



**family
lives**

***Through life's ups
and downs, we're
with you, all the way***

Family Lives Annual Review 2013-14



We are all part of a family, our relationships can have the biggest impact on our happiness and quality of life. Families are complex and ever-changing – Family Lives’ services reflect this, providing vital support through our helpline, website and in person in local communities. Our volunteers, offering befriending to families and vital support on our helpline, are an essential part of what we do and how we do it.

Family Lives supports families across the UK with the normal, everyday ups and downs of family life such as toddler tantrums and communicating with teenagers. But we also support many individuals, both adults and children, who find themselves not knowing where else to turn, whether this is a father who thinks his son’s alcoholic mother is neglecting him, or a child who is feeling suicidal due to being bullied at school.

We provide 24-hour support through our free helpline, and our email and online chat services, as well as extensive advice on our website. Across England, we provide support to families focussing on specific issues such as coping during divorce, helping young parents access services and supporting forces families with the transition back to civilian life.

In this Annual Review we wanted to give you a snapshot of the different ways we support families across the UK, the often harsh realities of daily life for some and the impact our work can have.

Jeremy Todd

Chief Executive

Why we are needed

The origins of Family Lives began in 1973 when a young girl was killed by her step-father. Local parents saw the need to ensure that no mother or father felt they had nowhere to turn to, not only in crisis but before situations reach crisis point which could result in abuse. We aim to normalise seeking support and the provision of support where and when a family needs it. We support hundreds of thousands of people through our different services from all walks of life, of all ages and from all backgrounds.

***Families are the foundation of society.
All families should have access to active
support and understanding.***

Our aims

We aim to transform the lives of families who need our help, supporting parents and making happier relationships, happier families and a stronger society. We are often the first port of call for a parent who doesn't know where else to turn. Our services aim to help parents feel more confident, more capable and more resilient in the future. We aim to work directly with young people through our TeenBoundaries and Bullying UK projects and to take a family-centred approach to all our work, including during and after separation or divorce. Our work with parenting practitioners aims to provide advice, information, best practice approaches, networking and training opportunities, as well as introducing the CANparent Quality Mark for universal parenting classes.

Overview of our services and activities

We are extremely proud of the diverse range of services we can offer families. Our helpline, email support and online chat services are available across the country. Through our website we reached over 1 million visitors in 2013-14 providing advice about pregnancy, toddlers, teens, bullying, divorce and more.

As well as our own busy helpline, we have partnerships with other organisations to provide their support helplines including Families Need Fathers and Marriage Care. Last year we received 122,492 calls (including those from our partnerships) and answered 80% of callers contacting us with 66.5% answered the first time they called. There are many people who call us on a regular basis, and also those who need more intensive support. We would like to be able to answer every call we receive and strive to find a way to do this.

We also responded to 5,812 emails and 7,977 online chats and we are extremely proud to be able to support so many families. Some of our calls and emails are from highly stressed individuals who find themselves in often unimaginable situations and we are pleased to be able to offer guidance and support to them at such a difficult time.

We also run services across England ranging from TeenBoundaries workshops for teenagers in schools addressing the issues surrounding relationships, boundaries and pornography, supporting 2,246 young people aged 10 to 18 last year, to training prisoners to provide peer support in Hertfordshire or supporting parents whose child has a special educational need. You can read more about the different areas of support we provide on the following pages.

The backbone of our support for families is our volunteers, offering befriending in local communities and manning our busy helpline and online support, without whom we would not be able to do what we do. Empowering people in their local community to provide volunteer befriending support helps the families and also the volunteers themselves with their self-esteem and skills. Over half our workforce are volunteers.

“Thank you for responding so promptly to my email about my grandson - just knowing that there is somebody out there to help my son is not only reassuring for him but helps me tremendously.”



Early years

We know that the early years are vital and that parents determine whether these early years provide a strong bedrock for social and emotional development that children need to thrive at school and in life. Family Lives supports families in the early years via a parenting programme called GroBrain. This programme is tailored for parents of babies from before birth to 1 year old and links basic parenting skills to early brain development, helping to support secure attachment. We currently deliver GroBrain in the South West.

