

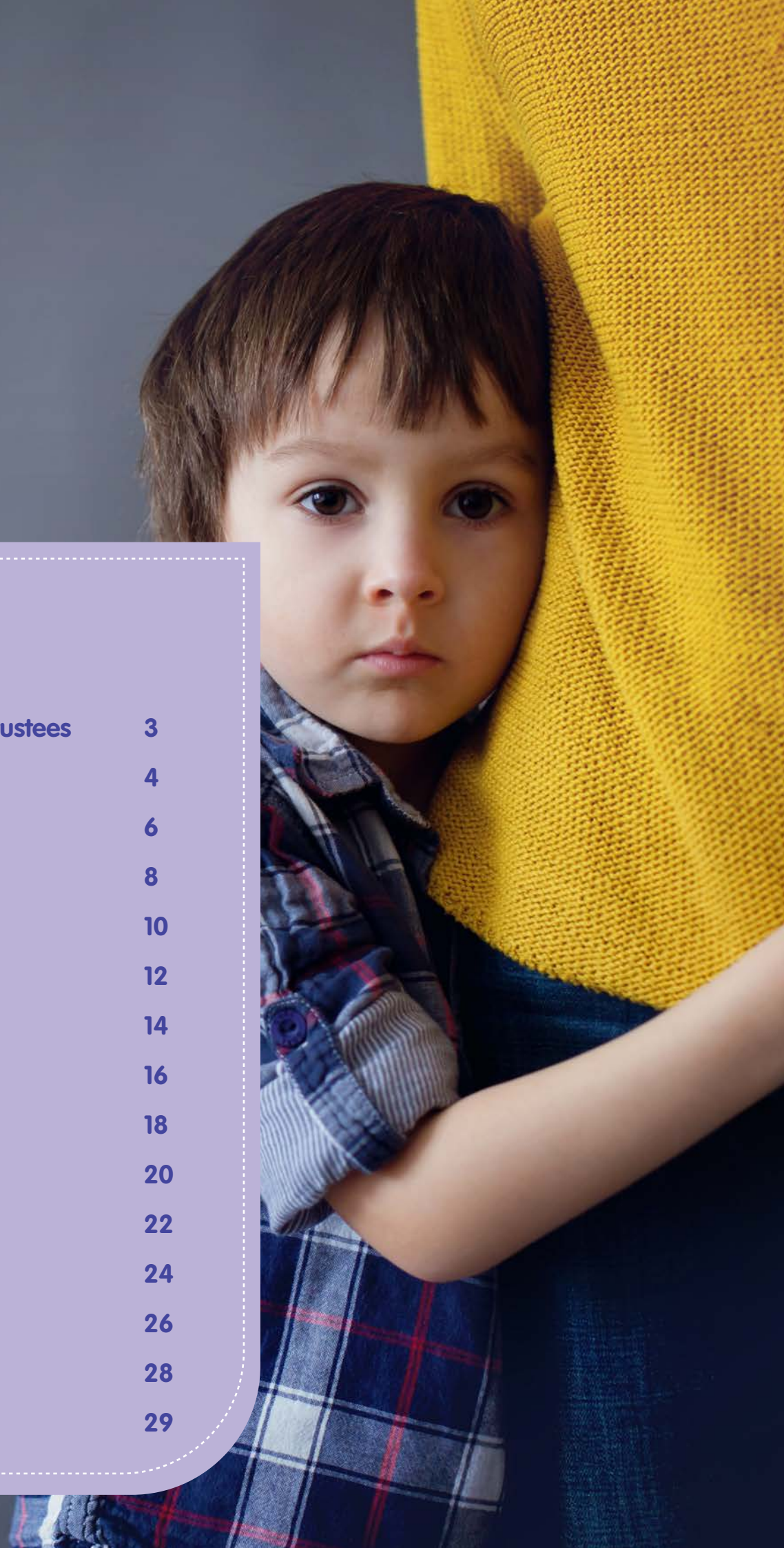
# gr'ef encounter

supporting bereaved children & young people



**grief encounter**  
**annual review**  
**2020/21**





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# dear families, supporters, friends and patrons



**As a charity, the last year has seen many peaks and troughs, but the overarching outcome of the past 12 months has been seeing the dedication from our most wonderful staff members. With extraordinary growth in enquiries, and children, young people and their families needing support, our staff members have gone above and beyond to assist us in moving forward positively.**

The UK has now seen more than 750,000 mourners as a result of Covid-19, over 60,000 of which are children. Our helpline calls continue to rise month on month, in number and complexity, from those seeking support; whether that be as a result of familial bereavement, or from NHS and essential workers facing the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

Last year we successfully transitioned services online, and now we begin the process of opening up safely again to in-person services and events. Our Fundraising Team continues to work creatively, hosting industry leading events, carrying us through these challenging times. Our Trusts and Grants Team has sourced essential funding, both for specific projects and from Covid-emergency grants, and our Clinical Department has, in the face of adversity, uncertainty and overwhelming demand, kept Grief Encounter going. Working both remotely, and in new ways in our clinical space, the team has continued to provide outstanding support to those grieving.

Our biggest thanks, however, must go to you, for your ongoing support this year to help us provide a lifeline to families experiencing unimaginable pain from bereavement. With your help we are meeting the demand upon us, increasing our service offering and reaching individuals across every county in the UK. Thank you for standing by us.

