

relate
the relationship people



**Supporting
relationships in
changing times**

Annual review 2016/17

Welcome

Ken Littlewood, Interim Chair of Board of Trustees 03

Professor Sir Cary Cooper, CBE, President 04

Introduction

Chris Sherwood, Chief Executive 05



06

Who we are and why we're here



10

How we've helped



15

Our year



19

Looking ahead



21

Our finances

Thank you 23

Ken Littlewood

Interim Chair of Board of Trustees

Welcome to our *Annual review*. Relate is by far the UK's largest provider of relationship support, reaching more than 1.85 million people this year. Through our network of 50 local Centres we work across England, Wales and Northern Ireland at more than 600 different sites and we employ more than 1,500 counsellors, mediators and educationalists.

In May we published the first ever national estimates of relationship distress and found that one-in-five partners in the UK (nearly three million people) are in distressed relationships, which are known risk factors for poorer physical and mental health for adults and poorer outcomes for children. This helped to set the scene for the year about why our work is so important, achieving significant media and political attention.

In terms of delivering services, we're really pleased to have helped more people in more ways that work in 2016/17. Even better, the feedback we've had from those we exist to support has been very positive: 95% of clients said that their communication was "better" after attending relationship counselling and 85% felt able to cope with any difficulties they might face in the future.

The appetite for accessing relationship support services online continues to grow as technology becomes more ingrained in our everyday lives. Relate has experienced a strong increase in the take up of digital services this year, with a 280% year-on-year growth in Webcam Counselling. Keep reading to find out more about what happens in Webcam Counselling from the point of view of a client (page eight) and a counsellor (page 13).

Finally, we've been taking stock of the climate we're working in and what our changing world means for the relationship support we provide. We'll be looking closely at this question in the coming year as we consider – as a whole Federation – the best set-up for us to continue to support the nation's relationships into 2017/18 and beyond.



“The appetite for accessing relationship support services online continues to grow as technology becomes more ingrained in our everyday lives.”

Professor Sir Cary Cooper, CBE President

In my last full year as President of this crucial charity I've been delighted to continue to research new and different areas of relationships.

The way we are now survey once again provided a window into how the nation feels about partners, families, friends, sex lives and colleagues. This year we also looked specifically at the relationships of parents who have a child with a learning disability, who clearly face additional pressures over and above those of other families. The importance of high quality relationships for the mental and physical wellbeing of parents of a child with a learning disability, however, is of course no different, so I was proud to see Relate call for improved understanding and support.

In my eight years with Relate it's been inspiring to see the organisation start to diversify its work to help more people in more ways that work. I took up the role of president because of Relate's reputation for delivering high quality counselling services; I stayed on longer than planned because it's crystal clear that the importance of relationships is under-valued in every corner of society: from the workplace to Westminster.

I'd like to thank everyone at Relate for their tireless work and I look forward to watching the organisation support even more relationships in the years ahead.



“In my eight years with Relate it's been inspiring to see the organisation start to diversify its work to help more people in more ways that work.”

Chris Sherwood

Chief Executive

Relate's reason for being is simple: relationships are the beating heart of our lives and when they aren't healthy, we suffer. That's why my colleagues across the country and I work so hard to provide expert, non-judgemental services to all who need them and to illustrate the importance of relationships to the nation.

It's easy to overlook the value of relationships to individuals and society. But in a year that's brought a lot of change I've been constantly reminded how closely tied our lives are to the wider world – like the 19% of counsellors saying they've seen clients who've mentioned Brexit as an issue in their relationship, and the 26% of UK adults telling us that money worries are the top strain on their relationships.

Relationships with our partners, families, friends and colleagues are the foundation on which we build our lives; they get us through good times and bad. In short, relationships have rarely been under the sort of pressures they face now, so it makes complete sense to nurture them.

How Relate supports relationships isn't a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Our local presence allows us to tailor our services to meet individual communities' needs. From projects focussing on compulsive sexual behaviour at Relate Bournemouth, Poole & Christchurch and Relate Oxfordshire, to working with prisoners and their families pre- and post-release at Relate Brighton, Hove, Worthing, Eastbourne & Districts – we're making a difference in all sorts of innovative ways.

To find out more about how we help, turn to page 14 where you'll find an interview with sex therapist Rosemarie, whose work transformed life for widower Mike (see page nine).

I'm so proud of all we've achieved this year. Looking ahead, we must keep reaching out to those who need us most, redoubling efforts to make our proven support available to everyone who needs it, in ways that work for them.



