

Annual Report 2020-2021

A member of Relationships Scotland **RELATIONSHIPS**
counselling, mediation & family support across **SCOTLAND**



Who we are

We are an independent Registered Scottish Charity based in Orkney, providing specialist support for adults, children, couples and families affected by relationship difficulties and family breakdown.

The charity has been operating since 1994, originally as Family Mediation Orkney, which merged with Couple Counselling Orkney in 2006 to form Counselling and Family Mediation Orkney. In 2008 this organisation joined Relationships Scotland, the national body for counselling, mediation and family support in Scotland, and adopted the name Relationships Scotland Orkney, operating as RS Orkney. We are a registered Scottish charity and became a Company Limited by Guarantee in 2010.

As a Relationships Scotland (RS) member, we are part of a Scotland-wide network of locally run services, are Organisational Members of COSCA (the Professional Body for Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) and the College of Mediators. RS are also a Signatory of The Scottish Mediation Charter.

Our Values

- We work to the highest possible standards in accordance with the requirements of professional bodies.
- We respect and value diversity in our clients, practitioners, staff members and volunteers.
- We work in partnership with other organisations and individuals who share our aspirations for the people of Orkney.
- We are transparent and accountable, acting with openness and integrity at all times.

Our charitable objects

To relieve the needs and promote the welfare of individuals, families and children affected by relationship difficulties by providing support services, principally family mediation, child contact and confidential counselling services, and to develop other appropriate services to meet the changing needs of those disadvantaged by such difficulties.

Our vision is for positive and respectful relationships to be at the heart of our community.



What we do

Counselling

We provide a safe, confidential place to talk to a professional counsellor about problems of any kind such as anxiety, depression, anger, relationship difficulties, to explore feelings and find ways to move forward.



Mediation

Family mediation is a voluntary process which can help separated parents and family members when communication becomes difficult or has broken down. With the help of a trained and impartial mediator, long, painful and expensive legal battles can be avoided. We also offer specialist workplace mediation for conflicts arising at work.

Family Support

Our **Child Contact Centre** provides a safe, friendly, neutral and child-centred environment where children affected by family breakdown can meet and maintain their relationship with the parent they no longer live with or with other family members.

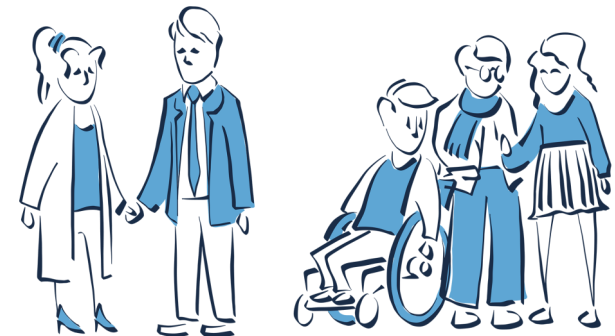
Family Support Workers help individuals and families to identify their strengths and build capacity, so they become better able to cope with relationship issues, parenting and other life challenges. They provide a range of specialist support including specific evidence-based interventions such as Parenting Apart, and programmes to support loved ones involved in substance misuse (CRAFT, ACRA).

Our Aims

- Children and their families, couples and individuals, are supported to have better, stronger relationships.
- People in Orkney make the best possible transitions through relationship difficulties, separation and divorce.
- Relationship and family support is fully integrated within national and local policy and practice.

Our Objectives 2019-2022

- To provide and support high quality services across Orkney, including relationship counselling, family mediation, child contact centres and other related forms of family support.
- To demonstrate the effectiveness of our services and help local policy makers, politicians, the media and others understand why relationships matter.
- To achieve long-term, stable funding for the Relationships Scotland Orkney services.



A word from our Chair

The past year has been overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and, despite the challenges, RS Orkney has continued to provide a range of services to people across these islands.

Following the national lockdown in March 2020, which caused closure of the office and suspension of face-to-face work with clients, we worked quickly to develop guidance, training and procedures to enable us to operate remotely and provide services online, while safeguarding the safety of both clients and staff. As a result, we were able to continue delivering sessions throughout the pandemic, and most clients have adapted well to working online.