**Richard Fogelman**  
Chief Executive

**Harold Gittelman**  
Chair of Trustees



# a message from our founder



**At Grief Encounter we've long been in the front face of traumatic grief. That's every family we encounter, whatever creed, culture or financial situation. In the face of Covid-19 bereavement, we are meeting people who have intolerable levels of anxiety, fear and mistrust. What uniquely previously affected bereaved children, young people and their families is now hitting the nation as a whole, hard. It is vital that we take the emotional and psychological damage very seriously and act appropriately. This needs to be extended over the long-term, with even more support extended to those who are suffering from the COVID "excess" deaths.**

I'm so proud to see Grief Encounter, in its 17th year, on the front line of grief support, reaching so many individuals who are suffering. Our team has filled me with pride and offered the most comprehensive support they can. With grief now impacting younger families, we once again are going to have to up the ante to help the hundreds of bereaved children and their families who contact us.

We promise to continue offering vital services to all of those who need us, for as long as they need us.

***grief doesn't stop, neither will we.***

**Dr Shelley Gilbert MBE,**  
Founder, Clinical Trustee and Lifetime President





## who we are

Grief Encounter is one of the UK's leading bereavement charities, providing a lifeline for bereaved children, young people and their families, helping them live again, with grief.

We offer a variety of accessible face-to-face and remote services, ranging from 1-1 counselling, bespoke therapy options, residential camps for families, and group workshops. Our helpline, grieftalk, offers immediate support and advice for those suffering with grief, and those supporting grieving individuals.

Death is devastating at any age, but for a child who is still emotionally developing, it can be catastrophic. Research shows that without early intervention, bereaved children can experience mental health, emotional, social and behavioural issues, together with educational and financial problems as they mature. Our wide range of clinical services aim to give the right support at the right time, so young people can go on to lead full and happy lives.

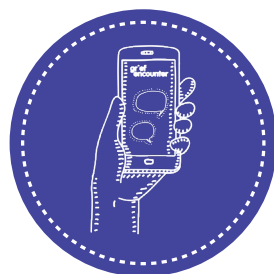
Grief Encounter ensure that bereaved children and young people have access to professional help, when they need it most.



**over 400**  
families in receipt of counselling



**4992**  
total online counselling sessions



**over 6000**  
calls, chats and emails to  
our helpline, grieftalk



Children enjoying their Grief Encounter Residential weekend, 2021



# covid-19 update

Our national free helpline, grieftalk, continues to help and support all those affected by grief as a result of Covid-19 including all essential key workers, NHS staff, social care workers, and anyone impacted by bereavement.

Our specialist Clinical Team have supported our bereaved families this year both online, hosting remote grief groups, online fun-days for both children and young adults - and are now starting to incorporate some face-face activities. There is an instant web chat facility on our website as part of grieftalk and our growing e-counselling option have been the main source of support and advice for those we work with.

Our Clinical Team have provided e-counselling sessions with all children, teens and young people. Families continue to be supported via regular telephone check-ins with family liaison and parental support.

## growth & goals

1

To return to face-face counselling and in person therapeutic events including fun days, residential camps and workshops

2

To continue to extend our reach to all those affected by Covid related grief on an ongoing basis

3

To develop our web-based training modules to ensure professionals can access best practice training as and when they need



over £1.88m raised by our fundraising team who in the face of continued cancelled events, adopted an outdoor event strategy



35% increase in referrals of children in 2020/21



over 90% uplift in helpline calls during the pandemic



414 individuals affected by covid-19 bereavement received online counselling



# core services

Grief Encounter offer a tailored, professional support programme to children, young people and their families, who have experienced the death of someone close. This year has seen continued lockdowns and restrictions across the UK, and as such we have responded with an extended online, remote service offering, ensuring we can reach as many individuals, in all locations, as and when they need us.

Our open-access services include our national, free helpline, grieftalk, and a variety of different therapeutic options, forming the highly regarded Family Programme. Continuation of restrictions in place has meant our face-to-face therapies continue to take place remotely. Our online Grief Group Workshops and Fun Days have connected like-minded children, young people and their families, providing a way through the isolation that grief can bring. Grief Relief Kits containing at-home resources are sent to families' homes as an introduction to Grief Encounter. All services are designed to help alleviate some of the complicated and varied challenges faced after the death of someone close, alongside the emotional, social and behavioural issues, together with educational and financial problems as they mature.

Our wide range of clinical services offered as part of our unique Family Programme aim to give the right support at the right time, so young people can go on to lead full and happy lives. Grief Encounter also offers best practice training programmes for schools, colleges, therapists and corporates.



