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Andrew Ketteringham Chair of Relate Board of Trustees

Welcome to our Annual Review. I'm delighted to present some of Relate's greatest successes from the past year, which have all helped to bring us closer to a future in which healthy relationships are actively promoted as the basis of a thriving society. From MPs in Westminster to campaigners in Welwyn Garden City and beyond, momentum to support this vision is increasing and I'm extremely proud of Relate's leading role in this culture shift.



This year we've been focusing on supporting more relationships in more ways that work for those who need us. As well as coming to Relate for face-to-face counselling and support, it's clear that more people want our services in new and different ways. We know that visitors to our website have increased by 23% in the last year and that almost 55% of people now visit via a mobile or tablet device. Every day we see more and more people getting in touch through social media. Our job is to ensure we're ready and waiting to help those we exist to serve, so we've worked hard to grow and improve our online presence in 2014/15.

Another top priority has been continuing to bring the relationship support sector together by leading The Relationships Alliance, which is made up of Relate, Marriage Care, One Plus One and The Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships. With a remit to raise the prominence of relationships in policy, the Alliance hosted the Prime Minister at a Relationships Summit event in London in August. Mr Cameron gave a keynote speech on family and relationships policy which included the announcement of a 'family test' to apply to all domestic public policy. We welcomed this as a very positive step towards recognising the value of relationships and putting them centre stage in public policy, something we've long been campaigning for.

In March 2015 we launched our latest integrated campaign, *The Best Medicine*, calling for relationships to be put at the heart of the NHS to improve health and wellbeing and reduce pressure on the public purse. As part of the campaign we started a petition which attracted over 1,000 signatures in its first day – it's clear that many people are as passionate as us about ensuring relationships are given the prominence they deserve in society.

Overall this year, I'm delighted to say that Relate has supported more than 1.25 million people through our national and local work. The thread that pulls all this together is enabling people to build strong and stable relationships which go the distance in good times and bad. This would simply not be possible without the tireless work of our highly skilled practitioners, volunteers and staff across the Relate Federation.

"It's clear that many people are as passionate as us about ensuring relationships are given the prominence they deserve in society."

Professor Sir Cary Cooper, CBE President of Relate

Relate is a very well known and respected organisation, however it's often misunderstood. I take every chance I can to tell people that Relate is here throughout everything life throws at them: whether that means planning a family, parents and teenagers locking horns, a couple in crisis, retirement or bereavement. And it doesn't matter how they want to access our support - we're here when and how we're needed.



One of the things I'm most proud of this year is the publication of our *The Way We Are Now 2014* report, which greatly helped to keep Relate in the public eye. The report paints a picture of the nation's relationships, based on a survey of over 5,000 people. One of the key areas the report focused on is our work-life balance. It's disconcerting that for those in full time work, contact with colleagues and bosses by far exceeds contact with many family members. In fact, we're about as likely to have daily contact with our colleagues (62%) as we are with our own children (64%), and much more likely to have daily contact with our bosses (44%) than with our mums (26%) or our friends (16%). Overall, it was particularly sad to hear that one in ten people said they had no close friends at all.

When it comes to the quality of these relationships, thankfully, the survey results revealed that the majority of people are positive about their working relationships: 70% described their relationships with colleagues as good or very good.

The Way We Are Now 2014 showed that the delicate balancing act between work and family life continues to be a concern for a significant number of workers as the lines between work and home become increasingly blurred. But work-life conflict isn't inevitable; work can serve to enrich family life and vice versa. It'll be interesting to see how things change when we pose these questions again in *The Way We Are Now 2015*.

"I take every chance I can to tell people that Relate is here throughout everything life throws at them."

Ruth Sutherland Chief Executive of Relate

Relate is about people: about individuals, couples, families and communities. Everything we do is rooted in improving life for those we exist to serve. Our corporate strategy and its five clear goals reflect this. Armed with the ambition of growing in service and influence, we're driven by a strategy which aims to help the nation's relationships thrive.



We offer our services to people of all ages, at all stages of many different types of relationships. For decades Relate has been a source of support and guidance for people across the country, and we're increasingly a leading advocate for the importance of relationships to individuals and society. The essence of our work has not changed, but we're committed to growing the ways in which we help people so that we can be there for them when and how they need us. That's why continuing to develop our online information, support and digital services is a priority. Over 1.2 million people visited our website in the past year which highlights just how important our digital presence is. We've been working to grow our online self-help tools and have won funding from Google to develop an innovative online family dispute resolution service for separating parents.

