



Everything has changed for me...

...my mental health, the stability of my family,
reduced anxiety, increased socialisation for
my baby – you mentally and emotionally held
me and guided me through.

Family Action Service User





Welcome to Family Action's Third Impact Report

Throughout our 148 year history, Family Action has supported families who face many complex challenges - helping them to overcome those challenges, move forward with their lives and thrive.

We work with tens of thousands of families every year. This is a big responsibility and it is essential that we understand and can evidence the impact of our work. This is not just for those we support, vital though that is, but also for our Trustees, staff, commissioners, funders and supporters and so that we can share what works more widely. Measuring and understanding our impact, and linking it to our core mission of building stronger families, is essential to our ongoing innovation and growth.

Our previous two Impact Reports evidenced the value and effectiveness of our work using skilled and objective performance measurement, evaluation and research. In this Third Report we have chosen to illustrate our impact at a more individual and family level - hearing personal accounts from the people we support who share their experiences and talk about the positive impact we have had on their lives.

There are many similarities between the difficulties faced by families today and those faced by families back in 1869 when we first opened our doors. We are dedicated to continuing to provide support for these needs. However, as society changes over time we are continually revisiting and adapting our service models to ensure we are meeting the fresh challenges this evolution brings; ensuring we deliver excellence and meet the needs of today's families.

I hope you will find this report interesting and enjoy hearing the first hand accounts of how we have helped change people's lives for the better.

We are an ambitious organisation and we do not stand still. We want to continue to get better at what we do. We want to continue to excel at building stronger families and brighter lives.

With your help we can make such a difference to the people who need us and who rely on us so much.

Thank you for your support.

David Holmes CBE
Chief Executive

Welcome from our Chair of Trustees

It gives me great pleasure to hear first hand accounts from some of the people Family Action has helped to change their lives for the better. Their personal stories provide a real insight into how the organisation makes a difference to the families and communities we work with and this makes me very proud.

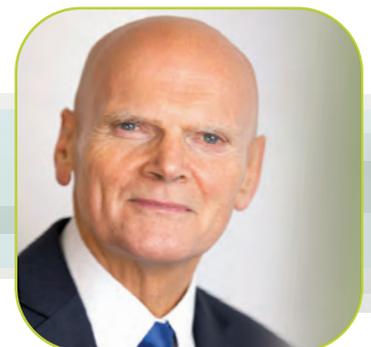
The passion and dedication of those who work for Family Action, be they paid staff or volunteers, shines through this Report. I am inspired by their tireless efforts through which Family Action continues to develop and thrive; ensuring the organisation is able to do the best we possibly can for those who need us.

There are always new and ever changing challenges to be faced - for those we support and for the organisation itself. However, Family Action is meeting these challenges head on - seeking new opportunities and creating innovative new services to ensure we continue to improve the lives of families and the community as a whole.

The Board of Trustees and I remain committed to supporting everyone within the organisation to do all they can to develop and grow the charity and its impact. I hope you enjoy reading this report and are inspired, as I am, about the future of Family Action.

Thank you for your support.

Bryan Portman
Chair of Trustees



About Family Action

Family Action is a charity committed to building stronger families and brighter lives

Since 1869, across the country, we have delivered innovative services that support people who are experiencing poverty, disadvantage or social isolation. We empower individuals and families facing the most challenging problems by providing the practical, emotional and financial support they need to unlock their potential.

We have a clear vision and mission, underpinned by strong values – values that are reflected in everything we do.



Our vision is that everyone who comes to us will receive the help they need to tackle their problems, whether they're experiencing poverty, disadvantage or social isolation.

Our mission is to provide services and financial support which will strengthen and improve the life chances of those who are poor, disadvantaged or socially isolated. We believe in the strength within families, and our approach is to provide support that achieves maximum impact. We seek to empower everyone we work with and ensure they are listened to, helping them look forward to the future and not be defined by their past.

Our values are central to us. We are a **can-do** organisation, we strive for **excellence**, we maintain a clear **people focus** and we have mutual **respect** for everyone we support and work with.



practical, emotional, financial support

Our services

We work with more than 45,000 families through over 140 community-based services and support thousands more with financial assistance through our grant programmes.

Our specialist areas include Early Years, Children and Families, Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Grants Programmes.

We are widely recognised for our Training and Consultancy Services in the areas of Family Wellbeing, Family Placement, and Safeguarding.

Across all our services, we focus on three main goals:

- **Strengthening relationships**
- **Tackling intergenerational disadvantage**
- **Promoting health and wellbeing**



Early Years

We offer support from pregnancy through to preparing children for school. Included are perinatal services working with women at risk of postnatal depression and delivering a range of support services through Children's Centres.



Children and Families

We offer services to whole families. This includes intensive family support, working with children in care and families affected by special educational needs and disability (SEND) and our Young Carers services which support young carers and their families.



Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing

We support adults by providing a range of practical, emotional and financial help. For example, our Social Prescribing Service offers an alternative for patients who may need support but not necessarily a medical intervention.



Grant Programmes

We offer emergency cash grants to people in crisis, as well as education grants and a Deputy and Trustee Service.

85

Services working with Children and Families

- Family Support
- Special Educational Needs and Disability support
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing services
- Mentoring of Children and Young People
- Young Carers support
- Looked After Children services
- Therapeutic services
- School based support
- Domestic Violence and Abuse support
- Advice services
- Parenting programmes

15

Services working on Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Social Prescribing
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing services
- Supported Housing services
- Learning Disability support
- Perinatal Mental Health support
- Deputy and Trustee Services
- GP and A&E based advice, support and counselling

45,000 families supported every year

42

Services working in Early Years

- Children's Centres
- Perinatal Mental Health support
- Childcare provision
- Parenting programmes

3

Grants Programmes

- Open Doors
- Education
- Welfare

Training and Consultancy Services

DEPTH AND REACH OF OUR RESOURCES

Working in **84** English Local Authorities, in all **22** Local Authorities in Wales, and on the Isle of Man. Working in partnership in Scotland

732
STAFF

599
VOLUNTEERS

140
SERVICES

4,043
OPEN CASES

As at 31 January 2017



**I would just stay in,
I didn't want to go
anywhere and I felt
like a failure**

The term perinatal refers to the period immediately before and immediately after the birth of a child.

In the UK perinatal mental health problems are estimated to carry a long term economic and social cost of over £8 billion for every one-year cohort of births.

This cost to the public sector is five times greater than the cost of providing the services that are needed throughout the United Kingdom to support these families¹.

The Family Action Perinatal Support Services across the country are early intervention, low intensity services for those with low to moderate level diagnosed mental health issues or who are at risk of developing perinatal mental illness.