“Relationships with our partners, families, friends and colleagues are the foundation on which we build our lives; they get us through good times and bad.”



**Who we are and
why we're here**

Who we are and why we're here

Relationships are the beating heart of our lives – when they aren't healthy, we suffer. That's why Relate, the UK's leading relationship support charity, is here. We provide face-to-face counselling, therapy and mediation, training and education, and online information, self-help and support.



Our non-judgmental services support couples, families, individuals, friends and colleagues of all ages, backgrounds and sexual orientations. Whether it's your relationship with your partner, your mum, your brother or your boss – Relate can help.

People come to Relate for all sorts of reasons: 68% are battling rows and arguments, at least a third have money worries, a quarter are dealing with an affair, 10% are experiencing violence and/or abuse and for 25% mental health problems are an issue. Our work directly tackles some of the most difficult and painful problems that relationships can face.

Ultimately, we help prevent loneliness, depression, homelessness, debt and many other life-shattering events that can happen when relationships go wrong. As well as helping to keep individuals healthier and stronger, society gets healthier and stronger too.

What we do works. We know that 95% of clients say their communication was better after attending relationship counselling, and 85% say they feel able to cope with any difficulties they might face in the future. Importantly, for every £1 spent, Relate's couple counselling saves the public purse an estimated £11.40.

Our vision

We're working tirelessly for a future in which healthy relationships are actively promoted as the basis of a thriving society.

Our mission

We 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 policy makers improve their understanding of relationships and what makes them flourish.

“We're working tirelessly for a future in which healthy relationships are actively promoted as the basis of a thriving society.”

Our strategic aims

Our work is structured under five priority goals, designed to deliver our vision, mission and corporate strategy.

These goals are:

- 1 **Service effectiveness**
- 2 **Influence and visibility**
- 3 **Impact and value**
- 4 **Income generation**
- 5 **Sustainability**

This year, there's been a particular focus on Service effectiveness and Influence and visibility.

How we achieve our aims

Relate is built on the expertise and experience of our workforce, coupled with a constant drive to reach more people in innovative ways that work for them. We have 1,500 counsellors across the country.

Seeing a counsellor in person remains the most popular way to access our services and we expect this will continue. But the way we all conduct our relationships is changing and Relate must be ready to change to stay relevant to those we exist to support. Technology has been key to enabling us to help more people in more ways that work, through our digital services such as Live Chat, Message a Counsellor and Webcam Counselling.

Relate also works to inform the public and policy makers about relationships and what makes them flourish. We do this through our research, campaigning and communications work.

Our set-up

We're made up of the national charity Relate and over 50 local Relate Centres, all of which are independent charities. Over the last year we've been looking at how we're organised to ensure we're set-up in the best way possible to support the nation's relationships now and into the future. We're looking at moving to a new structure and updating our business model. This ongoing work will run into next year, too.

How our work *really* helps

Michelle and Dan - used Webcam Counselling

See page 13 for an interview with Michelle and Dan's webcam counsellor

Michelle:

“ I found a trail of instant messages between Dan and a colleague. It was clear something was going on but I didn't know what – we've been married for more than 25 years and nothing like this had ever happened before.

When I confronted Dan it soon became clear that he'd actually been covering up how much he'd been in contact with this woman. I felt betrayed and shocked. We needed help, because he didn't really think he was doing anything wrong. I called Relate and ended up booking us in for Webcam Counselling. In our first session we were immediately put at ease. Nicola, the counsellor, didn't take sides and didn't judge. She made us realise our feelings were normal. With her help we realised that Dan had been having an emotional affair without even knowing it.

I want people to know what an emotional affair is and to see that you can get through it. It can happen to anyone.

“I want people to know what an emotional affair is and to see that you can get through it.”

Dan:

“ My colleague and I were having a hard time at work and supporting each other through that gradually turned into something else. We were mainly in contact through instant messaging, emails and phone calls. Technology made it much easier to have more contact – we didn't have to make special arrangements to meet up or talk because we were always available in some way on our mobiles.

Without any effort, it just slipped into something more than a professional relationship. The problems at work led us to have more personal conversations and it just spiralled. We met up a couple of times outside of work but it was never sexual.

Counselling made a real difference to our marriage. Nicola, the counsellor, was neutral and had seen people in our situation before. It wasn't about her solving our problems for us – she asked us questions that made us stop and think.

Relate's use of technology was very effective and made a big difference to our counselling experience.

Michelle and I still hit 'speed bumps' along the road, but we're starting a new chapter now and are looking forward to the future.

