

# gr'ef encounter

supporting bereaved children & young people



## Impact Report 2021/22



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## Our Chair of Trustees and Founder



Another year has passed us by, and one which had us continuing to adjust our ways of working into the second year of the pandemic. There was a significant increase in demand from 2020-1, with children and their families experiencing prolonged and more complex grief reactions in the face of uncertain and challenging times.

As always, grief continues to live with those who have experienced bereavement, and we have ensured that we have stayed close, for all of those who need us. Despite the challenges, we moved forward positively, knowing that what we do makes a lasting impact on bereaved families' lives. With you by our sides, we have risen to meet demand, growing, and expanding our reach to support even more children and young people, and with the help we have received from you, we know we can continue to make a difference. Thank you.

**Harold Gittelmon**, Chair of Trustees



With Grief Encounter experiencing such an increase in requests for bereavement support across the UK, the ongoing challenge that we now face is being there for when families need us most with our specialist resources and Family Programme. We need to be ready to manage the shockwaves grief has on us all in our communities, our workplaces, and our schools.

Grief Encounter will continue to provide professional support and give families a chance to connect with others who understand them, whilst listening, learning, and responding to what bereaved children and young people really need. Together, each and every one of us has the opportunity to help build a more positive future, re-shaping lives.

Thank you for your ongoing support this year.

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

# Our Year in Numbers

**Grief Encounter is one of the UK's leading childhood bereavement charities, offering free, accessible support to children, young people, and their families across the UK, who have experienced the death of someone close.**

In the last year, we have seen a huge increase in calls to our free national helpline, grietalk. Referrals for children to receive support from our specialist therapeutic services have increased by over half, with at least 50% of those needing face-to-face, clinical intervention, and a staggering 173% increase in the number of families supported through initial calls from our expert team of advisors.

## Key Achievements

### New Ways to Help:

We have continued to explore new ways we can reach young people and their families to provide support when they need it. By collaborating with The Stephen Okrent Shared Grief Foundation, Grief Encounter has structured new and targeted support programmes centred on wellbeing for children, young people, and their families. This includes yoga, mindfulness, and sleep therapies, designed to provide a 360 approach to bereavement support. Going into a new year, we will be using our brand new Teen Journal, created with the Okrent Foundation, and working hard to working hard to create a targeted Sleep Support Programme, unique to Grief Encounter, which will benefit children, young people and their families in so many ways.

### Virtual Support Groups:

Grief Encounter launched new online support groups to help connect bereaved families across the country. The online groups have opened new avenues of support for grieving parents, which in turn benefits the children and young people being supported at home. This year, we established a widow and widowers' group, set up to mitigate against the isolation caused by bereavement for surviving parents. We received excellent feedback from all participants and the groups have been incredibly well received amongst families.

### BBC Lifeline Appeal:

A key achievement this year was securing our first BBC Lifeline Appeal which helped us to raise vital funds and increase brand awareness. This widely publicised appeal, hosted by radio and TV personality, Roman Kemp, showcased our national helpline, grietalk and families that Grief Encounter have supported over the last few years. Huge thanks to those who took part, for sharing their stories with us, and the UK.

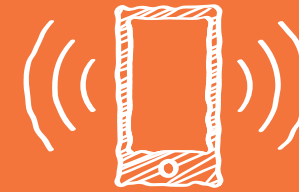
over  
3,500

children and young  
people supported via Grief  
Encounter's professional  
services



71%

increase in calls to our free,  
national helpline, grietalk



Over  
4,000

emails asking for  
support from our trained  
grietalk volunteers



429

professionals trained in  
best practice bereavement  
support for their clients/  
organisations/schools



55%

increase in children  
and young people  
referred for further  
Grief Encounter support



5,902

specialist resources  
sent out



37%

increase in views to  
online grief guides



46%

increase in traffic to our  
website



41%

rise in face-to-face  
activities



68%

of all referrals in 2021 –  
2022 related to the  
death of mum ' or dad



10%

rise in followers on our  
social media channels,  
reaching more  
engaged  
communities