The services are led by a professional project co-ordinator, with an early years, health or social care background, and provided by a team of volunteer befrienders who have experience of parenthood. Some of our befrienders have personal experience of perinatal mental health problems and may even have received help from our perinatal services themselves.

We work with families from before the baby is born to at least one year after. Our services complement the work of midwives, health visitors, GPs, Children's Centres and existing perinatal teams.

£8 BILLION

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COST PER YEAR**

**It's not always easy
becoming a mum**

Like a mum to me – a mother’s account of postnatal depression and working with Family Action

“It’s not always easy becoming a mum and it isn’t just becoming a mum for the first time that can seem very daunting. For me it was my third time.

In the run up to giving birth everything was lovely, we were all very excited and ready to meet the new arrival. Everything went smoothly at the birth and my baby boy was healthy.

After a couple of days I started to feel the baby blues. I had the same overwhelming emotions with my other two children after they were born so I just thought it would soon pass.

But weeks seemed to pass and it wasn’t budging. With each day that went by the emotions would just get worse and the anxiety I would feel would put a stop to everything. I would just stay in, I didn’t want to go anywhere and I felt like a failure – the worst mum ever.

When the health visitor came to see us again I told her everything, just hoping that she might have some magic cure that would make it all stop. She suggested a referral to the Family Action Perinatal Service.

As the date came closer for a Perinatal Worker to visit, I couldn’t believe I was going to let a stranger into my house with me in the mess I was in. But I needn’t have worried - Julie was so lovely and reassuring.

After a long chat she suggested attending a small group where there would be other mums with similar struggles from around the area I live in. I wasn’t keen at first and there were so many things that seemed to be in the way of me attending. I didn’t feel like going out for a start and the thought of leaving my little one in the crèche just made me feel even more like a bad mum. But I was reassured once again that everything would be fine and Julie even said she would meet me outside the building so that I didn’t have to go in alone. So I agreed to give it a go.

At first it was very difficult. My confidence was at an all time low, and I was so worried about meeting others and them just thinking I was a freak. After the first week I didn’t think I had the strength to go back. But I did, and with each week that passed I started to enjoy going more and more. My confidence started to grow, little by little, with the encouragement and support that was given.

It didn’t seem to matter that I was struggling with my mental health - I was made to feel human again. A human that just needed help and there was no shame in that. I also received home visits from Julie, which really helped me to feel like I had someone who understood what my struggles were and how to work through them.

She befriended me when I had no one and kept me focused on what was important when my depression was overwhelming – my boys.

I don’t really want to think if things had been different, but I know I wouldn’t be where I am now without Family Action. I still sometimes struggle from day to day, but now I am armed with coping strategies and have also made two friends from the Support Group. My boys have also made friends with the other parents’ children from the group.

The whole experience has inspired me to become a volunteer, so that I can give something back and also get out and meet other adults – hopefully helping them in combating their isolation.

For me this service has not only been the hand that brought me out of the darkness, but also the hand that wiped my tears, held me up when I was weak and encouraged me to just be me. It has been like a mum to me.

A huge thank you to the Perinatal Service and all that have been involved in working with me and my boys.”

To find out more about Family Action’s Perinatal Services and to hear from the families we support visit www.family-action.org.uk/perinatal

¹ ‘The costs of perinatal mental health problems’; London School of Economics and Centre for Mental Health; 2014



Children and Families

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES



Life is a lot better now
than back then

£9 BILLION

ESTIMATED COST OF PROVIDING
SERVICES TO FAMILIES WITH
COMPLEX NEEDS

Families are, by definition, complex - they involve different people, different combinations of issues, different life events and stages and different relationships and emotions.

Family Action's Family Support Services across the country support families with particularly complex and sometimes interconnected needs which might include physical and/or mental illness, substance abuse, disability, family conflict, poverty, housing problems and unemployment.

We know that without effective support early on, some families with complex problems will require costly state intervention such as child protection, children coming into state care, involvement with the criminal justice system and/or specialist health and education support.

The estimated cost to the taxpayer of providing services to families with complex needs is £9billion a year, of which £8billion is spent reacting to issues and £1billion trying to tackle them¹.

Families with complex needs require an integrated service response. This needs to be reflected over the long term in policy, commissioning and service delivery. At the same time investment in early intervention services is vital - to prevent families from reaching the stage where more costly intensive intervention is required.

Family Action has been delivering effective, intensive support to families with complex needs in different locations across the country for decades.

Our approach to working with families is consistent and it works. Family Action uses a whole family approach throughout all our services, building on strengths, empowering family members and increasing resilience.

The achievement of lasting change for families facing complex difficulties needs to be measured in a sophisticated way. We are careful not to equate success or failure with outcome data that covers only an aspect of family life e.g. attendance at school or getting a job. As a result we look holistically at the progress a family is making in the different aspects of daily life in order to judge whether life is getting better for that family.

In our experience the *journey* towards improved outcomes is just as important as the end result.

I really needed help his behaviour was pushing me over the edge

“My eldest son had started to get a little bit unruly and I couldn’t control him. I knew I had to get help to help him get back on track or I could have seen him either being six foot under or behind bars and I didn’t want that for my son - he was only ten then, coming up eleven.

I first noticed he was playing up when he was moving from primary school to secondary school. His behaviour went really downhill. He was getting into trouble with the police and going to court. The school was constantly calling me - at least once a week - and he was getting excluded. He was getting into fights and hanging around with people that were going shoplifting. I didn’t know if police were going to knock at the door. He was also causing problems at home. He was setting fire to things in my house and had anger problems - lashing out at the walls and things like that. Life was hard, it was very hard. It was like I was walking on eggshells with my own child because I didn’t know what was going to come around the corner. I really needed help because his behaviour was pushing me over the edge and I couldn’t deal with it any more.

I found out about Family Action through my social worker and she made a referral for me and my kids. When I was first told about them I thought there was real hope there for me and my boys. I thought, yeah, maybe this service will help to get my son back to where he should be - to the sweet boy I remember he was when he was growing up. It was good to know someone was there to support and help me turn my weaknesses into my strengths when dealing with my two boys. Although it’s been a long journey, I’m glad I was referred to them because we got back on track.

It wasn’t easy. There was a lot of work to be done with Family Action. When we first started, it was about learning things such as how to do ‘time out’, making rules that were achievable for children of their age group, setting boundaries for the boys and teaching them there were consequences for their actions and behaviours. Family Action helped me with a lot of that.

Family Action has been working with me two days a week, every week of the year. At first the support workers took us out bowling and for something to eat. But now, we really haven’t anything left to do. We sit and have a chat about everyday things and how I’ve been and what we’ve done and it’s got to the stage when there is no support needed in the family now. It has been quite a long journey with Family Action, but we got there in the end.