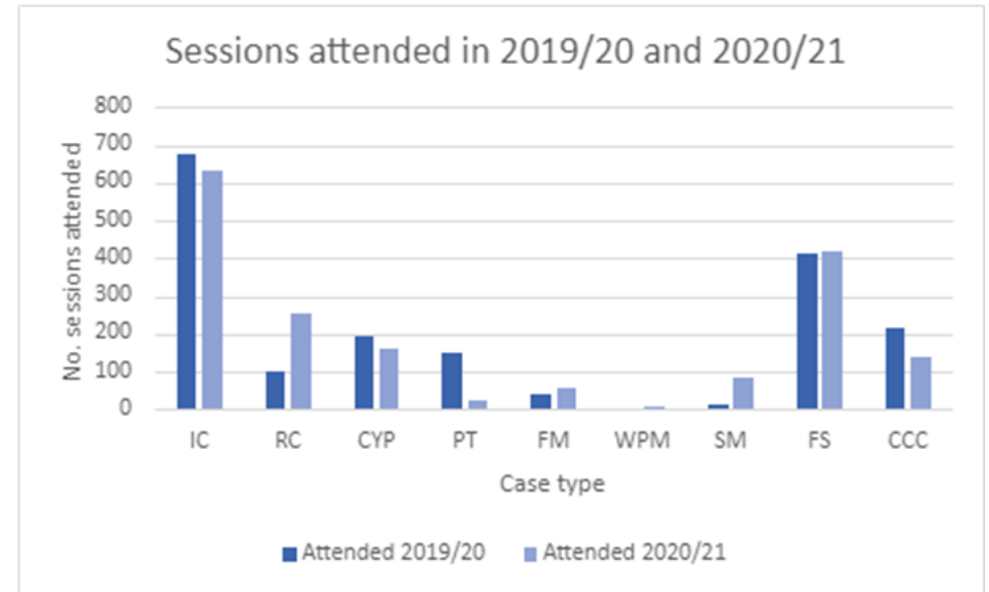
This is reflected in the numbers: during the year April 2020 to March 2021 we offered 2,028 client sessions, of which 1,765 were attended, just 46 fewer than in the previous year. This is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of our staff.

The cases handled by the Service are increasingly complex, reflected in the risk factors identified at intake. These show some worrying trends: of 176 clients attending a service intake meeting, 75% showed at least one risk factor. Of these factors 78% identified mental health as a risk (up 24% from the previous year), 26% suicide, 20% identified a domestic abuse risk (16% female; 4% male) and 20% substance misuse. This clearly demonstrates the extent of need within our community for this kind of support.

Looking ahead, RS Orkney's organisational aims and objectives remain a good fit with national and local government priorities, with a focus on prevention, early interventions and work with families. We remain committed to providing services for the Orkney community free of charge, and are grateful to the funders and individuals whose donations enable our vital work to continue.