1292 grief relief kits sent out

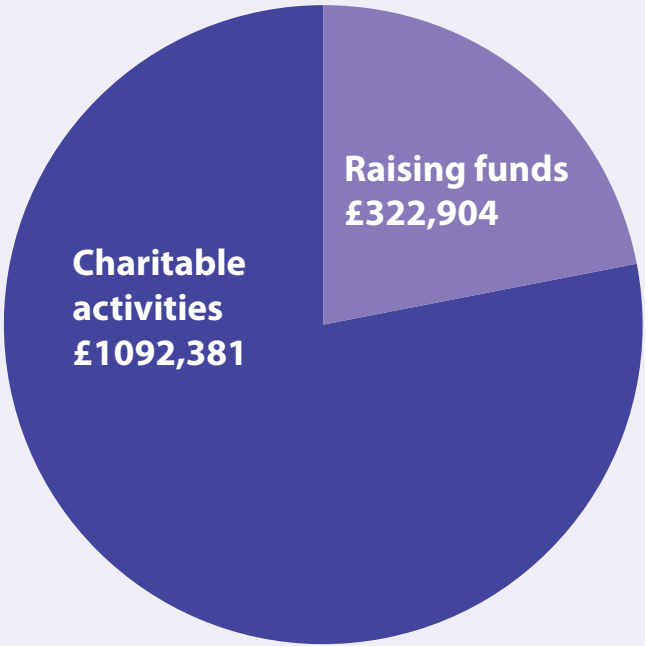


90 counsellors provided online therapy sessions across the UK



670 new children referred in the last 12 months

## Total Expenditure



Total Expenditure £1,415,285



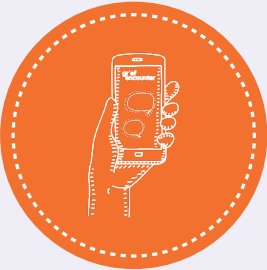
Your donations mean our helpline can continue at an optimal level. We need to provide the right training, induction and ongoing support to advisors working remotely, covering key topics such as safeguarding, understanding trauma and effective resilience building. To help us cope with increased demand and case complexity, we need to continuously recruit and train new advisors. This is vital to ensure we are able to speak to every single person that calls our grieftalk helpline.

Helene, Helpline Manager, Grief Encounter



Grieffalk marked its 2nd year in March 2021, with over 12,000 contacts since launch. Never more vital in its offering, the helpline is able to provide immediate listening services to those suffering with grief, across the UK. At the start of the pandemic, grieffalk was made available to all those in need of bereavement support, including NHS staff and essential workers, faced with grief on a huge scale. The helpline has been invaluable for reaching those in isolation and those who have been unable to access a wider support network. Calls have continued to rise month on month, with a total uplift of 197% since March 2020. This year, particularly, as a direct result of Covid-19, the helpline has seen a significant rise in the complexity of calls received, and therefore the duration of calls too. The grieffalk helpline staff and volunteers have gone above and beyond to meet the needs of our callers. Mainly working remotely, from their living rooms and kitchen tables, our call handlers have faced complex and often heartbreaking calls, all whilst dealing with the impact of the pandemic on their own lives and job roles.

This year Grief Encounter has partnered with corporates including Lloyds Bank and Aviva Insurance, caring for their customers who have experienced bereavement, to provide grieffalk as a signposted support service. With so many people across the UK facing familial bereavement, it is essential that large corporates extend bereavement support to their clients and offer additional care.



**613**  
family liaison calls



**grieffalk**  
touches every  
county across the  
UK



**3132**  
hours open



**over 6000**  
calls, chats and emails



Many callers have been directly affected by the death of a friend or family member, where others have had fears of the virus and of experiencing illness with emotions re-triggered around bereavements. Lockdown has also resulted in a significant increase in feelings of loneliness and/or isolation, anxiety, depression, substance misuse and concerns relating to housing or employment. This increased complexity has resulted in a longer duration time for each call, alongside a need to support clients with a wider range of concerns.

