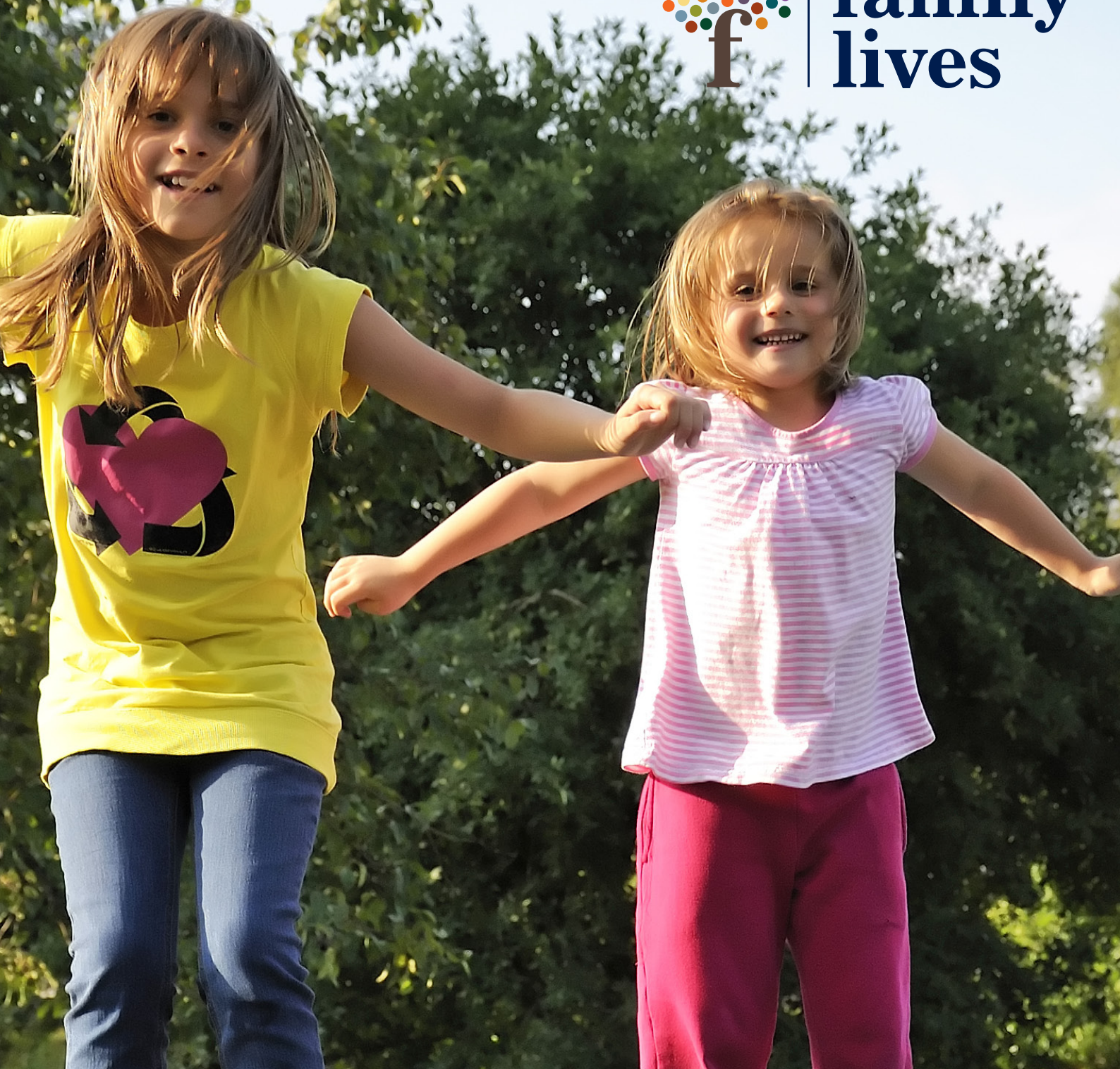




family  
lives



# ***We're here for families***

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

***Our achievements 2016/17***



# Foreword

***We are here for all families. We work to improve outcomes for children and their families across the UK, whether they grow up in care, in a one-parent family, with two parents or are raised by grandparents. We know that family life is complicated, and we support families every step of the way. Whatever a family is experiencing, from postnatal depression, toddler tantrums, schooling issues, teenage aggression, bullying, mental health issues, imprisonment to divorce, we provide a wide range of services to support all.***

At Family Lives, we are committed to being here for families, whatever they need, whenever they need us. From our helpline to our befriending support, we provide information, support and advice every step of the way.