How our work *really* helps

Mike - attended Sex Therapy

See page 14 for an interview with Mike's sex therapist

“ I had many years of a very happy and stable marriage and then suddenly, five years ago, I lost my wife to cancer. After a while I started dating again. Although I had no issues meeting women, I soon realised that I was nervous of the relationship developing into anything physical – even holding hands made me feel anxious. I met somebody who I really liked but my lack of confidence was causing some issues in the bedroom. I felt like a man in his 60s should be sexually confident and assumed nobody else had this problem apart from me.

I thought I'd gone through the grieving process but it turns out I hadn't. I was feeling lonely and bored. Once my GP had ruled out any physical problem I was referred to my local Relate Centre for Sex Therapy.

Rosemarie, my sex therapist, was fantastic. The first

thing she did was boost my confidence. She also explained that there are hundreds of men like me. The way she spoke about sex was quite matter of fact – I was shocked at first because I wasn't used to having these kinds of conversations outside of the pub! But because she was talking about sex so openly, I felt I could say anything. She also gave me some exercises to try at home, which really helped.

Guys of my age come from a different era and certain things are taboo. Rosemarie made me realise that I'm just the same as everyone else. I feel on top of the world now and the best I've felt since before my wife passed away. I'm not anxious about sex anymore and things are going really well with my new girlfriend. I'd urge any men my age who're having sexual problems to get in touch with Relate. ”

How our work *really* helps

Peter and Rachel - went through mediation

See page 14 for an interview with Peter and Rachel's mediator

Peter:

“ After my wife and I made the difficult decision to separate, I really didn't want to spend excessive amounts of money, add even more stress into the mix and make things worse for our three grown-up children. My wife agreed.

So I called Relate and set up our first mediation appointment. Before going I was apprehensive and stressed, my blood pressure had gone up and I was particularly worried about losing the family home which was very important to the children and me.

The first meeting went well, though. It was about setting out what we each wanted and understanding the ground rules for the discussions we'd be having. Over three meetings, we reached an agreement we were both happy enough with – I could stay in our family home and my wife could start afresh.

The sessions were comfortable and informal. I wouldn't say they were stress-free, but they allowed us to have difficult conversations in a neutral setting that didn't involve solicitors and court rooms. ”

Rachel:

“ I wasn't at all sure about mediation – the thought of sitting down together and picking over our lives just seemed too emotionally difficult. I thought solicitors would be the easiest way forward, but I agreed to give Relate a try because Pete was keen.

I was dreading the first session and was really upset. We each saw our mediator, Rupert, separately to start with. He did a very good job of putting me at ease early on, explaining that he was there to help us reach an agreement we were happy with and to support us both in getting our voices heard. For me, the priority was getting myself straight financially and ensuring that our children – although grown-up – were well looked after.

Things got easier as the process went on. During the joint sessions, one of Rupert's ground rules was that we couldn't interrupt each other and I have to say I found this difficult sometimes. However, he was right and it helped to make sure we listened properly.

Both Pete and I had to make compromises, but we got to a really good place where we both felt we could move forward. Rupert did a brilliant job. ”



How we've helped

BROOKLYN
NEW YORK ATHLETIC
76

How we've helped

The evidence is clear: relationships matter to individuals and society. They're the support system that keeps us going in good times and bad. That's why Relate and its network of local Centres reach out to people in communities across the country, offering a range of relationship support services. In this section you'll find out how many people our work has helped over the last year.

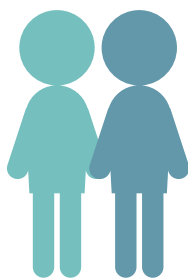


Our face-to-face services

Counselling, therapy and mediation

Most of the people we see in our counselling rooms are already going through a difficult time in their relationships. They're there for a huge range of reasons, from childhood trauma to retirement worries, domestic abuse to bereavement, struggles with parenting to living with a health condition – and many, many more besides. Our 1,500 counsellors offer adult Relationship Counselling for couples and individuals, Sex Therapy, Children and Young People's Counselling, and Family Counselling and Mediation.

71,400
couples and individuals
attended **adult
Relationship Counselling**



3,300
couples and
individuals
attended
Sex Therapy



7,800
**children and young
people** received
counselling via
schools and dedicated programmes



4,800
people attended
**Family Counselling
and Mediation**



Training and education

Our training and education work is crucial for developing the skills needed to build and maintain good quality relationships. Whether it's a course to help separating parents work together for the sake of their kids, or designing new training and development opportunities to help practitioners help more people, Relate is doing it.

