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# ANNUAL REPORT

## 010-011

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# MAOS

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE



SOME OF OUR STAFF TEAM

# CEO REPORT

In June 2011 of this year MACS will celebrate its 21st Birthday. “Happy Birthday!” Over the years we have developed and changed enormously from one worker, providing supported housing to 5 care leavers to an organisation who now support approximately 270 young people a year.

In 2010-2011 we continued as a charity to find ways to move forwards and positively impact on the lives of the young people we engage with. We set targets both in terms of organisational development and face to face practice with young people which included for example achieving a ‘B’ in Supporting People’s (Quality Assessment Framework) and an ‘A’ in participation of young people in the organisation. This was no mean feat and staff burned the midnight oil in order to prepare for validation visits. The assessors from Supporting People paid special praise to their commitment, energy and skills. We also maintained previously won accreditations, and we are currently working on an ‘Investors in People’ Health and Wellbeing award. **Our aim is to make MACS a truly inspiring and great place to work.** We succeeded in winning two funding awards from the Building Change Trust. As a result of this funding MACS will provide mentoring and training to four other voluntary organisations

## CONTENTS

1	CEO/CHAIR REPORT	13	COLLABORATION AND OUTCOMES MONITORING - SPIN
2	VISION/MISSION/AIMS	14	EQUINE ASSISTED GROWTH AND LEARNING (EAGAL)
3	KEY ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS	15	FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS 2011-2012
4 - 5	SUPPORTED HOUSING SERVICE	16	ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE
6 - 7	MENTORING SERVICE	17	BALANCE SHEET
8 - 9	FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE	18 - 19	ORGANISATIONAL CHART
10 - 11	RU OK?	20	WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US
12 - 13	YOUNG PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION		



on outcomes monitoring and provide a shared corporate partnership with VOYPIC and Include Youth. Both these projects we will roll out in 2011- 2012. We have successfully managed to secure funding for our three core services for the next three years which in these difficult financial times is the miracle of blood from stones.

I am proud to say that our greatest achievement over the last year has been the emphasis placed on meaningfully involving young people in how the organisation is run. Several workshops were carried out with young people over the year which resulted in MACS name and logo change. We developed an exciting new vision, **(Life is gr8 for young people)** mission, values and new aims that make sense to our young people. We have tried to listen carefully to what our young people want and therefore have not used limiting terms like 'vulnerable' or 'at risk'. Instead we have used neutral terms like "supporting young people who have not had a fair deal" and "we depend on each other to make life work".

**At last we have developed a formalised participation strategy for young people at MACS and we will be implementing it in April 2011.** Its success will be monitored by a participation subgroup comprising of staff, young people, and Board of Directors. **Young people now represent their views at Board level and I am delighted that we have two past young people and one current young person contributing on the Board of Directors.**

As usual I would like to extend thanks to MACS amazing staff team, volunteers and to acknowledge the dedication of our Board of Directors, in particular Tracy for taking on the new role of chair without hesitation. I would also like to thank Angela Lynn who retired from the Board after 21 years of service. She was and is gifted at working with young people, a true inspiration and friend. Thanks are also extended to Steven Dornan who retired this year after 12 years of service and who provided a thoughtful and reflective voice to Board meetings.

Lastly I recently asked a young person what would he like MACS to do better his reply was - show more empathy. Taking the time to really understand another human being is key to all the work we undertake. If you read nothing else in this report please let me direct you to the young people's stories which are funny, inspiring, honest, candid and at times very moving.

*Mary Ryan*

Mary Ryan  
CEO MACS



## CHAIRS REPORT

I would like to take this opportunity to present to you the MACS Annual Report 2010-2011.

I took over as Chair of the Board of Directors in March 2011, replacing Eithne Craig, to whom we would like to express our thanks and gratitude for all that she achieved in her role as Chairperson.

The organisation is changing rapidly with one of the most significant changes being reflected in the amendment to the name of the organisation, to MACS, with a modern twist to the strap line; Supporting Young People, which reflects the organic growth of the wide range of young people with which MACS works.

Successes within the year include: Obtaining funding within this rocky and uncertain funding environment. Management and retention of employees who demonstrate every day their loyalty and commitment to MACS and the organisation's ethos. Engagement of young people to ensure their values and opinions are heard and counted. Participation of the young people in the Strategic Plan for 2011-2015, their design and hard work giving the layout and design a modern and upbeat feel. The growth of the EAGAL Project, which has seen 11 young people being supported via the programme; and four employees and one Board member undertaking the training for the project to aid its sustainability.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There have been significant changes within the Board of Directors during this past year. Huge thanks go out to Angela Lynn and Stephen Dornan who served the Board for many years and whose contribution has proved invaluable.

This year the Board welcomed three new younger members who are representative of the service users of MACS - past and present and whose insight and experiences are acknowledged and appreciated, so our thanks go out to them for their participation and enthusiasm. I would like to extend my thanks to all those who have served on the Board for their dedication and contribution. Great thanks go to Mary who always presents a positive front and to the employees who remain hard working, loyal and committed. To the volunteers who mentor the young people "thank you" your services are appreciated and priceless. And not least to the young people themselves, thank you for attending, participating and cooperating, keep up the good work and creative ideas.

*Tracy Bell*

Tracy Bell  
Chairperson MACS

# WE HAVE A NEW VIBE...

VISION  
MISSION  
ETHOS  
VALUES  
AIMS

## VISION

Life is gr8 for young people

## MISSION

Provide a range of support services for young people who haven't had a fair deal aged 16-25

## ETHOS

We depend on each other to make life work

## VALUES

Make your own choices  
Risk mistakes  
Involve yourself

## AIMS

Strength, Excellence and Vision

Getting you to where you want to be

Led by you



**MENTORING**  
DARE TO DREAM



**FLOATING SUPPORT**  
BUILDING FUTURES TOGETHER



**HOUSING**  
MOVE IN TO MOVE ON

# KEY ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

## YOUNG PEOPLE & STAKEHOLDERS

### OBJECTIVES

Support young people who have not had a fair deal 16-25 across MACS' three services: Supported Housing, Mentoring and Floating Support

### OUTCOMES

MACS supported over 275 young people across the three services

Set up a young people's forum to develop a young people's participation strategy

- 30 young people attended four young people's forums
- Set up a young people and staff participation subgroup
- Developed a four year young people's participation strategy 2011-2015

1 Strategic vision day for 25 young people across the organisation

- Young People consulted on Vision, Mission, Aims & Values
- Young People made changes on an operational level

Achieve a quality service for all young people at MACS

- 98% of young people indicated they received a good or excellent service

Referrers and other stakeholders receive a good or excellent service from MACS

- 100% of stakeholders indicated that they received a good or excellent service

## PEOPLE & INNOVATION

### OBJECTIVES

Establish greater partnership and collaboration with other agencies

### OUTCOMES

- Received funding from Building Change Trust to develop shared corporate services project with Include Youth and VOYPIC

Ensure staff and volunteer development is central to MACS' ethos.