Last year, thanks to our dedicated body of volunteers, over 2.5 million people found advice through our website, and nearly 40,000 people received support on our helpline. Supporting families with issues such as bullying and teenage behaviour continues to be prevalent and we regularly comment in the press on these.

Providing easy to access and non-judge-

mental support is critical for families to thrive. Our latest Annual Review highlights just how our vital work supports children, parents, families and parenting practitioners throughout the UK.

The economic climate continues to impact on families and the services and support available to them. For the voluntary sector itself, we face continued uncertainty during the Brexit negotiations and after the general election, and are actively seeking new and innovative sources of funding.

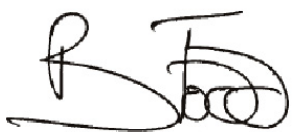
Family Lives' ability to react and adapt to funding changes demonstrates that we can tailor our support services to ensure support

***“I felt like I was meeting a friend not having a session with someone. I have the confidence to make my own choices now.”***

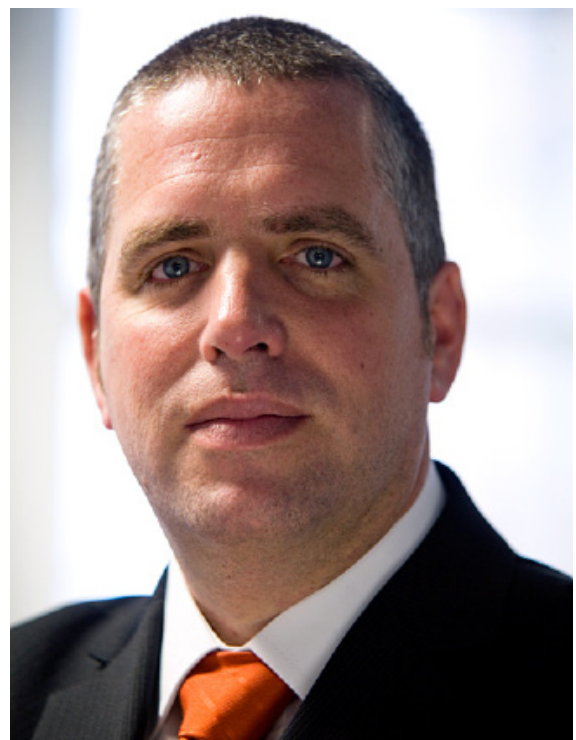
***“Family Lives saved my life. If I hadn’t had your helpline to call, I’d have been feeling the same isolation as others do.”***

gets to where it is needed the most in the most cost effective way.

We remain committed to providing services which are free at the point of delivery. This is only possible thanks to the dedication of our workforce and our invaluable body of trained volunteers who donated over 22,000 hours of their time last year.



Jeremy Todd  
Chief Executive



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

We are a charity and rely on your support to provide the services to families who need our help to improve outcomes for children and their families across the UK.

Please visit **[www.familylives.org.uk/get-involved/donate/](http://www.familylives.org.uk/get-involved/donate/)** to donate online or send your donation to us at:

Family Lives  
15-17 The Broadway  
Hatfield  
Hertfordshire  
AL9 5HZ

Donate from your mobile:

You can make a single donation via text

**Text FMLY01 £5 to 70070**

**Over 2.5 million website users**

**Over 39,000 helpline calls answered**

**10,090 children and adults interacted with through face to face services**

**22,000 hours donated by our volunteers**

**52% of helpline callers are single parents\***

**98% of helpline callers are satisfied with the service**

**31% of helpline callers over last 2 years on family income of less than £15k pa\***

**16% from BME background**

\* Demographic and satisfaction data is gathered from representative samples of caller and website information, with differing sample sizes for each question due to the availability of data.



# ***Why we do what we do***

***Families come in many shapes and sizes and no one really knows what's around the corner. We support anyone who needs our help whether that's a grandmother looking after her grandson because his mother is in prison, a teenager who is depressed and self-harming, or a dad feeling the pressure of raising his children alone.***

It has always been our mission to support families, but now, more than ever, families are feeling the pressure from all sides. Economic times continue to be difficult and uncertain and many families need support to navigate their way through dealing with the stresses and strains which accompany financial pressures.