6,200
people used our
**training and
education services**



Our digital services

Our website is the first stop for more people than ever who're looking for information and support about relationships. We work incredibly hard to make sure that we're ready to answer people's questions and to direct them to the right help. This includes publishing and promoting new blogs, articles and quizzes about different relationship topics and leading the way in real-time online support from counsellors. We aim to reach people and help them work through problems before their relationships suffer.



Website

1.75m
website visitors



Online information and self-help

1.17m
people have used our
online self-help services



Digital support services

15,000
used our **Live Chat service**

15,000

Live
Chats

700
used **Message
a Counsellor**



300 used **Webcam Counselling**

1000 used **Telephone Counselling**

National phone network 0300 100 1234

Lots of people choose to contact us by phone to find out how we can help and how to book an appointment at a Relate Centre. Our team of consultants are specially trained to deal sensitively and confidentially with all calls. Putting people at ease and getting them the right help is our priority.

281,600
calls received by our
national phone network



How our work *really* helps

Nicola - Michelle and Dan's webcam counsellor

“ I've been a Relate counsellor for a decade and I'm proud to work for an organisation that's always thinking of different ways to reach out.

Many people who use Webcam Counselling have caring responsibilities, live in rural areas or work abroad, meaning it can be harder for them to get to a physical location for counselling. Sometimes partners video in from two different locations. Also, I find that younger people are particularly comfortable with digital technology so they actively prefer the idea of webcam sessions.

The techniques I use via webcam are very similar to my other face-to-face work: it's a direct conversation and we can all see faces and general body language. For me, listening to what everyone's saying and staying attuned to how they're acting is really important, just as it is in any counselling setting. What's fascinating



is how people tend to open up more quickly – some say they feel more comfortable in their own space and that puts them at ease from the start.



I support all sorts of people in all sorts of situations, including Michelle and Dan who came to Relate following an emotional affair (see page eight). This is when a person invests a lot of emotional energy into someone who's not their partner. The instant engagement they can get from some else is exciting: a faceless encounter that enables them to share deep feelings. This in turn can build sexual tension.

What many don't realise is that this type of affair can be more hurtful than a sexual encounter for the partner who's in the dark. It lends itself well to a deeper level of deception than, for example, a one night stand.

As with so much of my work, helping people through an emotional affair comes down to improving communication. A crisis in a relationship forces people to think about what they want. Counselling helps couples reconnect as they work out what their future looks like.

**“I support all sorts of people
in all sorts of situations.”**

How our work *really* helps

Rosemarie - Mike's sex therapist

“ People come to Sex Therapy for all sorts of reasons: body image issues, recovering from illnesses like cancer, losing the desire to have sex, life stages such as after having a baby, battling with cultural pressures which can affect sexual intimacy and sexual dysfunctions – to name but a few. We see people of all ages and at many different stages of life. Nothing shocks us!

It's important to ensure early on that Sex Therapy is right for the person or people I'm seeing. That's why we do an initial consultation to see which of our services will be most helpful in each case – sometimes a relationship issue is what's actually at the bottom of a sexual problem and in those cases relationship counselling might be most appropriate. Also, we rule out any specific medical issues that would need to be addressed before the programme starts.

At the beginning, it's a really big deal to sit opposite a stranger and start talking about one of the most intimate areas of your life. I try and put people at ease as soon as possible, asking what they want out of their Sex Therapy programme and using the kind of language

each individual or couple is comfortable with for body parts and sexual terms. I let people know that it's ok to talk about anything in our sessions; a well-placed dose of humour can also help to break the ice.

As the sessions go on, I make sure that we're working towards achieving the specific goals of each client. When I ask people at the beginning 'what would a happy sex life be for you?' I get many different answers. Some are looking for pain-free intercourse, some want a more balanced sex life for both partners, some want erections to last longer and some want to be sexual again for the first time in years (like Mike, page nine). Often, you'll also find that a couple reaches a deeper understanding of their relationship and they have more confidence together. Ultimately, when my clients are happy and have achieved their goals, or feel confident with their sexual intimacy, I feel I've done a good job. ”



How our work *really* helps

Rupert - Peter and Rachel's mediator

“ As a family mediator I help separating couples to sort out arrangements for their finances and children. I'm not a counsellor – mediating is a different skill to counselling, although some people are both mediators and counsellors.

Mediation starts with each partner meeting separately with me so that I can understand their situation and point of view. I make sure each individual feels they're in the right place to be talking about the practical side of separation, as sometimes people are still in shock about what's happening or have left it a very long time to start finalising things and have extremely entrenched views.