**Helene, Helpline Manager, Grief Encounter**

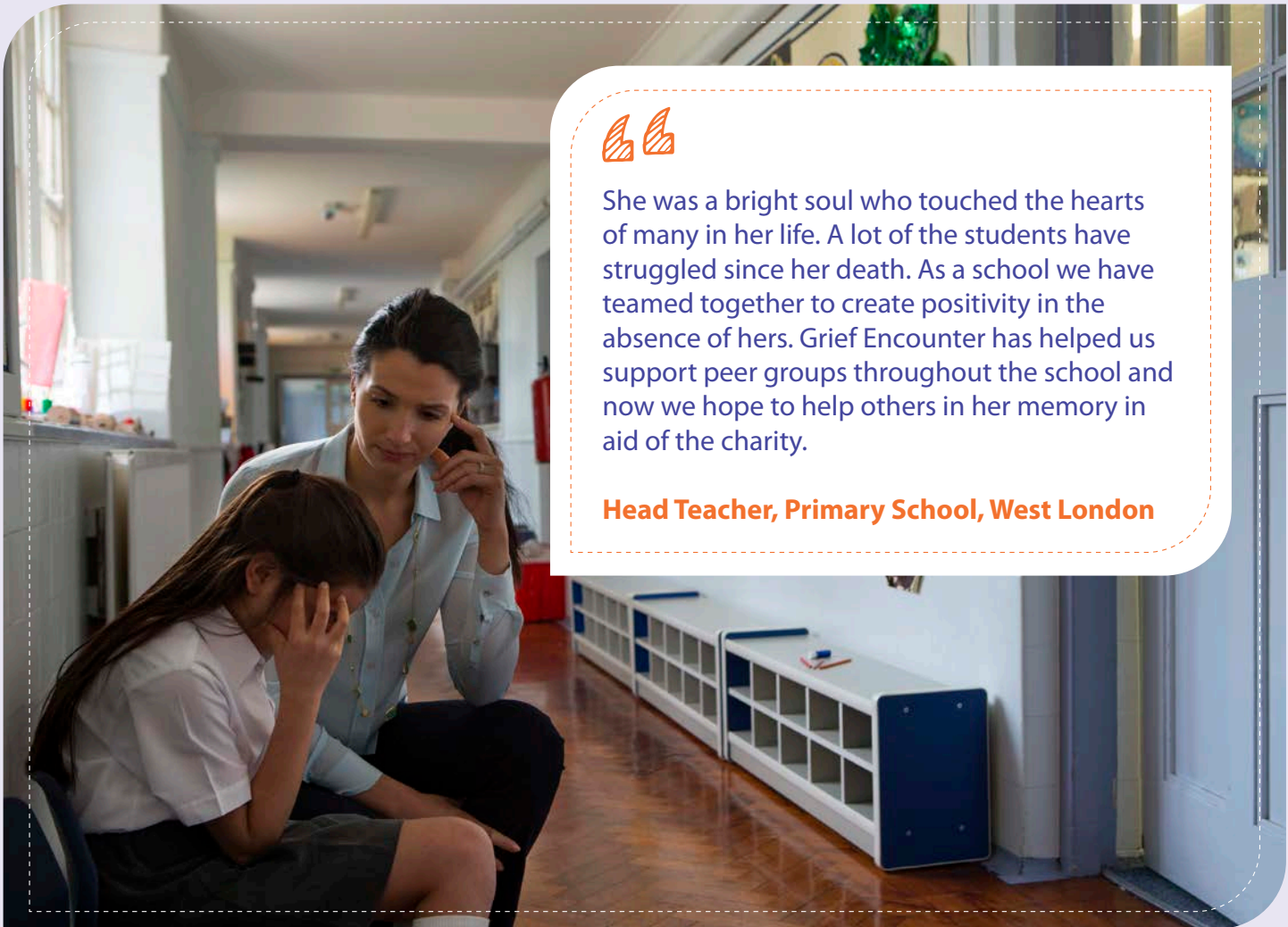


# schools and trauma

Grief Encounter is proud to be able to offer a dedicated Trauma Team, available to respond to humanitarian disasters and critical incidents within our community and further afield, with immediate professional support and training.

This year, our Trauma Team has seen a rise in bereavement by suicide and traumatic grief. In 2021, our expert Clinical Team provided over 140 schools, corporates and sports teams with support following the death of a student, staff member or a student's family member.

At the beginning of the year, the Grief Encounter Trauma Team attended one particular school affected by a student's death by suicide. Working with the teaching staff to plan an assembly to announce the tragedy, our specialist team set up on-site counselling groups and 1:1 sessions for students that felt impacted by the death. Members of the school later fundraised for Grief Encounter, to remember the student, and recognise the importance of the support we had given them following her death.



She was a bright soul who touched the hearts of many in her life. A lot of the students have struggled since her death. As a school we have teamed together to create positivity in the absence of hers. Grief Encounter has helped us support peer groups throughout the school and now we hope to help others in her memory in aid of the charity.

Head Teacher, Primary School, West London

The Grief Encounter Trauma Team can offer remote or in-person support to schools across the UK.

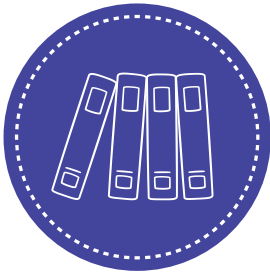


Before we went to Grief Encounter, they internalised it. Talking to a professional on their own terms, and at times when they are ready, via the helpline, has helped them open up. It's lovely for me to see that what has happened doesn't seem to be dominating their life, that they have been helped to remember him in a positive way.

Jackie\*, Mum to Olivia\* and Lucy\*, aged 7 and 12



over 140 schools supported



350 resources sent to schools

\*Some names have been changed to protect identities



# bereavement training



Almost a quarter of employees have faced bereavement in the last year.

Supporting mental health in the workplace has never been more relevant and important. Grief Encounter prides itself in its CPD accredited training programmes, led by our expert Clinical Team and experienced Training Manager, Stacey Hart.

As a leader in the field of best practice child-focused and bespoke bereavement training, our targeted webinars and seminars can be hosted on-site or online, and provide corporate organisations, schools, colleges and professionals with the latest tools and knowledge to support clients, customers, students, and each other effectively.

## Covid-19 Response

Our webinar offering has continued to be targeted towards responding to Covid-19, both for organisations and educational institutions. Remote training has proved successful with our Clinical Team responding to both bespoke training enquiries and offering a programme of pandemic specific courses. Internally, Grief Encounter has made a commitment to supporting its team with robust training and decompressing strategies. Faced with working remotely on services such as our helpline, we are mindful as a charity that our staff and volunteers are not only facing their own struggles but also working with families in unimaginably traumatic situations.



**7.9 m employers**  
experienced bereavement in  
the last 12 months



**£23bn annual cost**  
to the economy due to staff  
bereavement leave



**743 individuals**  
trained by Grief Encounter



**500 attendees**  
to external training



Going back to work after the death of my husband, whilst also navigating a 'new normal' for my children, was a struggle. Knowing my organisation had invested in bereavement training to ensure I felt comfortable in the office, and had a structured way of returning slowly, with mechanisms in place if I was overwhelmed, was extremely comforting. They have made the transition a lot easier, and relieved a lot of the anxieties I had about being supported at work.

**Jane, Office Worker**



# meet our families

## Lily's\* Story



**Lily\*, 15, suffered the bereavement of her brother during Lockdown in 2020. After his death, Lily, whose school was closed, needed support to help her process her grief.**

"Because we were at home all the time, it felt like everything had changed but nothing had at the same time. I didn't want to make Mum and Dad more upset, so I hid how I was feeling. I saw on Facebook there was a helpline I could call at Grief Encounter. I spoke to a really nice lady who just let me talk for as long as I wanted, and answered some of my questions. Since then, I've joined some online teen sessions, where I can meet other kids who know how I feel, and made some new friends who I can chat to online while we are at home. My teacher has also spoken to Grief Encounter, so when I'm back at school, they can help."