- MACS maintained Investors in People award 2009
- Working towards obtaining Health and Wellbeing Award - Investors in People by September 2012

Carry out and external staff satisfaction questionnaire

- Implemented 14 of 19 recommendations from external staff survey 2010

Strengthen governance and strategic leadership

- 2 past young people and one current young person recruited onto Board of Directors in July 2010

## OPERATIONS

### OBJECTIVES

Ensure MACS are a regulated Housing, Floating and Mentoring Support provider

### OUTCOMES

- MACS maintained Supporting People Accreditation from March 2009
- MACS maintained Mentoring Befriending Foundation (Approved Provider standards) 2009-2012
- MACS maintained OCN Centre Approved

Maintain and enhance MACS monitoring/outcomes system

- SPIN database system implemented to track and monitor outcomes
- Received funding through Building Change Trust to pilot SPIN system with four other voluntary organisations

Young people benefit from an alternative therapeutic intervention

- Project proposal and funding plan will be developed for Equine Assisted Growth and Learning services by March 2012

Research and develop the need for a high support leaving and aftercare service in Belfast

- Proposal for high support project accepted by Supporting People and Belfast Trust and will be commissioned by December 2011

Ensure MACS meet the relevant standards as indicated by funders

- MACS achieved level B Quality Assessment Framework (Supporting People)
- MACS achieved Level A in young people's participation Quality Assessment Framework (Supporting People)

Develop a new strategy for MACS 2011-2015 in partnership with young people

- Strategy 2011-2015 to be published in September 2011

## FINANCE

### OBJECTIVES

Ensure MACS has sustainable financial resources

### OUTCOMES

- MACS secured £810,000 to sustain the organisation

## SUPPORTED HOUSING SERVICE

### MOVE IN TO MOVE ON

Through the Housing Service we aim to bridge the gap between leaving care and interdependent living.

Housing is jointly funded by Supporting People and The Belfast Trust and placements are available to young people aged 16-21 years (for up to 2 years). We currently offer 12 placements across two locations in Belfast.

**Our ethos and value base clearly recognise risk taking as a wholly appropriate and indeed necessary process in life.** This acceptance is particularly relevant with regards to supported housing. As young people journey through care and into their own accommodation, they take many risks as they learn to understand and appreciate the responsibilities that come with interdependent living. For the last 20 years, MACS has offered support and accommodation without staff in situ. Our belief being that with staff on site, young people would have less opportunity to take and manage their own risks. That staff would intervene to resolve issues and 'manage' behaviours that young people often regarded as appropriate and indeed 'normal'. In 2009 Housing was jointly commissioned (by Belfast Trust and Supporting People) and placements were purchased exclusively for care leavers. With this changing referral remit came a younger population who typically had no experience of living either in their own accommodation or in hostels/foyers. Moving to MACS directly from

care, to an unstaffed model, was a major transition for some young people and they often found it difficult to balance the responsibilities that came with the 'freedom' of supported housing.

This has led to numerous challenges over the last year for young people and staff alike. With much reflection, consideration and discussion, MACS have entered into consultations with the Trust and Supporting People to transition to a higher support model; providing a service staffed 24 / 7. Through our own consultations, as well as those carried out by RQIA and Supporting People in their respective evaluations this year, **young people were explicit in their desire to have staff on site, stating that it would make them feel safer and offer them a point of contact and support at night and over weekends.** Throughout 2010 / 2011 we have been negotiating this transition as well as refining a model and approach that best imbue the MACS ethos and value base. Our high support model will be underpinned by Social Pedagogy. MACS believe that this approach lends itself fully to our ethos and values. The underpinning principles of holistic and reflective practice, empowerment, citizenship and collective responsibility are also ideally suited to supported housing. We are looking forward to 2011/2012 and the much anticipated roll out of our new high support project and model.

*I got my benefits sorted and looked into a few courses at tech that I actually liked.*

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 10-11

- 25 young people supported in placements (with all 14 move ons planned)
- 7 young people accessing their own tenancy at point of move on; of the 8 who returned to family, 5 accessed their own accommodation within 6 months with MACS support
- 11 young people accessing MACS Floating Support
- Creation of a high support model and proposal for presentation to funders.
- Assessed and approved by RQIA's pilot inspection of the Draft Standards for Supported Accommodation Projects (themes; quality of care and support; quality of staffing and management) - July 2010
- Assessed and approved (Level B) by Supporting People's Quality Assessment Framework (QAF)- September 2010
- 1 Student Social Work placement offered (successful placement) supported

### MICHAEL'S STORY

I got a phone call at 10am on a Monday morning from Ciará asking me to write my story for the MACS annual report. To be honest she could have asked me anything and I still would have said yes just to get her off the phone at that time of the morning! When I woke up at a 'normal time' for a Monday morning, around 12noon or so, I remembered vaguely what I had agreed to.

I was going to send Ciará a message to tell her I couldn't do it anymore when I remembered I had no credit left in my phone, so I ended up waiting for her phoning back to confirm. My plan was to make up an excuse of why I couldn't write about my story for the annual report but instead I thought, actually this might not be a bad idea. I have so many funny stories to tell and I even might be able to help some people out with the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the housing project. So here goes . . .

My name is Michael, I moved into the MACS housing project after being in a children's home for a good few years. **I had a big shock when I moved into MACS because it felt like for the first time in my life I was treated like an adult.** There was no more being dragged out of bed for a boring tech class that I hated and never wanted to do in the first place, no more being made to eat food that I didn't like, and no more being told what time I had to be back for! What could be better?