Our influencing work also continues apace. This has been an exciting year which has seen us meet with the Prime Minister on three occasions, and also receive support from MPs Iain Duncan-Smith, Jon Cruddas and Simon Hughes. The introduction of the 'family test' and a commitment to further funding for relationship support have been important milestones. In the run up to the General Election we released our manifesto with The Relationships Alliance, clearly setting out what we as a sector wanted to see from a future government. People are starting to see our point of view and take tangible action.

Finally, this is my last full year as Chief Executive of Relate. I feel so lucky to have contributed to a cause as important as Relate's, and I look forward to seeing the charity progress in the years to come. It has been a great source of pride for me to know that everyone is so united in achieving our goals. Thank you to everyone across the Relate Federation for their passion, enthusiasm and commitment – I have no doubt that Relate will continue to help more people in more ways that work in the years to come.

Chris Sherwood, Chief Executive of Relate from July 2015

In the time that Ruth was Chief Executive she created a strong legacy which I'm honoured to carry forward and progress. Relationships are at the heart of everything we do, as individuals and as a society. They're central to our wellbeing but they need to be nurtured. Relate has a pivotal role to play in raising awareness of the importance of relationships and delivering high quality services to support the nation's couple, family and social relationships.

I'm excited about the challenge of leading the charity to grow even further in influence and service, enabling us to help more people in more ways that work. To achieve this, we'll need to truly place those we exist to serve at the heart of everything we do. Our corporate strategy and service plan are vital tools in that process, and I look forward to building on these excellent foundations as we look to the future.





Who we are and why we're here



Who we are and why we're here

Relate's vision is of a future in which healthy relationships are actively promoted as the basis of a thriving society.

Mission

Our mission is to develop and support healthy relationships by:

- helping couples, families and individuals to make relationships work better;
- delivering inclusive, high quality services that are relevant at every stage of life;
- helping both the public and policymakers improve their understanding of relationships and what makes them flourish.



Our values

Relationships

For the beauty, joy and learning they can bring to all. We value the personal courage needed to forge and sustain lasting relationships. We value the quality of the relationship and are non-judgmental in supporting people to build healthy relationships whatever the circumstances.

People

People are at the heart of everything we do. We create and deliver services around clients and potential clients' needs. We value our people (volunteers, staff and supporters).

Inclusion

We work to reach out, and to extend our services and transcend the barriers that people may face. We do this to ensure that people who might need or want our services can access them. We actively promote equal opportunities and diversity in all that we do.

Partnership

Together we're stronger, more effective and can make a bigger difference. We seek to influence and collaborate with others to achieve our vision.

Learning

We seek to reflect, review, research and evaluate practice to continuously learn and improve understanding about relationship support.

Our strategy and priority goals

We understand the importance of effective corporate planning, to make sure that we're clear on where we're going and how we're going to get there with the resources we have. In 2014, we launched a new corporate strategy. All our work is now structured under five priority goals. Together, the goals enable us to deliver our corporate strategy and continue to champion our vision and mission into the future.

The five goals, which will be our focus until 2018, are:



Service effectiveness

We help more people in more ways that work.

2

Influence and visibility

A known brand which becomes an increasingly understood and valued leading brand.

3

Impact and value

The return on investing in relationships is demonstrable and disseminated.



Income generation

We grow and diversify our sources of income.



Sustainability

The organisation is fit for purpose now and into the future.

Our future service offer

Counselling and therapy continue to be an important part of our services work. In addition to this, our new services plan sets out our ambition to grow our offer in the key areas of mediation, information, education and support.

Our future service offer will operate at three levels:

- the promotion of quality relationships;
- the prevention of damage to relationships at times of transition;
- protection from harm and damage of relationship breakdown.