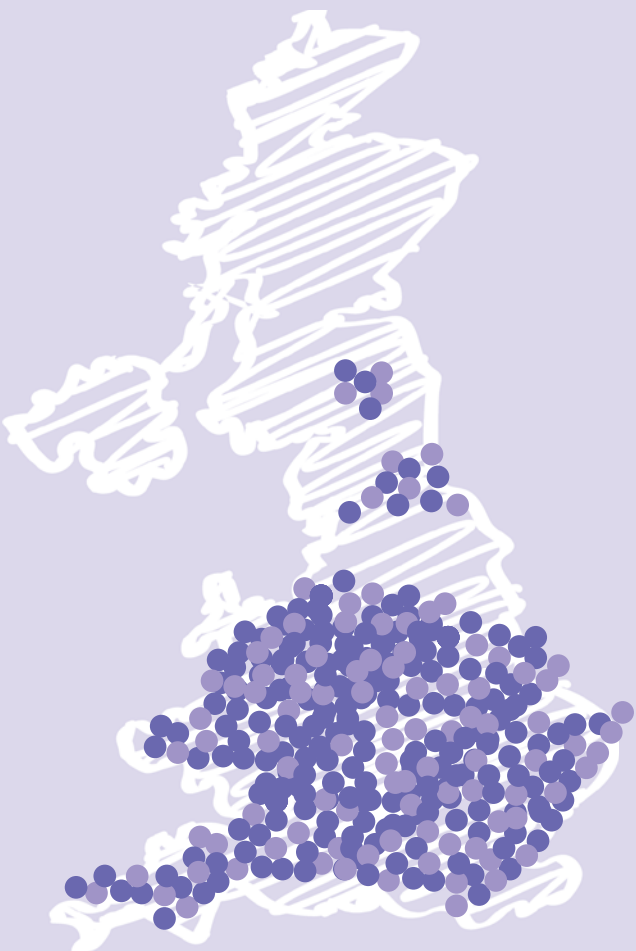
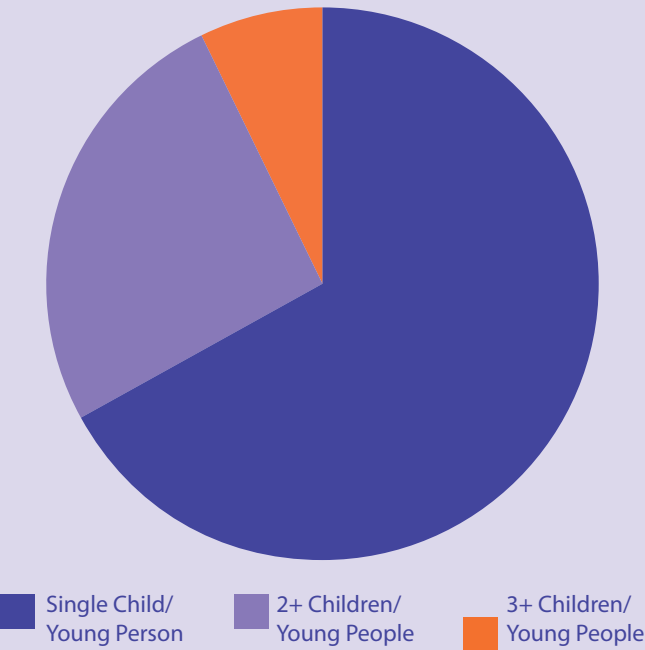




