

Amber

transforming lives



Amber transforms lives by

The Amber idea

80%

**Amber's success rate in 2010:
the proportion of young people who
leave us having found a job, started
a course or achieved a major goal.**

offering young people who are going nowhere a fresh

Amber exists to help young people transform their lives.

They come to us without work, without self-esteem and without any sense of direction. Almost all are long-term unemployed, are homeless, have a history of substance misuse, or have been involved in crime.

In return for a commitment on their part to work towards achieving a better future we help them develop the skills and self-confidence to do so.

Amber becomes their temporary home. In a friendly and relaxed, yet structured, environment they learn about the world of employment and further education. They learn about being a good tenant, and how to live on a budget. More generally, they learn about presenting themselves in a positive light, interacting successfully with others and maintaining a sense of their own self-worth.

By the time they leave us, the vast majority are ready to lead sustainable independent lives.





start; a chance to escape

The Amber difference

In a number of important ways **Amber is different** – different from any other organisation working with disadvantaged young people.

Amber is comprehensive: our approach is based on helping the individual, not on tackling specific issues only, such as unemployment, offending or homelessness. As a result, young people who have often been passed from one agency to the next, find everything they need to turn their lives around in one place.

Amber is progressive: our programme is structured to help young people overcome each of the obstacles that stands between them and a better life.

Amber is hands-on: we offer young people a seamless route from a chaotic lifestyle to one of sustainable independence, and we're with them every step of the way, providing active support and practical coaching.

from their troubles and build

Amber is unlimited: our residential programme gives every young person the time, encouragement and space that they need to find their own way forward.

	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Amber
residential		●		●
not time bound		●		●
confidence building	●	●		●
motivation	●		●	●
counselling		●		●
tenancy skills			●	●
literacy and numeracy skills	●			●
attending college courses	●			●
work experience		●		●
achieving personal goals			●	●
finding a job		●		●
finding accommodation			●	●
follow-on support			●	●

The Amber programme: first steps

Young people hear about Amber from a variety of sources, including the employment service, social services, night shelters, and the probation and prison services. We then invite them to visit us and meet the residents (known as Amberteers) and staff and discuss how Amber could help them. The only criteria are that they must be aged 17 to 30, out of work, and genuinely committed to making something better of their lives.

Currently, Amber has three centres: in the rolling hills of Devon, the leafy county of Surrey and the bustling centre of Trowbridge. In whichever location, we aim to provide the breathing space for Amberteers to take stock of their lives.

Teamwork plays a crucial part. Amberteers work under the guidance of Team Leaders experienced in helping young people. Learning to respect and support each other is, we believe, just as valuable as the more practical skills we teach.

self-confidence in a warm and supportive atmosphere

With 4 Team Leaders and a maximum of 30 residents per centre at any one time, teams are small – which means we can ensure that each person receives all the one-to-one support and encouragement they need to work out for themselves what they want to do with their lives and how to go about it. The intimate scale of Amber and its hands-on approach means that nobody is neglected.

Chris then: living on the streets, life at an all time low, doing drugs

Chris now: a full time postman and learning to drive





The Amber programme: step-by-step

Nicholas then: unemployed, homeless and desperate

Nicholas now: soldier in the army

while also gaining practical skills or qualifications, and

While the atmosphere at Amber is friendly and relaxed, our programme is carefully structured. It provides Amberteers with a challenging and engaging step-by-step rebuilding process, designed to help them overcome each of the obstacles that have previously stood between them and independent living.

Our housing units course deals with tenancy matters, and other practical housing-related issues such as budgeting and debt management, managing utility bills and maintaining a healthy diet. For potential landlords, certificates gained within the course serve as evidence that Amberteers will be good tenants.

Literacy and numeracy skills are also embedded in this course. And, as they progress through our programme, some young people develop broader transferable skills by taking part in our Teamwork and Leadership Course. Involving personal fitness and a wide range of outdoor activities, these courses help participants gain confidence, learn to communicate better, and improve their problem-solving and team-working skills. Amberteers can also gain certificates with our drink and drugs course as well as our volunteering and work course.

The Amber programme: widening horizons

What else do young people do during their time at Amber? The opportunities are virtually endless. Art, crafts, music, drama, sport and cooking are all very popular Amber pastimes. We also offer a range of accredited courses for those who want to leave Amber with qualifications.