Counselling, therapy and meditation

Information Education

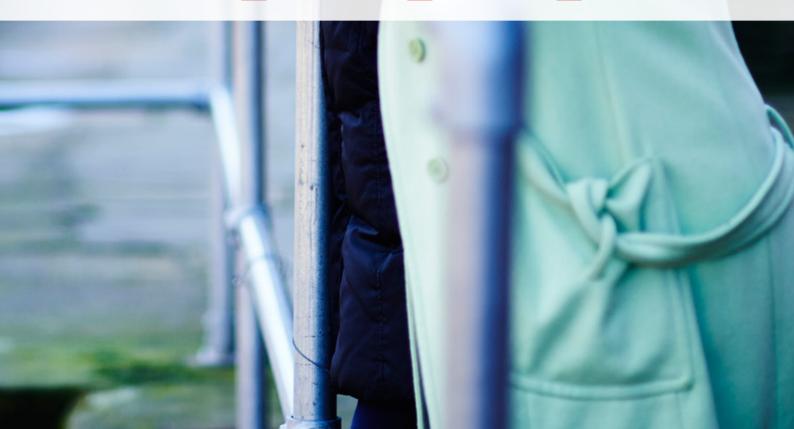
"Our new services plan sets out our ambition to grow our offer in the key areas of mediation, information, education and support."

Support





How we've helped people



How we've helped people

We work tirelessly to reach people who need us in ways that suit them. We strive to improve how clients experience the services, information and support we provide for them. Digital access is at the heart of our improvements, alongside the invaluable work of our 59 Centres across the country.

Our digital services

Our website:

1.2 m
visitors to our website

• That's a 23% increase on last year

Online information and support:

585 people took our online personality profiler



16,134 people have taken our self-help quizzes

Email counselling:

874 clients



National phone line:

The Response telephone network, staffed by efficient and expert Consultants, is our national phone network set up to deliver a high quality and consistent service to all callers. Response is the 'front door' to everything we offer, helping people to access our services across the country.



• A rise of 13% compared to 2013/14

Telephone counselling:

2,134 clients

Webcam counselling:

150 clients







Live Chat:

90% of **Live Chat clients** would consider using Relate's face-to-face counselling

- 80% would consider Telephone Counselling
- 94% would consider using Live Chat again

92% of clients are satisfied with their experience of Live Chat

87% of clients say that following the Chat they feel confident that they can start to address their relationship difficulties

Profile of a Live Chat Counsellor

Sam has been a Live Chat Counsellor for six and a half years, helping thousands of people with relationship issues.

When I trained as a Live Chat counsellor, it was a brand new service which was just being tested out. Now, six years later, it's one of our most popular services and we have a team of 14 Live Chat counsellors ready and waiting to help people when they need us.

Live Chat is one of my favourite ways to help people. Where else can you speak to a counsellor for free at the exact point you're having difficulties in your relationship? Clients tend to give a lot more information a lot sooner online than they would in a face-to-face

session, so you tend to get to the heart of an issue quickly. This means you need to be ready to go – when you open up that Chat you have no idea what question or problem you're going to be dealing with, so you need to think quickly and have all the information you might need to hand, like a list of web links where people can get further help and support for certain issues.

Communication breakdown is probably the most popular issue I see, followed by affairs, separation and struggles with teenagers around boundaries and parenting. An average session lasts about 30 minutes, but it's amazing how you can have such a connection with clients without seeing them or even hearing them.

This year we've helped nearly 155,000 clients through our face-to-face counselling and support services.

Our face-to-face services



Family Counselling

7,082 families **12,896** sessions

While the shape of the modern family may have changed dramatically, our relationships with our families matter to us as much as ever. Separation and divorce are increasingly common in the UK (with 42% of marriages now ending in divorce)¹, and the modern family faces all kinds of external pressures. However, it's important to remember that whether the strains we face are money worries, separation or grown-up children staying longer in the family home, our capacity to forge, develop and sustain good relationships can help us to manage these transitions and stresses. Relate is here to help – both in good times and bad.



Relationship Counselling

101,674 couples **236,611** sessions

Relationships are good for us, and there's plenty of evidence that we live longer, happier, more prosperous lives when we share them with someone we love.

Sustaining good couple relationships through everything life throws at us, the good and the bad, requires us to nurture and invest if we want to enjoy the benefits being part of a couple can bring. Over ten Relate Centres are now offering the NICE recommended treatment Couple Therapy for Depression, offering up to 20 NHS-funded counselling sessions for couples.



Children and Young People's Counselling

10,472 clients **41,787** sessions

At the heart of our young people's services is one-toone support for children and young people affected by issues such as family breakdown, bullying and peer relationships, bereavement, the formation of new families or the absence of a family member in their life. A study of school-based counselling found that 90% of teachers said that it made a positive difference to students. Relate is one of the largest providers of counselling and support services for children and young people.

