

# Parentline report

## Call data analysis October 2008 – December 2008

### Introduction

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 Unit demonstrate that parents ring us either at a time of 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 use 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. 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 Young Minds, 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.

A total of 14,145 calls were answered by a call taker and forms submitted during the time period October 08 – December 08. 4,260 of these were short calls and 9,885 were long calls<sup>1</sup>.

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.

### Gender of callers making short calls during this period (n=4,260)

Male	1,073	25%
Female	2,870	67%
Gender not specified	317	7%

<sup>1</sup> Many parents ring Parentline for a short call – seeking information for example. Anonymous case records are kept of all calls lasting over 12 minutes; such calls are termed 'long calls'

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

(n=4,260 but please note that some data is recorded twice, for example if a caller is sent a leaflet and is signposted to another organisation)

Type	Total	% of short calls
Call interrupted\did not expand	1,085	25%
Repeat caller – calls from CMS <sup>2</sup> callers	394	9%
Sent leaflets	19	<1%
Signposted to other organisation	1,116	26%
Calls for general information about Parentline Plus or our offices	1,723	40%
Callers referred to Useful Website Links	77	2%

<sup>2</sup>: Case management support is an internal management tool allowing us to provide a more appropriate service to regular callers, to manage inappropriate users and improve our capacity on the national line.

## 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 Parentline Plus services or other organisations, if relevant
- Demographic information
- How they found out about Parentline Plus
- 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 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%. 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 to 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.

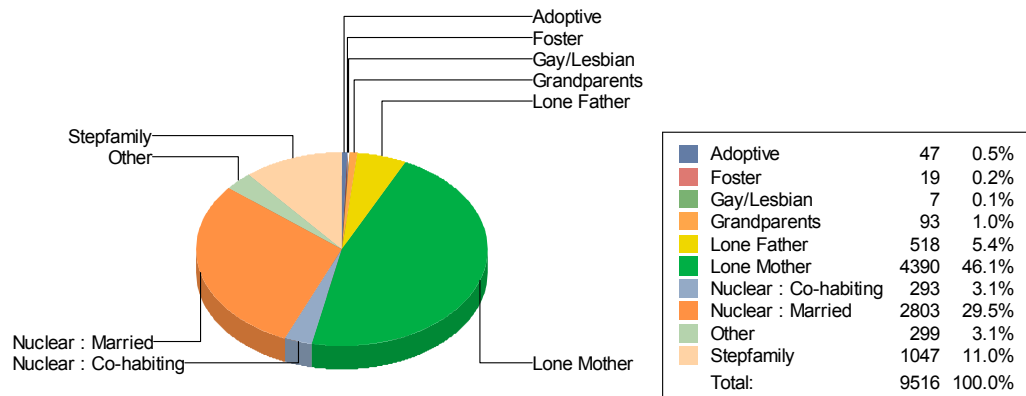
<b>Caller</b>	<b>Total of long calls in this period (n=9,885)</b>	<b>% of long calls in this period (n=9,885)</b>
Mother	7,309	74%
Father	1,161	12%
Stepmother	135	1%
Stepfather	93	1%
Non-resident father	272	3%
Non-resident mother	158	2%
Partner of non-resident father	49	1%
Partner of non-resident mother	4	<1%
Male relative	61	1%
Female relative	473	5%
Male – friend	17	<1%
Female – friend	81	1%
Professional	40	<1%
Other	133	1%

## Family status

This graph 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 Parentline 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 almost 52% of family types causing concern.

It is also interesting to note that stepfamilies represent a significant percentage of callers at 11% this quarter. This proportion is growing by approximately 0.5% per quarter.

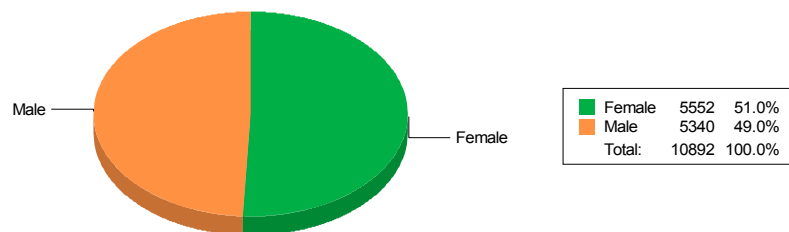
## Family status of callers to Parentline during this period (n=9,885)



## Sex of the person causing concern

The chart below 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, and the data on age of child causing concern consistently shows differences between boys and girls.