Once we're all agreed that Mediation is the best way forward, we have our first joint session. I explain that I'll be providing structure and support to allow them to explore the options for their separation arrangements in a safe and neutral environment. My job is to listen, to manage their conversations and to support both partners as they make proposals, clarifying what's being said so we're all on the same page.

When it's purely about arrangements for children, clients often need just one meeting where we agree anything from contact arrangements to choosing a new school. In certain circumstances, children may be invited to have their say with the mediator. When finances are involved, there are usually three or four joint sessions, although each couple is different. For married couples, we aim to produce a document summarising proposals that's recognised by the legal system. Where couples aren't married, with less protection from the law, they're all the more reliant on the strength of the agreement reached in Mediation. I always advise separating couples to get legal advice on their rights and entitlements alongside the Mediation process.

Mediation supports people to make their own arrangements for separation. It saves money, time and heartache. ”



Our year



Our year

It's been a busy year - here are some of the highlights of our work.



New *Breaking Point* campaign

In May we launched a new campaign to help families at breaking point reach a turning point. *Breaking Point* captured the national media's attention when it launched with our own research showing the first-ever national estimates of relationship distress. Our *Relationship distress monitor* revealed that 2.87 million people are in distressed relationships in the UK, putting adults at risk of poorer physical and mental health and damaging children's life chances.

We focused on the message that getting counselling at an early stage can help families to solve problems before they become more serious.

The campaign called on policy makers and the public to support Relate's work for the good of families and society as a whole. Our research was mentioned in a debate in Parliament by Fiona Bruce MP and demonstrated to government the value of measuring relationship distress.

"Our *Relationship distress monitor* revealed that 2.87m people are in distressed relationships in the UK."



Expanding our support of the armed services

In November we were awarded £230k by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity to continue providing counselling services to serving personnel and veterans, and their families, over the next three years. This partnership has so far run for two years, supporting more than 200 couples and individuals.

We also continued to work with Army and Royal Air Force personnel and their families this year through partnerships with the Army Welfare Service and RAF Benevolent Fund.

Serving and former armed services personnel can find their relationships under particular strain because of their profession. Being deployed overseas for long periods of time and dealing with traumatic situations are just some of the reasons people come to us for support. This sort of pressure can leave some couple and family relationships at breaking point, when counselling is a lifeline.



"Being deployed overseas and dealing with traumatic situations are just some of the reasons people come to us for support."

Digital love

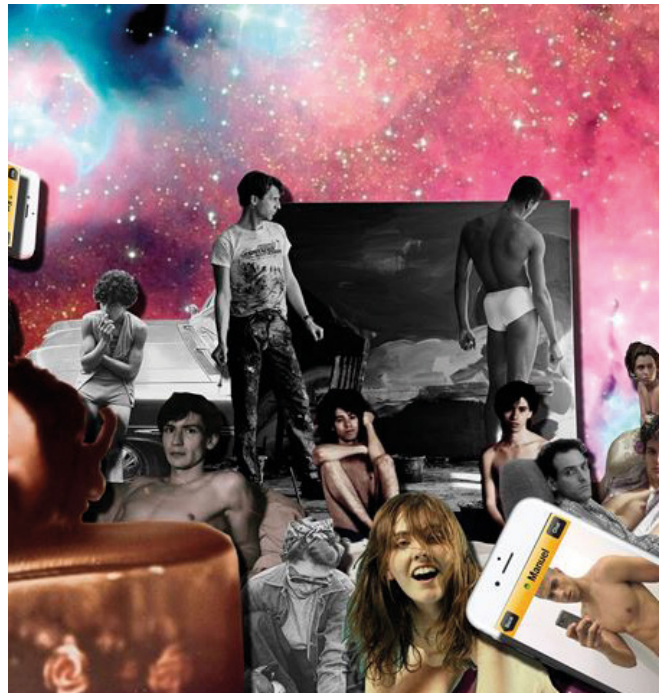
Relate's CEO Chris Sherwood has been busy highlighting the impact of digital technology on relationships. He's become a regular media commentator and event speaker on the issue, sharing Relate's experience about the pros and cons of tech for love lives.

Chris told Wired magazine: "Relate is encountering new and different ways that technology impacts our relationships every day, so we, too, are learning how to navigate this new digital world. Technology is one of the top reasons people come to us for counselling, whether it's the couple where one partner's had an affair via Facebook or the individual who's struggling with an addiction to online porn.

