

Parentline Report

Call data analysis Oct 07 – Mar 08

“Had reason, once again to use the helpline on the weekend and once again the lady I spoke to was very helpful, sympathetic, understanding and non-judgmental and that really makes a difference when you are already beating yourself up about your parenting skills so could you pass my gratitude on to the service.”

Introduction

This report has been generated from the calls taken on Parentline from October 2007 to March 2008. In October 2007 we launched a new system to record details from calls and to analyse that data. In due course we will be able to analyse the data on a monthly basis and offer a comparison from the corresponding month of the previous year but for the time being it is not possible to compare the data from the new system with that from the old system. The new system gives greater accuracy. The format of this report is under development and we are presenting this to show what is possible.

Parents ring Parentline at times when they are most in need of support and information, often about situations which they experience as highly distressing. Two independent evaluations undertaken by the Thomas Coram Research Unit¹ demonstrate that parents ring us either at a difficult time or crisis and/or with deeply entrenched and chronic difficulties. As a result call data shows, from parents' own descriptions, a range of serious difficulties and how parents are feeling.

Call takers using a helping process to enable callers to unburden themselves, explore the reasons for their children's difficulties, and consider further actions they could take to improve their situation.² When appropriate, callers are signposted to more specialist sources of advice, and can be referred for further help from our own Individual Support Service or for specialist child mental health advice to YoungMinds, for family legal advice to the Children's Legal Centre, education advice from ACE, or to One Parent Families for employment and financial advice for lone parents.³

¹ see http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk/uploads/tx_policyreports/Parentline-Plus-helpline-2006-evaluation-TCRU.pdf

² see http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk/uploads/tx_policyreports/How-helping-works021106.pdf

³ We have partnership arrangements with those specialist services.

A total of 35,885 calls were answered during the time period October 07 – March 08. 15,086 of these were short calls and 20,799 were long calls.

The long calls form the substantial part of this report but here is a breakdown of short calls showing the reasons for calling and the gender of the caller (if known). A third of short calls are interrupted or cut short. We do not know what happens to these callers but we hope that they try to call again and that they receive the support they are seeking.⁴

The following table shows the breakdown of short calls made during this period:

Type	Total	% of short calls
Call Interrupted \ Did not expand	4946	32%
Repeat Caller – calls from CMS callers	2756	18%
Requested/Sent Leaflets	90	1%
Requested Signpost to other organisation	3303	21%
Calls for general information about PL+ or our offices	4295	28%
Male	3740	25%
Female	9022	60%
Gender Not Specified	2324	15%

Long calls

The format of this section of the report largely follows the sequence of the form used by call takers to record details of the call. It should be noted that call takers collect as many details as possible and we are working to reduce the number of “not asked” questions but it is not always appropriate to ask for demographic information.

Over the course of a call, the call takers collect details on the following:

- Relationship of caller to person causing concern
- Family make up of the family causing concern
- The subject of concern, including their age and gender
- Any child issues (the main reason for the call or any supplementary issues)
- Any adult issues (the main reason for the call or any supplementary issues)
- Referrals to other PL+ services or other organisations, if relevant
- Demographic information

⁴ Note that most large free helpline services receive high volumes of abandoned calls.

- How did they find out about PL+
- A free text box to record any other feedback

Also, please note that at the moment the pie charts are sequenced in alphabetical order. We are investigating whether or not this can be altered to sequence the pie charts from the largest share to the smallest.

The following table shows who is making the call.

