

Contents

Welcome	4
Simon Wilson, Chair of Board of Trustees	4
Aidan Jones, Chief Executive	5
Who we are and why we're here	6
Our year in numbers	8
Our impact	9
Why are people coming to us	11
What we do works	12
Our key achievements	16
Looking ahead	26
Our finances	27

Relate Annual review 2022/23

2

Thank you

We're extremely grateful to the many people and organisations who support Relate and our work. We couldn't do it without you.

Acorn Child Care

Bank Workers Charity

Bedford Council

The Brain Tumour Charity

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Ceredigion County Council

The Charity for Civil Servants

Chartered
Accountants
Benevolent
Association

Children in Need

City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body

The Department for Work and Pensions

Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance

Families First Conwy

Gateshead Council

Grocery Aid

Hampshire County Council

Home-Start South and West Devon

IE Digital

iQ Student Accommodation

Licensed Trade Charity The Lincoln Diocesan Trust & Board of Finance Ltd

Marriage Care

MS Society

The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund's Digital Fund

Newcastle City Council

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner

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

Selwood Housing

Somerset Council

Tavistock Relationships

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Welcome

Simon Wilson Chair, Board of Trustees

Welcome to *Transforming* relationships, Relate's annual review for 2022/23. Whether through counselling, digital services, or self-help tools, we've spent the last twelve months meeting our mission to cater to everyone, offering support and guidance to those striving to better navigate their relationships.

During the 2022/23 financial year, we've focused on improving our accessibility. Our brand underwent a significant refresh, and it now truly represents the engagement, assurance, and excellence our clients can expect to experience when accessing our services. This brand has been brought to life on our overhauled website, Relate.org.uk. Take a look if you haven't already!

But we haven't just been busy with refreshing our brand and website, we've also been campaigning. Relationship's Week returned in September '22, and focused on "milestone anxiety". We revealed that Millennials and Gen Z feel heightened pressure regarding traditional life milestones. In response, we championed alternative achievements which young people felt should be more recognised by society. These included leaving your job to do something you love, ending an unhealthy relationship and deciding not to have children.



Another campaign I loved this year was "The Hornicultural Society", which addressed the surge in STIs among the over 65s in a unique and playful way. By camouflaging condoms as seed packets distributed in garden centres, we used humour to get the nation talking about sexual health - underlying our determination to approach challenging topics with both sensitivity and creativity.

I've been so proud of all we've achieved over the past twelve months. I'll be standing down as Chair of Relate in October 2023 and while I'm of course sad to leave, I'm already so excited by the work that's in the pipeline. It's strategic, compassionate, and, as ever, fully focussed on what's needed by our clients. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Simon

"We've spent the last twelve months meeting our mission to cater to everyone, offering support and guidance to those striving to better navigate their relationships."

Welcome

Aidan Jones Chief Executive

Another year has passed, and with it comes reflection, progress, and anticipation for the future.

This year, the Relate Federation completed a major piece of work; breathing fresh life into our brand. And as the financial year draws to a close, we're preparing to launch a visionary strategy that promises to refocus our purpose and bolster our impact.

I've always believed in the power of adaptability, and witnessing our Federation undergo this brand refresh has been nothing short of inspiring. The vibrant energy, the renewed purpose, and the innovative ideas that have been put forth by every member of our team are evidence of the passion that lie at the heart of this organisation.

As we prepare to embrace a new strategy, I feel an immense sense of pride and gratitude. This strategy will be more than just a blueprint for our future; but a testament to our collective ambition, foresight, and dedication to the countless individuals and families who rely on our services.

Yet, with all these new beginnings, comes a personal end. This will be my last annual review as Chief Executive of the Relate Federation. The last five years have been a rollercoaster, filled with challenges and triumphs, sorrows and joys.