"It's interesting that 62% of our counsellors say technology has had a negative impact on relationships, compared to just 13% of the public. However, we also see that technology has brought huge benefits to relationships, from the serving members of our armed forces who can now rely on video calling and email to stay connected with home, to young gay people who can much more easily connect with one another in less liberal parts of the world."

Chris did a TED talk about this in August, which has been viewed more than 500 times. In February, Relate and the Design Museum hosted an event called Love in a networked world, where both Chris and Relate Ambassador Anjula Mutanda talked to a packed audience about how design is transforming intimacy.

This is a huge issue for relationships and relationship support so we'll continue to talk about it lots in the future.



Digital Love © Andres Jacque, Office of Political Innovation

Digital services

We've worked hard to innovate our digital services this year so that we can support more people where they're so often looking for us – online. We re-launched our Message a Counsellor service and increased Webcam Counselling promotion (which saw a 280% growth in the service, to 300 people using it). Ensuring that we're able to help people in a range of ways both online and offline is crucial to achieving the ambitions of our Service effectiveness priority goal.

"Ensuring that we're able to help people in a range of ways both online and offline is crucial to achieving [our] ambitions."

The way we are now reports

Early on in the year we re-ran our *The way we are now* research into the state of the nation's relationships, working with Relationships Scotland. We once again surveyed more than 5,000 UK adults to get a picture of couple and family relationships, social relationships, work-life balance and sexual relationships, plus – for the first time – families who have a child with a learning disability.

To maximise the impact of the findings we published not one but six* reports from this research. The range of statistics and expert comment we provided went down very well, achieving more than 350 pieces of coverage across a range of media outlets. Our aim was to talk to both the public and policy makers, starting conversations about relationship issues and how Relate's work changes lives. We were therefore pleased to achieve diverse coverage including a feature and quiz in the *Daily Mirror* on sex lives, a comment piece in the *Daily Telegraph* from TV presenter

“Our aim was to talk to both the public and policy makers, starting conversations about relationship issues and how Relate's work changes lives.”

Kirsty Allsopp about her experience as a stepmother and a comment piece on *The Independent* website by the mother of a child with a learning disability.

Thank you to Mencap who worked with us on the *Under pressure* report, Simpson Millar who sponsored the *Happy families* report and Marriage Care who partnered with us on the *It takes two* report.

*Please note, the final report, *Let's talk about sex*, was released in May 2017.

Policy successes

The Department for Work and Pensions is the government department that leads on policy making and funding for family policy. Clearly this has been a year of change politically, however we continued to make the case for the government to measure inter-parental relationship quality nationally and locally, rather than simply recording family structure, as a measure of how stable families are. Our *Relationship distress monitor* research was crucial here. We were pleased to see the government commit, in the policy paper *Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families*, not only to a new programme to address parental conflict, but also to national and local indicators of parental relationship quality. In addition, the paper committed to a new focus within the *Troubled Families* programme on reducing inter-parental conflict, which is also something we've called for.



Local Centre becomes part of Relate

This year saw Relate Cymru, formerly an independent local Centre, become part of our national charity.

Relate Cymru's National Director Gwilym Roberts explained: "Due to a 70% cut in state funding in recent years, Relate Cymru had been struggling financially. We were pleased to be able to diversify the services we were offering and to reach a break-even financial position at the end of 2015/16, however we wanted to ensure our future stability to make sure we could keep supporting Wales' relationships in the future.

"We decided to approach Relate to request that we become part of the national charity. After a thorough process of assessing our liabilities and assets, the Relate Board agreed. We've gone from strength to strength ever since and I'd like to thank all those involved in the process." In 2016/17, Relate Cymru supported the relationships of nearly 3,000 people in Wales.

Supporting young people in Lincolnshire

Relate Lincolnshire became part of the national charity last year. A big success in 2016/17 was winning £110,000 from Children in Need to fund three years of counselling for children and young people in the county. So far we've worked with more than 80 children and young people via this programme, reaching out through schools, GPs and Social Services.





Looking ahead

Looking ahead



Relate's view: what will technology mean for relationships in the future?

There's no denying that we're living in revolutionary times. Digital technology has changed countless aspects of our lives, from education to work, energy production to running our homes and finding friends to making love. We're a nation so busy looking down at our phones that often we need to be encouraged to look up, take a breath and think about what's going on around us – especially when it comes to our relationships.

How we relate to other people has changed and is still changing. We hear less about the friendly neighbour next door and more about how many connections people make on social media. At the supermarket we're seeing fewer friendly faces at the till and hearing more automated voices as we scan through our own goods without a word from another human being. Furthermore, almost a fifth (18%) of UK adults told us this year that they feel lonely often or all of the time, and one-in-eight (13%) said they do not have a single close friend. These heart-wrenching statistics should be enough to stop us in our tracks and think about where this revolution is headed.