## Jackie's Story



**Jackie and her three daughters experienced the death of their husband and father, Jason, in 2020.**

"Due to nationwide restrictions, we experienced difficulty in being with Jason, and although he was able to die at home, we were not able to hold the funeral we wanted. A year later, we're still unable to host a memorial to say goodbye. It's been incredibly hard for me and the girls experiencing grief in isolation. Grief Encounter's online services have helped us all enormously. We have regular support calls with the clinical team, and the girls use online teen groups and online workshops to help process their grief within their own age groups. We're planning to come to Workshops in person when able."

**Alexander's daddy, Simon, died suddenly in 2020 whilst on a family holiday. His sister and his mummy, Natalie, have been supported by Grief Encounter since.**

"My daddy died in August while we were on holiday in Portugal. Though I thought it would be ok and that I wouldn't be too sad about it, a few months later I realised it's not that easy. We started speaking to Grief Encounter over Zoom every week, and it helped us understand what had happened, and start to feel better because we had a safe space to talk. I decided that I wanted to do something to help other children like me, and my dad and I loved running together, so I ran a 5k in aid of Grief Encounter and raised over £68,000! I was inspired by Captain Tom Moore!"



## Alex's Story

**Gloucester cricketer, Tom Smith, experienced the death of his wife Laura and has since been using Grief Encounter South West's services for one of his daughters.**

"Grief Encounter has been a huge part of my family's life, after Laura died 3 years ago I didn't know which way to turn. My eldest daughter Rosie was struggling at school trying to deal with losing her mum, but she had 12 months of play therapy with Grief Encounter South West and it's made a huge impact on our lives. Grief is so isolating, but realising there are other families out there in a similar position has been hugely important and instrumental in helping me deal with my grief."



## Tom's story



# fundraising and patronage

This year should have been one to see us celebrate our 4th bi-annual Gala Dinner, a variety night, our annual Ladies Lunch, marathons, treks and many other critical fundraising events. Our small but dedicated and talented fundraising team have worked with unwavering positivity and passion, despite a constantly changing landscape, to adapt and be creative in their efforts to raise essential funds, allowing us to continue offering open-access support.

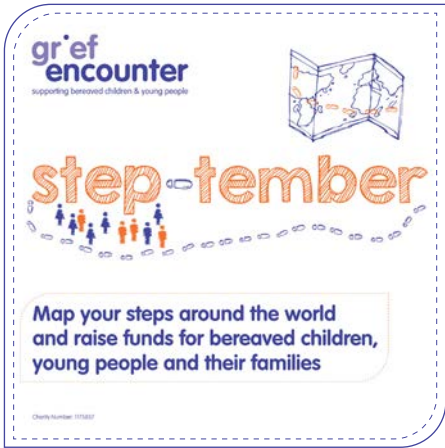
This year, standout moments have been our first ever Forget-Me-Not Walk, our much loved annual Golf Days, the incredible 4 course golf challenge, Virtual London Marathon Team and for the first time since 2019, #teamgriefencounter at the first in-person run – London Landmarks Half Marathon. We have been lucky enough to partner with organisations for Charity of The Year Partnerships, been awarded £100,000 from Barclays as part of their emergency Covid-19 funding and worked with families to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds in memory of loved ones.



**NEW!**  
The Forget-Me-Not Walk



**NEW!**  
4-Course Golf Challenge



**NEW!**  
September



**over £200,000**  
donated from The Stephen Okrent Foundation



This year we have been proud to host the Forget-Me-Not Walk 2020, our much loved annual Golf Days, for the first time since 2019, and welcome new team members to #teamgriefencounter at the first in-person run – London Landmark Half Marathon

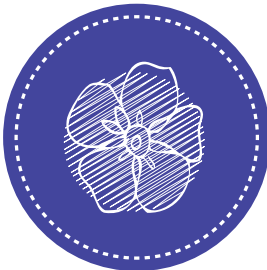
## patronage

Our Patronage Programme, which has grown to over 50 patrons, is vital to our fundraising model and gives us the confidence to plan for the year ahead, knowing we are able to continue reaching as many bereaved children and young people as we can. As a patron, your commitment, your donation, your loyalty and your passion to help us makes a real difference to a bereaved child.

“Being a Patron of Grief Encounter is a true honour. The support delivered via the clinical services team and the grieftalk helpline allow so many children and their families to get the direct help they need. I couldn’t think of a more worthwhile cause.” Silver Patron



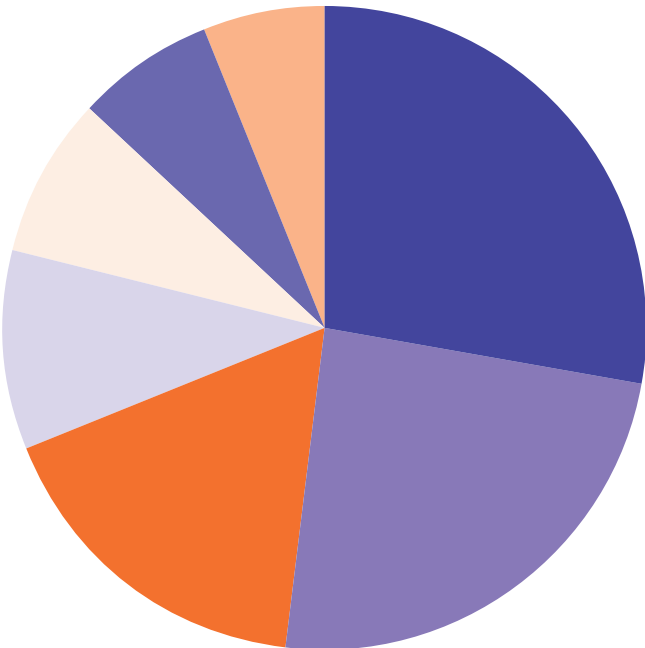
**awarded £100,000**  
Barclays Covid-19 Emergency Relief Fund



**an incredible £172,598**  
raised by over 300 Forget-Me-Not walkers

## Fundraising Income

Income Total	£1,869,363
Trusts & Grants	28%
Events and challenges	24%
General	17%
Patronage	10%
Corporate giving	8%
Gift Aid	7%
Grief Encounter South West	6%





# grief encounter south west



It has been an incredibly tough year for our clients with the enforced isolation and Covid contributing to deaths and also interfering with 'normal' grieving.

