

# Impact Family Services

## Annual Report 2009—2010



Family Support Services

Employed a Women's and Fathers Support Worker, a much needed service which focuses on families facing separation and relationship breakdown.

Specialist Contact Services

Entered into a contract with Cafcass to deliver a range of specialist contact services requiring qualified Social Workers

Impact  
Family  
Mediation  
Services

Family Mediation Service

Have experienced a 14% increase in referrals across the year we believe this is linked to extra pressures brought on relationships due to the recession.

**Sunderland**  
Anti Bullying Service



Anti Bullying Service

Have reached over 2032 children and young people and have offered 1-2-1 support to families around bullying issues

As my first year as chair draws to a close it is time to reflect what has been achieved. This year we set our largest budget ever, we continue to diversify our funding sources.

In addition to monies received from outside sources, we have increased our income from mediation and work carried out for Cafcass in the preparation of court reports and facilitating contact.

The trustees agreed with a plan that I proposed to make changes in the way the Board supported the service. We have reduced the number of Board meetings.

Regular monthly meetings are held with Hazel and myself and the vice chair.

Sub committees have been established to ensure full fiscal control and good governance of the charity. These changes have made the meetings of the trustees more effective.

I would like to thank the trustees for their support in bringing about these changes, especially the vice chair who has given her time and personal backing to the plan. I thank the trustees for giving their time and the contribution that they make to the wellbeing of the service. We continue to work towards achieving our strategic plan.

I wish to thank the staff without their hard work we would not have the excellent organisation that we do, without their dedication and commitment the service would not be as good as it is.

I had the good fortune to join them at their training day, it provided me with an opportunity to be able to meet with them. I was very impressed with their commitment to the service and their ideas as to how things might be developed.

They are a very enthusiastic staff and it shows in the quality of their work. I want to take this opportunity to thank Hazel our CEO, who works very hard for Impact. We have, I hope formed a very good working partnership, one that will I think take the service forward. I regard it as my task to ensure that Hazel receives the necessary support in carrying out her role.

Clearly the current economic situation will I know that this will provide an extra workload for Hazel and her team in seeking funding.

Like everyone I am aware that the Government are seeking to make more use of the voluntary sector. Given the specialised nature of the work that many charities are involved with there is only limited part that volunteers however well meaning can play.

If the sector is expected to replace public sector it will require funding. Much of the work can only be undertaken by specialist workers with the required skills to perform the task required. It is in my view essential that the sector receive funding.

To close on a positive note the service that Impact provides has helped many people and I am sure it will continue to do so in the years to come.

I look forward to my continued association with Impact and I wish thank everyone who has supported this service in the past year.

Keith Younghusband  
Chair

2009-10 saw both the Family Support Team and Family Mediation Service grow and develop considerably, enabling us to offer families facing separation and breakdown a range of support services.

This includes funding from Northern Rock Foundation to employ a Women's Support Worker, with a focus on supporting women where there have been issues of domestic abuse; a £10k donation from Sherburn Hospital Trust allowed us to commence the development of the fathers support worker two days week in July 2009, rising to a full time post in January 2010 when we were successful in securing 3 years funding from Tudor Trust.

Eighteen month funding from the Hardship Fund, a government initiative to support organisations seeing a rise in customers due to the recession, gave us a balanced budget and an opportunity to employ another full time social worker.

This then enabled us to assist Cafcass with their backlog as we undertook a range of Needs Wishes & Feelings Reports and Full Assessment Reports for the family courts.

In addition to this above we successfully delivered on our commissioned work from Cafcass, providing a range of contacts to suit individual family need.

Towards the latter part of the year we saw a rise in the number of referrals for Parenting Information Programmes as a contact activity under the Children & Adoption Act 2006 and we envisage this area to grow over the coming year.

In partnership with Barnardo's we continue to run the voluntary perpetrator programme for men who have been abusive in their intimate relationships and wish to change their behaviour.