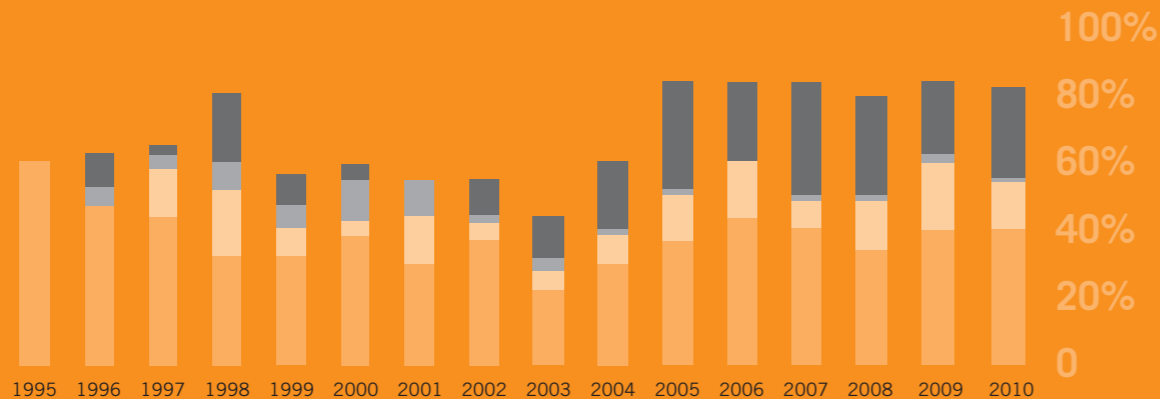
Ambertees can spend a few days on our canal boat gaining experience in boat handling and undertaking conservation work in conjunction with Inland Waterways.

They can also help with projects in the local community and abroad and gain work experience with local companies.

learning more generally

Amber successes

- Major goal
- Voluntary work
- College
- Job



about the world of work, so



The Amber programme: moving on

Georgina **then:** no job, left home, no goal, no future

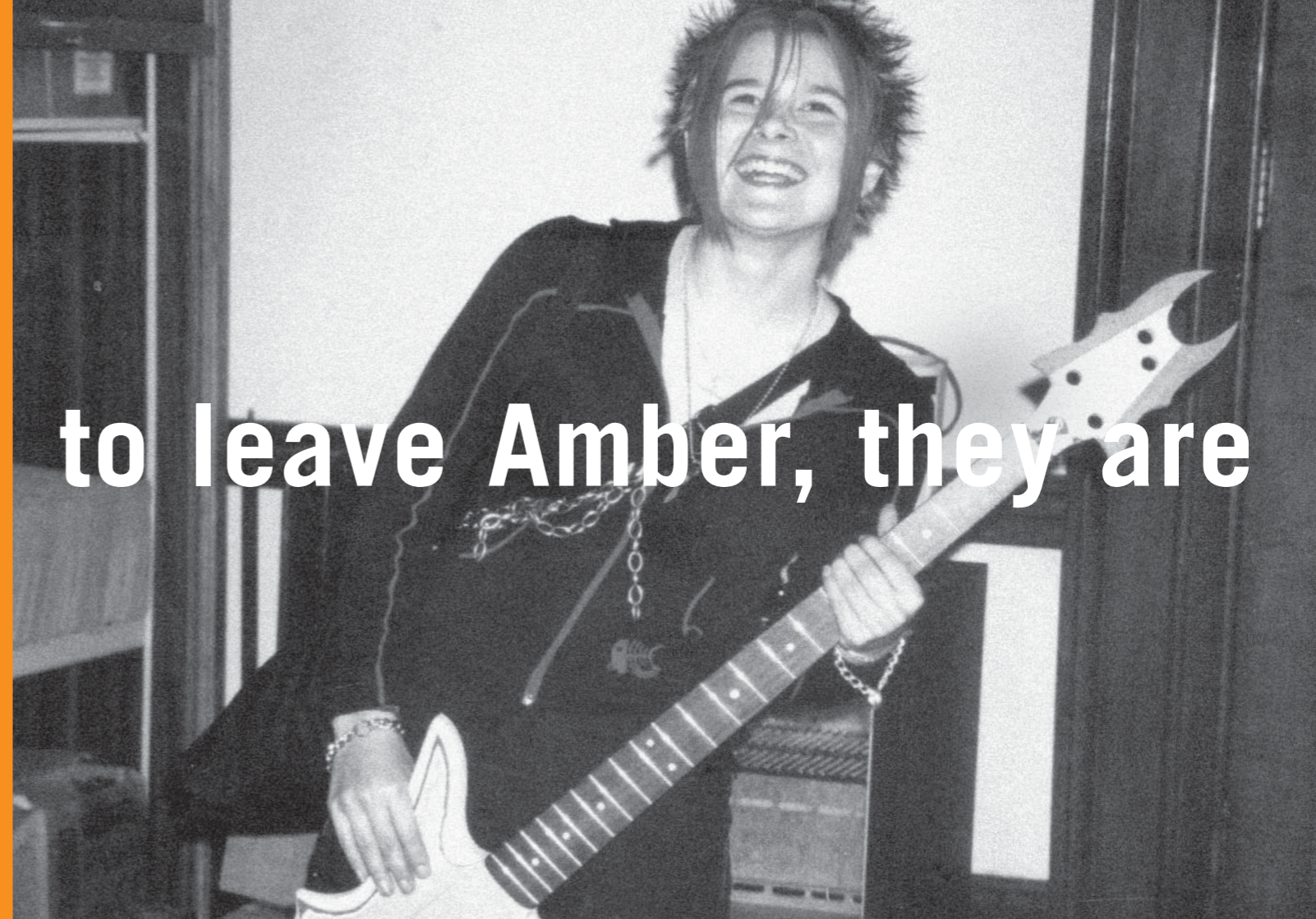
Georgina **now:** assistant manager within a department store

