

A photograph of a family of four sitting on a couch. A woman with curly hair is leaning over a man, both smiling. A young girl in a yellow sweater is holding a tablet, and a young boy in a striped shirt is looking at it. The scene is warm and intimate.

Relate

Foundations for change

Annual review 2021/22

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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.

Bank Workers Charity
BBC Children in Need
The Brain Tumour Charity
British Association
for Counselling and
Psychotherapy
The Charity for Civil
Servants
Chartered Accountants
Benevolent Association

Counselling and
Psychotherapy Central
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The Department for
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Accommodation
Licensed Trade Charity
Marriage Care
The National Lottery
Community Fund

The National Lottery
Community Fund's Digital
Fund
NHS Cheshire &
Merseyside Resilience Hub
NHS South West
Norfolk and Suffolk NHS
Foundation Trust
Ogilvy UK
OnePlusOne
The Positive Parenting
Alliance
Retail Trust
Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund
The Royal Navy and
Royal Marines Charity
The Seafarer's Charity
Tavistock Relationships

Welcome

Simon Wilson Chair of Trustees at Relate

“ Welcome to Relate’s 2021/22 Annual review: *Foundations for Change*.

This year, it fast became clear that returning to the ‘status quo’ in the wake of the pandemic wasn’t what was needed. Things had changed, people had been through so much, and we were certain we had to continue to innovate for the good of the nation’s relationships, our colleagues and our charity.

With a careful focus on financial stability and a renewed ambition to innovate and grow, we were able to make the most of opportunities to do things differently including:

- setting up our cross-Federation Inclusion Network to look at how we can become a more inclusive organisation, inside and out;
- adapting Relatehub, our service offering 30 minute web and phone chats with counsellors, once its original funding ended so that we could continue to support NHS staff and the general public;
- reaching 75% more people via our partnerships with occupation-specific benevolent charities to provide free counselling;

- kicking off a series of projects thanks to continued funding from the National Lottery Digital Fund such as the groundwork for our brand refresh, new website and online booking system;
- and our beautiful and brilliant *Let’s talk the joy of later life* sex campaign with renowned photographer Rankin.

I’m hugely proud of the forward looking approach we took this year which enabled us to begin to reach more people in more ways that work for them, all whilst carefully balancing the books of the national charity. I’d like to thank my fellow trustees, our Executive Leadership Team and colleagues across the Relate Federation for making this possible.”

“We were able to make the most of opportunities to do things differently.”



Welcome

Aidan Jones Chief Executive at Relate

“ Like so many others in the charity sector and beyond, colleagues across the Relate Federation have faced change and uncertainty in recent times – both professionally and personally.

I’ve been amazed by people’s compassion and resilience, at how we’ve come together to support each other and create positive changes in our work during very tough times. I’d like to record my huge personal thanks and congratulations to the whole Federation on all that’s been achieved this year.

Together, we reached millions of people with our services and support in 2021/22. And we managed to change and grow throughout that time – testing and learning from new ways of helping people at different stages of all their relationships. This has laid the foundations for a clear path to growth in the future.

“We work to transform relationships and we know what we do works.”



We work to transform relationships and we know what we do works:

- 82% of our Adult Relationship Counselling clients described their situation as much better or better after counselling;
- 72% said their mental wellbeing had improved;
- 77% reported having improved coping strategies which they can draw upon going forward.*

Extending the offer of relationship support to even more people is vital right now as we’re all under pressure from many angles, not least our health (physical and mental) and finances. We know that pressures like these can build up and put enormous, sometimes irrevocable, strain on relationships. Our job is to equip people with the ability to head off that pressure early on, to manage it as well as possible and also to be there when it all gets too much.

People need to know we can relate to what they’re going through and that they’re not alone – and that’s why we’ll continue striving to reach out to more people who need us.”

*Numbers based on feedback from 850 clients.

Who we are and why we're here

Relate is the largest provider of relationship support in England and Wales.

Working with our partners across the Relate Federation we deliver vital relationship support services.

Since the first national lockdown in March 2020 this has mainly been done via video, phone, web chat and email and we're now also delivering some face-to-face services again.