We have had a huge increase in the amount of Family Support required to support families bereaved during lockdown. We have had to quickly convert to online provision of group interventions as well as one to one when we couldn't see clients face to face. Therapists have done a remarkable job in adapting to this way of working but found it far more challenging than in the room, keeping young children engaged and within camera

range! Perhaps the biggest challenge as Centre Director has been the number of more complex cases with higher risk levels such as self-harm given increased pressures and reduced outlets for difficult feelings. We have more cases of suicide with traumatised families, added outreach, professional support plus work on initiatives. In these strange times this has included helping families to manage the surge in social media messaging and give themselves permission to find the kind of space with their grief which suicide in 'normal times' often does proffer. I currently am taking increased calls about covid-related grandparent loss and do a lot of support conversations and consideration of managing the many manifestations of grief, especially managing the understandable anger at the nebulous covid enemy.

Karmen Losey, Clinical Services Director, Grief Encounter South West



797 1-1 sessions  
which is a 30% increase on last year



95 families supported  
which includes 49 new families



£10,000 donation  
from The Crematorium and Memorial Group



a local school  
raised a fantastic £5,438.75  
rowing, climbing, running  
and mental puzzling



wainhomes  
hosted a charity Golf Day  
and raised a fantastic £8,000



Many clients have expressed huge relief in having us here throughout this period, with care, support and knowledge. A Mum of three children where Dad died in lockdown has faced enormous challenges and is adamant that she would not have got through it without us. We very much hope our clients will be able to come back to the Centre in the Autumn and benefit from what a teenaged client called 'putting down my grief here'. Meantime we are endeavouring to simultaneously manage expansion to meet the levels of need both now when restrictions lift further and more cases come to the surface.





# standing out

**As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this year we have experienced the additional challenge of having what was once a taboo subject in the media, death and grief, to being a topic that is saturated. We have been able to capitalise on this by extending professional and expert commentary on national and individual grief, suffered as a consequence of the volume of death experienced due to Covid-19. We have also taken the opportunity to lobby government, through the media, to highlight how restrictions affect bereaved families.**

Our media presence continues to grow, with Dr Shelley Gilbert MBE, alongside members of our Clinical Team, featuring across radio, broadcast and print publications.



Winning the Good Morning Britain Volunteer of the Year award was one of the most special and moving moments of my life. It is an honour and a privilege to be recognised for doing something I am so passionate about and that I truly love. It was completely unexpected but the best surprise and way to end 2020!

**Renu Dewan**



## The Forget-Me-Not Walk

We were proud to have been shortlisted in the Third Sector 2021 Awards for the first ever Forget-Me-Not Walk. The national walk was nominated in the 'Best Fundraising Campaign' category.

Head of Fundraising, Louise Scott, also delivered a webinar for Blackbaud's 'Digital Future' event, discussing Grief Encounter's digital evolution and outdoor fundraising event strategy. This was also published in Blackbaud's Digital Future E-book.



## 1 Million Minutes 2020

**In December 2020, Grief Encounter was excited to be asked to once again partner with ITV's 1 Million Minutes campaign in association with Good Morning Britain. This year was to look a little different with remote activities and Covid-safe events taking place online. On 17th December, Grief Encounter's Children's Choir went Live with Ben Shephard and Kate Garraway, alongside our patron Katherine Jenkins, to surprise Renu Dewan, Grief Encounter's Volunteer Co-ordinator, with the prestigious 1 Million Minutes Volunteer of The Year Award!**

Grief Encounter was also able to share the stories of a few of the families we support on Good Morning Britain, highlighting the important work we do.

With a reach of over 20 million viewers around the world, Grief Encounter appreciates the support ITV gives them throughout this campaign, and as a result of 1 Million Minutes 2020, we received over 1,200 applications to volunteer with us.



## Funeral Restrictions Lifting

Throughout the pandemic, the government has been criticised on restrictions both in hospitals and for funerals, limiting the number of guests/family members allowed to visit those dying, and then attend religious memorials. In March 2021, Grief Encounter worked closely with the Daily Mail to raise awareness of the importance of family members being able to host and attend a funeral for their loved ones, and how lifting restrictions on mourners would benefit those suffering grief. Our campaign was successful and on 17th May, restrictions were lifted.