As you can imagine, it wasn't long before I had taken advantage of this feeling of freedom. I got woken up one morning by the door bell going a 100 times a minute and a loud voice from Iain (the manager of the project) saying that if I didn't answer my door he was going to use his key to get in! Well at that point I jumped out of bed with the sorest head ever, looked around me and saw way too many bottles of beer and my mate, that had been barred from being at MACS a week ago, sleeping on my sofa. I bunged some of the bottles in a bag and shoved my mate into the cupboard in the kitchen and told him to be quiet. Iain came into the flat handing out another warning and telling me that I needed to wise up and start working with the staff at MACS to get help with cleaning up the flat and making a fresh start. I was hoping and praying that Iain didn't start looking in my cupboards but I think he knew exactly what was going on as my eyes darted between him and the cupboard the whole time he was speaking. With a cheeky grin Iain tapped me on the head with the warning handed it to me and said come on now Michael, wise up!

**So I took his advice and started to work with the staff, especially my worker Ciará I got my benefits sorted and looked into a few courses at tech that I actually liked. I was able to speak to the staff quite well and it felt good that I had someone to call on if things did go wrong.** I always wished for my own place with no staff but I am so glad that I had the time at MACS to learn that waking up with no electric, no food and a couple of empty bottles of vodka is not a good idea. Thank God the staff at MACS understood me and allowed me to make these mistakes now

and then. **Ciará always listened to what I had to say and she never judged me. I always found that she was there when I really needed her.**

There was a time in my life when I lived at MACS that my past really crept up on me and I ended up drinking really heavily and taking drugs. I got into a lot of bother in the community and ended up being very silly one night which led to me being put out of East Belfast by the paramilitaries. At this point I thought I had really blown it for myself and I had really hit rock bottom, I was just waiting for MACS to kick me out as I knew I had taken a bit far this time. I couldn't believe it when MACS offered to move me to the University Street building so that I could get out of the East. It was really nice that they gave me another chance but at that time in my life I didn't see this opportunity for making a fresh start and I was too far into my alcohol and drugs to realise it. I ended up living with my aunt and uncle in Newtownards for 6 months but my key worker in MACS still helped me. **Ciará helped me with the Housing Executive to get a place of my own, she challenged me on my drinking and drug taking, which led me to getting help from the GP. Ciará really helped me increase my confidence.**

There is no doubt that my time at MACS was quite crazy and I am definitely not the best representation of how you should spend your time at MACS but I will never forget the memories in my flat and most of all the lessons learnt. **Now I am living in my own place, off drink and drugs, in a good tech programme and I am still involved with the MACS in the Floating Support team so if any blips do come up I know where to go.**







## MENTORING SERVICE

### DARE TO DREAM

Mentoring provides a voluntary relationship with a mentor for young people when they feel they are most vulnerable, typically in the evenings and weekends. The mentoring relationship focuses purely on the needs and goals set by the young person and volunteer mentor. Together they enter into a year long commitment to achieve these goals and most importantly to enjoy building a positive relationship together and have fun. MACS Mentoring aims to reduce loneliness and isolation and improve confidence, self esteem and social networks.

We currently support young people throughout the Eastern Board area, targeting support to:

- Young men in South and East Belfast
- Young people in the Downpatrick/Lisburn areas.
- 16-18 year olds

These specific projects are funded through Children in Need and Wellnet "Protect Life Suicide Prevention Strategy" to support young people at risk of suicide and self harm.

This funding has allowed the staff team to remain as two posts for the geographical areas. We would like to welcome Simon and Emma on board to the Mentoring team.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 10-11

- 75 young people have been supported
- 55 Volunteers have been supported
- 9 volunteers have been trained

- Accreditation by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation for Approved Provider Standards has been maintained. This accreditation is evaluated every three years and will be due again in March 2012.
- Open College Network Centre Approval standards have been maintained
- Volunteer, Eric Brown won Northern Ireland Mentor Recognition Award for 2010

## STEPHANIE'S STORY

My name is Stephanie, I am 20 years old and live with my mum and cat Garfield in Belfast. I have been part of the Mentoring Service Since July 2009.

**I was referred to MACS Mentoring Service from the Young People's Centre who were supporting me with my Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, low moods, loneliness and isolation.**

When I first came to MACS Mentoring I felt very alone and scared, the idea of mentoring was new to me and strange. I didn't know whether it was right for me and whether someone more deserving should take my place. Looking back on it now, I know that I am a different person now and that is partly because the mentoring experience has helped get me in the right direction.

I have always felt alone in my community and although I know people I have had little friends to meet up and do stuff with. I lacked self confidence to build friendships and at times avoided



*“At school I felt I didn’t fit in, but at MACS, I fit in because I am with people who have been through the same stuff as me.”*

situations where I need to get to know new people.

“It frustrated me to get to know people and the thought of making friends scared me and knowing that got me down”

I had started the Princes Trust Programme at the same time my new project worker, Simon, joined the MACS family. I remember getting Simon’s letter saying who he was and with his photograph and I thought “oh no, not a guy, this is going to be uncomfortable”. Simon and I laugh about this now and how I feel comfortable working with him even though he is a guy.

**Simon has helped my confidence step by step. He has been patient with me and never rushed me to do things I am not ready for. If it hadn’t been for him I would never have went on to meet my mentor. Simon encouraged me to go to MACS group nights and days out and now I go to loads of things. It might not sound like much to you but these steps have helped me go back to tech to do my GCSE’s.**

In Feb 2011 I began my mentoring journey with a mentor I chose. Simon and I talked about previous experiences and the learning that could be taken from them. Although nerves were high, for both Anne and I. We did some art to personalise my mentoring journal, through this we got to know each other in a relaxed, fun environment.

I had talked about how a previous mentor was ‘pushy’ when choosing activities and therefore when it came to our planning meeting Anne and I created a list of what goals we would like to achieve. What fun activities we would like to do, in what order

and with a budget from MACS of £30 a month. This really helped to find out what Anne likes to do and what new things she’d like to try.

We have worked on various goals, achieving them with delicious results, such as; cooking Spaghetti Bolognese, baking strawberry and cream muffins and even working on interview skills and employability tips. I have found my mentoring relationship with Anne to be very positive.

**“Anne gives advice, is easy to talk to, is really nice. She makes me laugh and is a great listener”.**

“Anne has made me realise I could apply for other jobs, not just office jobs. She shared her experience of working which made me realise I have options”.

Although I am only half way through my mentoring year with Anne, I am very excited about the future and the new goals we have set. I can see how far I have come on in life and can acknowledge the achievements I have made. I feel I am taking more control over my life, future and dreams. “I continue to find it difficult to see positive things about myself”. “I don’t know who I am at the moment but with Simon and Anne I know I will work on this over the next few months”.

## VOLUNTEER’S STORY

I became interested in volunteering as a mentor through my job. I work for another children’s charity in a supportive role and see first hand the difference it

makes to young people to have someone who believes in them, so when I saw an advert for volunteer mentors with MACS I jumped at the chance to join.