The South Tyneside Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (STDAPP) received 55 referrals with 16 men successfully completing the programme and a number still engaged.

The Family Mediation Service experienced a 14% increase in referrals across the year, we believe linked to extra pressures brought on relationships due to the recession.

Our trainee Family Mediator Joyce Sloan successfully completed her portfolio and is now recognised as a Family Mediator by National Family Mediation (NFM) and the Family Mediation Council.

The Family Support Manager Steve Eales undertook the Family Mediation Training and is currently putting his portfolio of evidence together. We expect him to qualify by the end of March 2011 and will be training two further members of staff so that we have a flexible generic team of workers who can meet varying demands.

The Anti Bullying Service faced another uncertain year due to staff changes in the local authority, followed by long term sickness, meaning there was no statutory lead for the work.

Nevertheless the team worked with schools, enabling them to achieve Healthy School Status, AB Charter Marks and to combat bullying related issues.

This included piloting a Domestic Violence Peer Mentoring Programme in 3 schools on behalf of the Safer Sunderland Partnership.

The Service also saw a rapid increase in referrals for one to one support, highlighting a gap in service provision across the city. Impact Family Services were also commissioned by Safer Sunderland Partnership to deliver multi agency training on Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage. In total 3 days training were held, involving 82 participants. 2009/10 was a brilliant year for Impact Family Services, putting us at the forefront of quality support services for families in the North East.

A change of government brings a new set of challenges to the next financial year and I look forward to reporting to you in twelve months time!

*Family Support Services facilitated supported contact with a non resident parent and their children and offered much needed individual and group support to separated Mothers and Fathers.*

It has been another year of challenges for the Family Support Team and as in previous years the team has continued to produce positive and safe child contact sessions for children and their parents.

We continue to work from centres in Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland, with all three centres seeing an increase in referrals: in total we have had 167 families referred, including 212 children which is an increase on last year.

We have offered much needed individual and group support to separated Mothers and Fathers.

The Fathers Support Worker Paul Hedley has given support to 120 Fathers, 46 of whom requested regular support.

We piloted a parenting programme for Fathers who had completed The South Tyneside Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (STDAPP) and we intend to repeat this during 2010/11.

Our Mothers Support Worker Sharon Kane has supported 93 Women either individually and through groups, which included setting up a peer support group.

This year we started to deliver the Parenting Information Programme which is a programme for separating parents.

Referrals were initially slow, but we are now seeing a large increase in numbers.

Staff attended the National Association of Child Contact Centres AGM where we presented a workshop on supporting parents. The star of the conference was a service user who attended our centre in Sunderland and gave a speech on her experiences of using child contact centres.

A new development this year has been delivering training to outside agencies and services. To date we have trained 82 colleagues about Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages.

We have also delivered Domestic Violence awareness training to Junior Doctors.

Staff have been interviewed regarding the work we do and the articles were published in the Sunderland Echo, Northern Echo and the South Shields Gazette.

A staff member gave an interview about the Honour Based Violence training on a local ethnic minority radio station.

Areas for development next year include additional information on our website for parents and children and access to new child contact centres in Northumberland.

An Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) in Sunderland, a range of Contact Activities to support separating parents (PIP), Mediation Information and Perpetrator Programmes.

*Specialist Contact Services have worked with families providing contact for absent parents with their children and determining the wishes and feelings of children.*

Last year IMPACT Family Services entered into a contract with Cafcass to deliver a range of specialist contact services requiring qualified Social Workers to deliver and oversee the levels of work commissioned.

Therefore in February this year (2010) Lisa Arnell joined Suzanne Teasdale to carry out this work, alongside Chief Executive Hazel Brunton and three MSW students.

In February the team moved offices from St Luke's venue in Pallion, Sunderland to West Sunnyside office in Sunderland City Centre to accommodate Lisa and three student social workers, Alex James, Ian Sawyer and Kath Dent completed 30 extra reports for Cafcass and the Courts.