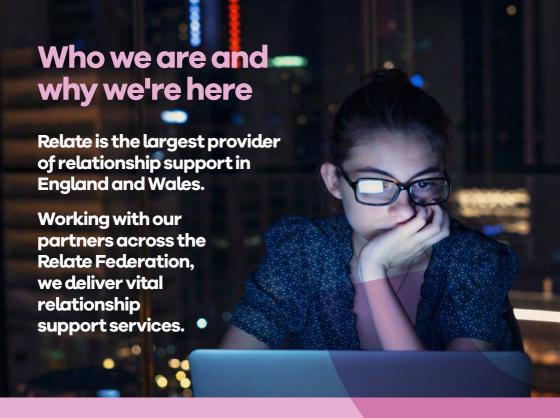
"This strategy will be... a testament to our collective ambition, foresight, and dedication to the countless individuals and families who rely on our services."

I will cherish every moment, every success story, and every lesson learned and am confident that our Federation is poised for even greater heights in the hands of the next generation of leadership.

In my time at Relate, I've seen firsthand the immeasurable power of human connection and the profound difference we can make in people's lives. I'm leaving knowing that the Relate Federation, with its revitalised brand and renewed strategy, is more equipped than ever to make a meaningful impact.

Thank you for entrusting me with the honour of leading this remarkable Federation.

Aidan



Since the pandemic we have mainly been delivering our services online, via video and email, or over the phone and are now delivering faceto-face services again in some areas.

The Relate Federation is made up of the national charity and 23 independent local Relate Centres, as well as associated organisations in Northern Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man.

At the heart
of our new
strategy is an
updated vision,
mission and set of
values. We hope they
inspire you and help us all work
towards a shared purpose.

Our new strategy for 2023-2026 contains an updated vision, mission and values.

Our vision

Thriving relationships in every part of life.

Our mission

To provide accessible support in the ways people need it so everyone can enjoy thriving relationships.

Our values

Accessibility

We believe in the possibility of every individual to have thriving relationships, irrespective of their background or identity.

Continuous improvement

We are committed to staying ahead of the curve, anticipating the evolving relationship and well-being needs of our communities, and continuously innovating.

We ask questions, seek feedback, and adapt to ensure we remain significant.

Safety

At the heart of our work lies a commitment to safeguarding every individual's well-being, dignity, and rights.

We emphasise the paramount importance of consent, creating an environment where personal boundaries are respected and upheld.

Excellence

With a foundation rooted in expert knowledge and deep skills, we measure our success by the tangible, transformative outcomes we achieve.

Every initiative is undertaken with a commitment to excellence and making a lasting difference.

7



Our impact

We reached more than 2 million people this year



2.3million people visited Relate.org.uk¹

of these accessed our self-help content such as articles, quizzes and toolkits



Our services

19,682 people attended Adult Relationship Counselling either alone or with a partner or partners



4.047

Children and young people accessed counselling



2,564

people accessed Family Counselling



2,248

people accessed **Sex Therapy**



1,316

people accessed Individual Counselling



¹ After rectifying a duplication of tags on our website, we're now more accurately able to measure the number of people visiting our site and accessing our self-help resources.

Our services (continued)

1,388

people accessed our 30-minute phone chats service



1,312

people attended **Mediation**



644

people attended **Couple Therapy** for Depression²



152

people took part in a Domestic Abuse **Perpetrator Programme**



127

people used our Message a Counsellor service



122

people received **One Session** Therapy³





people accessed our services for free through our much valued partnerships with:

- Bank Workers Charity
- Chartered Accountants **Benevolent Association**
- Grocery Aid, Retail Trust
- Licensed Trade Charity
- Royal Air Force **Benevolent Fund**

- The Brain Tumour Charity
- The Charity for Civil **Servants**
- The Seafarers Charity
- The Royal Navy and **Royal Marines Charity**

516

people accessed services such as 30-minute phone chats via our partnership with One Health Lewisham



2,875

people accessed our training and educational resources



- 2 Part of the NHS Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme.
- 3 Solutions-focussed service comprising a one-hour Zoom session speaking to a counsellor about a specific problem.

Why are people coming to us?

Of our adult counselling clients4....



95%

were having issues with communication



68%

were having issues with health and bereavement



45%

were having issues with finances

Of the young people who attended counselling with us...