**As a new recruit all volunteers with MACS are given group training on mentoring and safeguarding which I found invaluable. I was also impressed by the way MACS structures its Mentoring service and if there is ever an issue the staff are always on hand with a listening ear and good advice.** For example, if any situations arise where I have concerns about Stephanie, if she seems a bit down or anxious I can raise that with the MACS staff and they will either be able to explain what might be causing it, or take note and raise it with Stephanie herself to make sure she is ok. We also talk about anything and everything, sometimes all we need is a good natter.

After the training it took a couple of months before I was matched with Stephanie and it meant a lot that Stephanie picked me. I immediately liked Stephanie on the first night we met. We both like animals and I brought my dog (Maisie) with me, so that helped break the ice - and Simon from MACS was there too. He helped us put a calendar of activities together for the coming months so were able to find out things that we both liked doing and plan outings that we would both enjoy.

Over the eight months since then we have got to know each other much better. Stephanie is twenty and lives at home with her Mum. She is quite quiet and can feel lost in big groups. But with time, patience and reassurance she has come out of herself and I think she feels at ease being with me and talking to me.

Stephanie didn’t have a very good experience at school which affected her confidence and meant she left with few qualifications which has made getting a job quite difficult. We have been able to talk about what kind of job she might like, the benefits of having a job, interview skills and what qualifications would help her get a job. I think Stephanie appreciates the advice I give her - she might not always take it but she always considers it!

Stephanie will also talk to me about other aspects of her life and I think above anything else I am able to reassure her that feeling nervous in new groups, or difficulties in relationships are things that everyone experiences I can give her a perspective on that.

**I really look forward to spending our time together. We have both done and achieved things over the past eight months we’d never done before, like climbing Cavehill, baking muffins, watching the Belfast Giants and visiting the Titantica exhibition.** I have seen Stephanie’s trust in me grow and also seen her become more confident in herself. I’m also really delighted that she is due to start a work placement and is also going back to college to retake some GCSEs.

I have found my first year with MACS really rewarding. I would like to thank the staff who do an amazing job, Stephanie for being a brilliant mentee and the other volunteers for their support - I am looking forward to what this next year as a mentor with MACS will bring!

Anne Dawson *Volunteer*

# FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE

## BUILDING FUTURES TOGETHER

The Floating Support Service is funded through the Housing Executive's Supporting People programme and Wellnet. We offer flexible, person-centred, holistic services to vulnerable or at risk young people aged 16-25 to enable them to maintain interdependent living in the community. Each young person will have a tailored support plan that addresses individually assessed needs. Our support focuses on ten priority areas: managing tenancy and accommodation, motivation and taking responsibility, emotional and mental health, physical health, managing money, social networks and relationships, drug and alcohol use, self care and living skills, meaningful use of time and offending.

During this year our work on outcomes monitoring has been consolidated and strengthened. Our bespoke online database SPIN, has completed its stage two development and we are now able to record both the hard and soft outcomes of the young people we have supported. Our Outcomes work continues to enable us to develop and improve our services to young people in order to meet their needs and enables us as an organisation to clearly evidence the impact of our interventions.

This year has also seen the consolidation of our work at a local level. We have been working closely with the South Eastern Trust in order to pilot an intensive floating support model to 16 / 17 year old care leavers living in their own tenancies. This

pilot model is in its very early stages but we are looking forward to its development. We have also welcomed the ongoing funding support from the Public Health Agency in relation to maintaining our Suicide Prevention Floating Support post in the South Eastern area for the next year.

Eva Koerner has provided us with brilliant leadership and effectiveness in the Downpatrick team and Iain Neill, newly appointed Belfast Manager in August 2010, has clearly demonstrated his energy and commitment to improving and reviewing standards. Our project worker team is skilled, committed and dedicated to meeting the needs of the young people we support. Feedback from other organisations and professionals this year has been 100% positive and all our floating support team members should be thanked for their hard work.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 10-11

- 196 young people were successfully supported across Belfast, Colin, and Downpatrick areas.
- Securing ongoing funding from the Public Health Agency for our suicide prevention Floating Support post in the Downpatrick office.
- Sharing our outcomes monitoring learning to other organisations across Northern Ireland
- Successful validation of the service as an overall B standard in the new Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

- Completion of our second Equine Assisted Growth and Learning (EAGAL) pilot, which enabled 6 young people from the PBNI to experience the therapeutic benefits of this intervention. An evaluation report has been completed.
- A placement was provided for a social work student in the Downpatrick team.
- The commencement of a SPIN pilot with four other Supporting People Providers.
- Commencing the development of an intensive Floating Support model with the South Eastern Trust to meet the needs of care leavers.

## SHANNON'S STORY

After my daughter was born I lived with my foster mum for one year in the country. After this I lived with my daughter's father. However our relationship broke down and I moved into my own home. I was involved with Social Services at this time, but support was due to end and I was referred to MACS by my Social Worker in July 2009.

**At that stage my daughter was living with her dad as a result of court and was her full time carer. I was lost, devastated and heartbroken. I had nothing to live for. I was depressed that I didn't have my daughter with me.** This led me to drink

excessively and use drugs. This helped to take my mind off not being with my daughter. My drug and alcohol use made the process of court much more difficult as my ex partner raised concerns which led me to the addictions team in TSL House. Contact with my daughter was via a contact centre for four hours a week. I felt I had failed her and myself and that I couldn't get out of the hole I was in. It was during this time that I was assessed by MACS and given a Floating Support Worker called Catherine. I was scared and reluctant about support as I didn't think it would help me but I had nothing to lose.

**My relationship with Cat took time to build as I wasn't sure if I could talk about my feelings to her. I soon realised opening up and being honest to Cat enabled her to give me the support and advice I needed. The support from her was in emotional/mental health and drug/alcohol use.** She would support me at court; she was a listening ear and we would reflect on what had happened at court on the particular day. Cat was able to break down the information given to me and talk about the pro's and con's. The process of court was a long one but I felt that I wasn't alone as she was always with me.

In November 2009 I decided to go into Downshire hospital for one month to get away from the temptation to drink. This was an intense time; I began to learn where things went wrong and to see how quickly things got out of control. I realised





*The support has meant so much to me. It was someone to talk to, go for a coffee with and to not feel judged by.*



where I had to make the changes in my life; in places, people and things. I had found who I was. Cat also came to visit me there too.