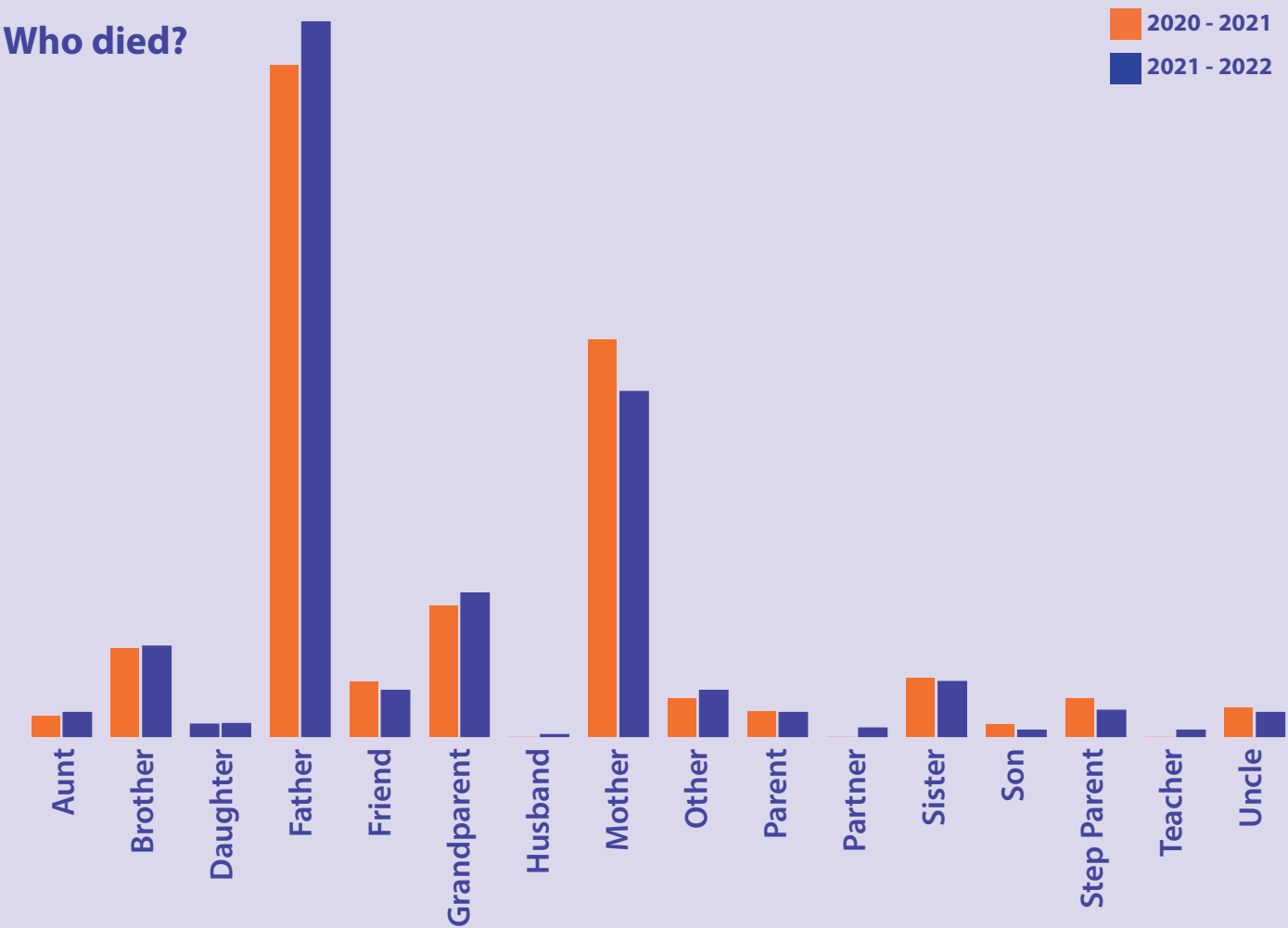
# Our Reach

This year, more than ever, we have been able to help children, young people and their families, from across all areas of the UK. We hope to do more over the next years, increasing reach and accessibility to all of those who need us.

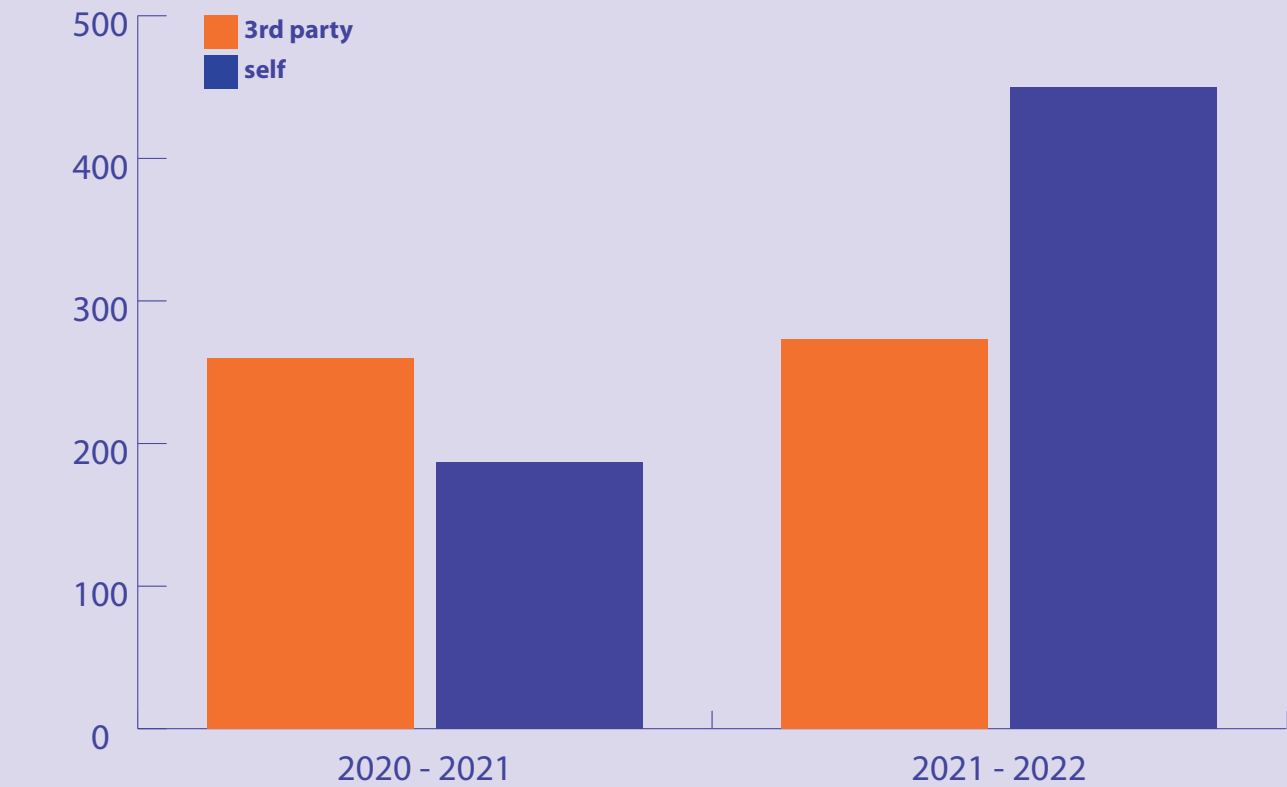
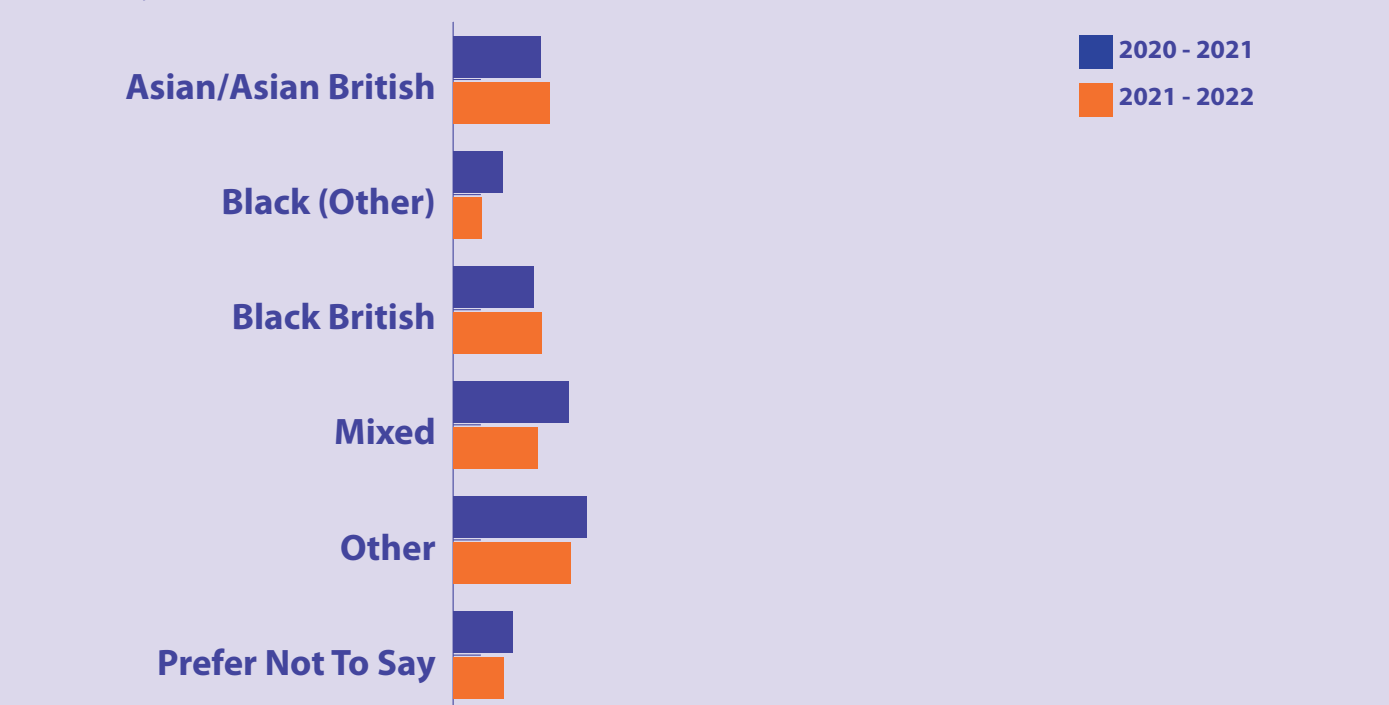
Number of Children/Young People per Referral