74%

were having issues at home and/or with family



69%

were having issues with friendships



were having issues with identity



Of the children who attended counselling with us...



were having issues at school



were having issues at home and/or with family





were having issues with friendships



⁴ includes adults who accessed Adult Relationship Counselling, Individual Counselling and Family Counselling.



Adult counselling services

People who accessed our adult counselling services such as Adult Relationship Counselling, Individual Counselling and adults attending Family Counselling rated the experience an average of 8 out of 10.

Of the adult counselling client who received services from Relate:

80%

said their situation had improved



72%

said their mental health had improved



75%

said they had better coping strategies





"Alison is a complete joy. She guided us with such skill and gentleness. Not afraid to probe into areas that were painful, but necessary for growth, Alison navigated all of the sessions with a warmth that made the challenging talks feel safe and in a strange way – light."

Adult Relationship Counselling Client

"From a practical perspective, a very accessible service, easy to use and well priced. From an emotional one my counsellor was exactly what I needed and helped me gently shift my perspective and make changes in how I assert myself in relationships."

Adult Relationship Counselling Client

Young people's services

Of the young people accessing counselling services with Relate:

82% said their situation



86% said their mental health had improved



70% said they had better coping strategies





Children's counselling

Of the children who received counselling from Relate:

61%

said counselling

helped them with

said they now

feel happier

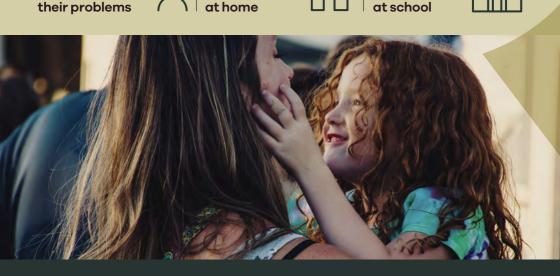
at home

50%

said they feel happier at school







Digital-only services

Our Chat with a Counsellor service was rated:

96% in terms of counsellor satisfaction



for overall experience



Our One Session Therapy service was rated:

in terms of counsellor satisfaction



for overall experience



"Really good. Weren't sure what to expect and whether it would be of any benefit even to the point I considered not taking the call.

I was wrong. Really helped straighten my thoughts out. Not some instant fix but a massive help in a world of over thinking and paranoia."

One Session Therapy client



Our key achievements

The Hornicultural Society

Relate's "The Hornicultural Society" campaign, the third part of the "Let's talk the joy of later life sex" series, innovatively tackled the rising STI rates among the over-65s by merging gardening and intimacy.

Teaming up with Ogilvy UK, Relate presented vegetable-themed condom packets designed to resemble seed packages, making suggestive imagery out of aubergines, plums, courgettes, onions, and avocados. These sustainable condoms even biodegrade when they're planted. Displayed in garden centres, the aim was to instigate conversations about sexual health in unexpected venues.

Research shows STIs are rising fastest among the over-65s, and although 62% of Brits claim sexual adventurousness, 52% haven't bought condoms recently. On top of that, 51% of Brits find talking about sex awkward, even though 44% of over-65s rank sex as their favourite pastime, before family visits (43%) and gardening (32%).



Anjula Mutanda, relationship psychologist, psychotherapist, broadcaster, author and Relate's President, said "Sex and intimacy can be as adventurous and fulfilling in later life as it can be at any age. It might be different – for physical or other reasons – but it's brilliant that our research showed it's still a significant part of life for those who want it to be. And we shouldn't be afraid to talk about the importance of safe sex, regardless of age."

The campaign achieved widespread media coverage and has won several awards.



"We shouldn't be afraid to talk about the importance of safe sex, regardless of age."

Anjula Mutanda, Relate President

Brand refresh

In September 2022 we launched our refreshed brand using funding from the National Lottery Fund's Digital Fund. Early research as part of this innovation project found there were major gaps in who knew about us and what we were known for – younger people weren't familiar with our brand and the perception that we're still solely for married, straight couples persisted. This was a clear illustration that we needed to change to stay relevant and support more people in years to come.