Young parents

In October 2013 we began working in partnership with Children's Centre services and Camden's network of support services to provide a service for young mums and dads in Camden. This three-year project aims to improve outcomes for pregnant teenagers, young and teenage parents and their children. We do this by providing information about their local Children's Centre services and the wider support network within Camden, linking them to agencies, services and opportunities which may benefit them.

Working with schools

We work across the country supporting teachers and parents to ensure the best outcomes for their children. Advice and support around bullying, online safety and challenging behaviour are core activities, alongside facilitating positive parental engagement where there may have been conflict with the school. Our family support workers in schools make this difference by working with teachers and families to resolve issues of potential conflict and also support parents to make positive choices around health and family wellbeing.

We know that positive parental engagement improves the outcomes for children, and also enables schools to get on with their core business of teaching. We deliver our TeenBoundaries programme across schools and are currently delivering countywide in Cornwall.

"I'm more confident, I can now read his signs and know when he's had enough to give him some space."

Kinship care

The pilot of our Relative Experience project ended in March 2014, working in partnership with Grandparents Plus and the Family and Childcare Trust. During the pilot we supported 19 kinship carers through 141 befriending sessions. Key areas of change included a reduction in stress and anxiety, reduced social isolation and improved sense of ability to cope. A full evaluation report by Coram found that, “The peer-led model and the use of informal befriending was an effective approach to work with kinship carers, a group that are often isolated and distrustful of conventional social services. Evidence suggested that kinship carers responded well to the support offered, valuing the emotional support and the opportunity to take time away from their responsibilities to talk about issues”. This project will run for another three years due to new funding from BIG Lottery Silver Dreams Fund and extend into Middlesbrough, Durham and Northumberland. The full evaluation report of Relative Experience by Coram will be available on our website www.familylives.org.uk

Case study

Alison* has three adult children and a 6 year old grandson Carl,* the son of her eldest daughter who has a mental illness. During the first four years of his life Alison provided an increasing amount of care and support for Carl until eventually Alison had to step in to bring him up. Alison still had her own children at home, she was supporting her daughter through mental illness and she was working full time. This proved so stressful that it was a factor in her break up with her partner and took such a toll on her own health that she had to seek medical help for depression.

“My head was in a mess – I was a mum, a step-mum, and a grandma. How can any one person play the roles of all three? I had to step back from my own daughter so that I could do the best for my grandson. It hurt like hell and I suffered many nights feeling alone and full of despair – crying myself to sleep.”

Alison didn't meet another kinship carer until she found out about a local support group and from them was put in touch with the Relative Experience project. Very soon Alison was introduced to a befriender who visited her weekly and supported her to find out more about things like residency orders and financial support from the local authority. As a result of the support the project has provided, Alison has really flourished over the past few months. She is a regular at the kinship carers support meetings, has talked in front of an audience at one of our events and has even made contact with key people at Carl's school to raise awareness about kinship care. She has become much more confident and has expanded her network of friends. Alison is doing a brilliant job in providing a better future for her grandchild.

* names have been changed



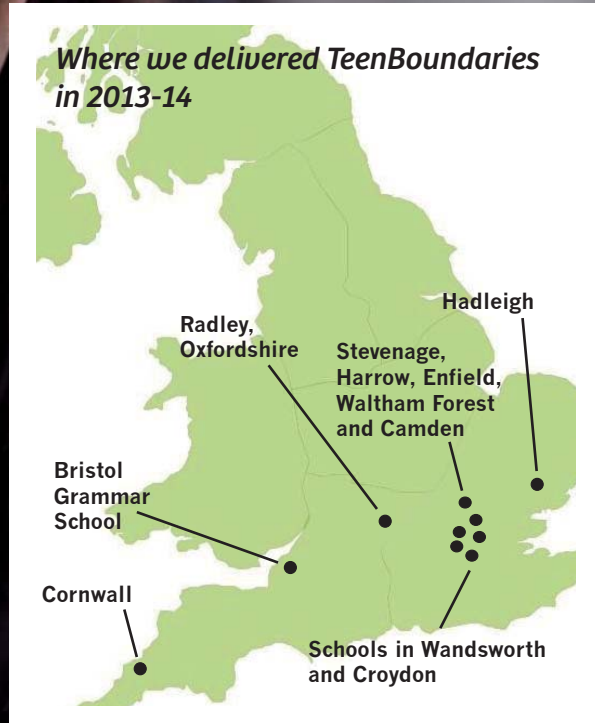
“We now have a calmer atmosphere at home. I am coping better and not losing my rag like I used to. And the children are better behaved.” Kinship carer



