

Relate NI

Annual Report

2021-22

we can Relate



Working to make
expert information &
support for healthy
relationships available
to everyone



87% of clients in 2021/22 reported an
improvement in their well-being
following Relate NI counselling
services



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CEO Introduction

I am delighted to introduce our annual report for the 2021/22 year, which has been a significant year for the organisation.

In the face of so much uncertainty, not least due to Covid and rising costs of living, I take comfort in the fact that people continue to recognize the importance of relationships to their well-being, and that they prioritize actions that will support these relationships.

As evidenced by the number of people helped further in this report, people continue to recognize Relate NI an important partner in supporting these relationships. I am delighted to be entering our 75th year of doing so and I look forward to working with our expert team to support families and individuals across NI into the future.

- Duane Farrell, CEO



The 21-22 year was significant for the organisation as it included the start of our 75th year of supporting families and communities across Northern Ireland.

The ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and associated lockdowns continued to be a key context for Relate NI operations this year. Pressure placed our parent, couple and family relationships as a result of lockdown has continued, and in many cases deepened. While our society returned to previous patterns in many instances over the course of the year, the longer term familial and relational impact of lockdowns requires longer term monitoring.

Feedback from our counsellors has indicated that emerging themes from our counselling rooms over this past year are:

- Anxiety & low mood are key presenting issues. The past 2 years appears to have exacerbated this and impacted those who had no significant prior experience of anxiety.
- The reduced pace of life over lockdown has meant that communication issues have increased in visibility in many couple & family relationships.
- Physical health issues coupled with lack of timely access to NHS health services, is resulting in poorer mental health and relationship distress, which is compounded when travel to other regions is required.
- Parents and families are increasingly concerned about the impact of the rising cost of living on their ability to manage financially, the worry of which is spilling over into the mental health of the family unit.
- There remains low awareness of what constitutes healthy relationships and how to navigate them.
- Increasing visibility and recognition of Trans people and the impact on family and romantic relationships as people

commence their transition.

- Pressure on parents to hold the space for everyone in the family while also holding their own personal fear and anxieties.
- Increasing number of couple's separating needing to stay in the same home due to financial pressures. This creates unique challenges for the individuals and particular risks for children where unhelpful conflict becomes part of their inter-parental relationships.
- Many people feel increasingly isolated, even as we moved further away from lockdowns, because support systems have been decimated.

To support people experiencing the issues outlined above, Relate NI deliver a range of therapeutic relationship support services including;

- Relate Kids – Counselling for Children from the ages of 4-12
- Relate Teen – Counselling for young people aged 13-18
- Adult Relationship Counselling for Couples and/or Individuals
- Family Counselling
- Sex Therapy
- Schools Counselling
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Workplace Wellbeing Workshops

We also further developed our suite of online self-help tools which we launched the previous year, and launched a new 'Sustaining Healthy Relationships' which provides relationships education programmes and research, and will seek to improve our organizational sustainability.

Relate NI

People Who Used Our Services 2021-22

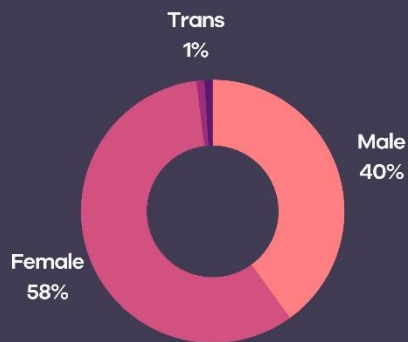
Presenting Issues

61% Relational

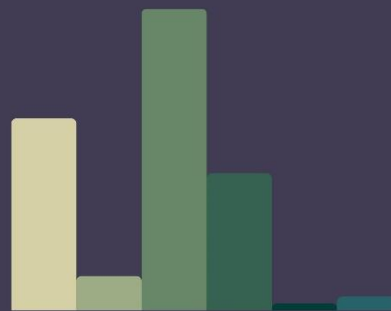


39% Health & Wellbeing

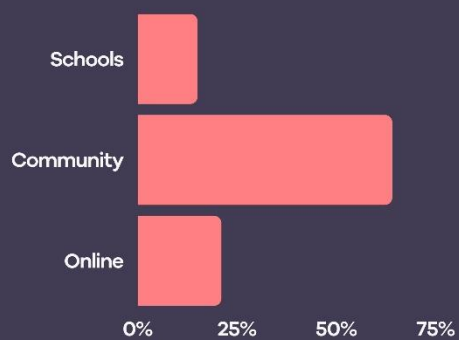
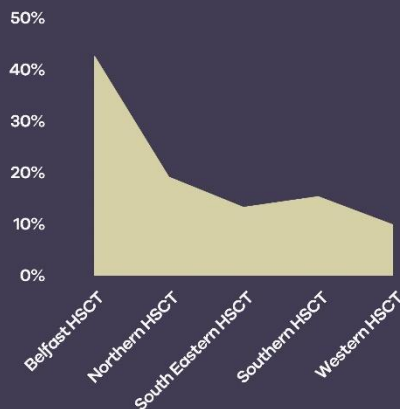
Age & Gender Profile



Under 18 18-24 25-44 45-64 65-74 75+



Where are people accessing relationship support?



we
can
Relate

Projects, Partners & Service Development

Over the course of the 21/22 year, Relate NI continued to work with a range of existing partners such as “Health and social care trusts, Parentline, Positive Life, Parent Rooms and Forward South Community Network ” to deliver services & other means of support. In addition, we welcomed the following new partners & projects;

Sustaining Healthy Relationships

Supported by the Dormant Accounts Fund, Relate NI launched a new project this year which aims to help improve our organisational sustainability. We want to build on the way we work with and provide support to people, by taking our educational interventions into the heart of communities with a view to preventing and or reducing relationship distress through providing tools and techniques to encourage, nurture and strengthen the foundational relationships that bring us joy and improve our mental and physical wellbeing.