ONS. (2013). What percentage of marriages end in divorce? Retrieved May 11, 2014 from http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/divorces-in-england-and-wales/2011/sty-what-percentage-of-marriages-end-in-divorce.html

Sex Therapy

4,163 clients **18,818** sessions

All couples go through phases where they don't have the time or energy for regular sex. It's natural to want better sex and sometimes there are specific psychological or medical reasons for difficulties. When it comes to our sex lives, it seems that we're a nation divided – in *The Way We Are Now 2014* survey around half of those asked were fairly or very satisfied with their sex lives but for a significant minority, experience fell short of expectations. Despite – or perhaps, because of – the wealth of information available about sex on the internet, in magazines and on TV, our survey found that many people don't know where to go to get practical advice or who to talk to about sex life issues. Working with a Relate Sex Therapist helps people to recognise any difficulties they're having and find a way to move on from them.



Education and Learning

14,733 clients

6,890 sessions

We believe that relationship skills can be learned and that it helps to talk about relationships with other people who are going through similar things. Our Education and Learning programme of workshops and courses help people develop their relationship skills to avoid or manage the challenges that can arise in life.



Gema's story

At a time when I felt it was very hard to communicate effectively with my husband, Relate was able to give us professional counselling and support.

Thanks to Relate, I was able to make some very important decisions in my life, which would not only affect my marriage but also my children. I needed some better understanding of what was happening in our relationship and with the help of the Counsellor, I could see more clearly the right way forward for me and my children.

I think I would have struggled to carry out these

decisions without having full confidence that I had a Counsellor at my side who listened, empathised and provided that emotional support which I desperately needed. What I think is especially valuable about Relate is the individual support that is given equally to both parties.

Since that time, I have developed far healthier relationships and I have written a book recently *The Real Food of Love* describing what I see as the three ingredients to make a relationship work. I remain grateful to Relate for their help and support at a time when it was most needed.



Our year

It's been a year to be proud of for Relate.



Google Impact Challenge

In August Relate was a finalist in the 2014 Google Impact Challenge. We were delighted to win £200,000 to fund the development stage of our new online family dispute resolution service, which will use technology to empower separating parents to agree arrangements out of court. The service will offer support for separating parents in the form of self-help tools, family mediation, legal advice and support with the emotional stress of separation.

At Relate, we know only too well how hard separation can be for everyone involved. Parents and children can suffer short and long term effects, but this doesn't have to be the way if the conflict that so often goes hand in hand with sorting out separation can be reduced. That's why Relate is developing a new online service with the potential to help tens of thousands of separating parents and children.

We want to lead the way in the UK to increase the options for families to deal with separation in the best way possible: amicably and affordably. We look forward to reporting back on the progress of this project next year.

"We want to increase the options for families to deal with separation in the best way possible: amicably and affordably."

The Way We Are Now 2014

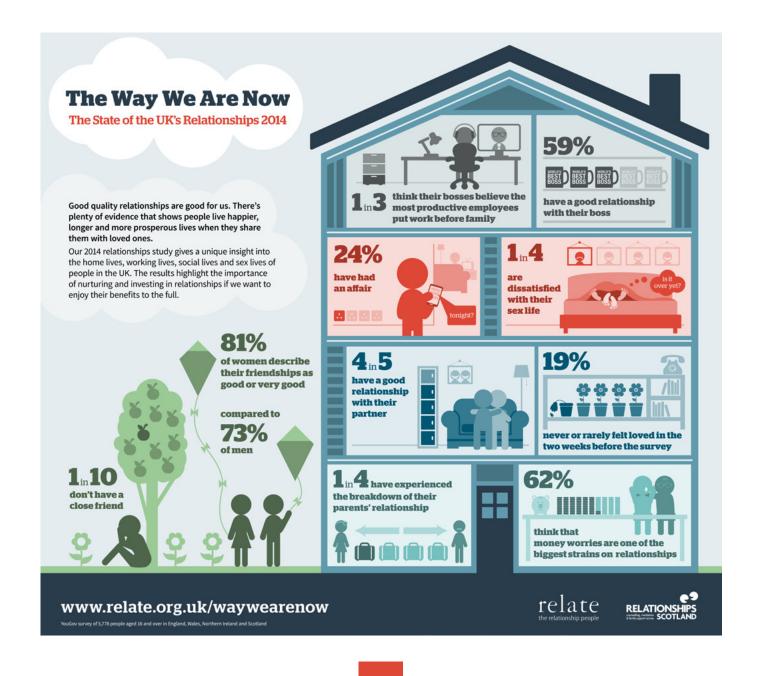
Good quality relationships remain key to our wellbeing and happiness, even as the world around us changes rapidly. In fact, strong relationships are our best asset when coping with the challenges that modern life throws at us.

