



CUMBRIA FAMILY SUPPORT

Business Plan 2023-2026

Cumbria Family Support
The Office
Mardale Rd
Penrith
CA11 9EH

Registered Charity Number 1085861
Registered Company Number 4151545

Telephone No 01768 593102

E mail: info@cumbriafamilysupport.org.uk
Website: www.cumbriafamilysupport.org.uk

CONTENTS

	Page Number
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Purpose of This Business Plan	3
3. Mission Statement	3
4. The History of the Charity	4
5. The Strategic Aims of Cumbria Family Support	5
6. Organisational Outcomes	5
7. The Current Position	7
• Service provision	7
• Staff	8
• Volunteers	8
• Governance	9
8. Service Objectives 2020 2023	10
9. Resourcing the Strategy	12
10. Managing the Business Plan	12
11. Operational objectives	12
Appendix 1 Evidence of Continuing Need for the Service	13
Appendix 2 Operational Objectives	15

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Business Plan sets out the current position of Cumbria Family Support (CFS) in the Eden, Carlisle and Allerdale areas and details the strategic aims of the Charity for the next three years.

The Charity is now 30 years old and provides services to approximately 200 families a year (supporting nearly 350-400 children and 300 adults). It has 13 funded staff posts and provides a range of needs-led services to its users.

CFS continues to raise funds from a variety of sources and identify new income streams. This Plan sets out planned activity for the next three years centred on agreed objectives aimed at continuing and improving current services.

We are committed to maintaining and continually improving our services over the next three years. We will achieve this by continuing to train and support our staff and volunteers, by working in partnership with other agencies and listening to what parents and children tell us. Our expansion plans are currently limited to an additional Contact Centre based in the Workington/Maryport area serving West Cumberland, but we will use our experience and expertise to advice and support other providers developing family support services in Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness as appropriate as well as looking to opportunities presented by the recent Local Government review and subsequent Local Authority boundary changes. We will continue to further develop our monitoring systems so that we have quality information available to evidence the effective work we do and continue to raise our profile so that referrers, families and potential funders are aware of the services we provide.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS BUSINESS PLAN

This document is a three year Business Plan, covering an exciting period for the Charity. The purpose of this plan is to:

- Provide a clear strategic plan for the period 2023-2026
- Set objectives in support of the strategic aims so that activity can be prioritised accordingly
- Develop monitoring and evaluation systems to support future applications for funding, and to be ready in three years' time for the next round of funding.

3. MISSION STATEMENT

Cumbria Family Support helps families with children in Cumbria to get through difficult times. Our staff and trained volunteers provide support to families in their own homes until their difficulties have passed.

4. THE HISTORY OF THE CHARITY

CFS was set up in 1993 in response to a need identified by statutory workers involved with young families. Social Workers were coming under increasing pressure to prioritise their service delivery, targeting families at the point of break down. Health Visitors were identifying families under stress but had little time to help them in practical terms until they reached crisis point.

The timeline below charts the development of the charity over the last 30 years:



5. STRATEGIC AIMS OF CUMBRIA FAMILY SUPPORT

CFS operates as an independent registered Charity (number 1085861) with a Board of Trustees. It is registered with Companies House as a charitable company limited by guarantee (number 4151545). The Charity supports families in Cumbria with children up to 18 years of age who are experiencing difficult times. A team of 60-70 volunteers and employed staff offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families in difficulty in their homes helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

In furtherance of the objectives the charity may:-

- Provide family support to disadvantaged families in a non-stigmatised, non-judgemental practical manner.
- Train and support volunteer befrienders working on behalf of the Charity.
- Work in partnership with children, parents, carers and other agencies to improve the quality of life for families supported by the charity.
- Co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objectives or similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them

The main emphasis of the services provided is centred on support for individual families in their own home. We also provide support to children and parents/carers by way of delivering group work sessions such as the "Best Buddies" (supported in partnership with other voluntary sector organisations). We also run three Supported Contact Centres, again delivered in the main through the support of a volunteer workforce.

6. ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES

- 1) **Children will experience increased emotional resilience and emotional well being, resulting in them having improved relationships, self esteem and confidence.**

Indicators

Children will:

- Show noticeably improved relationships within the family and with peers
- Experience greater levels of self esteem
- Have a greater level of understanding of their situation
- Make sense of what is happening in their family
- Have more strategies for coping
- Be able to say how they feel and what they want clearly.

- 2) Children and their families will have improved involvement in their communities and will therefore experience a reduction in isolation and social deprivation.**

Indicators

Children and their families will:

- Feel able and confident to participate actively in their communities
- Feel able to attend social events
- School attendance will improve
- Children as well as their families will have increasing numbers of friends
- Feel part of their community
- Feel they have a voice and a sense of belonging within a greater social environment.

- 3) Children will feel confident in the way they are parented and feel safe in their homes and communities.**

Indicators

Children will:

- Be showing positive changes in mood and emotional well-being within the family
- Feel physically as well as emotionally safe and secure
- Have improved and more acceptable behaviour
- Have an understanding of what is expected of them

In order to demonstrate the achievement of these three outcomes, the charity uses “Outcomes Star” which is an evidence-based tool for measuring and supporting change when working with people. The outcomes above are all captured in the various elements of the Star and are service user led.

- 4) Volunteers will experience a positive impact on their personal development, health and well being, community involvement and engagement with the labour market.**

Indicators

Volunteers will:

- Have greater self-confidence and learn new skills
- Have a sense of achievement
- Make a contribution to their community.

We will evidence the achievement of this outcome through an annual survey of volunteers.

5) Cumbria Family Support will contribute to influencing, in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector organisations, the development and delivery of high-quality services to children and families in Cumbria.