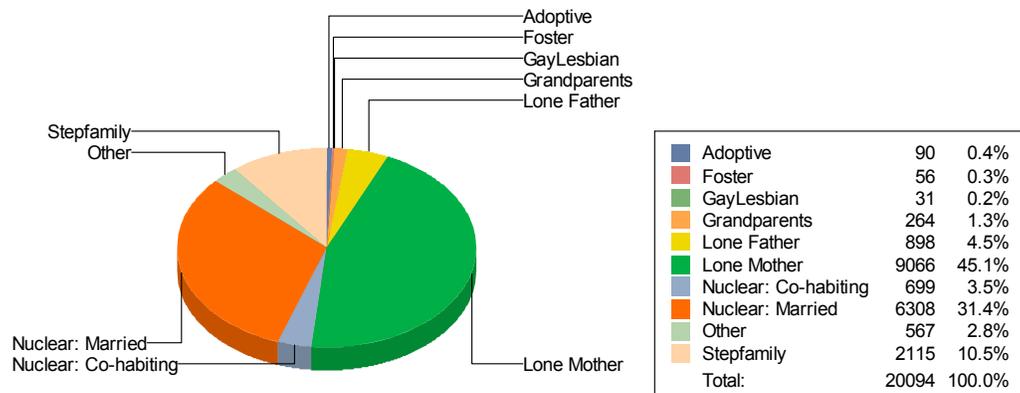
Caller	% of long calls
Mother	75%
Father	11%
Stepmother	1%
Stepfather	1%
Non resident father	2%
Non resident mother	1%
Partner of non resident father	<1%
Partner of non resident mother	<1%
Male relative	1%
Female relative	5%
Male - friend	<1%
Female - friend	1%
Professional	<1%
Other	1%

This table shows that in the clear majority of calls to Parentline, it is the mother of the family who is calling for support and information. It is interesting to note that men are more likely to make shorter calls. The percentage of men making short calls is 25% compared to approximately 16% for long calls (16% reached by adding up all the male categories of caller). This may be a reflection of the differences between the ways that men and women approach seeking information and support.

The responses in this section total over 100% due to the fact that callers sometimes see themselves as having dual roles within a family. A caller for example, may be both a mother and a stepmother.

Family status

The following pie chart shows the family status of callers to Parentline:

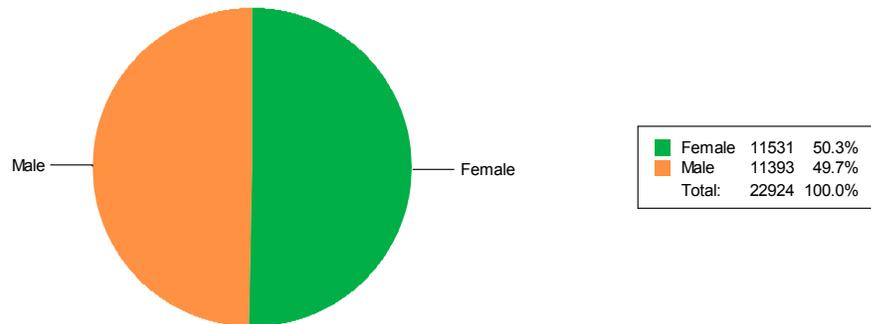


This pie chart shows that all types of family units have difficulties from time to time, although lone parents make up the largest percentage of callers to Parentline. This may reflect two things: firstly, the increased isolation and lack of support that lone parents may feel when bringing up their children and secondly that lone parents may use the helpline more proactively – before their difficulties become a crisis – because they do not have a partner to talk to about their concerns. If one combines lone mother and lone father together, we see that Lone Parents represent 49% of family types contacting Parentline.

It is also interesting to note that stepfamilies represent a significant percentage of callers (10.5%) which demonstrates that Parentline is reaching people who are less likely to use services but more likely to experience significant parenting challenges⁵

⁵ See research quoted in TCRU evaluation http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk/uploads/tx_policyreports/Parentline-Plus-helpline-2006-evaluation-TCRU.pdf.