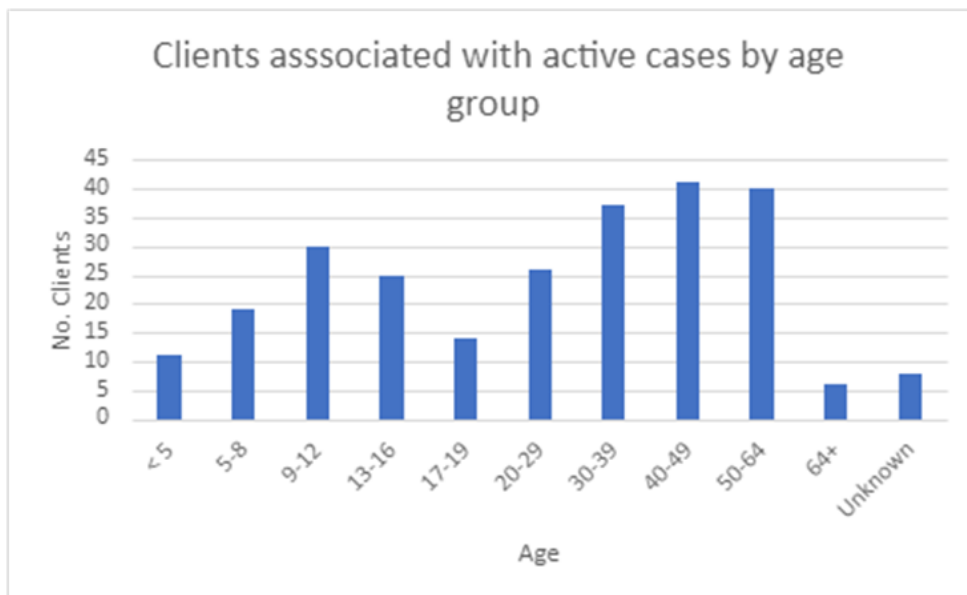
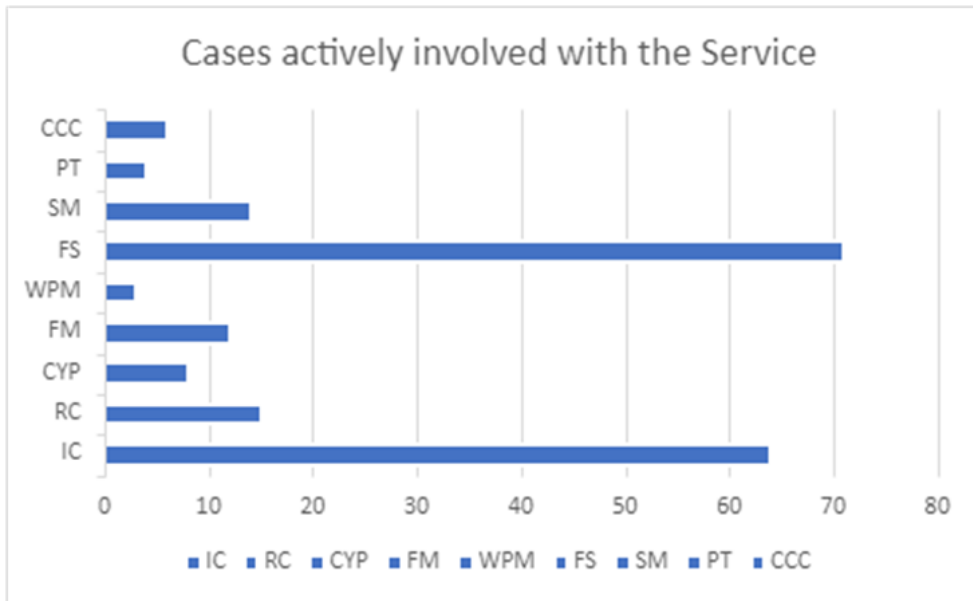
Overview of our work



OUR SERVICES

IC	Individual Counselling
RC	Relationship Counselling
CYP	Children & Young People Counselling
PT	Play Therapy
FM	Family Mediation
WPM	Workplace Mediation
SM	Substance Misuse Counselling and CRAFT
FS	Family Support
CCC	Child Contact Centre

Our clients



The client's view

"I don't feel invisible any more".

"Thanks very much for running such a valuable service. It's a lifeline!"

"Outstanding service from start to finish. Always felt valued and welcome. Helped me overcome an extremely difficult and challenging period in my life. I will always be thankful for the support and guidance."

"From [the first phone call] on I have felt heard, safe and supported at a most difficult time in my life. [The staff] have been amazing."

Across the Relationships Scotland network:

- 98% said that at this stage counselling had helped improve their family situation.
- 89% thought that at this stage mediation had helped improve their family situation.
- 86% of parents reported an improvement in their ability to deal with relationship conflict.
- 80% reported an improvement in their ability to cope with their current situation.

An update from the Service Director

This has been another busy year at RS Orkney after I took up the position of Service Director in July 2020. Despite the challenges of COVID-19 it has been positive to see how well clients and staff have adapted to the new world of online working.

A blended model of face-to-face and online services, according to client needs and preferences, has worked well. In particular this has benefited people in remote rural areas and outer islands, who are now able to access services more easily, without the time and cost of travel. In offering services online, we are conscious of the potential for digital exclusion, and have sought to overcome barriers by providing clients with a private space and equipment, where needed.

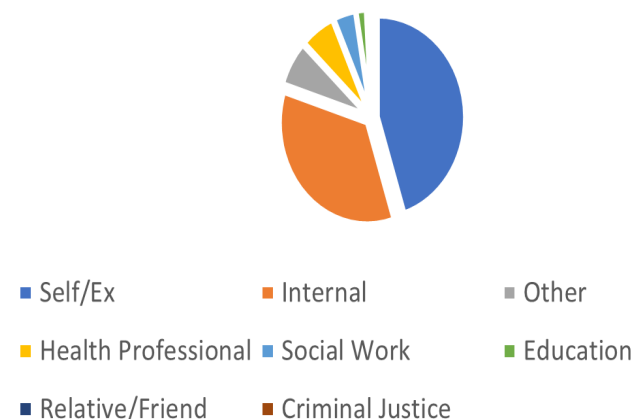
As the chart opposite shows, most clients come to us directly, and many are referred within the service for different kinds of support ('internal' referrals). This reflects the flexible and integrated way we work, responding to client needs as they change over time. We work hard to make links with other services both in the statutory and third sectors, so that we can offer a holistic approach to meeting client needs. We are grateful for the support of our funding partners, without whom we would be unable to offer free services for all, and in particular for their flexibility and understanding during the pandemic.

