

Annual Report 2023-2024



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, family breakdown and associated challenges.

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 (SCO23164) and became a Company Limited by Guarantee (SC380628) 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 for individuals and couples 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. We also offer specialist counselling for those struggling with alcohol/drugs.



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 work one-to-one with adults, children and young people, helping them to identify their strengths, to build capacity and resilience to better cope with the challenges they face. This support may be offered while a family is accessing other parts of the service. The Support Workers also provide a range of evidence-based interventions, including **Parenting Apart** and **Theraplay**.

Play Therapy is offered for children to help them process difficult emotions through play.

Alcohol/Drug Support helps individuals and families affected by alcohol/drug use to reduce harm and, where appropriate, to explore the underlying causes through counselling.

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

- 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 Relationships Scotland Orkney services.

We support **#The Promise** and work to ensure that every child grows up loved, safe and respected and able to realise their full potential.



A word from our Chair

The Service has had another very busy year supporting people in the local community. Thanks to funding from a range of sources described in this report, we have been able to continue offering free, professional services to help individuals, couples, children and young people in Orkney who are affected by relationship difficulties and a range of other challenges.

In the year April 2023-March 2024 we provided these services to **464 people: 274 adults and 190 children and young people**; and worked with a total of **590 people** (including all intake meetings attended).

A total of **339 new cases** were opened during the year, slightly down the previous year, but still far higher than pre-pandemic levels of referrals.

We are grateful to the volunteers from the local community, who sit on our Board, supporting the staff team. The Board recognises the skills and dedication of our people, and continues to invest in staff training and development, as well as being committed to Fair Work and to RS Orkney being a Scottish Living Wage employer.

Two Directors stood down during the year, and we would like to thank Luigi Borstotti and Huw Gwynn-Jones, who served as our Treasurer. We welcomed Alison Skea to the Board this year, and are grateful to Shona Flanagan who has taken on the Treasurer role.

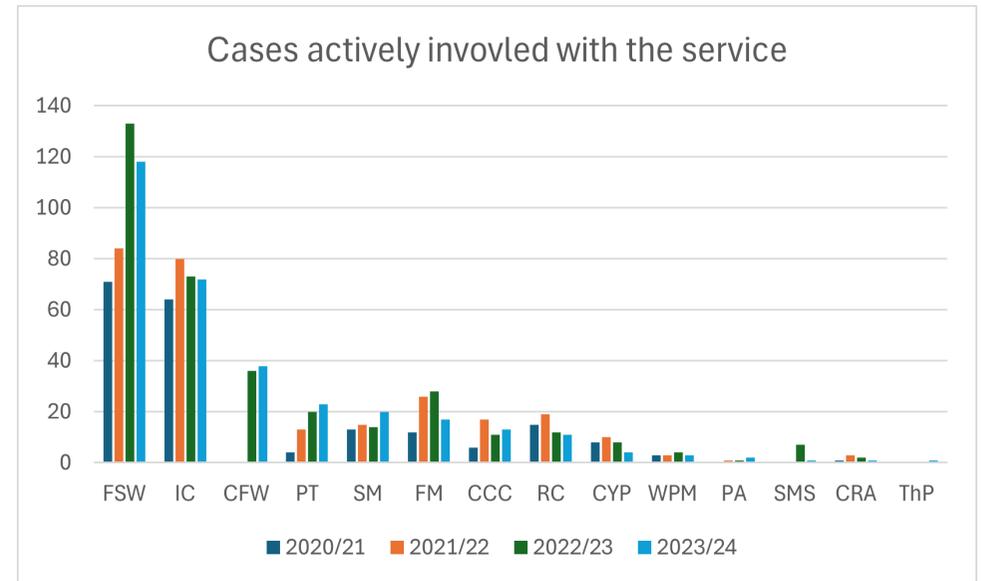
Looking ahead, RS Orkney's organisational aims and objectives remain a good fit with national and local government priorities, with a focus on prevention, early interventions and holistic work with children and families. This report contains a brief update on the excellent progress against our Strategy 2022-27.

We remain committed to providing services for the Orkney community free of charge, which has never been more important than in the current climate. We are grateful to all of the funders who enable us to continue doing so.