We are extremely proud of the quality of support we offer, whether that's provided by paid staff or our amazing body of volunteers – you can read more about their contribution on page 7.

We continue to keep finding solutions where we see gaps in provision and pride ourselves on continually seeking new and innovative ways of supporting families.

We are also proud of the complex and diverse range of issues for which we provide support, with specialist services offering help to families living with psychosis, helpline services supporting families of prisoners, guidance for supporting families through the complex special educational

needs system, and support for young people experiencing bullying. In short, Family Lives is here for every member of the family, whenever they need us.

## **How we support families – overview**

Family Lives provides a wide range of support to families through our helpline, online advice and face to face services such as befriending and outreach.

Despite having faced monumental funding cuts over the last few years, we continue to see increased demand for our services. This year we supported nearly 40,000 people on the helpline, a service which continues to grow in demand.

Our helpline provides emotional support to families across the whole range of issues people can experience from managing difficult teenagers, to the impact of divorce and self-harm.

This accessible and confidential service sits alongside our wealth of online advice and resources as well as our community services.

Improving the lives of children sits at the heart of what we do; much of our work centres around supporting parents to feel empowered and increase their self-esteem and confidence with whatever issues they are facing.

## **Our reach**

We engaged with over 2 million families last year through our helplines, online advice and support in the community. Demand for our services in general continues to increase. We supported just over 10,000 individuals last year (both adults and young people) through our face to face services, working with mums, dads, members of the wider family, and working with families on low incomes, single parents, families from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and parents with disabilities.

We are very proud of our digital reach and pride ourselves on being an innovative and digitally focused charity. Over the last year we had over 3 million visits (a 22% increase) to the Family Lives website. Our social media audience continues to grow reaching 292,263 followers this year, across our different channels. This digital presence enables us to reach an ever-growing online audience to share our advice and let people know where they can find support.

## **Our volunteers**

Over the last year, our volunteers donated over 22,000 hours of support through the helpline and face to face services

Our volunteers are the backbone of the services we provide to families. All volunteers receive substantial training before going on to support families. This is followed up with ongoing professional development and supervision.

Our helpline call takers undertake a 30-hour training programme to ensure they are equipped to become skilled and effective call takers. They support callers with a wide range of issues with care and respect. Our volunteers often benefit just as much as the people they support. For example,

in Westminster, 30% of our volunteer befrienders have gone on to higher education or found employment.

## **Supporting staff and volunteers**

Over the last year we have done a great deal of work on both wellbeing and engagement, including supporting staff who are unwell to get back to work, and we have continued to successfully support work-life balance by enabling employees to work flexibly, wherever possible. Feedback from our 2016 staff and volunteer workforce engagement survey was also very positive – with both staff and volunteers stating that they feel proud of the work Family Lives does.

We were also awarded the Investors in People kitemark, following their independent evaluation. Family Lives continues to be a Living Wage employer, ensuring that all staff are paid at least the voluntary Living Wage. This is a higher rate of base pay, attempting to meet more realistic basic living costs, rather than the National Living / Minimum wage which many other employers pay.

## **Our funding**

Times are still difficult for charities with competition for funding available from both government and trusts becoming ever fiercer.

However, we continue to seek new grants to maintain our existing services, alongside developing work in new areas and engaging with an increasing number of issues that impact on family life.

We are diversifying our income sources by working with corporate partners, selling merchandise, such as our Bullying UK wristbands, and promoting fundraising activities from the Great North Run and our Summer Ball, to our Wear Blue Day, which raises awareness of the impact of bullying. But we know that there are more families who need our help and we will always continue to seek ways of expanding our reach.



## **Supporting families with multiple and complex needs**

### **Southwark**

We support families across the country who are often very vulnerable, such as in the London borough of Southwark through the Families Matter service. All the families supported by our practitioners and volunteers showed improvement in the areas of emotion and affection, empathy

been particularly prevalent in the light of ongoing council funding cuts.

The support offered by our volunteers can include things such as helping them to apply for benefits, helping them to manage on a budget and pay bills, organising household chores, supporting them

*“I felt like I was meeting a friend not having a session with someone. I have the confidence to make my own choices now.”*

and understanding, boundaries, self-acceptance, and learning and knowledge. The service is in great demand with 17 volunteers actively supporting families in the area.

emotionally, and engaging with new social workers. “I now know and understand I am not alone with these difficulties and other people have similar difficulties. Knowing that I was able to talk and explain my difficulties has helped me so much.”