Our growing and varied caseload creates additional administrative demands. To facilitate the shift to online working, we undertook a major project in summer 2020 to upgrade our IT systems. This has supported staff working from home and enabled a range of improvements. We hope this will also support us in evaluating our services, by making it easier for clients to provide feedback in future.

Short term funding remains a challenge, with much of our income only secured to March 2022. We will continue to work hard to explore different funding options and to evidence the benefits of our work to our funders, so we can continue to support the Orkney community through the period of recovery from the pandemic, and beyond.

Tamsin Bailey

Referral source of cases opened in 2020/21



We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government through a Children, Young People & Families Early Intervention Fund (CYPFEIF) and Adult Learning and Empowering Communities (ALEC) Fund grant.

We are grateful to all our funders:

Foundation Scotland - Response, Recovery, Resilience Fund

CORRA Foundation Community Wellbeing Fund

The Henry Smith Charity - Improving Lives Fund

Orkney Alcohol & Drugs Partnership

Orkney Islands Council

Tesco *Bags of Help* grant scheme

We also receive generous donations from clients and members of the public. Without this funding we could not provide these vital services.

Counselling

"The whole experience has been transformational for us. I can't praise the service highly enough."

Demand for counselling, in particular, continues to be high, with 59 new Individual Counselling and 25 new Relationships Counselling cases opened during the year. This presents capacity challenges resulting in waiting lists for Individual and, to a lesser extent, Relationships Counselling. We have 10 sessional counsellors, including one trainee, who together offered 1,025 sessions during the year, and 8 supervisors providing regular practice supervision. We were fortunate to receive additional funding through the Orkney Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and also from Foundation Scotland during the year to allow us to offer additional free counselling sessions.

To help clients pending availability of a counsellor, we offer support to all those on the waiting list and started offering Single Session Therapy from January 2021. This involves the client and counsellor working together with the intention of addressing a specific problem or concern to help the client move forward, with the knowledge that more help and support is available if needed. Although not appropriate in all cases, initial feedback has been positive, with some indicating that they no longer require counselling, and others being referred for longer term therapy.

Our specialist Substance Misuse Counselling Service, commissioned through the Orkney Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, worked with 13 cases during the year, with an emphasis on prevention and progress towards recovery. These sessions have been offered online or face-to-face, and our Support Workers have provided help to family members and loved ones of those struggling with alcohol/drugs.

We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government through a CYPFEIF and ALEC Fund Grant.



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Perhaps the area of work most affected by the pandemic has been our counselling for Children and Young People (CYP) and Play Therapy. Although CYP counselling continued, some young people chose not to access the service online, preferring face-to-face sessions, which has been a challenge during the pandemic. 159 sessions were attended and 10 new cases opened.

Play Therapy

This work had to be suspended for a number of months due to limits on direct contact between adults and children, meaning that only 24 sessions were attended. Our two specialist practitioners are working with children again, but it will take some months to catch up.



Mediation

Pressure on relationships during the pandemic seems to have contributed to an increase in Family Mediation work this year, with 32 new cases opened and 55 sessions attended, mostly online. We have also started offering specialist Workplace Mediation, with feedback from referrers positive that this can be a constructive and helpful way to resolve conflict in the workplace.

Our counselling and mediation work is also supported by:



Family Support Work

Our Family Support Work has continued to grow, with 63 new cases opened. In all there were 71 active cases, with 59 attending 417 support sessions and 21 receiving regular email support. These cases involved 69 adults and 49 children, providing support with a variety of issues from anxiety and depression to parenting challenges and relationship breakdown.