Supporting teenagers

We support teenagers through our TeenBoundaries programme of workshops delivered in schools for 10 to 18 year olds. TeenBoundaries aims to prevent sexual bullying, peer on peer sexual exploitation and promotes positive gender relationships by challenging attitudes and promoting tolerance, understanding and cohesion between young people. Our interactive programme gives young people the skills they need to manage relationships, clarify attitudes and values and maintain boundaries, raising awareness about the effects of pornography, gang culture, homophobia, cyberbullying and social media. Over the last year we have delivered TeenBoundaries to 2,246 pupils in 24 schools and have now extended our delivery to Cornwall.

Over the last year we have worked in the most deprived part of the borough of Croydon, delivering TeenBoundaries as part of a three-year programme. In 2013 we began delivering TeenBoundaries to primary and secondary schools in Stevenage thanks to funding from Big Lottery. The first year of the project has achieved full delivery within schools and has provided new opportunities for commissioning the TeenBoundaries programme due to the project's success.



“It helped me to not be awkward when talking about sex.”

“I will tell my friends to stop watching porn.”

After delivering TeenBoundaries to 45 students at Fairland School, 90% of the pupils said they would change the way they act or treat others in the future



After delivering TeenBoundaries to 160 students at Barclay School, 92% felt they could understand and spot sexual bullying



Supporting families going through divorce and separation

Family breakdown can be a devastating experience which, if managed badly, can have a damaging impact on the children. Family Lives recognises that some relationships fail, but it is the nature of the ending which is all important. We help couples to think through how they establish clear outcomes for their children and protect them from unnecessary conflict.

We offer a number of different services to support people going through divorce or separation who are struggling to communicate with their ex, or agree on arrangements for their children. We have obtained the Help and Support for Separated Families quality mark. In December 2013 we started a project with the Barefoot Institute to support individuals going through divorce in the Muslim community in Waltham Forest and Leicester. The project provides peer support from volunteers which is relevant to the Muslim community as it mirrors the prophetic model as demonstrated throughout the prophetic tradition. The project will run from December 2013 until March 2015, and will engage 180 couples in the befriending service, with an estimated 150 couples completing the service.


Website: 74,268 unique pageviews of our divorce and separation content

Helpline: 7,407 calls taken about divorce and separation

Live chat and email: 621 about divorce and separation issues

Volunteer insight - what difference has being a volunteer befriender made to you?

"Oh, it has made a huge difference. I have met two lovely people who I can talk to and feel comfortable with. I've spoken to them and befriended them but I've found it quite therapeutic for me too, it's a two way thing, I've given them suggestions and they have helped me. It is nice not to be judged and to be able to be me, not mam, nana, wife, cook etc. I know we will stay in contact regardless."



For some mothers family life is living in a hostel with your 5 year old child after leaving your partner, with no money, no support and no one else to turn to.



Special educational needs

In March 2013 we began delivering a Parent Partnership Service in Croydon, South London, supporting parents whose children have special educational needs. The service provides independent information, advice and guidance for parents and carers. Our approach is to provide the information and advice parents require to make decisions, explore the possible options with them and assist them to get their views across on an equal basis with the professionals who are making provision for their child. During the last year, we supported 422 service users.

Mental health

Mental wellbeing is the top reason people contact our helpline. We support thousands of people each year to develop strategies to help themselves or other family members with issues that can include post-natal depression, anxiety, work stress and relationship problems. We offer a range of support services in the community including a three year project in Cheltenham in partnership with a local organisation, County Community Projects, to support the personal, educational, and social positive development of up to 250 hard to reach young people experiencing mental health and emotional issues.