### **Nottingham and Coventry**

In Nottingham and Coventry our volunteer befrienders support families who are experiencing challenging times. The most common issues presented are chaotic lifestyles underpinned by previous or ongoing experience of domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, and isolation and poverty, with often limited exposure to role models for effective parenting.

### **Hampshire**

In Hampshire we provide an intensive family support service to help families who have complex and multiple needs. The service model provides one family worker to work with the whole family, enabling families to make transformational changes to their lives and relationships. The support has enabled adults and children to engage with services, access support and empowered them to improve their lives.

Parents can be initially reluctant to accept another person to support them on top of the range of social and health professionals with whom they are already engaged. However, once befriending starts, we find that parents quickly warm to the volunteers as they see them as a ‘normal’ person, who will listen and support them, rather than telling them what to do. Volunteers provide consistency against an often fast turn-over of social workers which has

### **Gloucester**

Our Families in Mind project has enabled adults with a diagnosis of psychosis to be supported in the community. By providing a ‘buddy’, the service has enabled people to become less isolated, travel on a bus, visit a café, go out for a walk and make significant steps towards the road to recovery.



## Outreach services

### Westminster

Family Lives provides outreach services across Westminster, London, to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable families with children from 0-5 years old. We focus on an integrated service by providing outreach and home visiting as well as providing long-term befriending support.

The service is well established in the area and acts as a bridge to accessing vital support services which families need. Among some of the key issues

*“Accepting that my child has a disability was really difficult for me, my volunteer helped me look at all the positives that my child could do”.*

families were dealing with this year were isolation, domestic violence, mental health, financial grants, disability and adult education. Despite losing 60% of our funding from October 2016, we have still been able to deliver a highly effective service thanks to the dedication of our staff and volunteers.

Befriending volunteers have an empowering approach to supporting families to help them access services, reduce isolation and empower parents in their parenting. 104 families used our befriending service last year.

Our volunteers also benefit from this work with 30% going on to find employment or enrolling in higher education in an area that they are passionate about. 32% of volunteers have previously used the service themselves, and 18% of our volunteers in Westminster are survivors of gender-based violence. Westminster is a diverse borough and our volunteers speak 18 different languages which really helps the team to reach a wide range of families.

## Kinship care support

In the North East of England, we worked in partnership with Grandparents Plus and the Family and Childcare Trust to support grandparents and other family members who are looking after a relative through our Relative Experience project. There are an estimated 200,000-300,000 children living with kinship carers in the UK. A large proportion of these are struggling on very low incomes and face additional concerns around inadequate housing and caring for a child with a disability. Many are also coping with their own health issues.

Many of the children living with kinship carers have behavioural issues as a result of their early life experiences. Hostility from birth parents and other family members can isolate kinship carers, leading to low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

Our project offers kinship carers one-to-one befriending support and over the year 264 carers received befriending support. The evaluation report,



*Relative Experience*, carried out by York Consulting, found that: “Without Relative Experience, Kinship Carers reported they would have been significantly worse off. The listening ear of a befriender, someone who was able to empathise made a significant positive impact on Kinship Carers’ capacity to cope.” And like other befriending services, the experience of volunteers as befrienders was overwhelmingly positive: “93% of volunteers stated they would recommend the role to others. They reported improvements in their own levels of confidence as well confidence in delivering the role.”

## ***Supporting young people***

Bullying continues to be high on the agenda for both parents seeking advice and young people looking for support. We continue to support thousands of families and young people through our online advice on [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk), reaching out through social media, and raising awareness of the impact of bullying on young people and the whole family. We also focus on workplace bullying which remains a much accessed topic amongst our service users.

We ran a successful Wear Blue Day in November 2016 to raise awareness of the impact of bullying which raised over £12,000 and our Bullying UK wristbands continue to be extremely popular. This year they were sponsored by PilotPenUK.

We continue to deliver our popular workshops for young people, Positive Boundaries, in schools across the country, educating pupils about sexualised bullying, the impact of the media and pornography, issues around relationships and consent, and how to safely navigate the online and social media world that young people grow up in today.