Ray Knox, Chair



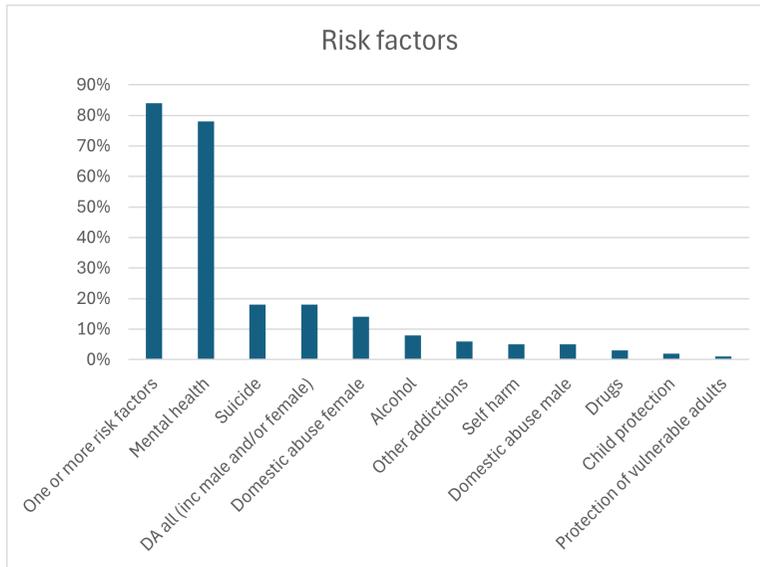
Overview of our work



OUR SERVICES

FSW	Family Support Work
IC	Individual Counselling
CFW	Children & Families Support Work
PT	Play Therapy
SM/SMS	Substance Misuse Counselling/Support
FM	Family Mediation
CCC	Child Contact Centre
RC	Relationship Counselling
CYP	Children & Young People Counselling
SST	Single Session Therapy
WPM	Workplace Mediation
CRA	Community Reinforcement & Family Training
PA	Parenting Apart
ThP	Theraplay

Our clients



What our clients say

"It was so difficult to know where to go for help at that time -- I'm so glad we found you! Very friendly service, very impressed"

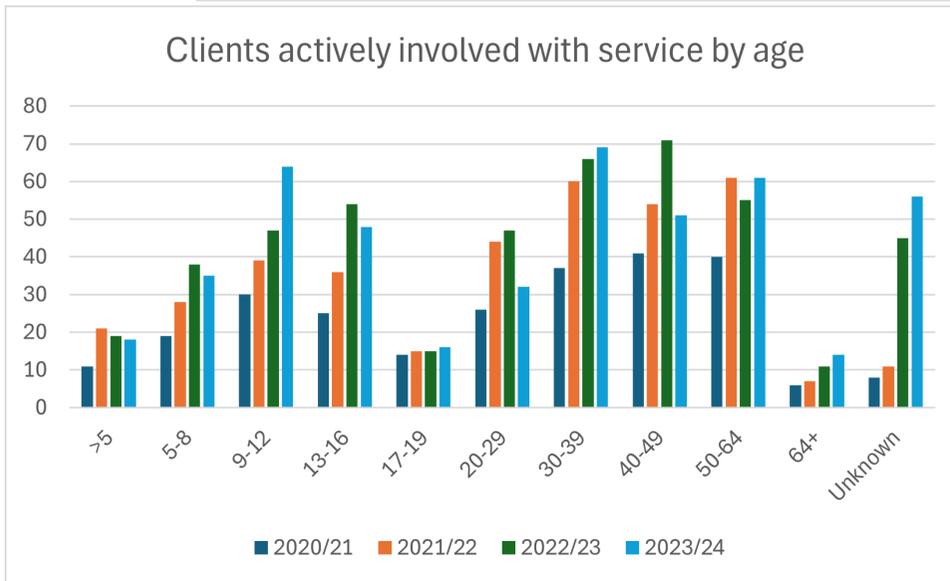
"Fantastic service available for people in their times of need"

"Great service and very understanding. Completely went above my expectations."

"You provide an amazing service. It is gentle, non-invasive and non-threatening."

Across the Relationships Scotland network:

- 92% of clients said their relationship/family situation had improved as a result of counselling
- 86% of clients said their ability to deal with relationship conflict had improved as a result of mediation
- 94% of parents said that attending a Child Contact Centre had helped improve their family situation



An update from the Service Director

This year we have delivered more sessions than ever before—almost 3,000 in total. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of our skilled staff team.

The 324 cases handled by the Service this year are increasingly complex: 84% of clients identified at least one risk factor; and of these, 78% identified mental health as a risk, 18% suicide, 18% identified a domestic abuse risk and 11% substance misuse.