We have supported families across four locations to improve the mental and physical health of vulnerable families as part of Department of Health funding. We provided support through our trained volunteer befrienders who together with family support co-ordinators supported families referred to the service by GPs, health visitors, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and other health-related professionals.

For some fathers family life is not knowing how to help your teenage son who has taken overdoses because he is being bullied online.

Supporting families with complex needs

In a number of areas we are supporting families who meet the criteria for the Government's Troubled Families Programme. In Hampshire we have worked with consortium partners to deliver intensive family support, working with the whole family to improve school attendance, support parents with routes out of worklessness and reduction in anti-social behaviour. This project began in April 2013 and is currently working with 201 families with the aim of supporting 500 families over the life of the programme (April 2015). In Ealing and Southwark our trained volunteer workforce is also providing befriending to families needing higher levels of support as part of the Troubled Families Programme.

Working with prisoners

We have been working in the Mount Prison in Hertfordshire to train prisoners in peer mentoring to help prisoners maintain contact with their family as research shows that prisoners visited by family have lower re-offending rates, and are more likely to have a job and a home when they are released.^{1,2}

The aim of this project is to support prisoners who are fathers, and partners/family members of prisoners, increasing communication between parent and child, increasing parents' confidence in dealing with loss and change and raising children alone, reducing the risk of re-offending and improving outcomes for children and young people. Specific objectives include: building self-esteem in both parents and children; improving family resilience; and understanding children's behaviour through understanding parents' own feelings and needs. Our work has been well received by the prison and has received excellent feedback from The Governor and Hertfordshire Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (HACRO) who are supporting our work. So far over 20 prisoners have been trained and are currently achieving APT accreditation.

1 May, C; Sharma, N; Stewart, D (2008) *Factors linked to reoffending: a one year follow-up of prisoners who took part in the Resettlement surveys 2001, 2003 and 2004*. Ministry of Justice, London.

2 Niven, S; Stewart, D (2005) *Findings 248: Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, 2003*.

Supporting professionals

CANparent quality mark

In 2013 we won a contract to develop the CANparent quality mark for universal parenting classes. The CANparent quality mark, launched in January 2014, builds on our work delivering the CANparent voucher trial and sets accredited organisations apart from others, enabling parents to choose between organisations with the quality mark and those without.

Achieving the quality mark will also demonstrate that organisations have met the unique elements of the quality assessment process, and the high standards expected by parents and commissioners across the country. So far five organisations have received the CANparent quality mark and 34 organisations have applied for the quality mark.

“The mentoring programme is excellent, it would cost £1,000s just to get this level of business support to develop our long-term strategy.”

Parenting UK

Parenting UK is the membership body for parenting professionals. We provide regular news bulletins, ebulletins and events for our members. In March 2014 we held our annual conference focussing on mental health and resilience in families.

Professional training

We provide a portfolio of training courses and workshops which we deliver to organisations on site. We have over 30 years' experience of working with families, providing us with invaluable experience in shaping our programme of training and consultancies for professionals.

Facts and figures - who we help and how

Total number of volunteers - 238

Helpline - 105



Local services - 133



Hours of volunteer support

17,235



Press and social media coverage

Family Lives gained 300 pieces of media coverage over the last year including ITV National News, BBC Breakfast, Channel 5 News, Sky News, This Morning, Radio Five Live and BBC Radio 4. We have participated in hundreds of local radio interviews and media coverage in a wide range of publications both national and local. News coverage covers the full breadth of the work we do including bullying issues, child on parent aggression and internet safety. Every year we exceed our media targets and we are increasingly considered as the go-to organisation for the media for comment on all family matters. This is only possible with the support and timely reactive skills of the entire organisation - volunteers, trustees and staff.