Since April 2009 in addition to ongoing private work we have worked with 82 families providing contact for 58 absent parents with their children and determining the wishes and feelings of 30 children. Undertaking this work as report writers both Suzanne and Lisa have travelled to various courts in Newcastle, Durham, and Scarborough Family Courts, to give evidence regarding contact and their recommendations.

We have carried out most of the work in Newcastle and Durham Cafcass offices which meant liaising and safety planning with Cafcass managers, office managers and admin staff.

As a result, built up good networks and working relationships with Cafcass, Solicitors and Courts who appreciate the work we have completed. Feedback from a District Judge relating to a specific case included a personal thank you for all our hard work.

*Anti Bullying Service has delivered 112 sessions across primary and secondary schools in Sunderland reaching over 2032 children and young people.*

The Anti Bullying Service is a unique service which supports children, parents, schools and other professionals on bullying issues:

During 2009-10 the Anti Bullying Service developed new intervention packages to work in schools, which included a key worker ½ day per week. The Service delivered 28 courses (112) sessions across primary and secondary schools.

ABS were commissioned by Sunderland's Anti Bullying Strategic group to support the development of the City's first Young People's Anti Bullying Policy. The policy will be published later this year and will be used to support the needs of children and young people and to offer guidance to those who are victims of bullying.

We have also supported over 45 referrals to the service for 1-2-1 work with vulnerable children, supporting them back into school.

This was a sharp rise to previous referrals and highlighted a gap in services available to children and young people across the city.

The Service was also asked to provide training to the Community Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and the Behaviour Support Team.

ABS have offered individual support to schools across the city to work towards achieving an Anti Bullying Charter Mark Standard and supported school councils in updating and rewriting a child friendly Anti Bullying policy using the schools existing policies.

During the year we have worked to develop additional courses such as domestic abuse and alcohol misuse peer mentoring programmes Which have shown clear links with bullying behaviour and peer pressure.

Altogether, ABS work has reached over 2032 children and young people via courses.

We have also supported teaching staff and other services to support children and young people to raise awareness and to respond to bullying incidents.

ABS work has made a positive impact on the children and young people who engage with the service.

The service we offer empowers children and young people to make positive changes in their behaviour and how they interact with their peers.

The pupils have used the skills they have learned to become peer mentors and peer mediators within their schools.

ABS was commissioned by the Strategic group to organise a National Anti Bullying Conference during Anti Bulling week. Over 250 pupils attended the day and completed the 'Voice It' survey.

The results from the survey were used to provide information to services on how safe children and young people felt within schools and in their communities.

*The Family Mediation service has a high success rate in mediating successful outcomes, facilitating contact between children their separated parents whilst improving parental communication and reducing conflict.*

The mediation service has had a successful year, with an increase in income generated from previous years.

Key achievements have been gaining a new three year contract to deliver publicly funded mediation (from October 2010) and the development of service delivery in Gateshead.

The mediation service manager has presented workshops at the National Family Mediation conferences in London and York.

Joyce Sloan is to be congratulated on achieving accreditation to deliver publicly funded mediation. The service is supported by a team of dedicated mediators and administrators, all of whom have worked hard to maintain high-quality service delivery.

Ashleigh Blackburn returned from maternity leave three days a week and the service has now employed Henry Hardy two days a week to maintain the high administration workload.

The service has a very high success rate in mediating successful outcomes, facilitating contact between children and their separated parents whilst improving parental communication and reducing conflict.

This forthcoming year the service aims to consolidate and increase its service provision in Gateshead, to develop direct work with children and young people, and to develop work mediating between young people and their parents.

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## **Impact Child Contact Centre & Family Support Services**

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## **Sunderland Anti Bullying Service**

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[www.impactfs.org](http://www.impactfs.org)

### **Our Funders and Partners**



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