## Sex of the person causing concern in calls to Parentline during this period (n= 9,885)

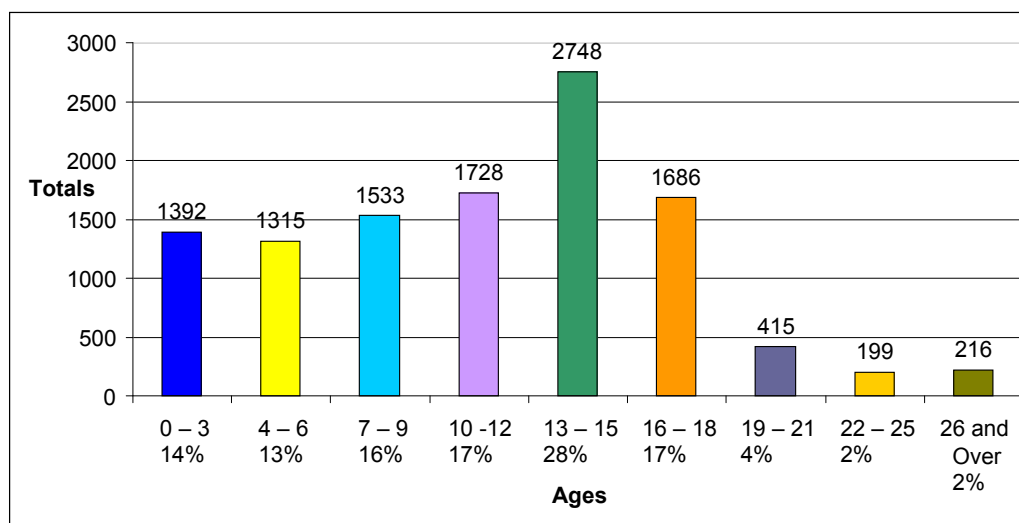


## Age of the children causing concern

The table indicates that the most challenging period for parents is the teenage years with 45% of parents who called concerned about teenagers aged between 13 and 18.

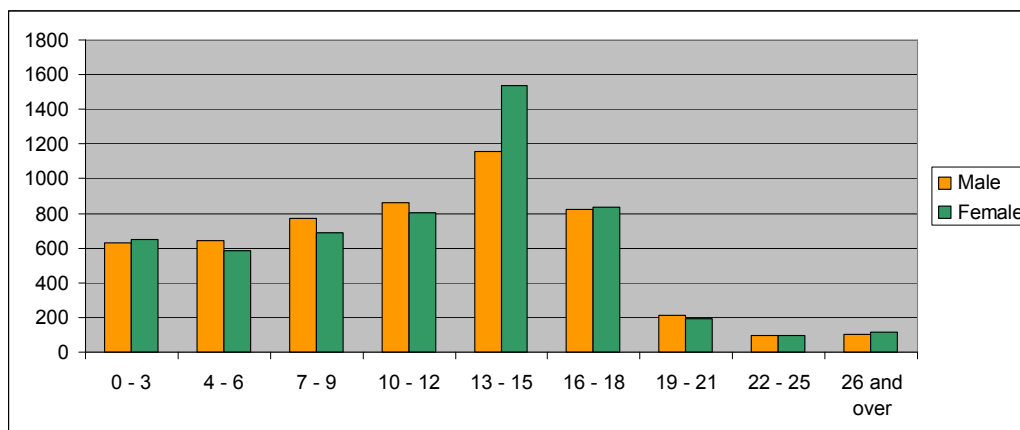
### Age of the children causing concern in calls to Parentline during this period, displayed as a table and a chart (n= 9,885)

Ages	Total	% of long calls
0 - 3	1,392	14%
4 - 6	1,315	13%
7 - 9	1,533	16%
10 - 12	1,728	17%
13 - 15	2,748	28%
16 - 18	1,686	17%
19 - 21	415	4%
22 - 25	199	2%
26 and over	216	2%



This can be analysed further to explore whether or not there are any differences between girls and boys.