**As time went on things improved. I stopped drinking and using drugs. I knew I needed to do this for myself and my daughter. I am proud of what I have achieved. We continued to attend court and slowly, time with my daughter increased and was unsupervised.** We were able to go to the park, we had time to bond and be together and have fun! Cat made a referral to the Family Support Panel in Lisburn for money to help with transport and activities. This was successful and we were able to go out more often. We went to the cinema and swimming pool. This was a relief to me financially. We had a choice of what we could do, which we didn't have before. **Cat told me about a course in MACS in summer 2010. This was an NVQ2 in Business and Enterprise. I decided to take part as it gave me something to do and would give me a qualification. The course was brilliant. I got to meet other young people from MACS and I learnt a lot. I successfully completed the course and received a certificate. My portfolio is now used by the tutor to show others! This makes me feel proud and is a real achievement!**

By Christmas 2010 I was one year into recovery and contact had again increased to home visits and more time. This was

a big step for me and my daughter. She was finally home and I could see that things were really changing. This wouldn't have been possible without Cat, as she was able to come to the home visits with me.

Support was due to end in July 2011. Cat and I spoke about this so I could start to get used to the idea. I thought I would be ok about this but as time moved on I became anxious about support ending as Cat had always been there for me. In June 2011 we attended court for the last time. It was agreed I would have overnight contact every fortnight and increased time on Saturdays and over the summer. We agreed that this will last six months until everyone is settled with the new timetable. This would be the first time my daughter had stayed with me in three years. There are no words to describe how I felt at that time; it was huge. We also agreed contact and I will have my daughter over Christmas. I am really looking forward to it!

**Support ended in July 2011 with Cat, my daughter and I going out to lunch and to the park. It was a lovely way to finish our time together. It felt right that my daughter was there when it came to the end.** It has made me see how far I had come in two years. The support has meant so much to me. It was someone to talk to, go for a coffee with and to not feel judged by. I don't know if I would be where I am today without Cat. I am in a much better place now.





## RU OK?

MACS recognise that mental health issues affect a large number of the young people we support, across all three of our services. We have always worked hard to enable the young people we support to develop positive coping mechanisms and to better manage their mental health. Since 2008, MACS received funding for two Mentoring project workers and a Floating Support worker from Wellnet in response to the Protect Life Strategy.

These posts provide specific Mentoring and Floating Support services to young people at risk of self-harm and suicide in the South and East Belfast and South Eastern Trust areas. Intensive support has been given to young people presenting with complex needs, with diagnoses such as schizophrenia, personality disorders, and high risks of suicide and self-harm. With these referrals MACS staff not only work closely with psychiatric services and other mental health professionals taking a multi-disciplinary approach, but also other relevant services to ensure that all the young person's needs are met.

**During 2010/2011 both services exceeded their targets with 77 young people being supported to keep safe, better manage their self-harm and suicide ideation, and address issues of social isolation.** Staff and young people also attended a number of events and activities. These included the "Walk of Life" event on Suicide Prevention day and the World Mental Health week events. MACS also represented the views and

needs of young people in a number of different forums. These include; Carers, Users, and Providers (CUP) where a young person, carer and staff member from MACS all attended the self-harm care pathway steering group and the suicide task groups in Downpatrick and Colin. As well, staff attend three mental health and Suicide Prevention Community of Interests across Belfast and the South Eastern areas. During the last year we have shared our practice via presentations in these forums. All MACS staff and volunteers are trained in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training).

*I have used the word professional more than once in this questionnaire to describe my experience of MACS Floating Support service that is how I have always found the staff. MACS managers play a full part collaborating with other agencies and are respected for this and their individual client work. They are also very receptive to new approaches and ways of working which can benefit their clientele. Anything which would increase the availability of Floating Support workers would be welcome. Sourcing new funding to increase their client contact time would be very valuable.*

## EVIE'S STORY

I'm Evie, I'm 22 years old. I was referred to MACS in May 2010 by the Housing Executive after my dad passed away because I was at a risk of being homeless. I lived alone with my dad. He had been unwell for most of my life. I was his main carer while studying hairdressing at SERC (South Eastern Regional College). This was an incredibly stressful time for me as I felt completely alone and responsible for tasks that a 'normal' 20 year old shouldn't have to undertake. I managed the household making sure the house was clean and there was food on the table. I eventually had to drop out of SERC in order to deal with all this.

**I was an emergency referral to MACS and met my Floating Support worker immediately. She took me under her wing and helped me with housing, money and learning to live alone.** At this point in my life I was living in shock from my father's death. I didn't have much concentration or understanding of things, and my confidence was at an all time low.

My support worker referred me to CRUSE bereavement counselling to help me cope with the loss I had experienced. I got on very well with my worker. This was an incredible support to me, I would have been lost without MACS as my emotional and mental health were deteriorating and close relationships of mine were breaking down - at this point I was suicidal. MACS





“Overall, MACS has given me a sense of worth, a reason to live and reminds me that I’m not alone.”



then set me up with Lifeline counselling and got me a referral with my CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse), who I continue to see every couple of weeks.

Since this my confidence has began to grow. I am finding it much easier to live on my own and I am continuing to work with support worker, Laura. We are currently looking at the possibility of me moving closer to town so I can be near my family and also back to SERC to complete my hairdressing course. Laura also accompanies me to my CPN appointments. These are a great help to me in relation to managing my mental health and helps me with my confidence and self esteem.

**I get on really well with Laura, she understands me. I can talk to her about anything and I know she is not going to judge me. I enjoy spending time with Laura and being involved with MACS in groups and attending outings and vision days. This allows me to have my say in the organisation. Overall, MACS has given me a sense of worth, a reason to live and reminds me that I'm not alone.**

## MARTIN'S STORY

I am Martin and I am 23. I live in Belfast with my family. I have been part of the Mentoring service for 11 months. I was referred to MACS by my social worker to help me use my time better,

develop social networks and work towards specific goals. **My social worker suggested MACS Mentoring because of the work mentoring does with young people who self harm and feel suicidal.**

I have struggled with my mental health since I was a kid. Finding school, making friends and keeping relationships has always been hard and sometimes these made my mental health worse.

I became 'known' to paramilitaries in various areas, which had a massive impact on me and where I could go. I was always looking over my shoulder and often had a feeling of being 'fearful'. When I first met my Mentoring support worker, Simon, I didn't know what to expect. From our first meeting, Simon and I began working on areas of my life that I wanted support with.