There is a big difference in the lives of me and the boys. It has helped me focus on what I have needed to change in my own life to be able to get my eldest son to change and also to work with my younger son to keep him on the right track and not let him go down the same path as his brother did.

The help that Family Action has given us has helped my eldest to think about his future and where he wants to be - there are still a few more improvements needed, but he has changed a lot and is a lot calmer - if he gets angry now he will go to his room or go out and find something to calm himself down. He is now thirteen and is changing his ways at school and looking towards the future - he wants to go into criminology.

Life is a lot better now than back then. I’m feeling really positive about the future and although it has been a long journey, Family Action has got me and my children back on track as a family.”

Bobbie, Family Support Service User

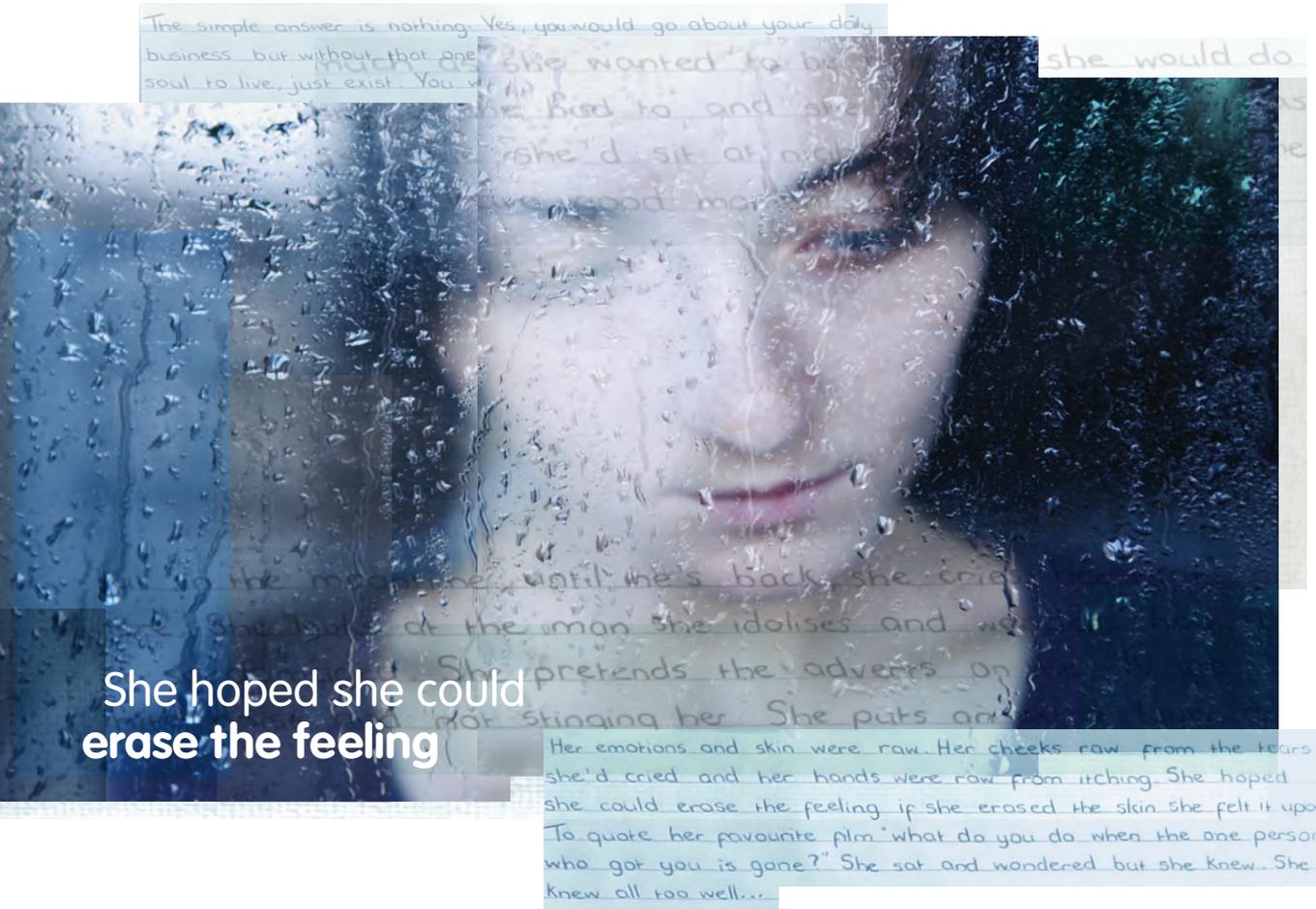
To find out more about Family Action’s Family Support Services and to hear from the families we support visit www.family-action.org.uk/familysupport

¹ www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/10254-001-Executive-Summary.pdf



Children and Families

YOUNG CARERS SUPPORT SERVICES



She hoped she could
erase the feeling

A young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative living with disability, illness, a mental health condition or a drug or alcohol use problem.

Most young carers look after one of their parents or care for a brother or sister. They do extra jobs in and around the home, such as cooking, cleaning and shopping, and they might help with personal care, getting dressed or moving around – the things adults in the family would normally do. They may also provide emotional support for their parents and siblings.

With so many responsibilities, young carers often miss out on opportunities that other children have to learn and have fun. Many struggle at school and are often bullied for being 'different'. They can become isolated - struggling to make friends and lacking the opportunity to do the things other children their age are able to do.

The 2011 census identified at least 195,000 young carers in the UK¹.

Family Action runs a number of Young Carers Support Services across the country. We adopt a whole family approach, working collaboratively with parents, children and young people, the wider community, schools and statutory services.

The services differ according to local need but include direct work with young carers and their families - often in their home, providing individual support and information to help children to understand their parent's/sibling's illness or disability and to express and understand their own feelings about their situation.

Some projects work within schools, providing counselling sessions or lunchtime discussion groups and raising awareness of the challenges young carers face.



**195,000
YOUNG
CARERS
IN THE UK**

Nobody will ever get what it is like

Amy's* story

Amy is 15 years old.

She was referred to a Family Action Young Carers service in December 2015 when her father was diagnosed with bowel cancer which had spread to his liver - he was given a life expectancy of one year.

Amy was providing a high level of emotional care to her father and this was having a negative impact on school, friendships and her wellbeing. Family Action worked with Amy and her family by providing family support sessions and liaising with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and school. We also provided fortnightly one to one focused support sessions with Amy and introduced her to peer support through opportunities to meet with young people who also have a cancer caring role. In addition we provided Amy with a number of carers' breaks, including a weekend therapeutic residential trip to 'Kites Rise' where Amy and the young people with her learned more about cancer awareness.