The Relate Federation is made up of the national charity and 24 independent local Relate charities, as well as associated organisations in Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.



Our vision

A future where healthy relationships are actively promoted as the heart of a thriving society.

Our mission

To make expert information and support for healthy relationships available to everyone.

Our 1,200 highly trained practitioners provide Adult Relationship Counselling, Sex Therapy, Children and Young People's Counselling, Family Counselling, Mediation and short interventions.

Our website provides a huge range of engaging information and self-help

content. We also offer training, education, information and support.

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

Our values are to be human, connected and smart.

Case study: Jackie's story

“ Our relationship had been struggling for around six months when my husband and I decided to contact Relate. Sadly I lost my mother, who I was very close to, during the pandemic. The experience of lockdown was another added pressure for us on top of the bereavement and we'd been having an increasing number of arguments where we'd talk about splitting up. We needed to fight for our relationship or end it, we just didn't know which.

As the majority of Relate's work had moved online we had weekly Zoom sessions with our counsellor, Faye. The online sessions worked well – I enjoyed being in the comfort of our own home and it was convenient not having to travel and worry about parking.

The majority of the sessions happened together but we also had individual sessions – a mix we found helpful. In the individual sessions our counsellor could get under the skin of how we were each feeling and brought this back to our joint sessions as appropriate and with our prior agreement.



Faye was fantastic. She seemed to 'get' us very well. There were lots of things she said that really helped us understand how we were feeling and how valid our emotions were. It felt like she had done this a million times before and very much knew what she was doing. It's comforting to know that what we were going through was 'normal' and something many other couples face.

In the past we'd make assumptions about how the other person was feeling or why they were acting in a certain way and often we'd be wrong. Now we're communicating very well. I feel I've made massive steps personally as well as in my relationship. Taking away the idea of blame has been huge – I don't feel guilty and that's really important.”

Our year in numbers

We reached more than 5.7 million people this year

Our services: video, phone and face-to-face*

33,259

people attended Adult Relationship Counselling

Either alone or with their partner(s)



4,487

accessed Children and Young People's Counselling



3,174

people accessed Family Counselling



2,598

people accessed Sex Therapy



809

people accessed Individual Counselling



547

people accessed Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Couple Therapy for Depression



344

parents accessed our Reducing Parental Conflict service



260

people accessed Mediation



235

NHS staff members accessed web and phone chats, and counselling, via our Relatehub service



196

people took part in a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme



*Excludes any Relate Centres not on our case management system so actual figures likely to be higher.

Our services: web, email and self-help

5,635,197

people used our website



4,425,185

people accessed our online self-help resources



344

emails were responded to via our Message A Counsellor service



788

people accessed our webchat service



Free counselling through national partnerships

4,623



people accessed our services for free through our much-valued partnerships with: Bank Workers Charity, The Charity for Civil Servants, Grocery Aid, Retail Trust, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Chartered Accountants Benevolent Association, The Brain Tumour Charity, Licensed Trade Charity, The National Health Service (NHS), The Seafarers Charity.

75% more clients were supported through these partnerships than in the previous year



Training

Our training and education work is crucial for developing the skills needed to build and maintain healthy relationships.



10,918 of our training and education courses were accessed this year

What we do works:

After counselling, our clients said...

...their situation was much better or better

82%



...their mental wellbeing had improved

72%



...their coping strategies had improved

77%*



*Numbers based on feedback from 850 clients.



Our key achievements

Our key achievements

Introducing Anjula Mutanda, Relate's new President



In November 2021 we announced the appointment of our new President, Anjula Mutanda.

Anjula, a relationship psychologist and psychotherapist, as well as a successful presenter, author and clinical therapist, has supported Relate for nearly a decade, first as an Ambassador and more recently as Vice-President.

She brings extensive clinical, industry and media expertise to her role as Relate President, as well as passion for diversity and positive change in counselling and therapy. Being of mixed heritage (Ugandan and Indian), Anjula's appointment is particularly significant as she's the first-ever black president of Relate.

Anjula said: "I'm very excited to be appointed as Relate's first black President especially because it comes at a vital time in our history – a time not only for soul searching but a time for action.