The support work is closely integrated with other services, for example providing additional assistance to those using the Child Contact Centre or involved in Family Mediation. To match the Scottish Government funding for this work, we were fortunate to secure an 'Improving Lives' grant from The Henry Smith Charity, which runs from July 2020 to June 2023. This has enabled us to grow the Family Support team, which is now providing over 60 hours per week between four Support Workers with varied expertise and experience.

"I feel comfortable here and the sessions have been really helpful in my daily life. My support worker always has materials and can work around topics which I need help with."

Our Family Support work is supported by:



Child Contact Centre

The Child Contact Centre has continued operating throughout the year, although for the period during which Orkney was in the highest level of COVID restrictions we were only able to offer online contact, making this a very hard time for parents trying to maintain relationships with children they no longer live with.

The Contact Centre space had to be adapted to ensure a strict cleaning and ventilation regime and adequate delays between different families using the space. We are grateful to the Tesco *Bags of Help* Community Grants scheme for funding to buy new toys and equipment for the Contact Centre this year.

In total the Centre facilitated 1062 hours of contact between parents and children, including supervised and supported contact. Most involved managed handovers, where parents use the Centre to facilitate the children passing between them.



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Our staff

All of our Counsellors, Family Mediators and Play Therapists are trained to nationally recognised professional standards. Minimum training for **Counsellors** is Diploma level, which takes approximately 3 years to complete. Student counsellors usually start counselling part way through the course, once they have been properly assessed and deemed ready to practice.

Family mediators must complete training to Accreditation level (approximately 2 years), including co-mediating with an experienced mediator and being assessed as competent to mediate before mediating on their own. They are expected to undertake a further 2 years of training to Registration level, and their name is then added to the national list of family mediators held by the Lord President of the Court of Session.

All practitioners receive regular clinical practice supervision, as and support from their line manager. They must attend training for their continuous personal and professional development, in order to ensure standards are maintained and that they comply with the requirements of Relationships Scotland and the professional body appropriate to their particular discipline.

Family Support Workers have regular training and are experienced working with mental health issues like anxiety and depression, parenting difficulties, substance misuse and other life challenges.

Our **Child Contact Centre Workers** are experienced working with children and families, and like all our staff their approach is person-centred and trauma-informed.

Board				
Ray Knox (Chair), Fiona Morgan (Vice Chair), Huw Gwynn-Jones (Treasurer), Colin Nisbet, Helen Martini, Heather Tait, Edith Pirie, Uka Summers, Lucy Stansfield				
Service Director Tamsin Bailey				
Administrators Cecily Cromby, Client Liaison Worker Deborah Rhodes, Finance Administrator				
Counselling	Mediation	Family Support		
		Child Contact Centre	Support	Counselling for Children & Young People, Play Therapy
Counsellors Rosie Alexander June Anderson Rachel Ashton Barbara Cordukes Katie Eaton (trainee) Helen Hiscoke Rachel Spence Hannah Stanger Sue Wall Eimear Young Supervisors Renate Andrews June Anderson Manda Balfour Judith Bale Shirley Sim Ramona Haetzer Nicola Kelly Cieeky McCulloch	Registered Family Mediators Tamsin Bailey Barbara Smith Supervisor Rhona Wilson	Co-ordinator Jade Baxter	Family Support Workers Rachel Ashton Lorinda Logan Helen Pepper Sharon Stephen	Counsellors/Play Therapists June Anderson Renate Andrews
		Support Workers Clarissa Adams Cynthia Chaddock Gillian Charlesworth Mary Foubister Morgan Maxton Lesley-Anne Millar Kirsty Thompson Sarah Wylie Volunteers Helen Baxter Edith Pirie	Successful Co-parenting Rachel Ashton Helen Pepper Barbara Smith	Supervisors Renate Andrews Susan Atkins Beth Wiseman
		Drug & Alcohol Support		
		Specialist Substance Misuse Counselling Rachel Ashton Hannah Stanger CRAFT / ACRA Family Support Lorinda Logan		

RS ORKNEY

counselling, mediation & family support

What happens when you get in touch

You will receive a phone call or email within 1 working day. An initial appointment is usually offered within 5 working days.

There may be a wait for some services, but support is available meantime.

We put your needs at the centre: we will work with you to find out which of our services best suit your needs. If appropriate, we can refer on to other services, and will support you through the transition from one service to another.

If you are concerned about a family member or someone else you know, you can contact us to discuss confidentially whether we may be able to help. If you think we can help you or someone you know, please get in touch.

Relationships Scotland Orkney

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