We have worked on different things over the last year, from mental health, offending, drugs and alcohol, housing and things to do during the day. Although I found it hard at first I am taking it step by step to achieve goals and resolve issues when they come along.

I was matched with a mentor also called Martin but it did not take off because I was involved in a new relationship. I would be honest in saying that I wish I had stuck with it as my situation changed and I was in need of support that a mentor could have given me. I am now waiting to be

matched again but this time I have clear goals and a list of activities ready to make a go of it.

**I have come through a difficult time with my mental health recently and struggled with thoughts of suicide. Through MACS I felt I was helped and supported through this time and linked into other services to help me. I have recently been discharged from hospital and Mentoring has helped me occupy my time when I feel most vulnerable and alone, usually in the evenings and weekends.** I attend MACS group nights and will be going to MACS Mentoring Young Men's Workshops. I am hopeful for the future and I have found MACS to be a great support.



## ORGANISATIONAL DAY OUT

At our annual organisational day out 12 staff, 20 young people, and 1 volunteer enjoyed a great day at the foot of the Mourne Mountains in Tollymore Forest. Mother Nature was kind to us and we kicked the day off with everyone competing in a range of activities, circulating through stations of rounders, ultimate Frisbee, lawn darts, and swing ball. We followed this with a walk along the Shimna River and ended the day with a picnic in the gardens.

## BELFAST/ DOWNPATRICK GROUPS

Groups continue to be a key feature in the work that we do at MACS with young people. It remains a popular resource for young people in helping with social isolation, connecting young people with the community, and provides them with the opportunity to meet others. Young people continue to be actively involved in the design and development of the yearly planner and the group remains a popular part of MACS. 2010-2011 has seen a diversity of activities being run with young people participating in canoeing, baking, and football.

**Following 6 weeks of sessions, Belfast young people got to put their dancing shoes on and choreographed a Lady**

**Gaga dance routine. Workshops have been delivered on sexual health with Brooke, and Downpatrick young people undertook a 6 week art project with Down Arts Council, showcasing their final pieces of work in an exhibition.** Next year's planner will see focused groups on Money Management, Drug Awareness, Photography, and an interactive group giving young people insight into the international role of the Red Cross. Downpatrick look forward to being able to show off their culinary skills competing in a "Come Dine with Me" group.

## DOWNPATRICK CELEBRATION OF SUCCESS EVENT

MACS Celebration of Success Event was held in Downpatrick County Museum in September 2010 to showcase examples of successful interventions by the Floating Support and Mentoring Services. This event was attended by Margaret Ritchie MP and our young people shone, sharing their inspiring stories of how MACS support has helped them transform their lives.

The event was attended by over 60 young people and representatives from



# COLLABORATION AND OUTCOMES MONITORING-SPIN

the South Eastern Community of Interest, and other Statutory and Voluntary organisations. The event was covered in the Down Recorder.

## INTERVIEW TRAINING

This unique training opportunity is open to all MACS young people. It provides training to enable young people to sit on interview panels in recruitment for potential staff and volunteers. This opportunity ensures that young people's participation is at the heart of MACS and that young people's opinions are valued at all levels throughout the organisation.

**Young people partake in interview training that consists of scoring answers, role plays etc. This invaluable training gives young people skills to prepare for their own interviews and an understanding of how interview panels operate. 6 young people completed the training in 2010-2011.**

Over the past three years MACS have been committed to developing outcomes monitoring systems in order to evidence the quality support we offer to young people accessing our services.

As part of the Supporting People outcomes pilot 2008/2010 we developed a bespoke online IT database system called SPIN that monitors hard outcomes. We selected 16 outcome areas to measure which fit into the five higher level strategic areas of the outcomes framework. The five higher level areas include; Economic well-being, Enjoy and achieve, Be healthy, Stay safe and Make a positive contribution.

The SPIN system is used to record, measure and analyse hard outcomes for young people and it enables us as an organisation to evidence details such as how many young people received the correct benefits, how many maintained their tenancies, how many accessed training and employment etc.

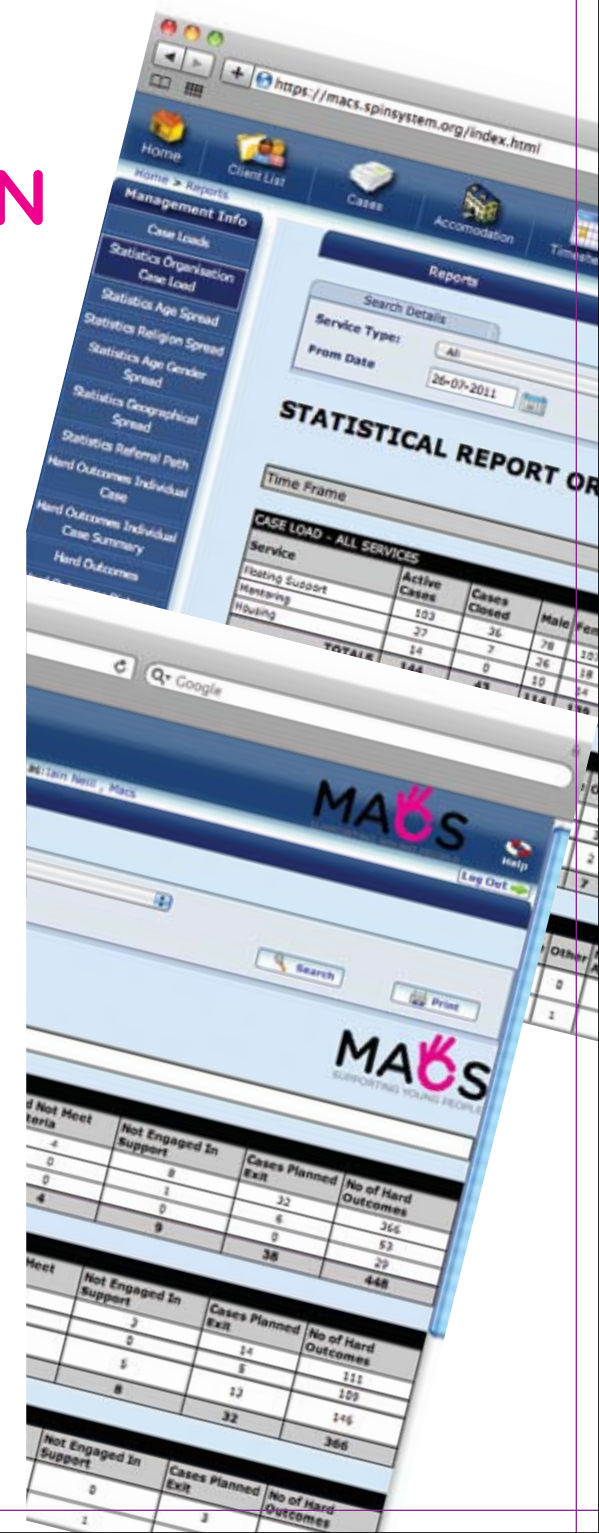
**The SPIN system generates reports that allow the analysis of outcomes information and provide us with an overall picture of service performance, gaps in provision, staff training needs, service strengths and young people's progress.**

During this year our work on outcomes monitoring has been consolidated and strengthened. Our bespoke online database SPIN has completed its stage

two development and we are now able to record both the hard and soft outcomes of the young people we have supported. We have also developed a reporting system which generates the data required by Supporting People to provide quarterly monitoring reports to SPOCC.