Amy has become an Ambassador for the service and uses her poetry, writing and art work to help raise awareness of cancer young carers. Amy attended the National Children and Young People's Awards ceremony in London with colleagues from her Family Action Young Carers service in November 2016 in recognition of her work.

He was given a life expectancy of one year

Help me

A piece by Amy, reflecting on her experience

Her emotions and skin were raw. Her cheeks raw from the tears she's cried and her hands were raw from itching. She hoped she could erase the feeling if she erased the skin she felt it upon. To quote her favourite film "What do you do when the one person who got you is gone?" She sat and wondered, but she knew. She knew all too well....

The simple answer is nothing. Yes you would go about your daily business, but without that one person, you simply don't have enough soul to live, just exist. You watch the clock to see if the weeks had passed. You sit, wishing to see them sweep through the door, guitar in hand and singing their head off. You ring them (obscure times mainly) to hear their voice and sob when their favourite song comes on.

But in the meantime, until he's back, she cries her tears and more. She looks at the man she idolises and wonders how they got so damaged. She pretends the adverts on the TV are white noise and not stinging her. She puts an extra layer of makeup on to cover her sleepless nights and bribes herself to get through the day. Although as hard as her tired mind tried, she never quite believed her own lies that she could do this.

But as much as she wanted to be "normal", she would do this for as long as she had to and she knew that once it was over and he was gone, she'd sit at night and pray for all the bad so she could have good moments.

Nobody will ever get what it's like....

** Names have been changed to protect anonymity*

To find out more about Family Action's Young Carers Services and to hear from the families we support visit www.family-action.org.uk/youngcarers

¹ The 2011 census identified 178,000 young carers in England and Wales. When figures from the Northern Ireland and Scottish census are taken into account, the total number of young carers in the UK total at least 195,000.



Children and Families

FRIENDSHIP WORKS MENTORING PROGRAMME



Michael suffered from
a lack of confidence

Friendship Works is Family Action's innovative mentoring programme for young people. The service matches a child or young person with a mentor for a minimum of two years, with the pair meeting three out of every four weekends.

Research shows that mentoring relationships that last for longer than one year produce more positive and lasting outcomes for children. The frequent contact between mentor and mentee in the Friendship Works programme helps the young person to feel secure and relaxed within the relationship, and to build a bond quickly with their mentor.

Particularly for children and young people who have experienced loss, separation and trauma it can be difficult to build new trusting relationships – the long term and regular contact with a Friendship Works mentor helps them experience that this is a person who can be relied on and trusted to fulfil their commitment to them.

Friendship Works does not seek to 'improve' a child, 'fix' behaviour or force change. Our mentors enjoy spending time with the young person they are matched with and it is the strength of this relationship that leads to positive improvements in self-esteem, confidence and resilience.

To find out more about Family Action's Friendship Works Service and hear from the young people we support visit
www.family-action.org.uk/friendshipworks

Michael was referred to Friendship Works to provide a positive male role model into his life, having not seen his father for several years. Michael suffered from a lack of confidence in social settings and it was felt a stable and reliable mentor could support him to broaden his horizons and allow him to feel more assured and comfortable in unfamiliar environments. Michael was matched with Jerry, who is a retired lawyer.

The first thing that strikes you when you see them together is their ease with each other. Although Michael is 17 and Jerry is in his 50s you can see they have a real bond of friendship – lots of banter and joking light heartedly as only good friends tend to do.

Jerry: Do you want to go first?

Michael: No you go first.

J: Well ok then - it was about two years ago when we first met? I was working as a lawyer for a hedge fund. I had done a lot of volunteer work in Canada and when I came to London I volunteered on the board of a charity. But I wanted to be involved more directly with what I was doing as a volunteer – I quickly came across Friendship Works... As it happened, there was a volunteer night and introduction evening to the charity about a week later so I signed up and the more I heard about it the more interested I was.

M: Well I was a student and I was studying and was taking my GCSEs back when I told Friendship Works I would like a volunteer. I went through the procedures and I found you Jerry. I thought you would be pretty much a normal guy who just happened to be a lawyer and was into politics and that's about all I knew.

J: Well, You seemed very shy when I first met you – you were very quiet. And you were quiet for a long time.

M: Yeah I was.

J: Once you get going its fine, but you had a lot of nervous habits and those seem to have disappeared which is great. I think that's part of growing up and becoming more confident and it's been great to see you change that way.

M: Things are a lot better than before I met you because you have shown me a broad selection of things I can do around London. We went to new shops and new places like museums and movies I had never heard about like "Fury Road".

J: Yeah – I can't believe you had never even seen a "Mad Max" movie! That's been the great thing. You are very open to new ideas and suggestions so we've been to plays and to "Cirque du Soleil". We have never really been to any music concerts though - that's one thing I'm trying to get you to do.

M: Well there's not really much good music around.

J: See what I mean!! So, anyway, we will work on that one – you were the same with food too.

M: That's true.

J: At first it was only McDonalds, but now you won't go to McDonalds – you don't even like it any more.

Michael laughs

M: I would never go to restaurants like "Chipotle" and had never heard of "Five Guys".

J: Two of your favourites now! You were a fellow who was very much set in his habits so it has been good to see you break out and try some different things. I have really enjoyed how easy it is to plan things as you always seem willing to try new stuff - it's been great.

M: Well my perfect day is walking around, talking about issues pretty much right now. Also going to watch a movie is one of the more entertaining things we do.

J: But a lot of times we just meet up and have lunch. Often, we will just go for a walk in Regent's Park and just talk and have a hot chocolate, if it's cold. Those are the most relaxing and fun times. We've done a lot of fun stuff together.

M: Very true, we have. But also it's meeting someone who comes from a different society compared to how I live. I live in North London and you live in a more central, upper class area I think you can say. And you come from a different country – Canada, which I would say has a different mind set compared to people in England. So it's been good to know someone who sees things differently and lives and thinks differently to me.

J: And I've definitely learnt a lot from you - I lived and worked in a very privileged part of London, in Mayfair, so travelling around and seeing other parts of London that I hadn't been exposed to before gives me a much broader perspective. It's good to get out of one's little day to day world and habits and you have made me do that... I think you have become a lot more mature and considered in what you look at now and what interests you like the US Election and Brexit which is really great to see.

M: Well, when I met you, you taught me a lot about stuff - like how things work – political systems that my parents had never really heard of. You have given me a load of information about what the world is like.

J: I also think we laugh at the same things. Although I think I poke fun at you more than you make fun of me to be fair. But you take it in good humour. I think you know when I'm joking.

M: Yeah I do.

J: I like to think that you keep me young and current. Seriously though, the most important thing that has come out of our relationship is getting to know you and feeling that maybe I have played a small part in how you have developed over the past few years. Helping you become a confident young man. Being able to ask any questions and not be nervous about reactions. I think that when we first met you were very nervous. Not just with situations, but just how people reacted to you. But you are a lot more comfortable around people now.