that when they are ready to leave Amber, they are

How long does the Amber programme last? That depends on the individual's needs. Amberteers stay with us until they are ready to move on with their lives; with a job to go to or a place on a course that's relevant to their career plans, as well as permanent accommodation. On average, this takes around six months.

When they are almost ready to "go solo", some Amberteers can move from Surrey or Devon to our centre in Trowbridge - where they can continue to benefit from our support, while attending college or working, and saving enough money to take on a place of their own.

Crucially we recognise the importance of staying in touch after they leave, monitoring their progress and offering encouragement and advice. We're proud of their achievements and very happy that so many come back to let us know how well they are doing.





equipped to lead independent lives. Amber works:

The Amber track record

Amber works. Our aim is to help young people transform their lives and that is exactly what we do.

For the sixth year our success rate exceeds 80% and currently, our success rate stands at 80%: that figure representing the proportion of young people who have achieved their personal goals. In the majority of cases, this means living independently and starting either a job or a work-related training course.

What's more, Amber gets results very cost-effectively. The average cost of the Amber programme per young person is approximately £12,000. By comparison, according to government figures, a problematic drug user costs the country an average of £35,000 a year; while the average cost of a prisoner who re-offends is £65,000 up to the point of re-imprisonment and £40,000 each year in prison. A prolific offender costs even more.

£12,000

The average cost of a young person successfully completing the Amber programme - a third of what it costs the country to deal with one problematic drug user every year and a seventh of the amount that a re-offending ex-prisoner costs the criminal justice system

The Amber finances

Some of our funding comes from Housing Benefit, via Amber's contract with the Learning and Skills Council and from the young people themselves in the form of a contribution from their benefits. Places at Amber are purchased on a block or individual basis by referrers. As you've read, after a few months at Amber most are able to move into employment, *taking themselves out of the benefit system altogether*.

We also rely upon the generosity of grant-making trusts, corporate sponsors and individuals for our existence and success.

Finally, we are hugely indebted to the many individual volunteers who freely give their time and energy - helping with fundraising, sharing their skills and interests with Amberteers, and providing opportunities for them to get involved in a wide range of activities.

so far, we've helped over

Amber maintains close links with other agencies and organisations concerned with the well-being of young people, including Jobcentre Plus, Progress2work, Social Services, Probation Service, Prince's Trust, A4e, BTCV, National Trust, Foyer, YMCA/YWCA.

Nick then: homeless, beaten up on the streets and left for dead

Nick now: chef with a major hotel group



1,284 young people turn

Amber
Transforming lives



things around. Please help

The Amber future

1,284

The number of lives Amber has helped to transform, in 16 years.

us transform more lives....

The scale of the challenge facing us is enormous. All over the country there are thousands of young people – jobless, homeless and facing many other problems – in urgent need of the skills, motivation and confidence that the Amber programme can provide.

We want to help as many of them as possible transform their lives, which is why we aim to open further Amber centres throughout the country.

That's our ambition for Amber's future. A lot of futures depend upon our achieving it.

Kym then: unemployed, involved in drugs and crime

Kym now: working abroad for an international travel agent

...amberweb.org

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