health
- 85% of young people improved their social networks
- 86% of young people accessed the correct benefits
- 74% of young people better managed their self-harm and suicidal ideation
- 98% of young people actively engaged in participation



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

MACS Downpatrick supply a great service to the local area helping and supporting young people experiencing Homelessness in Downpatrick and surrounding areas. They assist my team of Housing Advisors by providing an excellent floating support service and accommodation for young homeless presenters.

Our staff have a great working relationship with the team members and encourage all applicants from 18-25 to take up the service due to the benefits that we have seen first-hand change young people's lives through what some of the most difficult times in their life can be.

We have seen such positive changes in some of our young homeless applicants that when presented to NIHE they would have been vulnerable and lacking in the most basic of life skills. My team then pull on our floating support service from MACS. Some of our Young homeless applicants would have taken up a stay at MACS accommodation in the 2 year bed, when they have completed their time with MACS and are ready to leave the changes have been remarkable they have gained the life skills and confidence and are able to take up their own tenancy and with the continued floating support has helped to sustain tenancies and prevent reoccurring homelessness.

NIHE in Downpatrick are thankful to the Downpatrick MACS for their ongoing help with the young people of the district and would be keen to see this continue and expand.

**Team Leader, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Downpatrick**

I just want to say a massive thank you for having Daniel stay at MACS Lisburn. Daniel has really enjoyed his time there and speaks highly of all the staff there. This has allowed the Trust the time and space to secure accommodation for Daniel to ensure his education and emotional wellbeing have not been impacted and is greatly appreciated. Please pass on our thanks to the staff there. I was there yesterday, and it seems like a lovely facility.

Social Worker, Shankill Health and Wellbeing Centre

Since taking on this role I have relied heavily on MACS and we have been able to get great outcomes for Young People.

Housing Advisor (Young People), Housing Rights

Just wanted to highlight how impressed and delighted I am with how my dog turned out after her Muddy Paws session. Never has she looked so good to the point that people stopped me in the street. Well done and a million thanks on a great job.

Customer MACS Muddy Paws

Just wanted to send a huge thank you for going above and beyond to support my student in his placement. I can tell from my initial meeting to the closing how much time and effort had been invested by the staff in Led By You to give him the best placement possible.

Senior Youth Worker, New Start Education Centre

The Belfast Floating Support Worker went above and beyond recognising an adult safeguarding risk, he did an excellent job in recognising this safeguarding risk and identifying the support that was needed.

(Safeguarding Team)

I would just like to say how much I as a health professional appreciate the invaluable support and updates from the staff in MACS Downpatrick. Everyone in the team is always willing to support the young people with their health needs and any appointment they need to attend. They truly want the best for every young person.

LACNS

Since taking on this role I have relied heavily on MACS and we have been able to get great outcomes for Young People.

Social Worker South Eastern Trust Area

"Led By You is such a unique service – it is lovely to see young people kept central to the work that is carried out and helps ensure the best outcomes possible for young people involved in different projects"

**Representative from Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Social Cohesion Fund**

"It is good to see our funding being put to such good use and in creative ways to help young people"

Nikki – Public Health Agency

"Working in partnership with Led By You has been really useful in helping us hear directly young people. We are really grateful for the time and effort put in by MACS staff to help young people engage in the process".

**Representative from Northern Ireland Commissioner for
Children and Young People**

"We have had an excellent working relationship with MACS over the last several years and see their commitment to advocating on behalf of the young people experiencing homelessness"

Housing Officer – Northern Ireland Housing Executive

"The Wellbeing team have been a really good resource for us to be able utilise in the community and we regularly refer to provide additional help and support for young people struggling with their mental health"

CPN – Woodstock Lodge, Belfast



YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEEDBACK

"My worker has been my lifesaver. I honestly don't know what I would have done without him in my life and it scares me to think about where I would be. He has been an absolute blessing and I can't ever thank him enough. He is really amazing".

"My support worker was always there when I needed to talk to her or when she was off, she'd always remind me I can always ring the office and speak to another Mac's worker. I received a lot of support during the years I was involved with MACS".

"They made me feel hopeful about the future".

"My support worker was really helpful in helping me find houses and apply for house viewings along with listening to me if I had any concerns. She was always there for me and always made sure I knew that."

"Honestly don't think I could have gotten better support from anywhere else, as per the last question, I felt like I was listened to, I was given good advice and given help to take the steps I needed too".

"My support worker helped me to get a volunteer match, got me private counselling sessions and I was able to make friends and build up my confidence to go to groups and make friends".

"Being a Young Leader has been life changing - I got so much from it, loads of experience, skills and it has helped me to begin my career. I feel like I made a real difference and felt so supported the whole time".

"Muddy Paws was amazing, fun, I learned loads and it helped me feel so much better about myself. I loved every minute of it".

"The staff at MACS were always there for me when I had a problem to offer help and support".

"Being a student in Led By You was such a brilliant experience - I learnt so much being part of such a special service".



"MACS has made a huge difference to my life – I wouldn't be here without it"

"My worker really listened to me, they understood. They helped, even when I was at my worst, they didn't let me down"

"My mentor was amazing – I am so much more confident now than I was before. I tried loads of fun new things and I'm not stuck in my house all the time now"

"MACS was the best thing to ever happen to me"

"My worker helped me get sorted with my money and helped me get my own place. All I have ever wanted is my own place where I can feel safe. They helped me get furniture, paint it and make it my home".

"MACS staff are different – they want to help you achieve your dreams".

"My MACS worker helped me with everything and were always there for me. I've never had support like it"

"My worker is brilliant, she helps me with everything I need her to and she really cares about me"

"I owe my life to MACS – I was in the worst place in my life and my worker did everything with me. Got me to appointments, got me sorted and now things are looking up. My life is much better now".

"My worker is like a friend, they really care. I don't have many people who treat me like a friend and who help me".

"My life is so much better now – I was in a low place and didn't want to live. My worker and volunteer were great, they helped me out of a really dark place. I learned so much about myself and have a really good really relationship with my mentor. He was brilliant"

"MACS helped me with my housing, helped me get back into education and now I'm doing a course I love. It will help me get my dream job".



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