Pie chart showing the gender of the person causing concern:

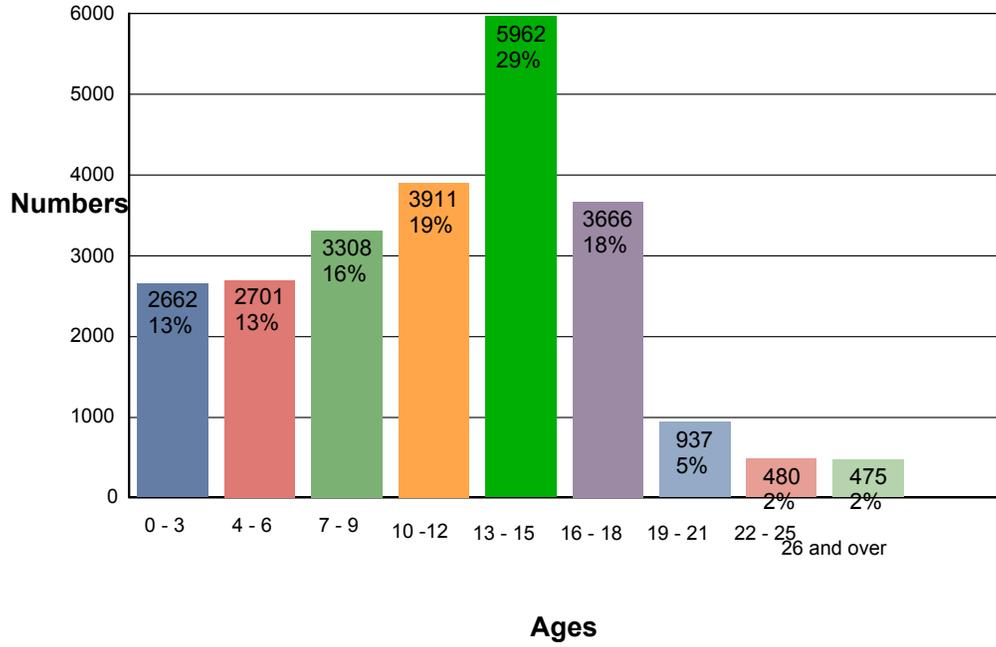


This chart demonstrates that there is an almost equal balance between the concerns parents feel for their daughters as their sons. This is what we would expect but it will be interesting to note any cyclical changes over the year as we are able to analyse the data more closely. There are also some differences according to the age of the child causing some concern (see p.6).

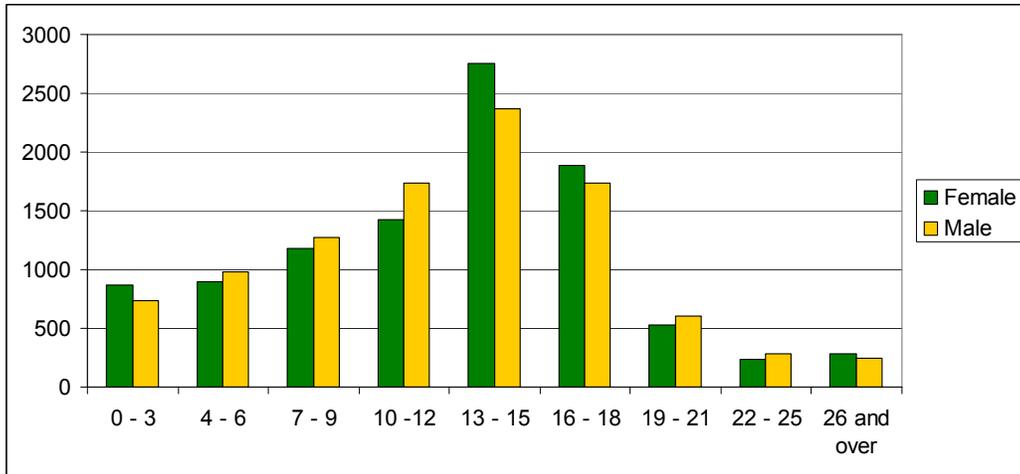
Table showing age of the children causing concern

Ages	% of long calls
0 - 3	13%
4 - 6	13%
7 - 9	16%
10 - 12	19%
13 - 15	29%
16 - 18	18%
19 - 21	5%
22 - 25	2%
26 and over	2%

This table shows that in 13% of long calls to Parentline parents are ringing to talk about children aged up to three years old around developmental issues such as sleeping, feeding, crying and misbehaving. The table also shows that 47% of our calls are from parents and carers of teenagers aged between 13 - 18, highlighting the fact that as there is so little information and support for parents of children within this age group, parents often do not know how to approach the difficulties they may be facing. However, the percentage of calls concerning young people aged 0 - 9 is 42% reflecting the continuing difficulties faced by parents as their children grow up.