We approached advertising and marketing agency, Ogilvy UK who worked with us pro bono on our award-winning Let's talk the joy of later life sex and Hornicultural Society campaigns. We had already seen from their team how they can take our work to a new level and the existing relationship meant we got an amazing amount of support for our small budget.

Together with Ogilvy UK, we talked to colleagues across our Federation and surveyed the public, to think through what Relate might look and feel like in the future. This was about more than a new logo and colour palette – it was 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 in May 2022 and the reaction was brilliantly positive.









We were then able to share brand guidelines and begin implementing them ready for a launch during Relationships Week in September 2022 along with the unveiling of the new website.

We are currently implementing the updated brand across the Relate Federation - rebranding everything from email signatures, social feeds, and leaflets to clinical guidance documents, training materials, and certificates. We've also been rebranding our charity shops and supporting Centres to rebrand their premises. Ensuring the brand guidelines are implemented consistently and that colleagues across the Federation have the support they need is vital. We're holding regular Q&As and workshops which are proving popular and constantly adding new templates to our library of resources.

It's very early to know what the impact of the refreshed brand has been so far but anecdotally we've received a lot of positive feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

We'll be continuing to measure the impact of the new brand over the coming months in terms of website visitors, brand awareness, staff feedback and service stats looking at the numbers and demographics of people seeking support with us.

Retail

In 2022/23, our charity shops played an important role in fundraising and enhancing our connection with local communities. Charity retailing is essential for Relate, fostering connections through meeting customers, working with volunteers, and receiving stock donations. We completed more than 200,000 transactions across the year. Following these results, and after a successful launch of a new shop in Seaford, East Sussex, in December 2022, we're now looking to implement an expansion strategy.

This year also marked our first full year of receiving Gift Aid income, which has contributed more than £30,000 to our mission.



Finally, we've been delighted to see the refreshed Relate brand come to life in our retail stores in in Meads, Eastbourne (pictured above) and Seaford.

EDI training

Our focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) has continued over the past year. With our brand refresh complete, we're now better able to represent the diverse range of people who access our services in our visual identity.



We have also begun exploring a broader range of issues in our self-help content, including relationship diversity, racism, and disability and relationships.

Perhaps our greatest achievement over the past year has been the introduction of a robust EDI training module that all colleagues have been asked to complete. Designed to ensure all our staff are equipped to make our clients feel welcome and understood, this training covers areas such as protected characteristics, reasonable adjustments, and unconscious bias. This training is free and available for all practitioners, administrators, managers, volunteers, and trustees working with Relate.

Relate Hub

This year we continued to support various NHS Trusts and national contracts through our digital services provision known as "the Hub". Excitingly, we also extended these services and made them accessible to the public.

Our greatest achievement in the Hub was launching our One Session Therapy service, which 122 individuals or couples have accessed since October.

This solutions-focussed service enables clients to speak to a counsellor for 60 minutes about a specific issue.

Early feedback shows that clients are getting significant value from the service, with rates of satisfaction with counsellors, experience, and value for money all greater than 88%.

We saw similarly high levels of satisfaction with other Hub services, with 96% of people who accessed our 'Chat with a Counsellor' service satisfied with the experience.

Speaking about One Session Therapy, one client said "I needed a completely neutral voice in an emotive challenge I am facing so it was good to hear and talk to a qualified third-party professional about my situation. This has helped to clearly articulate the issues I am facing, which is a good starting point for me to get the support I need."



Supporting parents at Relate

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) released its evaluation of the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme (RPC) 2018-2022 in August 2023. More than two and a half thousand parents participated in the program, with 993 engaged by Relate in the Northeast and London North West. The feedback from participants highlighted that the personalised content, the expertise of practitioners, the practical tools and activities, and the supply of workbooks for session reflections – were particularly appreciate by participants.

Half of the parents said their relationships had improved six months post-intervention, and this feeling continued into the following year.

Two-thirds said the sessions positively influenced their children six months post-completion, which rose to nearly three-quarters a year later. Parents who undertook sessions with their co-parent saw even higher rates of improvement.