The Way We Are Now 2014 has a positive story to tell about the state of the UK's relationships. In spring 2014, Relate and Relationships Scotland commissioned a representative survey of over 5,000 people across the UK to profile the nation's relationships. This wide-ranging survey (one of the largest of its kind) offered a rich insight into the home lives, working lives and sex lives of people in the UK. The Way We Are Now 2014 report offered plenty to celebrate – the vast majority of people enjoy good quality relationships at home, work and play. We found that four in five people (85%) enjoy a good relationship with their partner, 81% of women and 73% of men

describe their friendships as good or very good, and three-fifths of people (59%) have a good relationship with their boss.

The report was released in August achieving strong media coverage which helped to raise awareness of our expertise and work across a broad spectrum of relationships.

"Each chapter in the report tells a similar story - those with better quality relationships are more likely to feel better about themselves."



The Relationships Alliance

The Relationships Alliance consists of Relate, The Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships, One Plus One and Marriage Care. The Alliance's mission is to develop and support strong and stable couple, family and social relationships by championing the importance of relationships so that they are valued in all aspects of public policy and across national and local government.

Over the last year, the Alliance has discussed these big issues with politicians from all parties. We hosted the Prime Minister at our Relationships Summit in August; in October politicians from all of the major parties came together for the launch of the Relationships Alliance Manifesto in the House of Commons; and Sir Simon Hughes spoke at the Relate Annual Conference in November.

The Manifesto, the first of its kind from the Alliance, set out 12 policy ideas to take public policy about relationships from the margins to the mainstream. Through the work of the Alliance we hope to create the conditions for people's relationships to flourish.

In January the Alliance hosted a discussion with Jon Cruddas MP. Setting the scene, Cruddas said: "Our politics is in crisis. Large numbers of people do not trust government to represent their interests... At such times we are confronted with fundamental questions... What matters in life? At a different time in history, in a similar moment of change and uncertainty, William Morris' answer was "love and work, these two things only"."

Cruddas argued that, while politicians like to talk about liberty and equality, it's fraternity that seems to have been forgotten: "Politicians don't talk enough about love." He advocated an approach to policy-making with

people and relationships at its heart, not as consumers or customers, but as integral to the design and delivery of public services - crediting the Relationships Alliance with pioneering this approach. The factor linking his two key themes of love and work, Cruddas argued, is time: "People either have too much time with no work, no money and nothing to do, or they have too much work and no time for anything else."

This is a theme that came out strongly in our *The Way We Are Now 2014* report last year. This found that one in five people think their employees would like them to be available 24/7 and a third of people think their bosses believe the most productive employees put work before family.

The bold, relationship-focused approach to policy-making that Cruddas advocated is very welcome. We'll be keeping a close eye on how these principles translate in practice into tangible policy commitments for Labour and the other mainstream political parties.

"People either have too much time with no work, no money and nothing to do, or they have too much work and no time for anything else."



The Difference We Make

In November we launched a new tool to measure the difference Relate makes to people's lives. This toolkit allows us to demonstrate our value to our clients from across the country as well as improving the effectiveness of these services so we can help more people in more ways that work.

Relate Centres will start to use the toolkit early next year to measure the impact of our adult relationship counselling services. We'll be expanding this throughout 2015, starting with measuring the impact of our young people's services.



The Best Medicine campaign

In March we launched our campaign *The Best Medicine*, calling on the government to put relationships at the heart of the NHS.

The campaign aims to show that relationships are critical to the nation's health and wellbeing. Evidence shows that good quality relationships with partners, family and friends can prevent, delay or minimise the effects of physical and mental health conditions. They can improve wellbeing and potentially reduce pressure on the public purse.

The campaign is backed by a number of health charities, including Alzheimer's Society, Body & Soul, Breast Cancer Care, Carers UK, Headway – the brain injury association, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, MS Society, NAT, Prostate Cancer UK and Stroke Association.