So how can we take the best of technology and use it to improve our relationships, not segregate and isolate us? Many people are already doing just that. We needn't look far for stories of how technology has transformed life for the better – the parents of children with rare disabilities who felt utterly alone until they found each other online, the long-lost relatives reconnected, the people in this *Annual review* who used Relate's Webcam Counselling to reignite their marriage after an emotional affair. All these stories have one thing in common: it's about bringing

people together in some way, working with our natural craving for companionship and love rather than against it.

Relate is at the forefront of researching and future-proofing the nation's relationships. We commission research to understand how relationships are changing and why, and our practitioners are supporting thousands of people to use technology positively in building and maintaining relationships. Sometimes that means finding love online, video calling to keep the passion alive in a long-distance relationship or taking regular breaks from screen time to focus on the people around them. Emerging technology might even lead to robots in the therapy room, for example to help build sexual confidence – although careful consideration of the ethics and much more research is needed here.

There are some huge issues here for every one of us to consider. Relate's role is to present the evidence and learn from our practical experience of how people relate to one another in today's world. We'll keep sharing our insights and improving our services so that individuals, families, companies and government can learn and adapt, too. Watch this space.

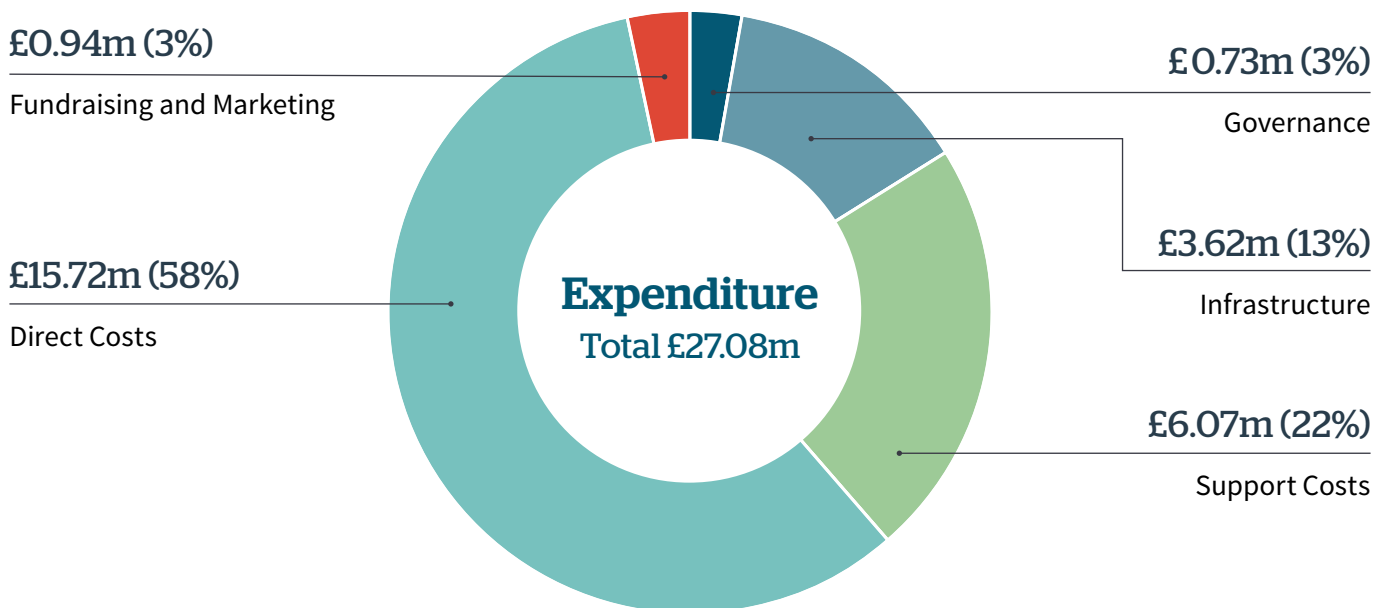
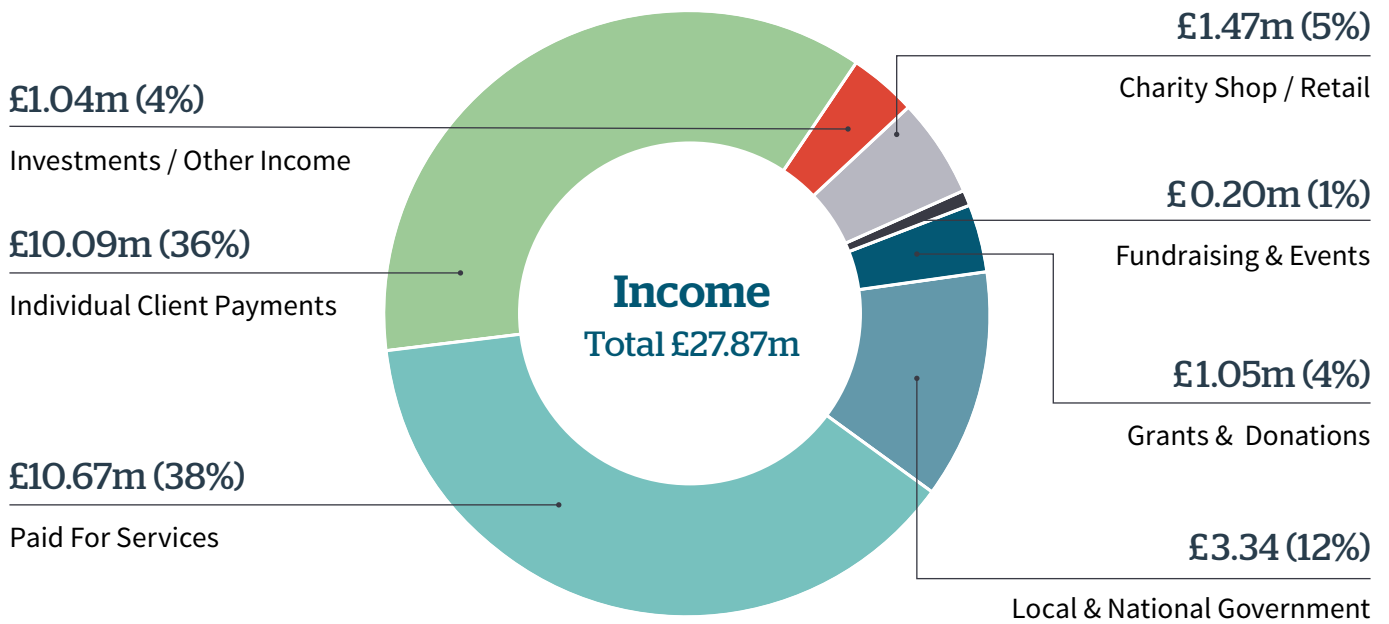
“Relate is at the forefront of researching and future-proofing the nation's relationships.”