Who died?



Ethnicity



# Direct Services

Throughout 2021, England experienced further lockdown periods, which resulted in delays to our face-to-face transitioning, pausing workshops and 1:1 counselling in person, and continuing our online therapeutic offering.

Despite forms of restrictions being in place, we are proud to have delivered 3,478 online therapy sessions and a residential retreat, supporting children, young people, individuals and their families via in-person therapeutic activities, online e-counselling, telephone, video and web-chat services.

This year has also seen a significant increase in safeguarding concerns, both from Grief Encounter implementing better processes, and due to more concerns from referrals; and need for early intervention in many cases. By becoming involved earlier with families who are experiencing bereavement in stressed circumstances, such as financial difficulties, circumstantial issues and more, means we can help families before they are in need of help from external agencies.



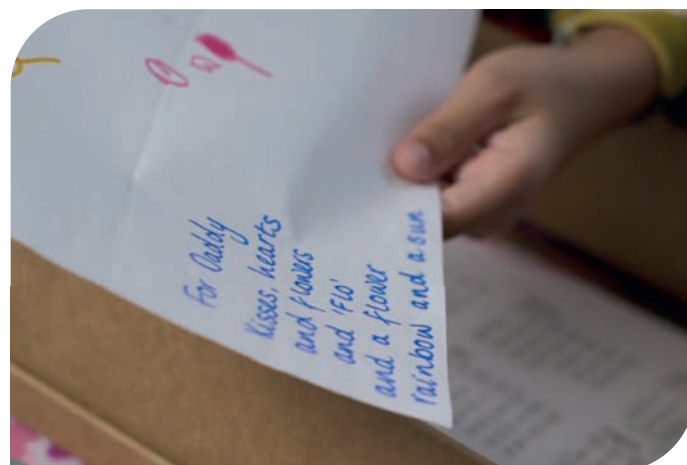
**By referring one of our families to Grief Encounter for early bereavement support, meant that they were able to make the necessary changes to keep a child safe, thereby avoiding escalation.**

Social Worker, Bristol



## Evidence shows that early intervention can prevent young people entering the youth offending services.

Our family programmes team have continued to offer a number of opportunities for children, young people and their families to come together to undertake new activities, therapy based workshops and residential experiences.