42% of clients accessed two or more of our services, indicating a complex range of needs within the family (10% access 3 or more services). This demonstrates the integrated way we work, referring internally for specialist support where appropriate, so we can support the whole family.

The majority of people self-refer or are referred internally. We also receive referrals from third sector and statutory partners, with whom we work closely to ensure we provide holistic support for individuals and families in Orkney. This year we have received more referrals from statutory partners, reflecting the pressure on their resources: 32 from health professionals, 8 from Social Work, 8 from Education, 3 from Criminal Justice Social Work and 13 from other agencies (including third sector).

Many of our clients face long-term challenges: 53% identified a disability, 15% experienced a long-term illness, disease or condition; 38% have a mental health condition and 9% a physical disability. 6% of respondents described themselves as care experienced.

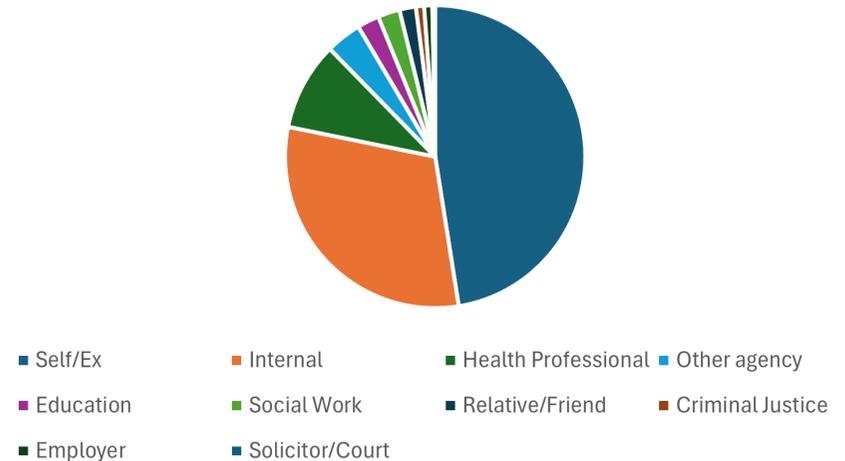
Our growing and varied caseload has placed significant pressure on resources. We still strive to ensure that enquiries are responded to within one working day and clients are offered an initial appointment within 10 days. Unfortunately there is a wait for some services, but support is offered meantime.

We secured additional funding this year, in particular to enable our Family Support to continue beyond March 2024, including work with children and young people.

Tamsin Bailey, Service Director



Referral source



We acknowledge the support of the Scottish Government through a Children, Young People & Families Early Intervention Fund (CYPFEIF) grant awarded to Relationships Scotland, and funding for Child Contact Centres, through the CORRA Foundation.

In addition, we are grateful to all those who have generously funded our work or awarded grants this year:

- The Henry Smith Charity - Improving Lives Fund
- The Henry Smith Charity - COVID-19 Long Term Support
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Robertson Trust
- Mind On
- Orkney Alcohol & Drugs Partnership
- Orkney Islands Council
- Voluntary Action Orkney - Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund
- Voluntary Action Orkney - Cost of Living Crisis Fund

We also receive generous donations from clients and members of the public.

Without this funding we could not continue to provide these vital services for the Orkney Community.

“My counsellor has been excellent, very supportive, non judgemental, compassionate & understanding.”

Counselling

Demand for counselling continues to be strong, with 98 new referrals for **Individual Counselling** and 23 for **Relationships Counselling**. Capacity remains a challenge in responding to this level of need, particularly for individual counselling, but we are increasing our capacity for this work thanks to a grant from The Henry Smith Charity *COVID-19 Long Term Support* fund, and through investment in training and support for student placements.

“The sessions have allowed us to explore some of our issues in a constructive manner. The service is professional and well structured. I have valued the support.”

“My counselling experience has been transformational”

Mediation

Family Mediation, which helps separated parents make arrangements for their children, has increased, with 37 new cases opened and 115 sessions attended.

There has also been some uptake of our specialist **Workplace Mediation**, with feedback showing this can be a constructive and helpful way to resolve conflict in the workplace.



Child Contact Centre

The **Child Contact Centre** provides a safe and neutral space where children can meet a family member they no longer live with. This year we opened 12 new cases, and 221 contact sessions were attended (more than double those attended the previous year). Many of these are complex cases with high conflict between parents. The service is vital in enabling children to maintain contact with a parent, or other family member e.g. sibling/grandparent, they no longer live with, and many families progress over time from supervised or supported contact to using the Centre to manage handovers between parents.