Our finances

Our finances

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



Reporting period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

All figures in millions of GB pounds.

Thank you

We're extremely grateful to so many people and organisations for the support they give Relate and our work. We simply couldn't do it without you all.

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board	Families First – Cymru
Army Welfare Service	Fiona Bruce MP
Bank Workers Charity	Frank Young, Centre for Social Justice
Baroness Claire Tyler of Enfield	Grocery Aid
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Julie Bentley, Girlguiding
Bircham Dyson Bell	Macmillan Cymru
British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)	Marriage Care
Cafcass Cymru	Mencap
CAIS	Nick Tarsh
Caroline Ansell	Platypus Digital
Charity for Civil Servants	Police & Crime Commission (North Wales)
Children in Need	Professor Sir Cary Cooper
Children in Wales	RAF Benevolent Fund
CP Thackray General Charitable Trust	Relationships Alliance Network
CTI Digital	Relationships Scotland
David Burrowes	Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity
Department for Work and Pensions	Rob Fello
Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (Flintshire)	Simpson Millar LLP
Dr Samantha Callan	Souter Charitable Trust
Dr Isaac Sserwanja, Leopanalytics	The Design Museum
Dulverton Trust	Ufi Charitable Trust
Early Intervention Foundation	Working Families
Embrace	

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Professor Tanya Byron, *Patron*

Bel Mooney, *Patron*

Roopa Farooki, *Ambassador*

Anjula Mutanda, *Ambassador*

Andrew Selous MP, *Ambassador*

Finally, special thanks must go to Denis Tindley who has stepped down as a vice president of Relate after a wonderful 10 years' in the role. Denis was also chair of the Relate Board of Trustees from 2000–2006.

Relationships are the beating heart of our lives.
When they aren't healthy, we suffer.

Relate is the UK's leading relationship support charity.
We need your help to reach out to everyone who needs us.

To donate to Relate
visit relate.org.uk/donate or call 0300 100 1234.

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