Workplace Wellbeing Workshops

In response to demonstrable need from various organisations, we developed a bespoke relationship support offering for workplaces and delivered to the staff teams of a number of local employers spanning multiple industries from construction to the creative arts.

Brain Tumour Charity

The Relate Federation, of which Relate NI is an associate member, has entered into a national contract with The Brain Tumour Charity, which allows us to provide funded counselling support for adults who are personally affected by a tumour or who are the parents of children who are affected.

Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)

Relate NI has been part of a partnership with Nexus and led by The Rainbow Project over the last 6 years to deliver RSE programmes to young people in community settings. The Consortium was successful in securing this project again following the PHA’s re-tendering process

in Dec 2021, and Relate NI is now lead partner.

Forward South Belfast – Seamless Transition through Education Project (STEP)

This education partnership is an early intervention programme specifically designed to provide support to families and children to help them get the best start in life. Relate NI commenced provision of therapeutic support services to schools in the South Belfast area, supporting children, parents and teachers in order to enhance emotional wellbeing.

Reach & Impact

How Much Did We Do?

During 2021/22, Relate NI directly helped 18,726 people with their relationships through various mediums of relationship support. The nature of our work means that 4204 people have also indirectly benefited;

- 2532 were supported through Therapeutic Services
- 480 young people attended Relationships & Sexuality Education Workshops
- 133 people supported through our Workplace Wellbeing Program
- 347 primary school children supported through drop in clinics
- 15,234 people engaged through digital resources, including through our annual “Relationships Week” & “Relieve the Pressure” Campaigns.

How Well Did We Do It?

Our website audience grew by 25% on the previous year, and we were recipients of the ‘Good Governance Award for a Medium Sized Organization. In addition, our Chair, Aidan Bennett, was awarded Trustee of the Year at the CO3 Leadership Awards. Our evaluation mechanisms indicate a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by Relate NI;

- 94% of respondents would recommend Relate NI to a friend or family member
- 91% of respondents found their initial engagement with Relate NI ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful.
- 84% of respondents rated their counsellor as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ in terms of helping them work through their presenting issues
- 78% of respondents wished they’d attended Relate NI sooner
- Schools Counselling scored an average 99% score on the Child

Session Rating Scale, a measure of therapeutic alliance completed at the end of each session.



What Difference Did We Make?

- 82% of respondents rated any improvements for their children as 'excellent' or 'good'
- 87% of respondents indicated that their wellbeing had improved as a result of attending Relate NI services.
- Children accessing our Schools Counselling Service demonstrated an average 22% improvement in pre and post intervention Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS) Scores.



Beyond the Counselling Room

Relate NI continues to engage with partners and stakeholders to build understanding of the challenges experienced by people and families across NI and also to ensure that relevant public policy areas are influenced and shaped by the experiences of people who access Relate NI services.

This year this included continued engagement with the Department of Health's review of the Regional Family and Parenting Strategy, meeting with the NI Mental Health Champion and as part of a consultation response to the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Directorate of the Executive Office.

Relate NI also launched a 'Relationships Matter Manifesto' ahead of the May 2022 Assembly Elections, highlighting key legislative & policy development priorities and lobbied extensively using this.

We worked with colleagues across the sector as part of the Covid Wellbeing and Community Wellbeing campaigns, giving people access to timely support at their point of need in the face of barriers falling out of Government measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19. This was also the focus of the second iteration of our annual winter campaign, 'Relieve the Pressure,' which provided practical ways for people to "Take A Breath" after a particularly difficult couple of years.



Digital & Self-Help Support

This year we continued the work we began the previous year, of creating additional resources for relationship support, beyond our therapeutic counselling services.



214

Hours of self-help videos viewed

7

PDF Support Tools Published

15,234

Supported through our digital
services

96

Questions Answered in our Weekly
Belfast Telegraph Advice Column

Thanks to our Partners & Funders

Partners

The Rainbow Project
Nexus
Surestart
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Northern Health & Social Care Trust
Southern Health & Social Care Trust
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
Western Health & Social Care Trust
Northern Ireland Prison Service
The Parent Rooms
Positive Life
Forthspring Intercommunity Project
Forward South (STEP)

Funders

Department of Health
Health & Social Care Board
Relate National Contracts
Full Service Community Network (FSCN)
Julia & Hans Rausing Trust (JHRT)?
Bank Workers Charity
The Seafarers Charity
The Brain Tumour Support Charity
The Charity for Civil Servants
Community Finance NI
Grocery Aid
Retail Trust
Probation Board NI
Dormant Accounts Fund

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