We're incredibly proud of these outcomes, and the pivotal role we played in reducing family conflicts. These results show the transformative effect of talking about relationships on family well-being. Since the release of this report, we've broadened our services to assist military families. Backed by RNRMC and AFCF funding, and in partnership with Homestart, we've launched a tri-service programme for parents in need of relationship support. We're also piloting our 'Co-Parenting Every Day (CoPE) initiative in select areas, and ensuring our practitioners can tell the difference between conflict and abuse.

Jude Gordon, our Programme Manager for Supporting Parents, said: "I feel like this is still the beginning of a huge journey for everyone; policy, systems, families and professionals working directly with parents. We know from recent issues in the UK family courts that things still need to change for families. We believe that parents can separate well, and we are fully engaged in helping them to address conflict before and after a separation happens. Every child has the right to grow up in an environment that feels safe."



Supporting employees navigating divorce and separation

This year we were proud to sign up to the Positive Parenting Alliance's (PPA) new HR initiative addressing the lack of employer support for employees undergoing divorce or separation. A recent PPA survey revealed over 90% felt their work performance and mental health declined during divorce, with 70% being less efficient and over 40% needing time off. Ten percent stopped work entirely.

The initiative encourages businesses and HR leaders to formally recognise separation as a 'life event' in their policies and provide employees with support materials from the Alliance.

Relate supports the #ParentsPromise, helping parents prioritise their children even during relationship breakdowns.



Embracing Progress: The Arrival of No-Fault Divorce

In a significant milestone, no-fault divorce became law on 6 April 2022 in England and Wales with the implementation of The Divorce, Dissolution, and Separation Act (2020). This legislation marks the end of the need for couples undergoing separation to attribute blame for the dissolution of their marriage. Instead, either spouse or the couple jointly can now initiate divorce proceedings by simply asserting that their marriage has irretrievably broken down.

For Relate, this change has been a long time coming, as we've been dedicated campaigners for no-fault divorce for several years. To make sure our clients understood what the changes meant for them, we crafted a blog explaining the changes and signposting to further support and information. We were proud to play a part in the announcement of the changes by being featured in the Ministry of Justice press release which was picked up by national media outlets, including The Independent.

Aidan Jones, our Chief Executive, shared his thoughts on this pivotal legistlation, stating: "It's an important step in moving away from animosity and blame being the norm, to a place where the welfare of those involved – particularly children – is at the forefront of the process... This is far from the end of the journey, though. As a society, we must encourage healthy relationships, reduce parental conflict, whether parents are together or not, and, in turn, enhance children's wellbeing and life prospects. Relationship support services are vital to this."

This marks the beginning of a transformative era, where compassion and the well-being of all parties involved take precedence in divorce proceedings.

National contracts

We continue to offer free relationship support to individuals from a wide range of industries through the delivery of our national contracts.



Over the course of this year, we collaborated with organisations such as: The Bank Workers Charity, The Chartered Accountants Benevolent Association, The Charity for Civil Servants, GroceryAid, The Licensed Trade Charity, Retail Trust, The Seafarers' Charity, The Brain Tumour Charity, The Royal Airforce Benevolent Fund, and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, collectively delivering more than 14,000 sessions of relationship support.

The feedback received regarding the quality of our free counselling services has been overwhelmingly positive, with 80% of participants reporting an enhancement in their life situation and 72% acknowledging an improvement in their mental well-being as a direct outcome of our support.

Training

We reached 2875 people with our various training and Continued Professional Development (CPD) courses. After needing to go online during the pandemic, our Level 5 Diploma in Relationship Counselling course returned to face-to-face delivery.

We now offer other courses as either fully online or blended between face-to-face and online. Having greater flexibility in how we deliver our courses means people from a broader range of geographical areas can now attend our training.

We updated our LearnRelate e-learning platform in the new brand and launched a variety of new courses on topics like safeguarding adults and children and counselling skills for everyday life.