The campaign is also supported by a group of fantastic media volunteers who have been kind enough to share their story with Relate and our audiences.



Joanie's story

Just over five years ago the unthinkable happened. My wonderful 18 year old daughter, Sarah, was in an English lesson at school when she had a stroke. Our world fell apart.

Sarah developed asphasia, which affects the part of the brain that deals with language. My independent daughter, who was about to go to university, was left unable to communicate.

Sarah's illness was hard on our whole family. And then three years ago, just when we were beginning to come to terms with things, I also had a stroke affecting my movement; we couldn't believe what was happening to us.

My husband and I had already been through it with Sarah, and for me to then get ill too was really hard to cope with. He was amazing, but what's happened has really affected our whole family's relationships. Sarah's older sister found it particularly hard, there was lots of speech therapy and medical support for Sarah, but nothing when it came to our family and relationships.



I'm campaigning with Relate to show that relationships are critical to the nation's health and wellbeing. There's evidence that good quality relationships with partners, family and friends can actually prevent, delay or reduce the effects of physical and mental health conditions. Living with physical or mental health conditions can be a long road, and relationships are a really vital part of making the journey better.

Yet when we need our relationships most, the effects of having a health condition can pile on the pressure.



RAF Benevolent Fund contract

Serving Royal Air Force couples may have to cope with long stretches of time apart from each other on top of all the tensions of keeping their work and family life together.

That's why the RAF Benevolent Fund has joined with Relate to provide a bit of extra support. The RAF Benevolent Fund pays for up to six sessions of Relationship Counselling with Relate.

"The hour we spent with our Relate counsellor was the safest I had felt in a long time."

Jade Munro, The Real Military Housewife



In the first 18 months of marriage, we relocated with the military three times. It had been a whirlwind of wedding, morning sickness, work trips, packing, unpacking, hellos and goodbyes, births, becoming parents and yet more packing and unpacking.

In the first couple of months, I threw myself into being the best darn housewife you could shake a tin of furniture polish at. What I wasn't prepared to contend with was the resentment bubbling and fizzing inside me from my chest to the darkest depths of my soul. The finality of leaving MY job, MY city, MY friends, MY lifestyle. Where was MY medal?! Where was MY parade?! The fear of never, ever being able to identify with myself as a financially independent, ambitious, awesome, sexy woman again took my inner breath away.

One sweltering late summer's day, this all came convulsing out, spewing like hot lava from within - frothing with anger and hurt and bitterness and resentment. The fury was unleashed. Divorce was thrown back and forth, becoming the trump card of threats, until one day he and I took a leap of faith in each other, bound by the love for our baby, and found our saving grace: Relate counselling.

The hour we spent with our Relate counsellor was the safest I had felt in a long time. My shoulders dropped and my face lost its pinched look. She mediated our conversations so that the end result was that we could both confidently lay bare our souls without getting

defensive and flouncing out as had previously happened when we had attempted drunken self-counsel.

She prompted with questions and acknowledged when each of us made valid points or contributions. It felt wonderful to have someone acknowledge that we were going through a rough patch and validated our thoughts and that it was so, utterly, completely normal.

In the weeks that followed the tension in our home melted away and the egg shells we were walking on were swept up and not under the carpet. We spoke, not to snap or accuse or demand, but to discuss, to question, to solve. Just small things at first, testing the waters.

We still argue, there are still moments of bitterness and anger, there are still things that we haven't spoken about, but it's getting better and we're acknowledging these things for what they are. That's progress in itself.

In the back of our minds our Counsellor is always there, quietly guiding and reminding us of our sessions together where we were confident, proud, honest and enthusiastic. Where we learnt that communication is key. And that brings us back together every time.

You can read Jade Munro's blog online at therealmilitaryhousewife.wordpress.com

Relate Institute

The Relate Institute provides expert training in working with couples, families and individuals, particularly for Relate Centre staff.