**Age brackets by gender of the children causing concern in calls to Parentline during this period (n=9,885, female 51% and male 49% of calls)**



This quarter the columns are closely aligned except for the 13-15 year olds which show a marked increase in the number of calls about girls. This peak of calls about girls in young adolescence is consistent across the quarters that we have collected this data, however this quarter there is less difference between boys and girls in other age groups than there has been in previous reports.

## Reasons for calling Parentline

Parents call for a wide variety of reasons which we sub-divide into children's issues and adult's issues. Due to the complexity of some calls, there is double reporting, for example if a call concerns adult and child feelings about divorce which is impacting on the child's school life. During the quarter October – December 2008 these were the top ten reasons for calling.

<b>Top ten reasons for calling Parentline in this quarter</b>	<b>% of all long calls (n=9,885)</b>
Adults' mental health	39%
Children's behaviour	28%
Children's emotional health	22%
Children's conflict	16%
Children's concerns about divorce and separation	13%
Adults' concerns about divorce and separation	12%
Adults' couple disagreements	10%
Adults' isolation and loneliness	7%
Children's mental health	7%
Children's issues about school/education	7%

## Children's issues

During October to December 2008, we recorded 9,885 long calls which show the issues that parents consider to be the main reason why they have called Parentline, however due to the complexity of some calls there is double reporting.

### The main reasons for calling Parentline about children during this quarter (all calls n=9,885)

Issue	Number of calls about children's issues during this period	% of long calls
Children: behaviour	2,802	28%
Children: emotional health	2,219	22%
Children: conflict	1,550	16%
Children: divorce/separation	1,299	13%
Children: school/education	692	7%
Children: mental health	650	7%
Children: bullying	436	4%
Children: sexual behaviour	329	3%
Children: abuse	356	4%
Children: developmental	394	4%
Children: physical health	137	1%
Children: disability	91	1%

The main children's issue parents called Parentline about between October 2008 and December 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	Total of long calls for this period (n=9,885)	% of long calls during this period (n=9,885)	% of long calls about behaviour during this period (n= 2802)
<b>Location</b>			
At home	2,477	25%	88%
At school	529	5%	19%
Other location	310	3%	11%
<b>Type of behaviour</b>			
Verbal aggression	1,712	17%	61%
Physical aggression	898	9%	32%
Other	515	5%	18%
Lying	446	5%	16%
Bad crowd	418	4%	15%
Staying away from home	428	4%	15%
Stealing	373	4%	13%

Alcohol	273	3%	10%
Drugs	308	3%	11%
Peer pressure	186	2%	7%
Wanting to leave home	247	2%	9%
Smoking	219	2%	8%
Runaway/threatening	109	1%	4%
Involved with Youth Justice System	111	1%	4%
Internet misuse	103	1%	4%
ASBOS	8	<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 shows that parents are most concerned about children's behaviour in the home rather than anywhere else.

The main reason why the 'Other' category is quite high is that it includes general misbehaviour that would not be considered aggressive, for example, disobedient, disrespectful, non co-operative, lazy and just generally naughty.

## Adult issues

Adult issues	Total of long calls for this period (n=9,885)	% of long calls for this period (n=9,885)
Adults: mental health	3,892	39%
Adults: divorce/separation	1,216	12%
Adults: couple disagreements	1,006	10%
Adults: isolation/loneliness	709	7%
Adults: abuse	358	4%
Adults: financial	217	2%
Adults: physical health	116	1%
Adults: disability	57	1%

During the quarter October – December 2008 mental health was the main adult issue. This reflects the anxiety and stress that parents feel as mental health is almost always the top reason for calling Parentline as well as being the main adult reason.