This year we have worked in Cornwall to train youth workers to deliver the programme. Over this period, 497 young people in participating schools reported being aware of different sexual health services and where to ask for advice if they need it. 681 young people in schools reported feeling confident in saying no to unacceptable sexual behaviour, stating that the project will change their behaviour. The project overwhelmingly exceeded targets and the Local Authority have continued their investment so that 18 further staff can continue to deliver the programme.

## ***Special educational needs***

Family Lives provides an independent support service to parents raising a child with special educational needs in three London boroughs - Lambeth, Croydon and Southwark - to guide and advise them through the complex assessments

required for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for their child. In both Lambeth and Southwark 88% of respondents said they gained new skills or information by using the service. In Croydon the figure was 89%. The service supported 42 families across the three London boroughs and all respondents said they would recommend the service.

## ***Families of prisoners and offenders***

Since 2014 Family Lives has provided the National Offenders' Families Helpline and website, which are under contract to the Ministry of Justice. In the last year we supported over 10,000 individual callers on the helpline, as well as answering over 1,100 emails, in addition the advice website received over 400,000 unique visitors (cumulative monthly visitors). Despite the continuing increase in demand we have maintained an answer rate of 85% for this service.

## ***Supporting professionals***

We continue to support professionals working with families through our Parenting UK membership service. This includes convening a network for parenting programme developers in the UK which aims to provide an opportunity for developers to exchange experience, promote the adoption of best practice in parenting education, and to ensure developers have a national voice. More information about the Parenting Programme Developers' Group can be found at:  
[www.parentinguk.org/our-work/ppdg/](http://www.parentinguk.org/our-work/ppdg/)

With the rapid development of integrated services and multi-disciplinary teams, high quality supervision has a crucial role to play in the support of any practitioner providing family support. Family Lives provides supervision and support to professionals, offering individual or group supervision, on a regular and ad hoc basis. It provides a complementary professional service to performance and line management from an alternative discipline.



## Case study

A mum with a teenage daughter was referred to us. She has another adult child who had been violent towards her in the past and no longer lives with them, and the mum also experienced domestic violence from a past partner who she is no longer in touch with. The mum and her daughter are fairly isolated as the daughter's father had died and most of the mum's family were no longer around. Mum had drug and alcohol dependence in the past and anxiety issues, and she was being supported by other services to help with these issues.

In the first meeting with her volunteer befriender, the volunteer realised that the mum was very anxious about appointments as she was poorly organised and found getting to places on time really stressful. The volunteer realised that mum didn't have a diary or calendar because she didn't know how to use them, so they bought one together and added in all the appointments that mum could remember. This simple act had a huge impact on mum's life and her anxiety levels, and she now uses it to help identify what triggers the anxiety.

The mum was often very focussed on the bad things that have happened in her life and found

it hard to focus on the positive. So together they looked at recording one positive thing each week that had happened or that she had achieved. Mum found that this made her want to achieve something each week and quickly developed a list of positive achievements, such as going on courses, getting help with her health and joining a gym. All these things helped her to feel more confident in supporting her daughter at school, her getting medication and feeling more confident around professionals, and she has now entered to run a half marathon.

The mum has also felt more in control of her home, achieving things such as opening bags of post that she had found too stressful to deal with, doing DIY and having friends round for dinner.

Our volunteer was able to develop a close and trusting relationship with the mum and together they found more beneficial ways of dealing with her anxiety, preparing for appointments and learning to relax. As well as now being able to deal with situations in a calm manner this has led to mum developing a more relaxed and positive relationship with her daughter.

*\*All names and personal details have been changed to maintain anonymity*

# Our finances 2016/17

For more information you can request a copy of Family Lives' audited Annual Report and Financial Statements 31 March 2017, or download it from:

[www.familylives.org.uk/about/annual-accounts-and-reports/](http://www.familylives.org.uk/about/annual-accounts-and-reports/)

## Total cost of providing services to families and family support sector

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
By cost type:			
<b>Staff and volunteer costs</b>	3,739,000	3,213,000	2,784,000
<b>Project costs</b>	758,000	199,000	142,000
<b>Premises, infrastructure and administration</b>	391,000	297,000	262,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,888,000</b>	<b>3,709,000</b>	<b>3,188,000</b>
By activity:			
<b>National support services</b>	1,510,000	1,110,000	1,044,000
<b>Local support services</b>	2,351,000	2,491,000	2,102,000
<b>Professional/sector development</b>	1,019,000	101,000	19,000
<b>Fundraising</b>	8,000	7,000	23,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,888,000</b>	<b>3,709,000</b>	<b>3,188,000</b>