Twitter - 142k followers

Parentdish

Scottish Daily Express

Huffington Post

Sunday Times

The Guardian

BBC Breakfast

Sunday Mirror

Prima

This Morning

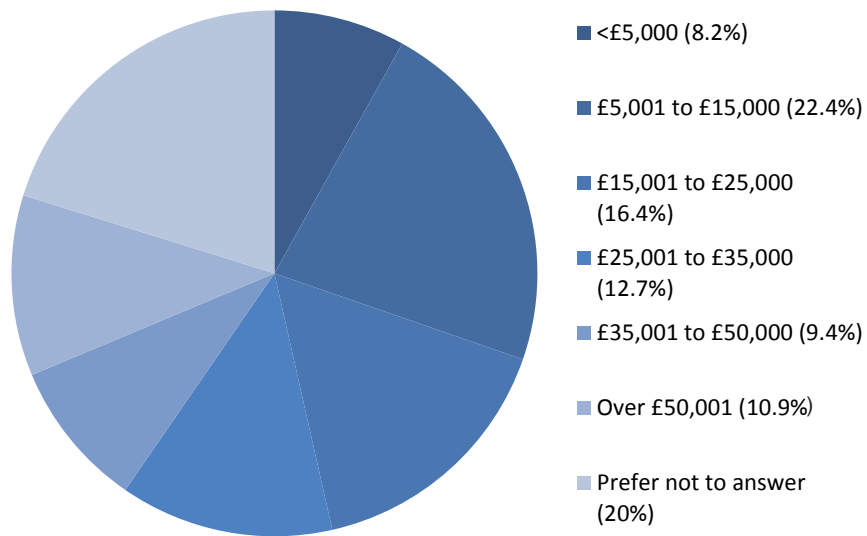
BBC Radio 5

Radio 5 Live

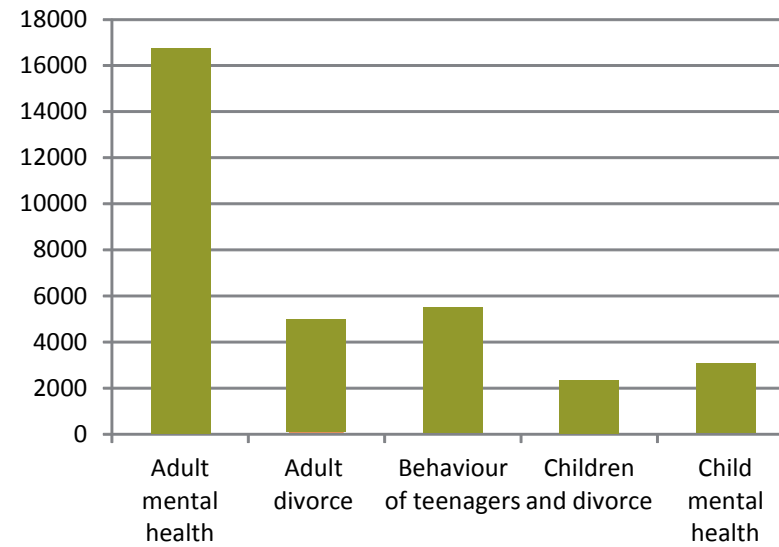
Sky News

Channel 5 News

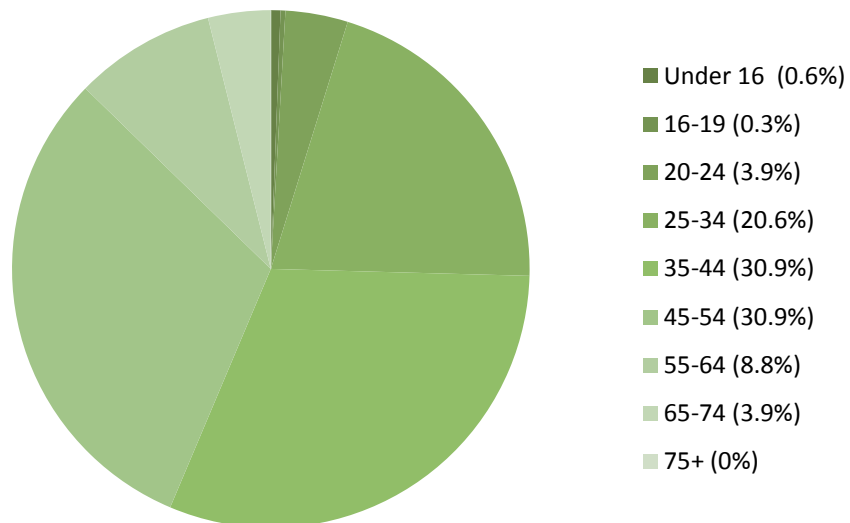
Helpline caller income 2013-14



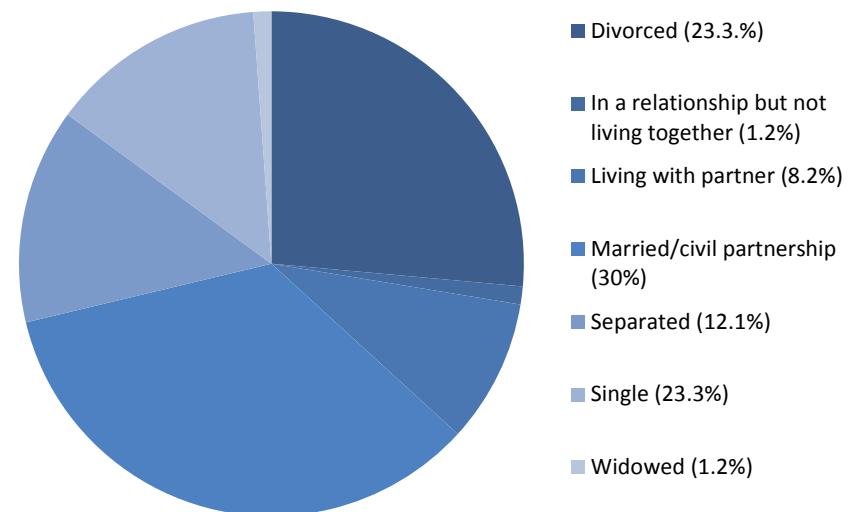
Top five topics from calls to our helpline 2013-14



Helpline caller age 2013-14



Helpline caller status 2013-14



An overview of finances 2013-14

Total cost of providing services to families and family support sector (£000)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
By cost type:			
Staff and volunteer costs	2,803	2,731	2,917
Project costs	387	240	802
Premises, infrastructure and administration	457	364	391