Cost of living crisis: Relate Chesterfield and North Derbyshire offers free emotional support

Relate Chesterfield and North Derbyshire provided emotional support to local residents to help them through the cost of living crisis by offering free assessments and funded places throughout September 2022. The initiative was well received by clients who were struggling to cope with the cost of living crisis or finding it was putting a strain on their relationships.

Amy Harris, Chief Executive Officer of Relate Chesterfield and North Derbyshire, said:

"Pressure and anxiety of how individuals, couples and families are going to be able to pay their bills may be causing difficulties within relationships or with their own personal well-being. That's why we were pleased to offer free one-hour assessment appointments throughout September 2022 to support people's mental health and wellbeing during this time."



Counselling for couples affected by autism

Relate Cambridgeshire launched their new Autism Relationship Counselling service in December 2022.

Claire Godward, Chief Executive at Relate Cambridgeshire said: "Having seen an increasing number of the community approaching us directly and asking for specialist support around autism for themselves or family members we applied to the National Lottery for a grant. This enabled us to upskill our relationship counsellors with specialist training to provide relationship support to couples where one or both partners are affected by autism. Our team now has an increased knowledge and awareness of autism and how it affects intimate relationships.



Importantly it has helped them to develop some different ways of working that will provide better support to the clients we see."

The service is proving to be very popular and the number of people seeking help is steadily rising. Relate Cambridgeshire plan to seek more grant funding to further extend and develop the service in 2024.

Clinical excellence

This year we've developed and implemented changes to our client assessment process, redeveloped our clinical competency framework for working with adult couples and multiplepartnered people and piloted a number of innovations to support safer working with people affected by domestic abuse and serious mental health issues, as well as introducing a new clinical magazine for staff throughout the organization.

Ammanda Major, Head of Service Quality and Clinical Practice said: "Our commitment to clinical excellence that provides the very best experience for our clients is at the forefront of everything we do. Liaising with stakeholders in and out of Relate helps us to support, maintain and enhance our practitioners' skills, knowledge and dedication to their important work with clients."

Looking ahead

Aidan Jones, Chief Executive

As I reflect on the past year, it's clear that we've faced many challenges. The uncertainty of the post-Covid era remains, as we and our clients try to regain a sense of equilibrium. But, despite this uncertainty, we have our new vision of "thriving relationships in every part of life" to guide and unite us. This year has shown us, again, the value of relationships – both in our personal lives and within our Federation.

As we enter a new year, our mission is clear: to provide accessible support in the ways people need it. We want a world where everyone can enjoy thriving relationships, no matter who they are. Our focus on reaching everyone in the ways that work for them hasn't wavered. Every person, from every background, should know the happiness and strength good relationships bring.

Looking ahead, we're planning a new strategy for the next phase of our organisation. We're pushing ourselves to do even more and provide relationship support in accessible, innovative and inclusive ways.

"We want a world where everyone can enjoy thriving relationships, no matter who they are."



Safety is still our top priority. Every chat, every piece of self-help guidance, every step we take is made with care, making sure everyone's well-being and rights are respected. As our strategy leads us to offer more services, we'll always remember the importance of trust.

To sum up our plans for 2023/24: We're ready. We're looking to expand our work, strengthen our resolve, and spread the word about healthy relationships across England and Wales. We're stepping into this new year with a clear goal, a strong plan, and our core values leading the way. There are hurdles ahead, but there's also a lot of hope, and we're ready for both.

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 2022 to 31 March 2023.

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

Income

Individual client payments	£8.61m	47%
Paid for services	£3.57m	19%
Local and national government	£2.55m	14%
Grants and donations	£1.58m	9%
Charity shop/retail	£1.19m	6%
Investments and other income	£0.43m	3%
Fundraising and events	£0.40m	2%

£18.30m

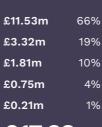


Expenditure



Total

Total



£17.62m



Relate

Thriving relationships mean a thriving society. Our work improves mental health and wellbeing and helps prevent loneliness, depression, abuse, homelessness and parental conflict. Now, more than ever, we need your help to reach everyone who needs us. Whatever the issue, we can Relate.

To donate to Relate visit Relate.org.uk/donate