“This is an invaluable service for individuals and couples and I fully support them in what they are trying to achieve for the people they help.”



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“A friend has commented on a positive difference since attending support sessions. These sessions are a huge help to me. Thank you very much.”

Family Support

This service involves regular one-to-one psychological support for people of all ages, to help them manage difficult emotions, deal with conflict and develop coping tools and strategies.

There continues to be strong demand for this service, with **118 adults** attending 977 sessions, and 98 new cases opened. This support is closely integrated with other services, for example support is offered to parents who are using the Child Contact Centre or while taking part in Family Mediation.

We continue to develop our direct work with **Children and Young People**, in response to local need. This year we worked with **38 children** of Primary School age, who attended 430 sessions in school or at our Counselling Centre; and supported **14 young people** of Secondary School age who attended 104 sessions, mostly in school.

Our capacity for **Play Therapy** has increased, with two trainees working towards their full therapist qualification. This is intensive work, with **23 children attending 323 sessions** during the year, and 24 new cases opened.

“The young person is now attending most classes....their confidence is improving and family relationships are getting easier.”
Young people’s Support Worker



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Alcohol & Drug Services

Our specialist **Substance Misuse Service** offers harm reduction support and, once the client’s situation is more stable, specialist counselling to help an individual address the issues underlying their drug/alcohol use.

Support is also available for loved ones and family members supporting someone on their recovery journey. This work is commissioned through the Orkney Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, and this year we delivered 196 sessions of counselling/support, involving 22 cases.

“The service provided has literally made the difference between allowing me to function or spiralling downwards.”

“My counsellor has been a guiding light and helped me to understand myself and others and it has been a safe space to allow myself to be vulnerable and express feelings.”



We really appreciate clients taking the time to give us feedback, as this helps us to understand the impact we are having and informs service development.

- 100% of counselling clients said they would recommend the service to others
- 100% said the counsellor fostered a safe and trusting environment

I can't express in words how grateful and how amazing the counsellors have been. I have learnt so much about myself, my family, other peoples behaviours, I have developed in strength and how to tackle issues in a more positive way. It has been like a huge weight to get everything off my chest in a safe environment. I have developed skills in communication and conflict and I think I have also learnt how to deal with my anxiety and depression, allowing me to feel strong...A massive thank you, this really has changed my life and future for the better.



Our staff

We have a small and dedicated staff team comprising 10 employed staff (7.1 FTE) and 7 sessional workers, plus 7 self-employed practitioners and 5 trainee practitioners.

Our Counselling, Family Mediation and Play Therapy practitioners are trained to nationally recognised standards and are members of their respective professional body (BACP, COSCA, BABCP etc).

Minimum training for **Counsellors** is post-graduate Diploma level. Our counsellors practice within a range of frameworks including person-centred, psychodynamic and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). We support counsellors in training, who work with clients once assessed as fit to practice.

Our postgraduate-trained **Family Mediators** are on the Register of Practising Family Mediators held by the Court of Session.

We have one Registered **Play Therapist** and two trainee Play Therapists.

All client-facing staff receive regular clinical practice supervision, and management support. Practitioners must evidence Continuing Professional Development to ensure standards are maintained, and undergo annual registration through Relationships Scotland to ensure they meet minimum practice, continuous development and clinical supervision standards.

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. They are trained in line with Relationships Scotland national requirements and pay particular attention to the needs of children using the service.

In all the work we do with families, we seek to ensure that the voice of the child is heard when decisions are being made or actions taken which affect a child's future.

Board of Directors

Ray Knox (Chair), Amanda Bettison (Vice-Chair)
Shona Flanagan (Treasurer), Mark Causer, Johny McEwen
Alison Skea, Lucy Stansfield, Uka Summers

Service Director

Tamsin Bailey



Administrators

Cecily Cromby (Client Liaison)
Deborah Rhodes (Finance)