Total	3,647	3,335	4,110
By activity:			
National support services	1,769	1,378	1,499
Local support services	1,803	1,522	1,594
Professional/sector development	-	377	963
Fundraising	21	12	8
Governance	54	46	46
Total	3,647	3,335	4,110

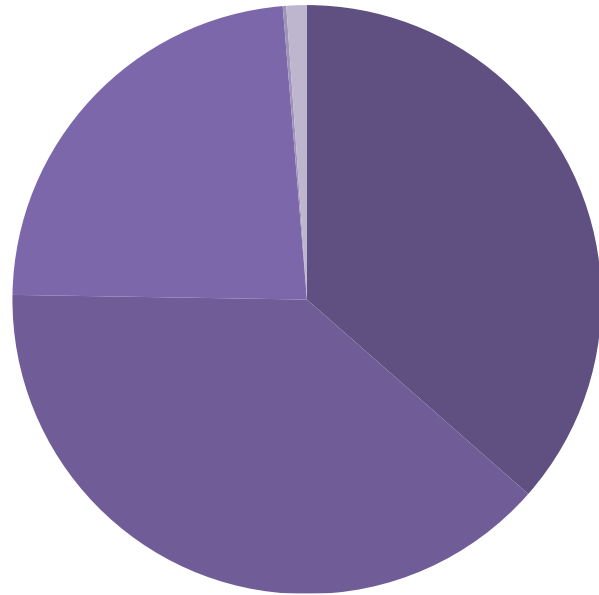
How we funded our services (£000)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
National Government	2,480	2,029	2,497
Local Government	490	459	857
Big Lottery, trusts and corporates	363	446	579
Charitable sector	80	449	18
Individual donations, subscriptions & sales	15	19	19
Donated services	210	214	212
Unrestricted reserves	18	-	-
Total	3,638	3,616	4,182

£25 helps train a volunteer call taker, so they can be there for a mum who has just found out her daughter is self-harming because she is being bullied online