**children's grief  
awareness week UK**  
18<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021



## Children's Grief Awareness Week

**This year, we knew CGAW would feel different as we took our awareness week online. Isolation has never felt more relevant, and we wanted to highlight to the nation that although this was a new feeling for most, as a result of the pandemic – both physical and mental – for bereaved children and young people, this is their 'normal'.**

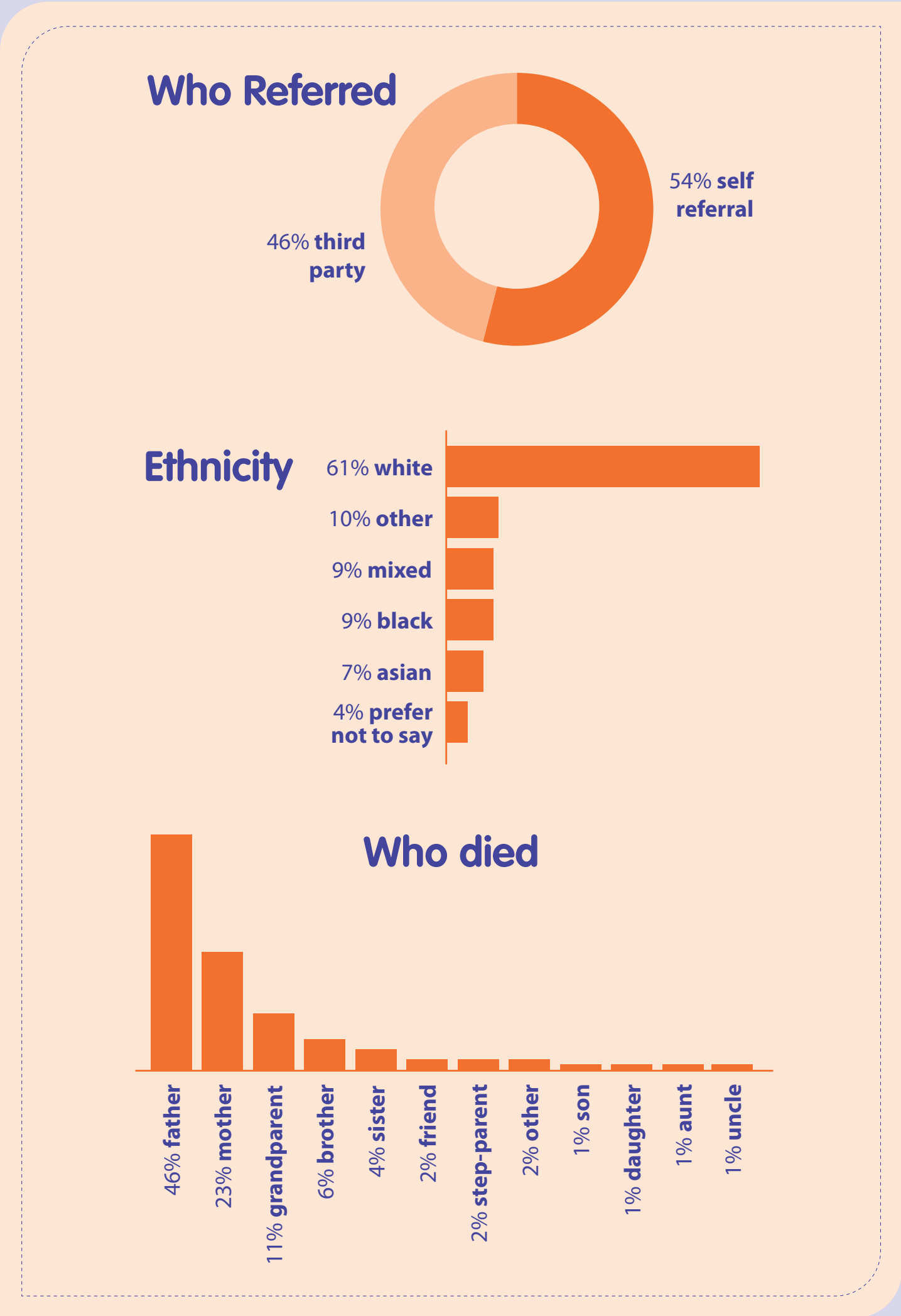
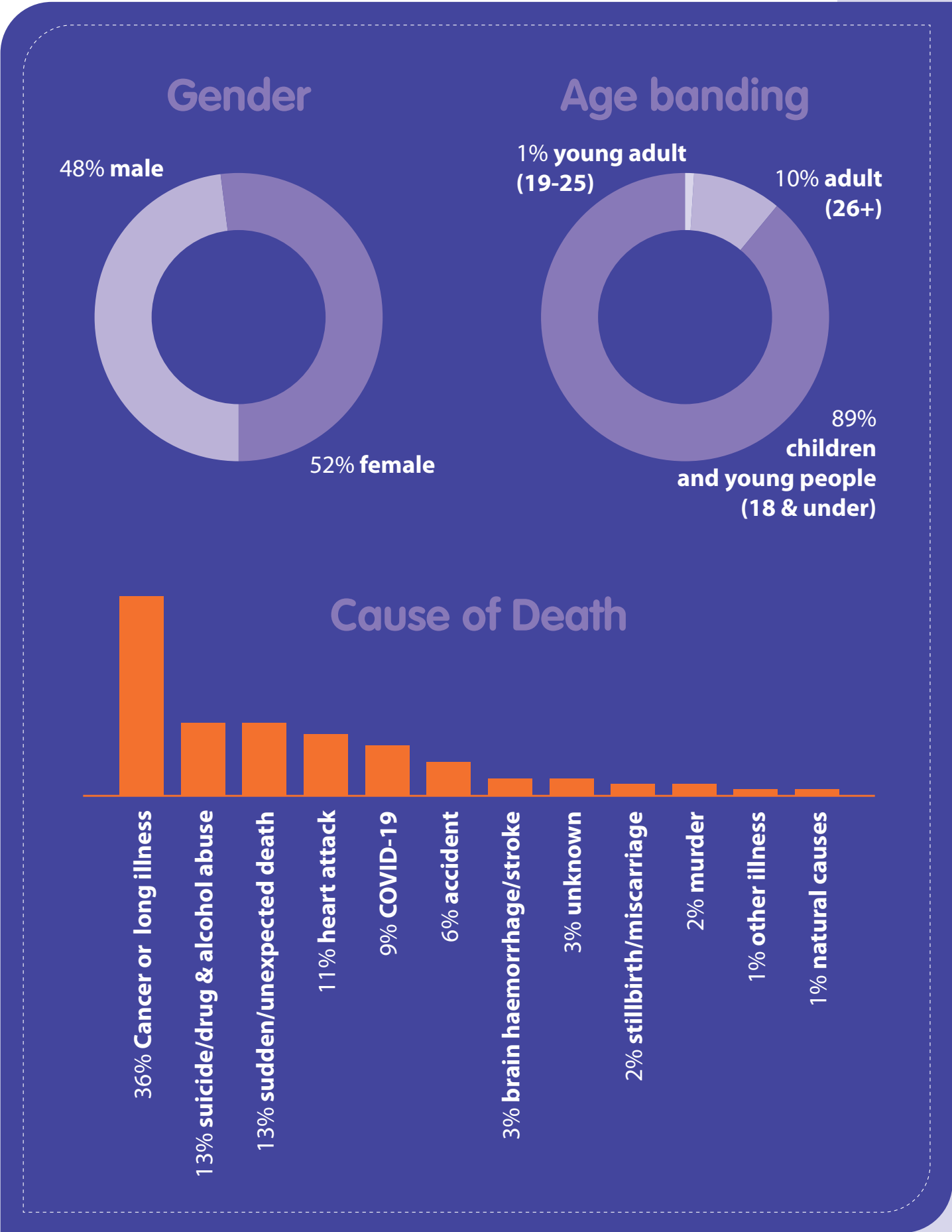
Working with mental health advocate Hussain Manawer, and our Young Ambassador Luke Brookner, we produced a spoken word film, 'I Got Through', centred on how missed moments shape a young person's grief journey, but with help – they get through.