"People of different backgrounds are under-represented in the counselling profession and this is something we definitely need to address. I'm looking forward to working with Relate to reach more young people, more people from black, Asian and ethnically diverse communities, more LGBTQ+ people, and to attract more counsellors from these backgrounds to train with the charity."

As well as holding a clinical caseload, Anjula's a well-known broadcaster, presenting Radio 4's popular Bringing Up Britain series and Sextape on Channel 4, where she guided couples to improve their relationships and intimacy. She's also written self-help books including Relate's How to do relationships (2013).

Relate's Chief Executive, Aidan Jones, said: "We're delighted to have Anjula on board as Relate's new President. She's bold, respected and passionate on issues such as diversity and young people's mental health – exactly what's needed as we step up our efforts to let people of all backgrounds and ages know that we're here to support their relationships.

"The journey we're on to becoming a truly inclusive organisation is hugely important to our plans for the future. We know Anjula will challenge and support us on this journey and highlight the breadth of our work with families, individuals, couples, children and young people to new audiences who could benefit."

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has been a key focus for us this year. Now overseen by a Head of Inclusion, Workforce Development and Training, a cross-Federation Inclusion Network was set up to define and steer this programme.

Specific initiatives have so far included improved monitoring of the make-up of our Federation and changes to our practitioner training to build in mandatory content on diversity and inclusion.



Our brand refresh work is also key to reaching more diverse audiences. We know we still have some way to go and EDI will remain a top priority for us.



Connected Relationships

This year we entered the penultimate year of our *Connected Relationships* project – a digital transformation and innovation programme funded by a grant from the National Lottery Digital Fund.

What we found

We undertook research that showed our brand – although well respected and valued by those who know about us – wasn't helping us reach out to new and different audiences: essentially, we're well-known amongst older, affluent, white audiences but far less relevant to younger, more diverse communities. And we're generally not well understood, with people thinking we focus only on counselling for couples.

Brand refresh

We talked to colleagues across our Federation and to former clients, and surveyed the general public, to think through what Relate might look and feel like in the future. This is about more than a new logo and colour palette – it's about our personality, our tone of voice and how people relate to us. Once we'd conducted the research, the creative phase went into full swing. A preview of the refreshed brand was shared with Federation colleagues and the reaction was brilliantly positive. The refreshed brand launches during Relationships Week in September 2022.



Website rebuild

In line with the brand refresh work, we began a complete rebuild of the national Relate website and also the associated federated Centres' websites. We conducted interviews, surveys and user testing with former and potential clients and colleagues. We're gaining invaluable insight into what exactly it is our users are seeking when they come to our website.

The new website launches during Relationships Week in September 2022, putting the refreshed brand into action online for all to see!

Improving our service data

Under *Connected Relationships* we've also been looking at how we can more effectively measure the difference we make to clients.

We're now measuring meaningful outcomes for clients across our adult services – Relationship Counselling, Individual Counselling, Family Counselling, Sex Therapy and Couple Therapy for Depression. For example we can now say that 72% of our adult clients report improved mental health and wellbeing after accessing our services, which is great for showcasing to the outside world the transformational effect of our work.

Let's talk the joy of later life sex

In May 2021 we teamed up with renowned advertising and marketing agency Ogilvy UK and British photographer Rankin to shine a spotlight on the unseen: sex and intimacy in our later years, in the campaign *Let's talk the joy of later life sex*.