£20 funds individual live chat sessions for ten families in distress each year

2013-14 Expenditure by activity

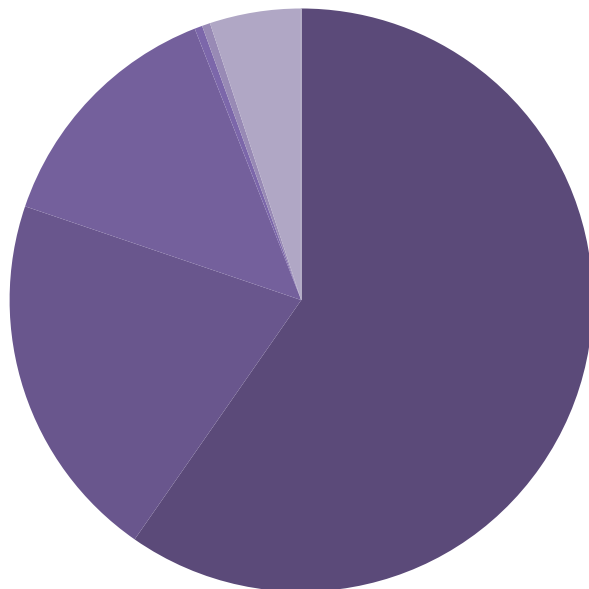


- National Support Services
- Local Support Services
- Professional/Sector Development
- Fundraising
- Governance

We secure funding for our national and local work from a wide variety of different sources:

Adoption UK
 Basingstoke Voluntary Services
 Big Lottery Fund
 Bridge House Trust
 Bristol City Council
 Burghley Charitable Trust
 Cabinet Office
 Caerphilly County Borough Council
 Charles Hayward Foundation
 Comic Relief
 Croydon Council
 Department for Education
 Department of Health
 Department for Work and Pensions
 Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
 Essex County Council
 Fairlands Primary School and Nursery
 Gloucestershire County Council
 Gosport Borough Council
 Hampshire County Council
 Henry Smith Charitable Trust
 Hertfordshire County Council
 London Borough of Camden
 London Borough of Ealing
 Milton Keynes Dons Sport and Education Trust
 Nomura International Plc
 Nottinghamshire City Council
 Peter Lang Children's Trust
 Premier Foods
 Radley College
 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
 Southwark Council
 The W.A. Cadbury Charitable Trust
 The Arimathea Trust
 The Bryant Trust
 The Hanley Trust
 The Living Room (Hertfordshire)
 University of Bedfordshire
 Waitrose Community Trust

2013-14 Income by funding source



- National Government
- Local Government
- Big Lottery, Trusts and Corporates
- Charitable sector
- Individual donations, subscriptions and sales
- Donated services

“I felt better about myself knowing that I don’t have to worry about silly things and I felt supported to make choices and feel safe... I changed my tunnel vision. I am now more positive and have a better outlook, I am focusing more on solutions rather than problems.”

“Before accessing this service, I could not stop crying and [...] was self-harming regularly when frustrated, he used to pull his hair, the skin on his cheeks, he used to stab himself with a pen... He hasn’t done that for a long time...”

“I discovered during these sessions that I am stronger than I thought, emotionally... You can throw anything at me now, I know I’ll deal with it...”