The film, nominated for several awards, received over 7,000 views on Youtube, national coverage and garnered significant press interest.

We also partnered with international vocal expert and well-known beatbox artist, Reeps One, to film a remote Masterclass, entitled Lessons Learned. Reeps met with a group of children supported by Grief Encounter and discussed what communication means to them, and how they express their grief with their voices. Reeps taught some beatboxing moves, whilst the children schooled him on what it means to live with grief.



# our year in numbers





# the year ahead

We had anticipated a rise in demand for our services last fiscal year, but have been overwhelmed with the actual increase in bereaved families needing support. The amount of people touched by grief will only continue to grow in the UK, and so must we as a charity. The year ahead is one for us to return to our very own 'new normal', coming back to some face-to-face interaction both for therapeutic events, and for fundraising.

Despite our Clinical Team working above and beyond to ensure we continue to offer free and essential services, our Fundraising Team has still been faced with cancelled events and Covid-19 related issues for in-person activities. As we look ahead, we are confident that as the world adapts, and our strong outdoor events strategy shifts to in-person events, we will be able to host a Gala Dinner in 2022, giving us a much needed boost for the future. We also look forward to seeing all the innovative ways in which our loyal supporters join #teamgriefencounter to raise vital funds for us, in person!

We are continuing to grow our Patronage Programme, encouraging multi-year pledges of support, and extend relationships in the corporate sector to allow us to continue to reach all of the families, across the UK, that will continue to need our help in their 'new normal', living alongside grief.

Looking ahead, as well as meeting the demands for our services, we are also aiming to extend the impact of our direct and indirect services by:

- Returning to some face-to-face therapeutic services and fundraising events
- Extending our bereavement by suicide programme, responding to the rise in deaths in this area, and ensuring a comprehensive grief support package is in place for families affected
- Continuing to build upon our relationships with corporate organisations and Charity of The Year Partnerships



# thank you



We cannot thank our loyal supporters enough for their continued support over the last 12 months, support which has enabled us to continue offering the best possible services to bereaved families across the UK.

Your generosity and kindness has provided a lifeline for those who so desperately need a light, in the darkest times of their lives. For those struggling, Grief Encounter has given hope, and that hope, with your help, has spread across the UK in what has been unprecedented times for bereaved families.

You continue to inspire us every day with your innovative ways of fundraising, your care for our organisation and your loyalty to keeping us open-access, for every family who need us.

**grief doesn't stop, neither will we.**

Thank you for standing by our side.

## Who's who at Grief Encounter

**Founder, Clinical Trustee and Lifetime President**  
Dr Shelley Gilbert MBE

**Chief Executive**  
Richard Fogelman

**Director of Clinical Services**  
Liz Dempsey

**Head of Fundraising**  
Louise Scott

**Head of Marketing**  
Anna Hoffman

**Head of PR**  
Samantha Fogelman

**Grief Encounter Board of Trustees**  
Harold Gittelmon (Chair)  
Dr Shelley Gilbert MBE  
Tony Beare  
Pam Firth  
Delia Goldring  
Andy Hart  
Bobby Lane  
Bernie Myers  
Michael Peen  
Gary Sacks





# gr'ef encounter

supporting bereaved children & young people

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**London Clinical Centre: Crystal House Daws Lane Mill Hill London NW7 4ST**  
**Bristol Clinical Centre: 27 Lilymead Avenue Bristol BS4 2BY**

**020 8371 8455 • [contact@griefencounter.org.uk](mailto:contact@griefencounter.org.uk) • [griefencounter.org.uk](http://griefencounter.org.uk)**



Charity Number: 1175837

**gr'eftalk helpline**  
**0808 802 0111**