M: I am more confident. Before you, I wouldn't speak in public. I am also more open-minded about stuff now and I do more stuff I wouldn't really do and go to places I wouldn't go to if I hadn't met you. This gave me a different take on what the world is like and how people interact with other people and enabled me to speak to them and increase my social skills – that's a big impact you have had on me right now.

Also, when I was moving through the transition from school to college, I would speak to you about colleges I could go to and courses I could do and you would always give me advice. You've been very supportive about that.

J: The highlights for me are the changes in you over the last two and a half years. From a shy 14 year old to a very confident and outspoken young man and I am really proud to see how you are developing, including how well you are doing at school, and just how confident you are day to day. Yes it's a big difference to the Michael I met two years ago.

I am very proud to know you Michael. I can't think of a better match that I could have had. It's always a lot of fun spending time with you and I look forward to every time we meet. Since I've met you, I have retired and am travelling more, so I am conscious I can be away for a long time. I do miss our times together when I'm away, but hopefully we try and make it up when I'm back in London.

M: Yes, when you are back we spend the entire day talking and just keep doing what we have always done, which is great.

J: I agree and I know that regardless of the formal relationship, I like to think we will always be part of each other's lives.

M: Yeah and I think that says it all.

The first thing that strikes you when you see them together is their ease with each other



Mentoring
as a
minimum



Meeting three
out of every
four weekends



Children and Families

HOPE POST DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE



**I want my relationship
with my child to improve**

The total cost of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) for the state, employers and victims is estimated to be around £23 billion¹.

In England and Wales domestic violence and abuse will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetime². It accounts for 16% of all violent crime³, yet is the violent crime least likely to be reported to the police.

DVA has more repeat victims than any other crime – on average, there will have been 35 assaults before a victim calls the police⁴.

20% of children in the UK have been exposed to domestic abuse⁵.

In 90% of domestic violence incidents in family households, children were in the same or the next room⁶.

62% of children in households where domestic violence is happening are also directly harmed⁷.

Living with DVA affects whole families and family relationships. Children and young people experience trauma which impacts on their social, intellectual and behavioural development, and they may also struggle with emotional attachments and relationships with safe parents, as well as with abusive parents.

Family Action's HOPE Service in Bradford works with children and young people aged 5 – 13 years old who have been exposed to DVA.

Children who live with DVA need to feel safe before they are able to start the journey of recovery. The HOPE Service aims to create this environment and support their recovery from trauma, repair family relationships and improve the emotional wellbeing of the family.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & ABUSE

Will affect 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men in their lifetime

¹ www.leeds.ac.uk/sociology/people/swdocs/researchsummarycosstdomesticviolence.pdf
² Crime Survey of England and Wales, 2013/14
³ Crime in England and Wales 04/05 report
⁴ Jaffe, 1982
⁵ Radford et al. NSPCC, 2011
⁶ Hughes, 1992
⁷ SafeLives, 2015

CASE FILE

Referral: Child C, male, aged 8

Interventions: Multiple. One to one work with Child C; Domestic Abuse, Recovering Together (DART) mother-child recovery programme; referral to social care following disclosure of sexual abuse by DVA perpetrator.

Background: Child C witnessed multiple incidents of DVA between his mother and her partner. Despite the relationship ending two years ago, Child C continues to dwell on the past and talks about it frequently, suggesting ongoing trauma.

First incident occurred shortly after the birth of Child C's half brother. Thereafter, multiple occasions of emotional and physical abuse of both mother and Child C, including the attempted removal of the half brother by the perpetrator, resulting in Child C witnessing his mother saying, "You will have to kill me first."

Assessed need: Child C expressed feelings of anger towards his mother, appearing to stem from feeling he was not heard and listened to. Child C avoids talking to his mother about his experience, there is a general lack of communication between the two.

Child C is protective of his two half siblings, and expresses anger that they have ongoing contact with their father, the DVA perpetrator.

During the episodes of abuse Child C did not feel safe to tell his mother, worrying about adding to her problems and under threat of repercussions from the perpetrator. Child C confided in his maternal grandfather, however when the grandfather passed away, he felt he no longer had anyone to share his experiences with.

Child C is experiencing the loss of his grandfather, but also mourning the separation from his biological father. "I wish my dad could live with me in my house."

Child C's experience of loss and separation, combined with the abuse he suffered is impacting his feelings of anger and sadness. He does not have a safe environment in which he can start to recover.

Child C is offered six, one to one therapeutic sessions with the HOPE service.

He now has a safe platform to be open about his feelings

Session notes:

Initial session focused on creating a safe space for Child C. From an exercise exploring places of safety, it was clear Child C was unsure about where he felt safe. His close bond with his biological father finally led him to choose to be "with dad at his house" as his safe place.

Session two: Child C completed an exercise on feelings which helped him discuss the abuse he had experienced, as well as his fear of speaking with his mother about it. He was afraid of how she might respond, given how poorly she had reacted to his attempts in the past.

Session three: The aim of the session was to focus on the feelings of anger Child C was experiencing, particularly towards his mother. However, he presented as subdued and was reluctant to take part. We used 'check in' to talk about the weekend and it emerged Child C was upset about the death of his grandfather (it had been his birthday that weekend). Child C continued with the session, choosing what he wanted to do, playing some games. Towards the end of the session, once he felt safer, he spent some time talking about and reflecting on his relationship with his grandfather.

Session four: To address Child C's feelings of bereavement and separation he created a memory jar for his grandfather and his father. Whilst not directly related to the recovery from DVA work, this was important for him to address in the 'here and now'.

Session five: Child C started to open up about the feelings of anger he felt for his mother. At this point we identified the DART group work programme as appropriate for this family, with its focus on the mother-child relationship.

Final session: 'Signs of Safety, three houses' activity. Child C made a disclosure of sexual abuse by his mother's ex-partner which had taken place when he was four/five years old. This was the first time Child C had spoken about this abuse to anyone. A referral to Social Care was made so that an appropriate investigation could begin.

Child C was offered three additional sessions in order to continue the support following the disclosure.

Child C's mother was offered, and accepted, support to help with her feelings of confusion and guilt following her child's disclosure of sexual abuse. Liaison with the safeguarding lead at Child C's school as well as with other professionals ensured that they were all aware and supporting the family appropriately.

The family was referred to the DART programme to support the mother-child relationship.

Outcomes:

Child C now has a safe platform to be open about his feelings. He is far more confident than at the beginning of the intervention and no longer feels guilty about not disclosing earlier.

Child C now acknowledges what makes him angry, how this is directed at his mother, and how it is also linked to wanting to protect his siblings.