We also successfully secured funding from the Building Change Trust and Supporting People in October 2010 to collaborate with four other providers. This pilot has provided the other organisations with the opportunity to use the system for six months with mentoring support from MACS and to allow MACS to develop a plan based on their experience for a stage three development which will make it universally adaptable for any Supporting People provider. MACS hope to develop a social enterprise project and sell the SPIN outcomes monitoring system to other organisations next year. The pilot will be completed in October 2011 and a showcase event is planned for December 2011.

Our Outcomes work continues to enable us to develop and improve our services to young people in order to meet their needs and enables us as an organisation to clearly evidence the impact of our interventions.





# EQUINE ASSISTED GROWTH AND LEARNING (EAGAL)

This year MACS has achieved two major developments in the field of Equine Assisted Growth and Learning. This includes the completion of a new pilot project with the Northern Ireland Probation Board (PBNI) and the expansion of our EAGALA qualified team.

MACS joined forces with the PBNI Priority Youth Offender Project in early 2011 to deliver a short pilot project entitled 'Making Connections'. The aim of the project was to explore the impact of Equine Assisted Growth and Learning (EAGAL) with young high risk offenders, aged between 16-18.

**Equine Assisted Growth and Learning (EAGAL) is a collaborative process involving a qualified counsellor and an equine specialist working with clients and horses to assist growth and learning goals.** This short-term intervention has demonstrated hard outcomes and benefits for a range of clients. The approach is widely documented in North America and has expanded to Europe in the last five years. **MACS is breaking new ground as the first organisation to introduce this horse based intervention to Northern Ireland.**

Five young people participated in the pilot and the impressive outcomes of their experience have been documented using case studies and the Mental Health Outcome Star distance travelled tool. To read the full report log on to [www.macsni.org](http://www.macsni.org).

MACS and the PBNI are delighted with the outcomes indicated by the young people who took part in the pilot project.

In April 2011 MACS sent four staff members to Gloucester for level one and two certified training in Equine Assisted Growth and Learning. **One young person who had previously benefited from our first pilot in 2009 also attended the training and successfully gained a level one certificate.** This was a tremendous achievement and it is hoped that on completion of his counselling training he will be able to return to complete level 2.

MACS' vision for EAGAL is that it will be available on a regional basis across Northern Ireland within the next one to two years supporting up between 150-200 young people annually.

Our current priority is to develop a three year funding proposal and to explore immediate opportunities to secure development money.



# FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS 2011 - 2012

- Research funding opportunities for Equine Assisted Growth and Learning (Transitions)
- Pilot MACS SPIN system to four other voluntary agencies
- Promote MACS SPIN system to other relevant voluntary agencies
- Create a work environment and space that is unique and inspiring
- Achieve staff Health and Wellbeing Award (Investors in People)
- Work towards Investors in Volunteers Award
- Research and develop collaborative opportunities with other organisations in the sector
- Develop shared, corporate services model with VOYPIC & Include Youth
- Increase the number of young people worked with from 275 to 300
- Implement young people's participation strategy 2011-2015
- Maintain three young people on MACS Board of Directors
- Recruit a MACS Volunteer Mentor onto the Board
- Maintain Level B QAF2 across all services and level A in young people's participation
- Source funding for four trainee positions at MACS for young people in or leaving care
- Respond to the emerging needs as indicated in the new Homelessness Strategy
- Implement MACS new strategic plan 2011-2015 (Life is gr8 for young people)
- Establish our High Support Housing Service for young people leaving care



## ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

MACS Administrative team provide organisational support and are responsible for overseeing the administrative, financial and human resources operations of MACS.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 10-11

- Implemented new and improved processes and procedures for finance, administration and HR
- Collaborated with the Board sub-groups to make improvements within Policies and Procedures and Financial Processes
- All events managed successfully
- Gained experience in Tendering, researching best practice in Employment Law and Health and Safety
- Completed Training courses on Microsoft Office Advanced, Sage Accounts and Payroll, Equality Commission - First Line Management, Professional Minute Taking with Elite Consultancy
- Attended seminars with relevant finance, admin and HR topics to keep up to date on changes, improvements and initiatives

## AUDITOR

Following our Annual General Meeting 2010 it was agreed that we would re-tender for the appointment of the Company Auditors. During this year we invited four Accountancy Firms to submit a tender. Baker Tilly Moore Moore was successful and has prepared and Audited Accounts for this year.

## FINANCE

### MACS (A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

Statement of financial activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2011

#### Incoming Resources

Incoming Resources from generated funds:

Voluntary Income  
Activities for generating funds  
Investment Income  
Other incoming resources  
**Total incoming resources**

#### Resources Expended

Staff costs  
Establishment costs  
Activity and residential costs  
Staff motoring and travel expenses  
Auditors remuneration  
Legal and professional fees  
Communications and IT  
Other office expenses  
Costs of trustees meetings and training  
Interest payable and similar charges  
Staff training  
Membership and subscriptions