Our family programmes team has continued to offer a number of opportunities for children, young people and their families to come together to undertake new activities, therapy based workshops and residential experiences.

**Fun Days**  
**109**  
**individuals**



**Workshops**  
**82**  
**individuals**



**Residential**  
**38**  
**individuals**



**Groups counselling**  
**15**  
**families**



Levels of required support rose across the board this year, with an increase of

**71%**

in calls to our helpline, an increase in safeguarding response due to complexity of cases, and an overall sense of urgency in delivering therapies.



**Usually, it's not just the bereavement that causes the individual to call us; it's that it's the last straw for families living with all sort of difficulties. It might be the family do not know where to turn for financial support following a death, or they may be in crisis and need professional intervention. Whatever it is they want listening support for, we are there to help.**



Nick, Grietalk call handler



# Grieffalk

To accommodate the growth of the helpline and ensure we could continue to service the number of calls, 2 grieffalk training courses were delivered, resulting in the successful recruitment of 20 Volunteer Advisors. Alongside new Advisors, increased funding has enabled us to welcome a new Helpline Manager, Coordinator, and three paid advisors.

Calls

2710



Web chats

1126



Emails

3640



Initial calls with a be-reaved family, from a qualified counsellor –

1540



Total

11,418

enquiries



173%

increase in number of family liaison emotional support and triaging calls completed.

To ensure we can accommodate the number of people who ask for help, the clinical team has embarked on a significant recruitment campaign. Staff, contractors, and volunteers have been the focus of this campaign, which aims to improve access to GE’s full-service offering.



Jamie\*, 16, suffered the bereavement of his sister in 2020;

“I didn’t feel like I could talk to anyone in my immediate family about how I was feeling, so I hid it. I saw an advert for grieffalk on Instagram and called them after school one day. I spoke to a man who let me say whatever I needed to, in a safe space. Since I spoke to the helpline, they’ve invited me to online teen sessions, where I can meet other kids who know how I feel. It’s helped me feel less alone, less isolated and given me a place I feel like I can be just me and say what I want to without judgement.”

\*All names have been changed for confidentiality purposes



# Our Impact

## Meet David & Lucy

David and Lucy experienced the death of their wife and mum to a short illness in 2019. Becoming a lone parent, David found his experience to be isolating, and left him with his children struggling to cope with the death of their mother. He reached out to Grief Encounter for tailored therapy to suit his youngest daughter Lucy, and she began 12 months of creative support, including art and drama therapy designed to help her move forward in her grief journey positively.

### Lucy, aged 9

"When I first started coming to Grief Encounter, I had lots of feelings I didn't understand. My mummy had died, and other children would ask me questions. At night I would find it hard to fall asleep and have nightmares. At school it was hard to concentrate, and I was angry. I was feeling sad and confused and was missing my mummy all the time. When I went to Grief Encounter I did things which helped me remember mummy and think about ways I could be happy when I thought about her – some of things we did were painting memory stones and doing sand kits.

Slowly I began to find it easier to talk with the other children at workshops and groups about mummy, especially because they knew how I was feeling. Now I like to talk about different memories, and I can ask daddy any questions I have. Grief Encounter has changed things for me. I feel much happier and positive about the future."



### David

"Following Jen's death, we felt we were in the darkest moments of our lives, and I was struggling with guidance on how to move forward with my children, who were experiencing issues at home and at school. My sister made me aware of Grief Encounter, and I finally reached out for help four months after Jen died. Lucy was very withdrawn after her mum died and wasn't vocal about her feelings. After an initial assessment, Grief Encounter recommended she went on to do art and drama therapies, with the team matching her needs with a therapist who she would connect with and activities they knew she would enjoy. As a parent, it gave me huge confidence to know she was understood and being helped in the right way for her.

As a parent, the charity has also helped me to learn how to cope with my own grief alongside the children's. They have given me tools and techniques I can use to encourage them to open up to me, start conversations and help me understand. I'm so grateful for their time and commitment to us as a family."



# Fundraising & Patrons' Programme



**We would like to thank all the individual fundraisers, corporate supporters and patrons who have chosen to champion Grief Encounter and fund our work this year. The increased support that we have received from our growing numbers of corporate partners, and patronage programme, and across our face-to-face events, has been vital in enabling us to meet the needs of bereaved children, young people, and their families. I would like to extend a special thank you to our event sponsors, charity of the year partnerships and every single person who has set, and smashed, a challenge for us this year."**

Lou Scott, Head of Fundraising

This year we are proud to have met our goal of expanding the fundraising team and appointing a dedicated Partnerships Manager, focused on fostering corporate relationships and supporting growth in our partnership opportunities. We have seen a significant increase in the number and range of corporate supporters for Grief Encounter, from one-off donations, sponsorship of events, taking part in Grief Encounter campaigns and challenge events, donating % profit from sales, organising bespoke fundraising events to raising awareness as a company.