Mother and son are engaging well in the DART programme. Through the work they have done in the group, Child C has been able to disclose his experience of sexual abuse by his mother's ex-partner to his biological father.

Child C feels safe to share his feelings with his mother and she appears to be more patient and empathetic with him. "I want my relationship with my child to improve and be how it used to be before all the domestic abuse."



Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing

ESCAPE ORCHARD AND ALLOTMENT PROJECT

It is no exaggeration to say that his life was transformed



1 in 4 people in the UK will experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem each year¹.

In May 2016, The King's Fund² launched a report which highlighted the benefits of gardening on both physical and mental health.

Key findings included evidence that:

- Increasing exposure to green space can lead to a reduction in reported health problems, reduced levels of obesity, increased physical activity, improved mental health and reduced health inequalities.
- Gardening can reduce depression and anxiety and improve social functioning.
- Particularly for older people, gardening can be an important source of physical activity and can support identity and independence as well as reduce loneliness.

Family Action's Escape Project is an orchard and allotment in Swaffham, Norfolk.

It was set up in recognition of the high levels of rural isolation, deprivation and lack of help for mental health issues in the area.

The project aims to support and improve the life opportunities of local people with mental health issues, low physical activity, isolation or who want to improve their general emotional wellbeing. It is open to all members of the local community and is run by trained volunteers.

The project works closely with local services, such as GPs, schools and mental health services who refer vulnerable individuals to Family Action for specialist support.

By encouraging their involvement in community activities we are supporting people to be active and valued members of society. We equip them with skills and experience to increase their independence, self-esteem and confidence. This in turn empowers service users to address their mental health problems and plays a part in their recovery or health management plans. Our work produces long term and significantly positive effects for their futures.

As well as spending time on the regular allotment sessions, we support people through a range of additional activities including:

- Workshops
- Craft making sessions
- Social cooking sessions
- Skills days
- Wider community activities
- Supervised gardening activities
- Training leading to qualifications

Our Escape Project has given new life to a disused orchard site and created an extensive, vibrant allotment with a number of large polytunnels. Everyone involved in the project is working hard to preserve local and heritage fruit and vegetable varieties and to encourage bioregional flora and fauna.



GARDENING CAN
REDUCE
DEPRESSION



Once they would have spoken to a deeply troubled and depressed youth

A letter from the father of one of our Escape Project's service users:

"I am writing to thank Katy and her team for transforming my son Charlie's* life.

Charlie is diagnosed as autistic. This is compounded by a number of physical disabilities which restrict his movement. Autism is, at its root, a social impairment. It leads to isolation and depression, which, in Charlie's case, led to psychosis and a great deal of distress. He eventually ended up being treated by the Mental Health Unit at King's Lynn hospital. He was on the verge of being sectioned under the Mental Health Act. It was during this low period that he was accepted onto the Escape Project and introduced to life on the Swaffham allotment.

It is no exaggeration to say that his life was transformed. And not just his life, the whole family has been lifted in spirit by his placement. From being a withdrawn, psychotic and lonely young man Charlie has blossomed into a lively, interesting and deeply caring person. His interest in plants, and in particular the Escape Heritage Project, has given him a purpose and a goal. His interests have always bordered on obsession and he has become a knowledgeable and erudite champion of the need to conserve old and endangered species. He preaches his gospel at every opportunity and has, without doubt, raised the awareness of the issue amongst many of the villagers he now feels confident enough to converse with. He has gained a qualification in Horticulture, a fact which boosted his self-esteem and allowed him to feel a degree of self-worth that most of us take for granted.

His transformation has been nothing short of astonishing.

I cannot praise the staff at the allotment highly enough. We have got to know Katy and the team over the year that Charlie has spent with them and realise that their hard work and enthusiasm lie at the heart of the transformation. Katy in particular is a rare jewel among the community. As an ambassador it would be hard to find anyone who was as effective. Her enthusiasm, good nature, knowledge, personality and idiosyncrasies mark her out as a star. I am sure great things lie ahead in her future.

In conclusion I would like to thank the staff of the allotment and all those who have invested their money into the project. Charlie's story is just one of many whose lives have been improved and made bearable by the generosity shown in the past.

If anyone doubts the efficacy of the project I can do no more than ask them to speak to Charlie. Where once they would have spoken to a deeply troubled and depressed youth, they will now enjoy a conversation with a bright, knowledgeable and erudite young man. I encourage anyone reading this to speak with him. It will be an enjoyable and possibly enlightening experience, and watch for the sparkle in his eye - it took 23 years to get there but it now shines like a beacon.

Thank you from a grateful father."

**Names have been changed to protect anonymity*

To find out more about Family Action's Escape Project and to hear from the families we support visit www.family-action.org.uk/escape

¹ www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/fundamental-facts-about-mental-health-2015
² www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kt/field/field_publication_file/Gardens_and_health.pdf



Open Doors Grants

OPENING DOORS, CHANGING LIVES

When you have no job, no home, it is really valuable to be trusted and feel trusted

In April 2013 the discretionary part of the Social Fund, providing crisis loans and Community Care grants to those with special needs, was devolved to 152 Local Authorities in England.

Following this, many local authorities stopped providing grants or loans - with 81%¹ providing direct or 'in-kind' support through the provision of goods rather than cash assistance. The Government cut this funding from April 2015, but as part of the Local Authority Finance Settlement 2015/16 Local Authorities continued to have the option to offer local welfare assistance, funded by their existing budgets. Each Local Authority's Revenue Support Grant has an amount identified for welfare provision, however this is not ring-fenced.

Demand for support has increased, coinciding with the reduction in Local Welfare Provision and longer term support services. Access to grants or crisis loans has become increasingly difficult.

In August 2013 Family Action, with support from Lankelly Chase (a grant-making foundation), launched the Open Doors Grants Programme.

The Programme provides cash grants alongside intensive support delivered to recipients by a range of partner organisations. The recipients of an Open Doors grant are, in addition to living in poverty, facing at least two areas of Severe and Multiple Disadvantage – domestic abuse, frequent contact with the criminal justice system (but not in prison), homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness, serious mental health problems, sexual exploitation and/or substance misuse.

From the launch of the Open Doors Programme in August 2013 to the end of December 2016, 1,093 grants were made to a total value of £350,400. The average grant was for £321.

The Programme has been extensively evaluated and in February 2016 the evaluation findings to that point in time were published in 'Opening Doors, Changing Lives: Measuring the impact of cash grants on disadvantaged individuals and families'.

This evidenced that low value cash grants, coupled with appropriate support, had a transformational effect upon the recipients. It was clear that each grant made had more impact as part of a longer term process of support, rather than a stand-alone event. Regardless of the type of support provided, it was clear that even a small cash grant has a large impact on the recipient's progress - the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts.