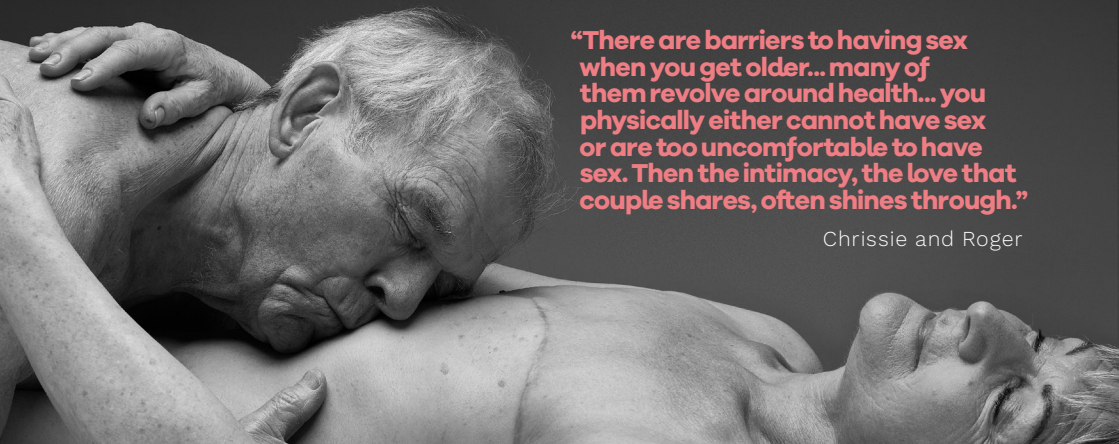
Photographing five older couples and one woman in their most intimate settings, the team set out to show what sex and intimacy can mean in later life in a way that's never been done before.

Its stunning photography and high profile exposure got audiences across the globe talking, reaching a total audience of over 1.3 billion!

We received a 29% increase in overall website users in the first month of the campaign and a 123% increase in over-65s visiting [Relate.org.uk](https://www.relate.org.uk).

Let's talk the joy of later life sex has since won multiple awards from the marketing industry.

These include Creative Moment Awards for Provocative Campaign of the Year and Grand Prix idea of the year, the Social Corporate Responsibility Award at the Drum and a bronze in PR and nine shortlists at Cannes Lions 2021.



“There are barriers to having sex when you get older... many of them revolve around health... you physically either cannot have sex or are too uncomfortable to have sex. Then the intimacy, the love that couple shares, often shines through.”

Chrissie and Roger

“As we get older we get more experimental, because you're fed up of having rice and peas every day, so you've gotta mix it up.”

Lynne and George



Reducing parental conflict, improving children's futures

We've been making huge strides in the field of reducing parental conflict, paving the way for future services which have families at their heart.

The Relationships Matters North East service – a partnership between Relate, Action for Children, Changing Futures North East and Gateshead Council – began in 2019. It was funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as part of their Reducing Parental Conflict Programme which aimed to pilot specialist interventions with families around reducing inter-parental conflict, in turn improving outcomes for children. This was originally a two year pilot, but due to the pandemic it was extended for a further year, ending in July 2022.

The DWP evaluation of the programme is yet to be published and Local Authorities have received further funding to offer training to practitioners and support to parents.

Here are some of the achievements we can share at this stage.

- We're delighted to have supported 993 parents to attend at least one session of relationship support on the programme over the three years, offering a range of different courses addressing parental conflict.
- We're proud to say that we managed to engage as many fathers as we did mothers, something we consciously tried to do from the beginning (53% of men completed our mentalisation-based therapy compared to 55% of women).



“I thought I would hate it but I really like it. I've been out of work too long but I have my reasons. I feel like a man with a purpose again but I would really like to keep our sessions going because I really feel like you give me another perspective on things and that you get me. Those times are good for me.”

– Relationships Matter client

We believe Family Hubs which are being run by Local Authorities are ideally placed to support the delivery of relationship support services which reduce family conflict. With this in mind, we're working on developing an offer to Local Authorities based on our experience with the Relationships Matter service which can be tailored to local need.

Jude Gordon, Relate National Programme Manager for Reducing Parental Conflict, said:

“The pilot programme may be finishing but this is an area of work that's still very much in the development stage. As professionals and parents begin recognising the damaging impact of parental conflict on children, and how to distinguish it from domestic abuse, we need to ensure we've thought about the delivery of evidence based interventions and counselling to support people to co-parent effectively. If we can do this then the negative impact of parental conflict on children and cost to the public purse will be greatly reduced.”

The Parent's Promise

Relate is part of the Positive Parenting Alliance – a newly-formed alliance of parents, NGOs, support groups and legal sector stakeholders with the long-term aim of promoting conversation and a change in the UK culture around divorce and separation.