Grief Encounter Impact Report 2021/22

Together, our corporate partners and supporters have funded the equivalent of:

**5,327** hours of 1:1 counselling for bereaved children and young people

Face-to-Face counselling for more than **100** bereaved families

**72%** increase in the number of traditional corporate partners this year

**40%** increase in the number of followers on LinkedIn

**"Without our committed steadfast supporters, we would not have been able to help the growing number of children, young people and their families who need our support now more than ever. You have made a huge difference to the lives of bereaved children and young people."** Lou Scott

**Alexander's Daddy died suddenly in 2020. In his memory, Alex planned a 5k run, fundraising for Grief Encounter. He raised £70,000.**



**I raised money for Grief Encounter because they have been supporting me, my sister and my mum. Though I thought it would be ok and that I wouldn't be too sad about it in a few months, I now realise that it's not that easy. Therefore, I want to raise money so they can continue to support children like me.**

Alex, age 10



## Fundraising Event Highlights:

Go-karting at Rye House Hertfordshire,  
raising **£35,000**



19 teams at our inaugural Clay Pigeon event  
at Holland and Holland, raising **£65,139**



288 golfers over 3 golf days at The Shire  
raising **£40,319**



72-hole London Golf challenge with 17  
golfers raised **£43,500**



370 walkers took part in our 2021 Forget Me  
Not Walk raising **£38,000**



Henry's Townhouse in Marylebone –  
26 guests raised more than **£30,000**



115 people raised money for us by doing  
a Trek or a challenge



Big Give Christmas Campaign raised more  
than **£60,000**





# Events in Aid of Grief Encounter

Quintessentially Bike Ride – Penrith to The Cotswolds raised **£82,000**



ART HUB LDN – 70 pieces of Art from 12 London based Artists raised more than **£5,000**



Highgate Golf Club extended Charity of the Year partnership and raised **£25,000**



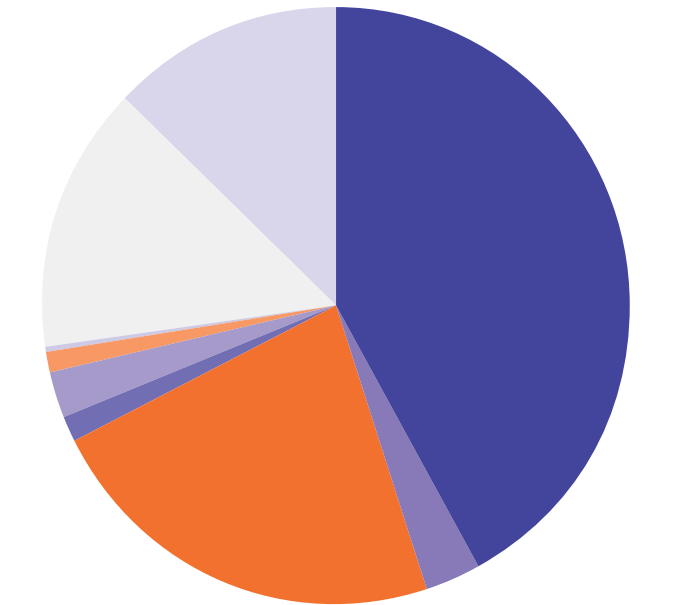
Stephen Okrent Foundation has raised over **£250,000** to date



**285** trust and grant applications written and submitted

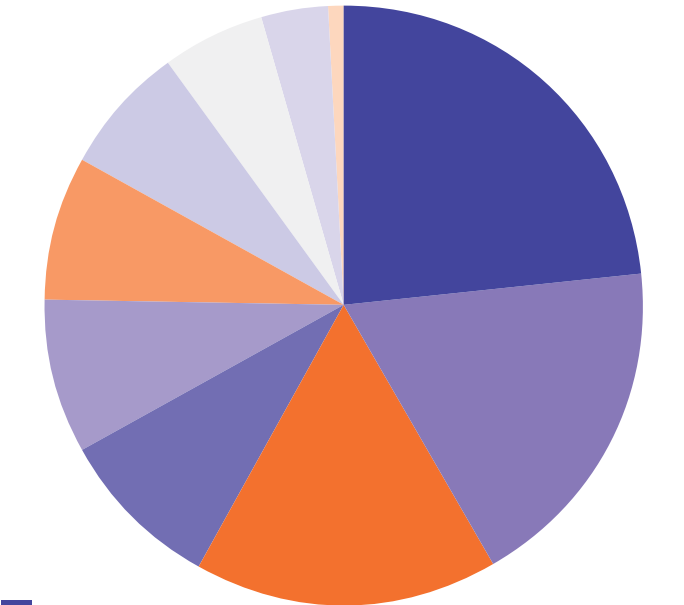


Clinical Expenditure '21- 22



|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Clinical Staffing                      | £417,038.73 |
| Workshops, groups, funday, residential | £29,821.12  |
| Counselling                            | £223,830.34 |
| Training                               | £13,610.50  |
| Grief Relief Kit costs                 | £24,801.32  |
| Clinical materials                     | £12,062.61  |
| Research & Evaluation                  | £1,090.00   |
| Helpline                               | £143,390.05 |
| Marketing/Website & PR/COMMS           | £125,702.64 |
| Total Clinial Exp                      | £991,347.31 |