Mental health	Total long calls during this period (n=3,892 calls about 6,159 issues)	% of long calls about adult mental health in this period (n=3,892)
Anxiety & stress	3467	89%
Anger	993	26%
Other	544	14%
Depressed feelings (identified by a health	384	10%



professional)		
Depressed feelings (not identified by a health professional)	355	9%
Grieving	198	5%
Suicide-attempted feelings expressed	80	2%
Postnatal depression	66	2%
Panic attacks	61	2%
Self-harm	11	<1%

## Actions taken by our call takers

Call takers respond to the individual needs of the caller. Some 46 parents (<1%) were sent leaflets from the current range published by Parentline Plus. Others (3,022, 31%) were referred to other organisations. These referrals are administered differently according to the organisation being referred to.

366 callers were referred to organisations from our Useful Website Links, representing 4% of all long calls.

Callers needing the support of Young Minds or Children's Legal Centre were 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).

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

Organisation	Total of all long calls in this period (n=9,885)	% of all long calls in this period (n=9,885)
CLC	880	6%
Young Minds	545	4%
ACE	400	3%
Get Connected	333	2%
CAB	310	2%
Connexions Direct	246	2%
OPF	214	2%
NSPCC	200	1%
Childline	177	1%
NHS	153	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.

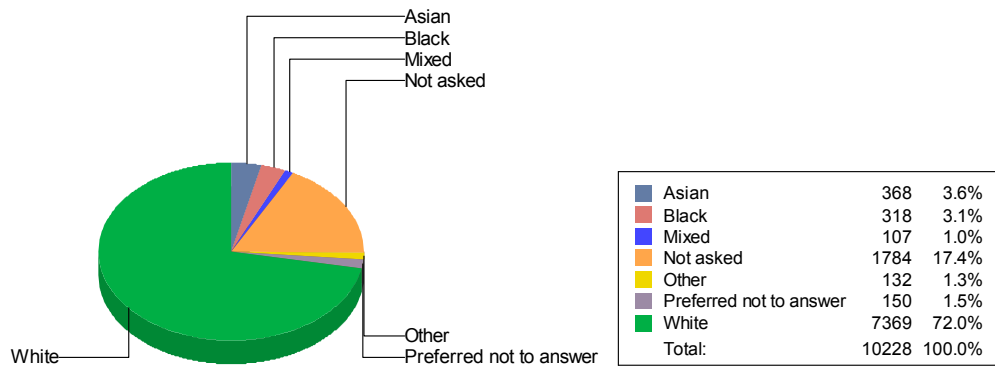
Organisation	Total of all long calls in this period (n=9,885)	% of all long calls in this period (n=9,885)
NSCT (National Services Coordination Team) for individual support or telegroups	581	6%
CLC	218 (closed over xmas period)	2%
YM	149 (closed over xmas period)	2%

## 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. 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 11% of callers who answered the question.



## 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. We are working to reduce the number of 'not asked' in this category.

Income bracket	Total of all long calls for this period (n=9,885)	% of long calls in this period (n=9,885)	% of callers who answered this question. (n=7,382)
0 – 5,000	547	6%	7%
5,001 – 10,000	990	10%	13%
10,001 – 15,000	1,008	10%	13%
15,001 – 20,000	887	9%	11%
20,001 – 30,000	1,177	12%	15%
30,000 and above	1,832	19%	23%
Not sure	941	10%	12%
Preferred not to answer	503	5%	6%
Not asked	2,000	20%	n/a
Asked and answered	7,885	n/a	n/a

## Disability

The table below shows an analysis of whether or not callers classed themselves as having a disability.

Disability	Total of all long calls for this period (n=9,885)	% of long calls in this period (n=9,885)	% of callers who answered this question. (n=8,006)
Yes	865	9%	11%
No	7,131	72%	88%
Preferred not to answer	86	1%	1%
Not asked	1,793	18%	n/a
Asked and answered	8,092	n/a	n/a

## How caller found out about Parentline

Information source	Total of long calls in this period (n=9,885)	% of long calls in this period (n=9,885)
Phone book	3,429	35%
Not asked	1,668	17%
Other	1,003	10%
Website or internet	1,232	12%
Other organisation	722	7%

Friend	523	5%
School	207	2%
GP surgery	217	2%
Family	176	2%
Magazine	105	1%
Book	112	1%
Television	141	1%
Local Authority	129	1%
Newspaper	67	1%
Children's Information Services	72	1%
Course	29	<1%
Campaign	25	<1%
Radio	27	<1%