Together in May 2021, we launched the Parent's Promise – a commitment made today, whilst a couple is still together, about how they'll do what's best for the long-term wellbeing and mental health of their children, should their relationship break down in the future.

We believe this initiative has a lot of potential for getting the message out there about the importance of keeping things as amicable as possible following separation and divorce to encourage positive relationships as co-parents.

Relationships Week 2021

For our second Relationships Week, the theme was 'love yourself- building self-esteem to get by, grow and thrive in relationships and life'.

Our The Way We Are Now 2021 report, released in partnership with eharmony as part of the Week, found that nearly a quarter (23%) of UK adults said their self-esteem decreased during the pandemic, compared to pre Covid-19 times. Inability to socialise with friends and family, money worries and not prioritising physical health drove this dip. Comparing ourselves with others on social media was another key factor.



During the Week, as well as publishing the report, we shared content including our quiz on self-esteem and relationships, Instagram Live Q&As and several blog posts. Having now established the Week, we're looking at how we can grow it further to reach even more people in years to come.



Men's heads and hearts

We published a second report with eharmony in October – *Men's heads and hearts*, which unpicked the complexities of dating and relationships in 2021. This found that more than half of men (60%) have felt insecure when it comes to dating, with fear of rejection, age and appearance key contributing factors.

It also found that one in five (20%) men say they can talk more openly about their mental health and a similar number feel comfortable showing vulnerability (20%) in a relationship. We reached out via the media and our social channels raising awareness of the issues and sharing tips and advice.



Families living in recovery

Relate London North West, Hertfordshire, Mid Thames and Buckinghamshire – together with addiction recovery charity The Living Room and Family Lives – have been working in a collaborative partnership since 2019.

The project, Families Living in Recovery, provides free, abstinence-based rehabilitation treatment to adults in Hertfordshire who are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol.

The charities take a family approach to rehabilitation by offering structured group work and individual counselling support for individuals, families and carers affected by addiction. The monthly groups in various locations across the county are facilitated by Relate counsellors and have covered topics including forgiveness and self-forgiveness, mindfulness and loss.

Ewan Malcolm, CEO of London North West, Hertfordshire, Mid Thames and Buckinghamshire, said:

“Prior to the pandemic Relate’s role was to support the recovery groups by offering relationship counselling to participants and their partners. Since moving online we now also provide a series of very effective workshops to these groups. We’ve had some great feedback, including from one client who said she can now say “I am acceptable as I am” more easily since attending our group on forgiveness and self-forgiveness.”



Funding to support children and young people

Relate Wiltshire and Somerset was awarded a new Children in Need grant for Talk Zone- their children and young people's out-of-school counselling service.

Sylvia Gilmore, Operations Manager at Relate Wiltshire and Somerset, said:

“This three year grant for £92,412 will help us to continue offering a free counselling service to young people. Being offered alongside our counselling service based in primary schools and some secondary schools ensures we're providing a comprehensive package of support for children and young people across Wiltshire.”



Relate was also awarded a similar amount (£93,895) from Children in Need over three years for children and young people's work within Lincoln, targeting the most rural areas.

Relatehub continues to support NHS staff members

Following the success of our Relatehub short intervention service, offering free 30 minute web chats and phone calls to NHS staff members in London and The Midlands during the peak of the pandemic, we were delighted to launch a service in the Autumn of 2021 to staff delivering social care and NHS services in the South West of England.

At the beginning of 2022 this extended to NHS staff in Cheshire and Merseyside, Kent and Medway and Sussex. The funding for NHS staff comes from the local Resilience and Wellbeing hubs whose aim is to support the wellbeing of colleagues, volunteers and those delivering social care services.

In March 2022 Relatehub also secured funding to work on a pilot with a large GP cluster in Lewisham to offer webchat and phone calls to patients who were referred by their GP.

Overall we delivered more than 1,000 chats via Relatehub and received 87.5% four-out-of-five star ratings from clients. As well as expanding Relatehub to support more NHS staff, we opened it to the public on a paid-for basis.



Relate's charity shops go from strength to strength

Relate's eight charity shops performed exceptionally well during 2021/22, with a total contribution of £193,000.