Income '21-22



|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| Trusts and Grants    | £382,908   |
| Corporate            | £296,940   |
| Events               | £269,562   |
| Patronage            | £142,154   |
| Treks and Challenges | £136,152   |
| GE South West        | £127,604   |
| Donations            | £114,246   |
| Community            | £88,693    |
| Gift Aid             | £60,337    |
| Other                | £10,324    |
| TOTAL                | £1,632,192 |



“When my sister-in-law died, the pain and devastation it caused our families was immeasurable. She left behind her beautiful new baby daughter and her son, loving husband and family and friends. Processing this grief and trying to articulate my emotions has been particularly difficult for me and still is. That’s why i showed my support in my own way and decided to fundraise for Grief Encounter by running The London Marathon. It was one of the most rewarding and challenging things I have ever done, and it meant the world to me to give back to an amazing charity that supported my family in our hardest days.”

Dan, London Marathon Participant,  
Team Grief Encounter



“Events, challenges, and third-party fundraising remains critical to our survival, and to be able to plan confidently for the coming years, ensuring we can continue to be an open-access charity. Huge thanks to all our supporters for their creative, innovative, and amazing achievements in their fundraising this year! From marathons to cycling – You are all part of team Grief Encounter, and we can’t thank you enough.”

Claire Richman, Treks and Challenges  
Manager, Grief Encounter







# Grief Encounter South West



We have worked hard this year to build on the newer, hybrid way of working at Grief Encounter South West, transitioning in and out of face-to-face, and I am so proud that we have been able to reach almost 1000 1:1 counselling sessions, 600 of which have been in person. It has been a real pleasure to see the value that families have been able to gain from our support in this difficult time, especially those whose bereavement happened during and due to Covid. The longer lasting impact that we are looking to create is so apparent in families we are supporting, helping them to move forwards in their grief. Credit for this must go to the incredible therapists who have continued, even as they struggled themselves, to provide a highly consistent and caring service to clients in the South West



Karmen Losey, GESW Clinical Services Director

## Clinical Highlights

First GESW Family Residential



172 new referrals



882 1:1 Sessions - 2/3 face-face sessions



3 Fun Days



5 Group Workshops



Increased clinical staff and geographical reach



51% increase in assessments YOY



143% increase in referrals YOY



58% increase in families supported



Doubled staffing to support demand



£10,000 from Stuart Cox and the team at the Crematorium and Memorial group

Challenges and Treks raised over £15,000

Over £6,000 - Sodbury Slog Team

£1,400 - Lands' end to John O Groats

£8,533 - Team of 3 London Marathon runners

£2,800 - Avon Caravan and Motorhome Club

£1,381.77 - Bath University Charity Challenge

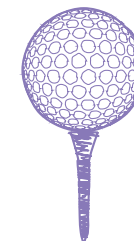
£3,259 - UWE Charity Challenge

£15,000 - Wainhomes golf day

£16,409.50 from Nick and Paul at Exacta Technology who hosted a tennis fundraising challenge over 24 hours

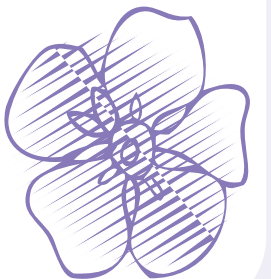
### Event Highlight

GESW Inaugural Golf Day In July 11 teams took to the course for a sunny day of golf including competitions, raising a fantastic £3,400



### Event Highlight

Forget Me Not Walk £5,500 raised



"It was amazing connecting with other families on the Residential, especially after such a long period of isolation. What affected me most was seeing all the children sharing their own experiences. I feel like now I have seen that we are not alone in our feelings, I can better understand and respond to my children's grief, thanks to Grief Encounter"

Bereaved Mother of 2, attended GESW Residential 2021.



# Standing Out

The news agenda this year has continued to feature Covid-19, and associated with that, living with significant change and bereavement in unprecedented circumstances. Our focus has continued to be to increase brand awareness, signposting grieving families and bereaved individuals to our service offering. We have worked hard to increase ease of use across our website and social media channels, so families, schools and professionals can access our free grief guides, grietalk helpline information and further resources.

**Children's Grief Awareness Week**, now in its 7th year, centred on #sayingthewords this year. We aimed to encourage bereaved children to talk about their feelings and break the taboo of talking about death. Featuring 5 children we support, we launched a series of films showing how they express themselves to help process their grief. From cooking or drawing, to singing and running, the children showed that they say the words in their own way. The films received over 17,000 views across social media and online.

**Dr Shelley Gilbert MBE**, our Founder and Lifetime President, launched her brand new griefbook update this year, as part of our efforts to give children and young people more access to resources and support, when they need it most. An award-winning resource for bereaved children, the updated griefbook, which has been changed and added to in line with feedback from children and young people who have used the resource, gives creative and practical advice, and gives children a place to express their grief in a safe and structured way. Dr Gilbert appeared on 6 national radio stations and had 2 TV appearances talking about the book and Grief Encounter.