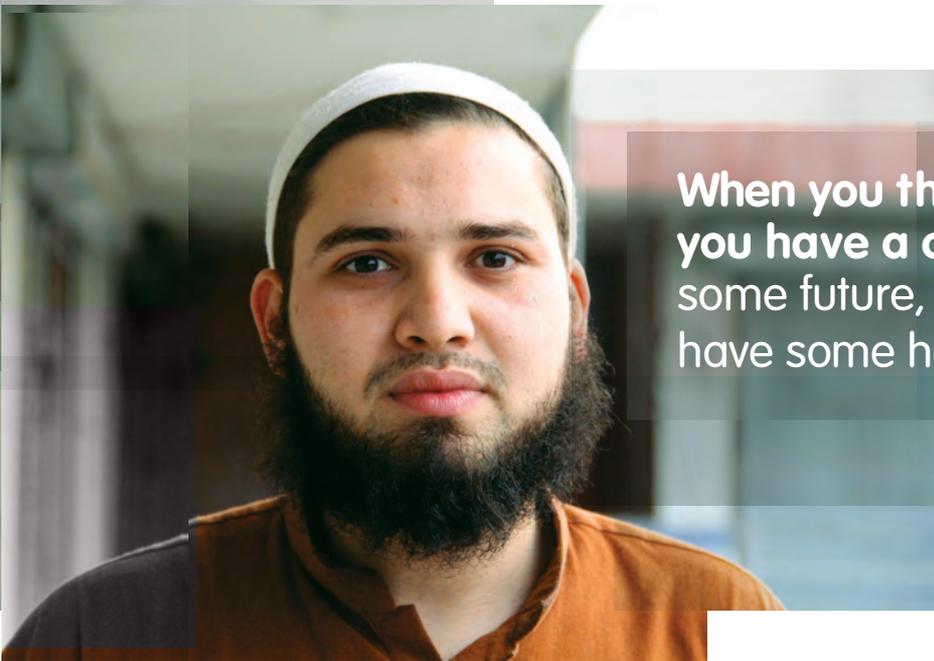
Open Doors Grants impact upon a recipient's entire life – from health to support networks, confidence to future resilience. Family Action is proud to say that this grant programme is still going strong and is still transforming many lives every year.

**Lankelly
Chase**

1,093
GRANTS MADE

£321
AVERAGE

£350,400
VALUE



When you think
you have a chance,
some future, you
have some hope

Mahmud* is 30 years old and was experiencing Severe and Multiple Disadvantage through homelessness and mental health issues.

Mahmud fled from Iran for political reasons. In his home country he was a successful accountant. He has been granted asylum in the UK and initially had two jobs – one in customer services and another cleaning.

However, he then developed serious back problems and had to stop working. Mahmud became homeless as a result.

Mahmud got a place in a hostel. He used his time there really positively - he got voluntary work, he studied, got new qualifications and passed his driving theory test. He tried for job after job without success. He became depressed and his back problems worsened. Mahmud says he was in a very dark place.

Mahmud's support worker helped him start bidding to get a flat but Mahmud was finding it hard. He had no savings and his benefits had stopped. Mahmud was desperate for work but the Job Centre was not helpful. His support worker felt that they judged him harshly and that Mahmud was doing all he could to help himself.

When Mahmud did secure a flat, it was dark and cold. His worker applied for an Open Doors Grant to help him establish his home. Mahmud had volunteered at a furniture store so was able to get good furniture. He bought wood and tools so that

he could build his own shelves and cupboards. He also bought bed linen and was able to find a second hand fridge on Gumtree.

Mahmud says "For me, the best thing was that my worker trusted me to spend my money, he trusted me to get receipts, to get what I needed. In the hostel, there isn't much trust. When you have no job, no home, it is really valuable to be trusted and feel trusted.

I am really grateful for my grant. It has made me a home. I can't forget how hard it was, but now I can focus on getting my job, on my life. I can really concentrate on the future. Now I have a proper home, I can focus on getting a degree, improving my English. I want to get a good job. I have used some of the wood I bought to make these shelves, for my books and learning.

I don't feel shame, what happened is part of my life, it is what I do afterwards that matters now. I still have nightmares, every day is like a pressure but having a home helps me in different directions. It helps with my depression, I have hope. I have something to do, there is still stuff that I need to finish in the house. It's like fuel, it's really crucial.

I don't want to be on benefits, I will get a job, I will get there. Now I have a space to learn.

I can't ignore what everyone has done for me. I am very thankful for everything, I hope I can pay back that kindness. When you think you have a chance, some future, you have some hope."

**Names have been changed to protect anonymity*

To find out more about Family Action's Grants Services and to hear from the families we support visit www.family-action.org.uk/grants

¹ Nowhere to turn? Changes to emergency support, The Children's Society (2013). www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/nowhere-to-turn-final.pdf

Family Action – Stronger than Ever



2017 *Stronger than Ever strategy*



2018



Past, present and future

Our history is remarkable - we created much of the infrastructure that strengthens vulnerable families today, including the first social work teams and the first Citizens Advice Bureau.

Our ambition for the future is no less great.

The need for Family Action's services today remains acute. We live in a society where the gap between the richest and poorest is widening and where social mobility remains hugely challenging. Demand for our services is intensifying as statutory thresholds for intervention continue to rise. In this context, there is an urgent need to support the poorest and most vulnerable families.

In order to reach more families and children who need our services and expertise we are committed to developing and growing our organisation to meet the needs of the present and the future.

We are implementing a bold strategy to take us forward to our 150th Anniversary in 2019. A strategy that will make us **stronger than ever** in 2019, strengthening more families and local communities, transforming more children's lives, making more impact on society.

The gap between rich and poor is widening... social mobility remains hugely challenging



2019 Our 150th Anniversary

We can only grow, innovate and diversify our income base by being the best at what we do. We are committed to providing excellent services and we will be both rigorous in identifying where we can improve and add value to our current service provision. We will also be agile in creating innovative service models in order to address urgent and emerging areas of work where there is a gap in provision.

Our strategy builds on Family Action's past record and honours its history, but also seeks to position the organisation as a global leader in its field. Our strategy will make us stronger than ever for our 150th Anniversary in 2019.

To read more visit
www.family-action.org.uk/strategy

Realising our priorities – our plans for the future

Our **Stronger than Ever** strategy is guiding our work between now and 2019.

Now is a time to be bold, creative and resolute in our ambition to grow and to innovate in order to increase our impact.