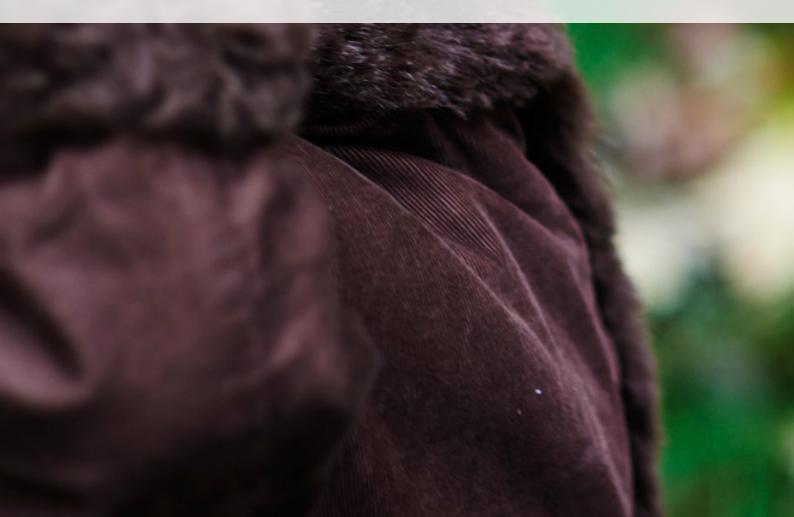
In 2014-15, the Relate Institute continued to offer a wide range of higher education courses and continuing professional development short courses. This year, the Institute had 253 students enrolled on its programmes.

We've continued with a review of the Relate Institute to ensure that we're making the most of the skills development opportunities for our workforce now and in the future.



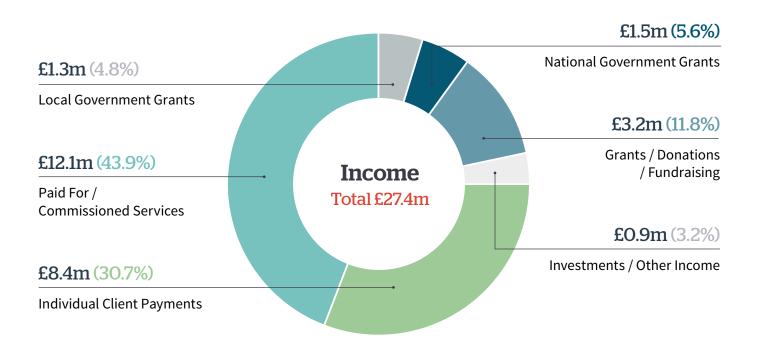


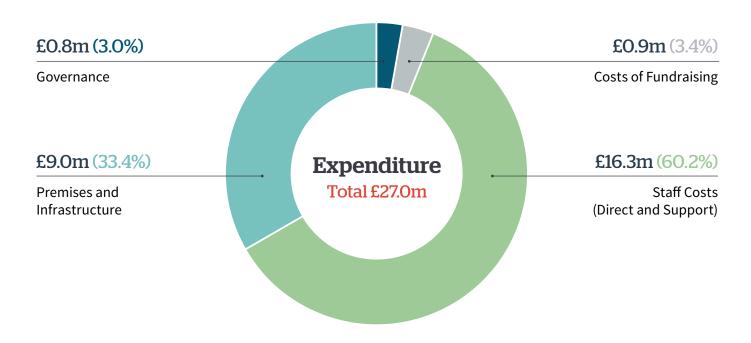
Our finances



Our finances

These figures represent the whole of the Relate Federation, including the national charity and all Relate Centres.





Reporting period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

All figures in millions of GB pounds.

NPC

Thanks

Carers UK

We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their support during the year.

Alzheimer's Society Jon Cruddas MP Andrew Selous MP Marriage Care

Anjula Mutanda Mental Health Foundation

Asian Family Counselling Mind

Bank Workers Charity Ministry of Justice

Baroness Tyler of Enfield MS Society

Bel Mooney NAT

Body & Soul Nick and Helen Tarsh

Breast Cancer Care

Brook OnePlusOne

Care for the Family **PACE**

Professor Sir Cary Cooper Contact a Family Professor Tanya Byron

Prostate Cancer UK Department of Education

Department of Work and Pensions Relationship Foundation

Doncaster Borough Council Relationships Scotland Dr Samantha Callan

Resolution Family and Childcare Trust Roopa Farooki

Fiona Bruce MP Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

For you by you (Charity for Civil Servants) Rradar Legal

Google **Sex Education Forum**

Headway - the brain injury association St George's House (Windsor Castle)

Iain Duncan-Smith MP Stroke Association

IPPR The Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships

John Glen MP YouGov



www.relate.org.uk