Age brackets by gender



Children's issues

The primary reasons for calling Parentline:

Issue	% of long calls
Children: Behaviour	28%
Children: Emotional Health	15%
Children: Conflict	13%
Children: Divorce\Separation	11%
Children: School\Education	7%
Children: Mental Health	5%
Children: Bullying	5%
Children: Abuse	4%
Children: Developmental	3%
Children: Sexual Behaviour	3%
Children: Physical Health	1%
Children: Disability	1%
Adults: Mental Health	26%
Adults: Divorce\Separation	9%
Adults: Couple Disagreements	7%
Adults: Isolation\Loneliness	5%
Adults: Abuse	3%
Adults: Financial	2%
Adults: Physical Health	1%
Adults: Disability	<1%

The table above highlights the range and complexity of problems that parents face on a day to day basis.

The main issue parents called Parentline about between October 2007 and March 2008 was their children's behaviour. The location and type of behavioural concerns can be broken down further as shown in the following table

Behaviour	% of long calls	% of section
Location		
At Home	25%	87%
At School	6%	22%
Other Location	3%	11%
Type of behaviour		
Verbal Aggression	17%	61%
Physical Aggression	8%	30%
Other	5%	18%
Lying	5%	16%
Bad Crowd	4%	15%
Staying away from home	4%	14%
Stealing	4%	13%
Alcohol	3%	10%
Drugs	2%	9%
Peer Pressure	2%	8%
Wanting to leave home	2%	8%
Smoking	2%	7%
Runaway\Threatening	1%	5%
Involved with Youth Justice System	1%	4%
Internet Misuse	1%	2%
ASBOS	<1%	<1%

The main type of behaviour that callers spoke about was the verbal aggression of their child/ren. This type of behaviour represented 61% of long calls about children's behaviour. A range of serious concerns are highlighted above, and the data also show that parents are most concerned about children's behaviour in the home rather than anywhere else. The percentages do not add up to 100% because the callers "main reason" may refer to issues relating to adults (e.g. their own or their partner's behaviour) rather than their children's issues.

The main adult issue

During the period October 2007- March 2008 mental health was the main adult issue for our callers.

Adult: mental health

Mental health	% of long calls	% of section
Anxiety & Stress	23%	88%
Anger	6%	25%
Other	4%	15%
Depressed feeling (Identified) by health professional	3%	11%
Depressed feelings (not identified) by health professional?	2%	8%
Grieving	1%	4%
Suicide-attempted feelings expressed	1%	3%
Post-natal depression	<1%	2%
Panic attacks	<1%	2%
Self-harm	<1%	1%

Actions taken by our call takers

Call takers respond to the individual needs of the caller. Some parents (1%) are sent leaflets from the current range published by Parentline Plus. Others (27%) are signposted or referred to other organisations.⁶ These referrals are administered differently according to the organisation being referred too and the needs of the caller.

Callers needing further educational support are signposted to ACE (Advisory Centre for Education) via a separate telephone number given to the caller which acts as a hotline to ACE for Parentline callers. It is different from ACE's regular helpline number and is part of the partnership arrangements between ACE and Parentline Plus.

Callers needing the support of Young Minds, Children's Legal Centre or One Parent Families are referred directly by the call taker via an online form which guarantees that the caller will be contacted by the other organisation within a specified timeframe (different for each organisation but usually within one week).

⁶ Signposting is where we give the caller the details of another service; Referral is where we pass the callers details to the other service who then ring the caller back at a convenient time.