This year was our sixth year taking part in ITV's Good Morning Britain's amazing social action campaign – **1 Million Minutes**. The campaign aims to end loneliness in the UK, and with our participation, loneliness caused by bereavement, by asking volunteers to pledge time to support charities. Featuring several families we support, we were delighted to gain such brilliant exposure on daytime television, plus gain over 800 new volunteer applications to support the charity. Volunteers are vital to our organisation, helping us to reach out to institutions to let them know about our services, forming committees for our fundraising events, taking part in regional walks and family days, and more.



10%  
increase in  
social media  
following

83,000  
web visits

The Grief Encounter logo, which consists of a central box with the text 'grief encounter' inside, surrounded by several arrows pointing towards it.

over  
15,000  
views of our  
CGAW Films

A circular icon containing a white play button symbol.

Over 30  
pieces of national  
coverage across  
print, online and  
broadcast.

A small icon of a newspaper with a headline.

By putting grief on the agenda, we're helping bereavement get acknowledged, ensuring that the hidden harms experienced by so many children and young people who have experienced the death of someone close are brought into the forefront of people's minds. Increasing brand awareness allows us to reach more families, in more areas of the UK, in more ways, so we can support all of those who need us, when they need us.



Sam Fogelman, Head of PR & Comms



# Looking Ahead:

We foresee more and more children and young people reaching out for our help following the death of someone close, from more areas across the country, as we see the complexities of bereavement increase. In response, we will continue to operate a hybrid model of services, to reach as many bereaved children and young people as possible, providing both online and face-to-face therapeutic counselling, support and training with a focus on the return of more group and family fun days. Our vision remains strong: a free service, tailored to the individual with immediate access to support, guidance, and help, for those who need support, when they need it.

Over the coming year, we hope to adapt our service offering, ensuring our methods are as innovative and engaging as possible, including:

Developing new and focussed bereavement programmes, including wellbeing and other creative therapies.

## Increasing Digital Support

Increasing our digital offering. Our online Grief Guides are at present the only significant, immediately available self-help resource, and whilst we are seeing increased traffic, we aim to increase what is available online, and how it is accessed.

## Expanding National Reach

Expanding our national reach with regional 'hubs' in those areas which demonstrate a greater need for grief support will allow even more families to access the right care for them, when they need it, regardless of age, circumstance, location, or background. As digital poverty rises across the country, we must ensure this doesn't affect accessibility for families. This will also include working towards an Inclusion and Diversity plan, ensuring that accessible and inclusive bereavement services are relevant to all bereaved children and their families.

## Early Years Intervention

Focusing on early years intervention will give children the very best chances of living fulfilled lives as they grow into their formative years. We hope to begin with under-8 groups of face-to-face support and move into developing a specific programme for children in their early years. We will also be looking at key factors which directly affect early years groups and working to support these.

## Diversity & Inclusion

Strengthening relationships with our community and corporate partnerships, expanding our reach and engagement in those areas. Most importantly, all these aims will allow us to broaden our reach nationally, giving more families and their children the benefit of our professional support, delivered locally to them.

We are also excited to be hosting our fourth Gala Dinner event at The Roundhouse, London, where we bring together people who support our work or who have their own bereavement stories to share. This is an incredible event that acknowledges the impact of bereavement in childhood, and whose generous support allows us continue to do more. We hope to raise £1 million, allowing us to plan the development of our services with increased confidence.

# Thank you:

Looking back on another year, we are overwhelmed with the number of children, young people and their families we have managed to help, although still conscious that there is so much more to do. The level of support we have received from our loyal and generous friends and donors has been outstanding; From charity of the year partnerships, Trusts pledging multi-year support, walking, running, and trekking in aid of Grief Encounter, to golf challenges, racing, bake sales and dressing in purple... the commitment shown by both individuals and organisations has meant that we have been able to reach so many more bereaved children, young people, and their families across the UK, with professional services that have given light to the darkest moments of their lives.







# At the heart of everything we do at Grief Encounter

## Our Vision

is that every bereaved child and their family in the UK receives access to quality support to help alleviate the pain caused by the death of someone close.



## Our Mission

is to be one of the UK's leading providers of high- quality support services for bereaved children and their families.



## Our Values

- CARING:** providing compassion, empathy and kindness
- ACCEPTING:** through listening, hearing and helping making sense
- REMEMBERING:** together and alone, publicly or privately
- INNOVATIVE:** informative, reliable and creative
- NON-JUDGEMENTAL:** ensuring an honest, empowering, understanding and respectful approach
- GENUINE:** demonstrating caring, sharing, fun and humour



## Who's who at Grief Encounter

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

**Chief Executive**  
Richard Fogelman

**Director of Clinical Services**  
Suzy Turner Jones

**Head of Fundraising**  
Lou Scott

**Head of Marketing**  
Anna Hoffman

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



# gr'ef encounter

supporting bereaved children & young people

Head Office: 33-35 Daws Lane Mill Hill London NW7 4SD  
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)

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



GriefEncounter