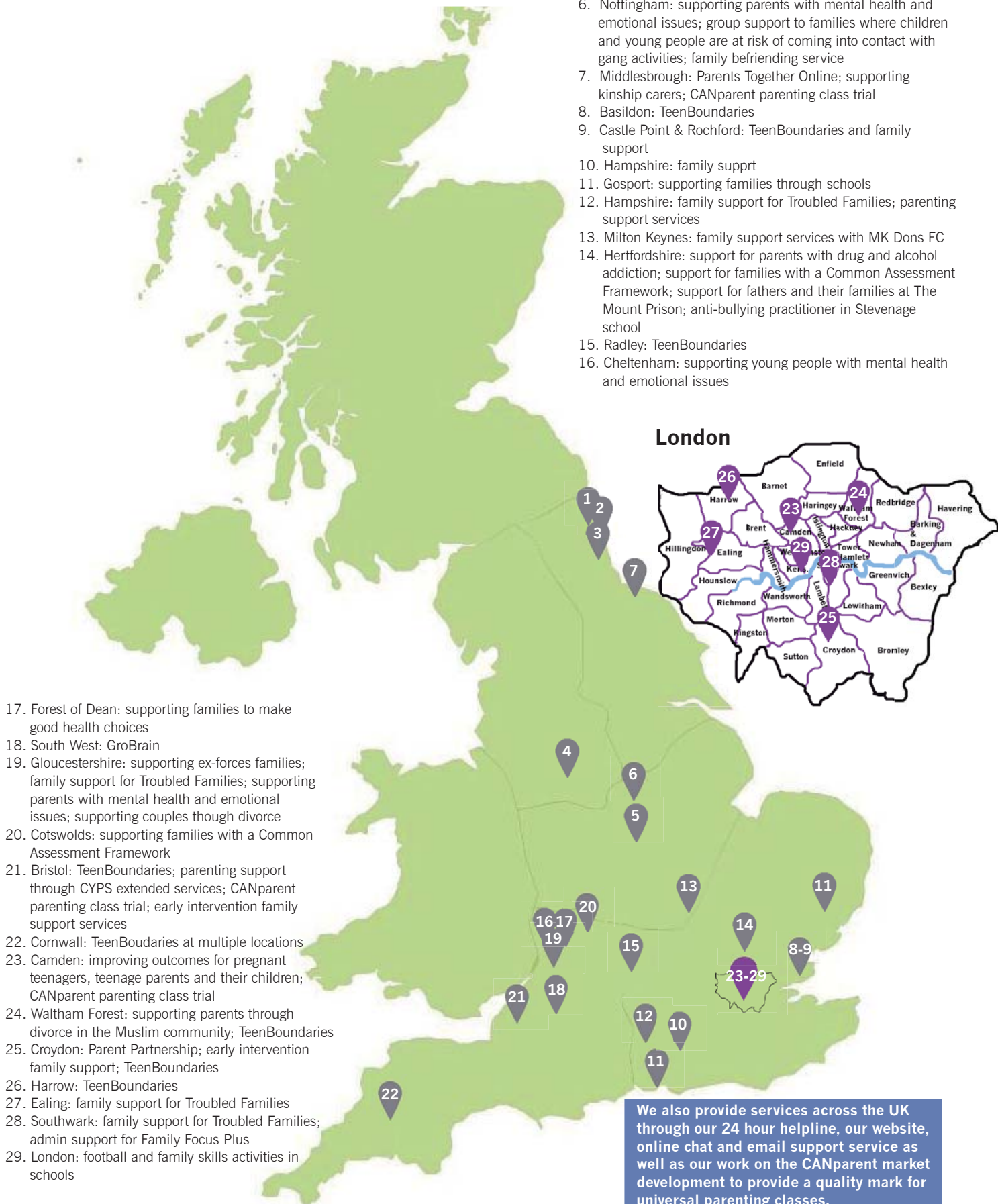
“A small diverse group helped me listen and understand I am not alone and gave me much better self-confidence”

“I also changed my tone and don’t scream or shout! I feel that whatever comes our way we can get through it!”

Map of Family Lives Local Services

Services

1. Newcastle: supporting kinship carers
2. South Shields: supporting kinship carers
3. Durham: supporting kinship carers
4. High Peak: Parents Together Online; CANparent parenting class trial
5. Leicester: supporting parents through divorce in the Muslim community; supporting parents with mental health and emotional issues
6. Nottingham: supporting parents with mental health and emotional issues; group support to families where children and young people are at risk of coming into contact with gang activities; family befriending service
7. Middlesbrough: Parents Together Online; supporting kinship carers; CANparent parenting class trial
8. Basildon: TeenBoundaries
9. Castle Point & Rochford: TeenBoundaries and family support
10. Hampshire: family support
11. Gosport: supporting families through schools
12. Hampshire: family support for Troubled Families; parenting support services
13. Milton Keynes: family support services with MK Dons FC
14. Hertfordshire: support for parents with drug and alcohol addiction; support for families with a Common Assessment Framework; support for fathers and their families at The Mount Prison; anti-bullying practitioner in Stevenage school
15. Radley: TeenBoundaries
16. Cheltenham: supporting young people with mental health and emotional issues





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Family Lives Annual Review 2013-14 covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. For fuller information you can request a copy of the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts, or download it from www.familylives.org.uk

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