## How we funded our services

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
<b>National Government</b>	2,408,000	933,000	915,000
<b>Local Government</b>	1,561,000	1,592,000	1,352,000
<b>Big Lottery, trusts and corporates</b>	674,000	631,000	319,000
<b>Charitable sector</b>	102,000	27,000	26,000
<b>Individual donations, subscriptions &amp; sales</b>	24,000	35,000	49,000
<b>Donated services</b>	215,000	247,000	322,000
<b>Unrestricted reserves</b>		244,000	205,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,984,000</b>	<b>3,709,000</b>	<b>3,188,000</b>

# **Thank you**

***Thank you to everyone who has supported the work of Family Lives during 2016/17. With your support we've been able to make a real difference to children and families across the UK at a time they've needed us most. Thank you to all the trusts and organisations that have so generously supported our work. We'd like to say a particular thank you to the following:***

Armithea Charitable Trust  
Bank of England  
Barrow Cadbury  
Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation  
Big Lottery Fund  
Burghley Charitable Trust  
Cereal Partners UK  
Christopher Laing Foundation  
City of Westminster  
Coleen: legacy from husband's will  
(in memory of son Joe)  
Coventry City Council  
Croydon Youth Locality North  
Danetre & Southbrook Learning Village  
Department for Education  
Department of Health  
Fairlands School  
Fundraising - Emily Lee  
Fundraising - Joanna Bradley  
Fundraising - Laurie Jaffe  
Fundraising - Spencer Tindal  
Gloucestershire County Council  
Hampshire County Council  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Home-Start Bexley  
Hyde Park Place Estate Charity

Jersey Beyond  
Julie Jack  
London Borough of Bexley  
London Borough of Ealing  
Ministry of Justice  
National Children's Bureau  
Nottingham City Council  
OfficeXpress  
Radian  
RAF Benvolent Fund- Northolt  
Scottish Prison Service  
Sir Frederic Osborn School  
Southampton City Council  
Southwark Council  
Summerfield Trust  
Swansea Council  
The Brook Trust  
The Cathedral & Abbey Church  
of St Albans  
The Hanley Trust  
The Living Room  
The Pilot Pen Company (UK) Ltd  
University of Bedfordshire  
Walcot Foundation  
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

# Family Lives services overview

*"I feel so much better; you have been amazing"*

**22,000** hours donated by our volunteers



39,268 helpline calls answered

10,090 children and adults interacted with us via face to face services

Over 2.5 million website users



292,000 social media followers

## Our family support helpline\*

52%

Mothers

27%

Fathers

8%

Wider family

1%

Children

9%

Friends/ third parties

2%

Non-biological family

## Callers to the Family Lives helpline are more likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds\*

52% are single parents

31% with family income under £15,000 pa over last 2 years

14% have some kind of disability

7% under age 25

## Impact

- 97% of helpline callers felt more able to deal with the issues concerning them after talking to us
- 30% of website users reported no longer needing to contact another service (GPs and schools were the two most common)

\* Demographic and satisfaction data is gathered from representative samples of caller and website information, with differing sample sizes for each question due to the availability of data.

# ***We can't do it without our volunteers***

***We'd also like to say a big thank you to our volunteers who gave us thousands of hours of their time over the last year to support children and families through our helpline and befriending services. Without our volunteers, many families would not receive the vital support they need and we wouldn't benefit from the wide range of skills and experience that volunteers bring to our work.***

***'It's a real privilege that someone feels they can talk to you, trust you and share with you what's happening in their lives.'***

***'Befriending has helped me to understand things from another person's life as well as learning more about my own.'***

# ***Thank you!***



***Family Lives is one of the UK's leading family support charities. We believe in improving child outcomes through family support and services.***

**www.familylives.org.uk**  
**0808 800 2222**

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Family Lives Annual Review 2016-17 covers the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. For fuller information you can request a copy of the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts, or download it from [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk). All images used in this publication are sourced from image libraries and are intended to be representative only. They do not portray any specific individual or service user.

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