This was achieved by the dedication of our shop managers, shop staff and volunteers and the support of our local communities, alongside an increased focus on marketing.

There are plans to expand the number of shops in 2022/23.



Relate launches revised training courses in relationship counselling

We pride ourselves in the quality of our training for relationship support practitioners and are constantly looking at ways to improve it. In early 2022 we re-launched our core training, comprising of two courses: the new two-year Diploma in Relationship Counselling and the Post-Qualifying Certificate in Relational Counselling.

The two year Level 5 Diploma trains people who have completed their Level 3 Certificate in Counselling studies

to become fully qualified relationship counsellors. The Post-Qualifying Certificate in Relational Counselling is designed to equip those who already have a recognised qualification in counselling or psychotherapy for individuals, to become a relationship counsellor.

Both courses are accredited by the Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB) and include an increased focus on equality, diversity and inclusion from day one.



Looking ahead

Aidan Jones, Chief Executive

“ It’s not always easy to create the space needed to look ahead when we’re living through such tumultuous times. As a nation, it feels like we’ve lurched from one crisis to another lately. Living with that level of disruption and uncertainty takes its toll on people – we see that in our work every day – and I’m acutely aware of Relate’s role in supporting people through that. However a crucial part of my job is to look beyond the here-and-now, so I have to make time to think about the future.

One thing I’m sure of is that uncertainty is here to stay. It’s always been there, it always will be, and right now that’s crystal clear to everyone. Building in strategies for dealing with the unknown is important in relationships and in managing an organisation: you’ve got to be ready to face the ups and the downs as they hit. Often that means getting the basics right. For relationships, that can be things like learning to love yourself and being able to communicate how you’re feeling. For Relate, that’s a lot about financial stability and valuing our wonderful workforce, so they’re two things we’ll continue to work hard on.

As I look to the future I also see more and more people recognising the importance of good relationships in all sorts of areas of life. When our relationships go wrong, everything can go wrong. How we connect and relate to ourselves and others affects everything the human race does – at home, at work, in politics...the list is endless. Relate knows relationships



inside out, and in the future I see us applying that insight and expertise in many more contexts, working with partners to develop and extend our reach.

Finally, I believe conversations about inclusivity that have exploded recently are the key to us being able to transform more relationships. We have to redouble our efforts to understand what different people want and need from Relate, how different communities view relationships and relationship support, and to show how we can help.

It’s not easy – there’s a lot coming down the track at a time when we’re all still trying to work out what’s just gone by – but I’m hopeful and optimistic about what’s next.”

Our finances

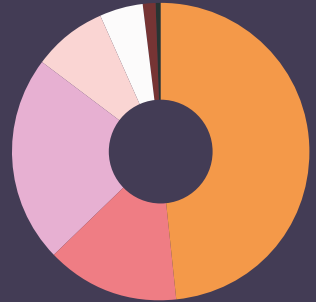
These figures cover the whole of the Relate Federation.

They're compiled from both audited and unaudited management data for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

In some cases estimates of income and expenditure have been used.

Income

Individual client payments	£8.64m	49%
Paid for services	£2.57m	14%
Local and national government	£3.97m	22%
Grants and donations	£1.46m	8%
Charity shop/retail	£0.84m	5%
Investments and other income	£0.24m	1%
Fundraising and events	£0.06m	0%

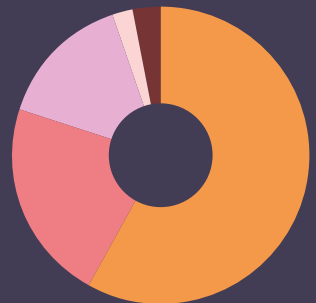


Total

£17.78m

Expenditure

Direct costs	£10.68m	58%
Support costs	£4.03m	22%
Infrastructure	£2.71m	15%
Fundraising and marketing	£0.54m	3%
Governance	£0.41m	2%



Total

£18.37m

Relate

Relationships are the beating heart of our lives. When they aren't healthy, we suffer. Relate is the leading relationships charity. Now, more than ever, we need your help to reach everyone who needs us.

To donate to Relate visit [Relate.org.uk/donate](https://relate.org.uk/donate)