The following table shows the top 10 organisations that we signposted callers to.

Organisation	% of all calls
CLC	5%
Young Minds	4%
ACE	3%
Get Connected	2%
CAB	2%
OPF	1%
NSPCC	1%
Childline	1%
NHS Direct	1%
Relate	1%

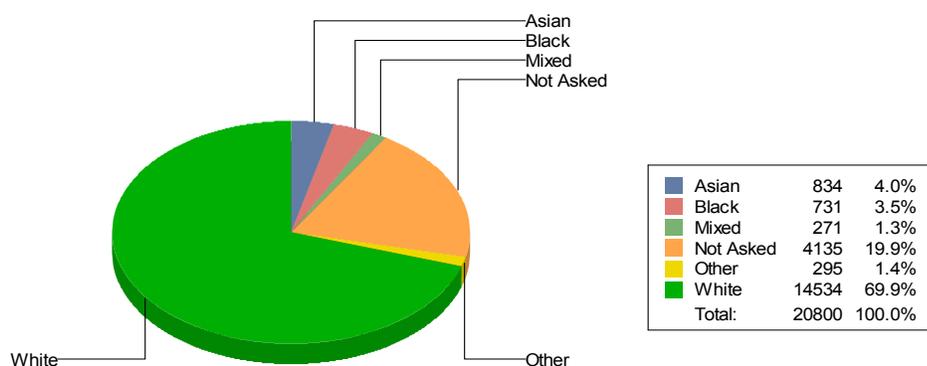
The table below shows the number of callers that were referred on to our own extended services and to partner organisations for additional call back support:

Organisation	% of long calls
PL+ National Services Co-ordination Team for individual support or telegroups	6%
CLC	2%
YM	1%
OPF\GB	<1%
ACE **	3% of all calls

Demographics

The following section provides information about the callers who call Parentline. We collect this data in order for us to understand our client group better; to be sure that we are reaching all the parents we need to reach; and so that we can provide a service that is tailored to their needs. The demographic questions include their ethnicity and some details about their location and household income.

Ethnicity



This pie chart shows the ethnicity of callers calling Parentline, please note that this chart is listed in alphabetical order. The total number of callers that were asked and answered this question was 80.1%. We use the census categories to collect this information in order that it can be compared with census information. The total percentage of black and minority ethnic callers was 13% of asked callers. This is an area where we are working to reduce the number of “not asked”.

Breakdown of those callers that were asked and answered the ethnicity question:

Type	% of answered
Asian	5%
Black	4%
Mixed	2%
Other	2%
White	87%

Household income of callers

The following table shows a breakdown of the information provided to our call takers by callers on their overall household income.

33% of callers had household incomes of less than £15,000 per annum, which shows that we are reaching lower income households effectively. We are working to reduce the number of “not asked” in this category.

Income bracket	% of long calls	% of answered
0 – 5,000	6%	8%
5,001 – 10,000	10%	13%
10,001 – 15,000	9%	12%
15,001 – 20,000	8%	10%
20,001 – 30,000	10%	14%
30,000 and above	16%	22%
Not Sure	9%	12%
Preferred not to answer	7%	9%
Not Asked	26%	NA
Asked and Answered	74%	NA

Disability

The table below shows the breakdown on whether or not callers classed themselves as having a disability.

Disability	% of long calls	% of answered
Yes	9%	12%
No	66%	87%
Preferred not to answer	1%	1%
Not Asked	24%	NA
Asked and Answered	76%	NA

How caller found out about Parentline?

Type	% of long calls
Phone Book	35%
Not Asked	21%
Other	10%
Website (Internet)	10%
Other Org	7%
Friend	5%
School	2%
GP Surgery	2%
Family	2%
Magazine	2%
Book	1%
Television	1%
Local Authority	1%
Newspaper	<1%
Children Information Services	<1%
Course	<1%
Campaign	<1%
Radio	<1%