Counselling (Adults)	Family Mediation	Child Contact Centre	Individual & Family Support	Counselling (Young People) Play Therapy
<p>Counsellors June Anderson Barbara Cordukes Katie Eaton Helen Hiscoke Hannah Stanger Eimear Young</p> <p>Trainees Angela Green Rebecca Scott</p> <p>Supervisors June Anderson Helen Hiscoke</p> <p>External Supervisors Judith Bale Manda Balfour Helen Moya Jacqueline Sharpe Shirley Sim Beth Wiseman</p>	<p>Registered Family Mediators Tamsin Bailey Barbara Smith</p> <p>Trainee Mediator Carrie Rendall</p> <p>External Supervisors Shona Manson Rhona Wilson</p>	<p>Supervisor Anthea Hume</p> <p>Co-ordinator Yvonne Drever</p> <p>Support Workers Cynthia Chaddock Ruth Fogg Mary Foubister Ria Leslie Lesley-Anne Millar Brooke Page Edith Pirie</p>	<p>Team Leader Helen Pepper</p> <p>Support Workers</p> <p>Adults Yvonne Drever Mary Foubister</p> <p>Young People Lorinda Logan</p> <p>Children & Theraplay Carrie Rendall</p>	<p>Counsellor & Play Therapist Renate Andrews</p> <p>Therapeutic Play Practitioners Kayleigh Shaw Sarah Wood</p> <p>Supervisor Renate Andrews</p> <p>External Supervisor Susan Atkins</p>
	<p>Parenting Apart Facilitators Carrie Rendall Barbara Smith</p>		<p>Drug & Alcohol Services</p> <p>Support Rebecca Scott</p> <p>Counselling Hannah Stanger</p>	

Our Strategy sets out our priorities and outcomes for 2022-27:

RSORKNEY

counselling, mediation & family support



Services

Priorities 2022-27

Outcomes

A member of Relationships Scotland

Strategy Priorities 2022-27 : overview of progress

Improve & extend our services to meet client needs

- The employment of a 30 hour per week counsellor (job share), made possible by The Henry Smith Charity Covid-19 Long Term Support grant, has helped us to reduce waiting times for Individual Counselling. We were able to offer an additional 429 counselling sessions to 38 individuals thanks to this grant.
- The average number of weeks someone had to wait before the first counselling session was offered was 33 weeks, compared to 46 weeks the previous year and 67 weeks in 2021-22, and we are working to reduce this further.
- The Children & Families support service launched in 2022 enabled us to work with 38 Primary School age children this year, and we are grateful to The Robertson Trust who have provided funding to allow this work to continue beyond March 2024.
- The Parenting Apart programme, offering co-parenting advice to separated parents, has been refreshed and is now offered to all families attending Mediation and the Child Contact Centre.
- Work is ongoing to prepare for regulation of Child Contact Centre, in line with the children (Scotland) Act 2020.

Build capacity and develop the workforce

We continue to invest in staff training and development:

- 2 trainees are in the final year of their Play Therapy Diploma;
- 1 staff member is part-way through their Certificate in Family Mediation; and
- we provided 3 placements for three Counsellors in training.

Staff and practitioners continue to attend training in a range of areas, including Safe and Together, Decider Skills, Trauma-Informed Practice as well as regular Child Protection and Safeguarding training. Our Board also attended Safeguarding training this year.

Raise awareness of our services and influence local service development

- We participated actively in a range of local partnerships including the Third Sector Working Group, Orkney Alcohol & Drugs Partnership, Orkney Community Justice Partnership, Orkney Partnership for Action Against Gender-Based Violence and Abuse and the Young People and Mental Health Strategy Group, among others.
- We work closely and constructively with colleagues in the Community Mental Health Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Social Work, Housing and Police Scotland to support clients and ensure a holistic approach to meeting their needs, wherever possible.
- We have updated and widely distributed service literature, and have increased our activity on social media this year, to help ensure those in the local community are aware of, and know how to access our services.

Fund our ambitions

- The Strategy set a goal of securing funding for our family support work beyond 2023, and thanks to The Henry Smith Charity, The National Lottery Community Fund and The Robertson Trust, we have secured substantial funding to 2026, enabling this important work to continue.
- Funding through the Relationships Scotland network currently runs to end March 2025 (core and Child Contact Centre funding), and uncertainty about longer term is challenging for forward planning.
- We continue apply for funding to enable us to continue and develop our services in response to community needs. We have also started to undertake more local fundraising, and hope to do more of this in the future, as capacity allows.

How to access our services

Individuals can self-refer or someone (e.g. a professional) can contact us on their behalf.

They will receive a phone call or email within 1 working day, and an initial appointment is usually offered within 10 working days. There may be a wait for some services, but support is available meantime.

We put the client's needs at the centre: we will work with the individual to find out which of our services best suit their circumstances. If appropriate, we can refer on to other services, and will support the client 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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Our services are free and confidential.