#### Total Resources Expended

#### Net incoming/ (Out going) Resources for the year

Other recognised gains and losses

Loss on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use

#### Net movement in funds

Balances brought forward 1 April 2010

Balances carried forward 31 March 2011



# BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31ST MARCH 2011  
MACS (A COMPANY LIMITED  
BY GUARANTEE)

Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2011 Total £	2010 Total £
245,876	540,885	786,761	804,100
21,038	-	21,038	21,167
-	-	-	15
2,565	-	2,565	-
<b>269,479</b>	<b>540,885</b>	<b>810,364</b>	<b>825,282</b>
162,728	386,015	548,743	552,038
46,784	45,710	92,494	108,039
22,217	16,082	38,299	59,212
5,672	16,526	22,198	20,990
1,325	2,398	3,723	4,460
2,561	8,071	10,632	10,471
3,739	10,204	13,943	14,138
10,849	22,979	33,828	60,525
300	619	919	1,217
205	392	597	546
3,804	7,198	11,002	9,774
700	1,770	2,470	2,173
<b>(260,884)</b>	<b>(517,964)</b>	<b>(778,848)</b>	<b>(843,583)</b>
8,595	22,921	31,516	18,301
<b>(82,500)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(82,500)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(73,905)</b>	<b>22,921</b>	<b>(50,984)</b>	<b>(18,301)</b>
<b>422,000</b>	<b>6,126</b>	<b>428,126</b>	<b>446,425</b>
<b>348,095</b>	<b>29,047</b>	<b>377,142</b>	<b>428,124</b>

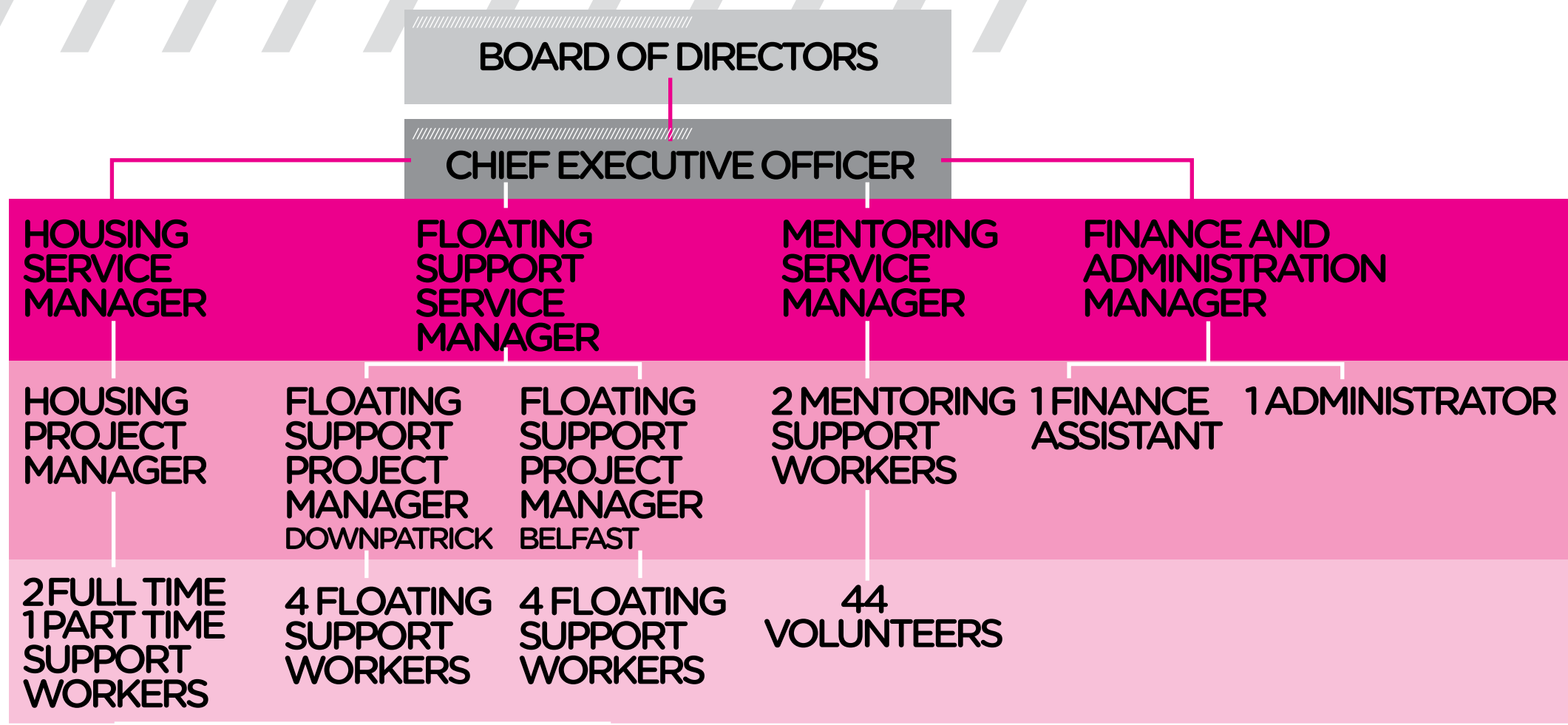
	2011 £	2010 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	150,00	232,500.00
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	39,118.00	44,082.00
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>216,377.00</u>	<u>231,312.00</u>
	<u>255,495.00</u>	<u>2,753,394.00</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<u>(28,353)</u>	<u>(79,768)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>	<u>227,142.00</u>	<u>195,626.00</u>
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>377,142.00</u>	<u>428,126.00</u>
<b>Restricted income funds</b>		
Restricted income funds	<u>29,047.00</u>	<u>6,126.00</u>
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>		
Unrestricted income funds	319,625.00	311,030.00
Revaluation reserve	<u>28,470.00</u>	<u>110,970.00</u>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<u>348,095.00</u>	<u>422,000.00</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u>377,142.00</u>	<u>428,126.00</u>



SOME OF OUR STAFF TEAM



# ORGANISATIONAL CHART



## WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US

*“I find the staff exceptionally approachable and professional at all times. I feel I have an excellent and productive relationship with all staff. I also find staff highly committed to the welfare of the young people in their care.”* Kate Savage Job Centre - Floating Support

*“This is a creative service which is very tuned into the needs of the service users. The dedicated and enthusiastic staff produce very positive outcomes for young people who enjoy their participation in the service.”* Maeve Gillen Senior Practitioner Belfast Trust - Mentoring

*“I feel the risk management approach is very realistic - MACS are prepared to work alongside young people to address the risks rather than immediately exclude them from the project. This helps young people develop a sense of “belonging” to the project.”* Finvola Kelly SW South Eastern Trust - Housing



# OUR FUNDERS





REGISTERED OFFICE:

4 LOWER CRESCENT, BELFAST, BT7 1NR

T: 028 9031 3163 F: 028 9033 2214

OTHER OFFICE:

17B ENGLISH STREET, DOWNPATRICK, BT30 6AB

T: 028 4461 5155 F: 028 4461 6551

[www.macsn.org](http://www.macsn.org)