This strategy puts front and centre three key goals:

- 1 to continue to **grow** our charity in order to help thousands more families to have better lives
- 2 to **innovate** in our service provision, as an organisation and as an employer, so that we can address new and urgent areas of work effectively and imaginatively
- 3 to **diversify our income base** to ensure we are not overly reliant on any one source of funding

Support us



Help us do more

Family Action relies on fundraising income to innovate, replicate and sustain new ways of helping vulnerable families, directly addressing the root causes of the disadvantages they face.

Many of the services that Family Action offers have been made possible through the support of our corporate, trust and individual donors and fundraisers. The Open Doors Grants Programme you read about in this report was established with the support of LankellyChase, and we are delighted to announce that we are able to continue this innovative approach to grant giving thanks to funding generously provided by NewDay.

The generosity of supporters and fundraisers also allows us to provide more to those families we are already supporting. Our highly successful Toy Appeal ensures that no child supported by our services need go without a Christmas present, and our 'Creating Happy Memories' campaign funds positive experiences for families that allow them to spend quality time together, away from some of the challenges they are facing.

We recently became a charity partner of the Science Museum's Wonderlab - allowing our families to visit the exhibition and a number of sister museums free of charge, and a generous donation from Gilead Sciences means that we can cover the cost of the travel and lunches for our families, many of whom are living in poverty.



6,000 TOYS

In 2016, over 6,000 toys were distributed via the Toy Appeal

93%

OF OUR INCOME GOES
DIRECTLY
TO OUR CAUSE

£5,000 – Could provide **five** school-based programmes to help children at risk of becoming involved in gang violence

£50,000 – Could give **1,000** children *and* their families a truly happy experience - simple things most of us take for granted like a day out at the beach in the summer or going to a pantomime at Christmas. We know these 'fun times' create valuable, shared memories and they also help to build trust with their support workers, helping to build stronger families and brighter futures.

£100,000 – Could pay for **10** Family Action workers to support **500** children and their families for a year. Helping them to overcome a traumatic experience, such as abuse or bereavement, giving them the resilience they need to build a more positive future.

Working in partnership

We work with a range of partners to maximise impact and provide expertise as broadly as possible. By working closely with local and national government, the NHS, the education sector, the media, other voluntary sector organisations, and the private sector, we can ensure we reach out to as many vulnerable people as we can.

We not only work directly with vulnerable families but also support professionals and organisations coming into contact with these families. Our Training and Consultancy services draw on our long history and our depth of practical experience to help all organisations working with, supporting or employing vulnerable families and individuals.

We are guided by an ethos of sharing knowledge and best practice so that children and families can look forward to the future and not be defined by their past.

For more information about training and consultancy contact us on **T&C@family-action.org.uk**



We know these 'fun times' create valuable, shared memories

Corporate partnerships

We are enormously grateful to our corporate supporters who give so generously of their time, expertise and money.

Your company can make a huge difference to the lives of the people we support and we would welcome a discussion about how we can work together.

For more information please visit our website www.family-action.org.uk/corporate or email fundraising@family-action.org.uk

Gifts in Wills

Family Action has been a driving force in improving the welfare of the most vulnerable families in the country since 1869 - helping found the social work profession at a time when The Workhouse was the norm. Throughout our history we have been supported by the generosity of people giving donations through their Wills. Every legacy gift we receive is extremely important to us and helps us to innovate and improve our work to build stronger families. For more information on leaving a legacy which can have a lasting impact on vulnerable families please get in touch with us via fundraising@family-action.org.uk



A need to do more:

It is testament to the organisation's grit and resilience that in times of economic difficulty, Family Action has expanded its work in order to help more people. However, there is a clear and present need, in the face of continuing austerity, for Family Action to do more. If you would like to support Family Action through fundraising, donating or by involving your company in what we do, then please do get in touch: fundraising@family-action.org.uk

We'd like to thank

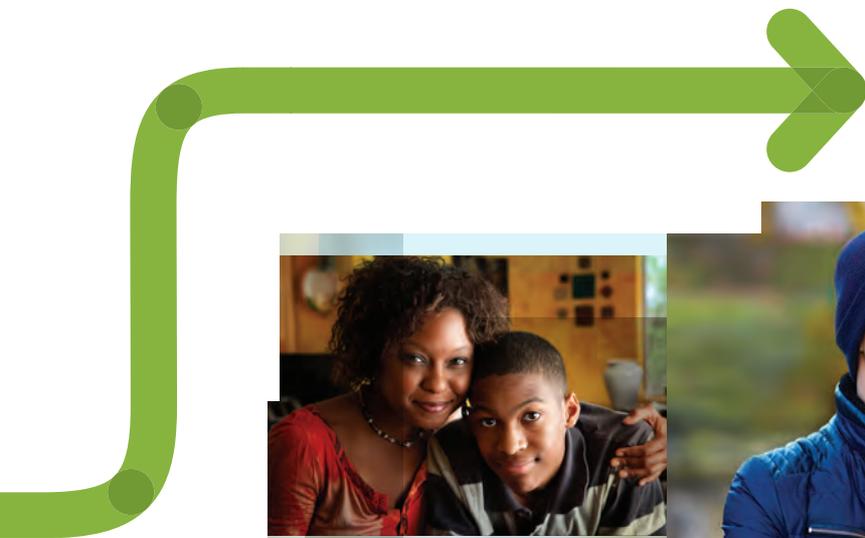
our many generous supporters, including the following organisations:

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Google DeepMind	The LankellyChase Foundation
Habitat UK Ltd	The Lynn Foundation
Helios Towers Africa LLP	The Mary Robertson Trust
Heritage Lottery Fund	The Maud Elkington Charitable Trust
Highgate Golf Club	The N Smith Charitable Settlement
ICap	The Oak Trust
Imperial Society of Knights Bachelor	The Oldhurst Trust
ING Group	The Restaraunt Group plc
Inspiro	The Salamander Charitable Trust
Institute of Ageing and Chronic Disease (IACD)	The Sir Jeremiah Colman Gift Trust
Staff at Islington Council Children's Services	The Swire Charitable Trust
Islington Giving	The Tanza Trust
J.P. Morgan Private Bank	The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation
Jeroboams	The Vandervell Foundation
John Horniman's Children's Trust	The Volant Charitable Trust
John Lewis Partnership	The Wenhaston Charitable Trust
Kensington & Chelsea District Nursing Trust	The Worshipful Company of Coopers
M & C Trust	The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals Charitable Trust
Macmillan	T.K. Maxx
Magnum Media	Toureen Mangan
Manulife Asset Management	Valeo Service
Michael Cornish Charitable Trust	Walcot Foundation
Microgaming Health and Care Trust	Wandsworth Grant Fund
Navigation Partners	Welsh Government - Sustainable Social Services Grants
NewDay	William A Cadbury Charitable Trust
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Stronger families brighter lives





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