Indicators

CFS will:

- Engage with local community groups and rural networks
- Work in partnership and contribute to multiagency training with local voluntary and statutory organisations to develop common best practice across the county
- Represent the voluntary sector on strategic county groups.

This outcome will be demonstrated through involvement with key strategic groups, including (but not limited to) Cumbria Voluntary Sector Reference Group and those emanating from Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership e.g. Early Help sub-group.

7. THE CURRENT POSITION

7a. SERVICE PROVISION

Referrals for the service come from Health, Social Work, families themselves and other voluntary and statutory agencies. Attendance at the Early Help Panels in Carlisle, Eden and Allerdale have ensured that families have a choice and receive the right service.

Home based support - Volunteers and employed Family Support Workers visit families in their own homes. Tailor made packages of support which are needs-led are developed and delivered through a Family Support Plan. The plans and outcomes are reviewed on a regular basis.

The Contact Centres in Eden, Carlisle and Kendal offer supported contact between children from 0-18 years of age and their non-resident parent.

Family Links Nurture programme is delivered on a one-to-one basis in family homes.

Specialist Family Support Advice is provided for approximately 6-12 week for families experiencing difficulties due to a family member's neurodivergence or Learning Disability

Support when dealing with Grief we now can provide short term support for families affected by loss.

7b. STAFF

As of April 2023 there are 13 staff employed in the organisation, plus one vacant post. The staff team overall represents approximately 9.5 full time equivalent posts. Some of the posts are temporary and also part time. We have the following roles in the organisation at present.

Post Title	Role
Chief Executive Officer/Company Secretary	Ensures that the Charity adheres to all relevant legislation including Charity and Companies law and to take day to day responsibility for the management and development of the Charity on behalf of the Trustees.
Office Manager	Ensures that all financial and administrative procedures are adhered to. To provide administrative support to the CEO. To provide a welcoming first contact point for families and professionals.
Family Support Coordinator	Assess the needs of families, develop and monitor packages of support, coordinate the delivery of home-based support. Also to facilitate group provision as necessary. Support and supervise volunteers.
Family Support Worker	Provide home based support to individual families and develop and provide group based services where needed.
Contact Centre Coordinators	Coordinates the Contact Centres in conjunction with volunteers liaising with referrers, families and NACCC.
Specialist Family Support Adviser	Provides support to paid staff, volunteers and families in respect of advice, guidance, signposting and resources regarding; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurodivergences, Learning Disabilities and Difficulties • Loss and Bereavement
Volunteer and Project Support Officer	Provides administration and coordination for the activities of the CFS's volunteers, and similarly administration and coordination for specific projects as required. Recruits new volunteers.
SENDAC Coordinator	CFS hosts SENDAC (parent carer forum)- primarily by way of acting as the employer for their Coordinator and being the financially accountable body. CFS has no day-to-day operational involvement beyond this with SENDAC but does provide advice and guidance as requested.

7c VOLUNTEERS

The Charity is fortunate to retain many volunteers for long periods of time, some have even been with the Charity from its inception. However, there is an inevitable turnover of volunteers as their personal lives and commitments change. Additionally, there are now many more opportunities for volunteers to move on into paid work in a variety of positions within the children and families' workforce. Thus there is an ongoing need to recruit new volunteers to maintain our base of approximately 50-60 trained volunteers. Volunteers predominantly deliver home-based support

and Contact Centre sessions. However in recognition that we may not always be offering opportunities that meet prospective volunteer's interests we have, in 2022, introduced a range of other volunteering options such as Group Work facilitator, Volunteer ambassador, Homework buddy etc. For some families support delivered by a trained volunteer is perceived as less threatening and stigmatising.

The Charity's trustees are volunteers responsible for the strategic and financial sustainability of the Charity.

7d GOVERNANCE

Trustees

The charity has a Board of Trustees currently comprising eleven Trustees. The Company Secretary/Chief Executive Officer attends the meetings which are held approximately every eight weeks. The trustees bring a range of skills and experience to the Charity.

The role of the Trustees is to:

- Ensure the financial probity of the Charity and ensure that financial management is effective and robust.
- Ensure that all relevant policies are adhered to and implemented correctly including safeguarding, health and safety, equality and diversity and environmental sustainability.
- Provide practical help, support and advice to the Chief Executive Officer/Company Secretary and staff, ensuring that they are held accountable for the implementation of this plan, achievement of outcomes, and quality of performance.
- Dedicate time at specific meetings to receive information on performance, implementation of the business plan, achievement of outcomes, and quality of performance.
- Act as ambassadors of the Charity, helping it to make links with partner organisations and potential funders.
- Share individual skills and expertise with staff as appropriate.
- Trustees should pay careful attention to the governance arrangements that relate to the members of CFS
- Ensure that the rights and role within the Charity of each member are clearly set out.
- Ensure that the role of members is fully understood
- Ensure effective means of communication with all members are in place
- Ensure the membership list is up to date
- Ensure that the governance arrangements are regularly reviewed, including the number of members

8. SERVICE OBJECTIVES 2023-2024

The following service objectives have been set out following a review of the Charity’s current position, local needs, and changes within the children’s services sector. This plan sets out activity for the next three years, centred around eight agreed objectives aimed at continuing current services and incremental development of new provision.

Strategic Objectives Green= Priority for year 1 Amber = Priority for years 1 Blue = Priority for years 2-3	Rationale
1: CFS will have a strong, valued and respected offer for family support; including being able to engage with “harder to help” families	We are the only organisation that provides holistic services to the whole family and do so without time limits. We know from our families and referrers that this is an essential service and is effective in engaging families that are not able to access more focused provision. We are a well-placed organisation to influence the development of the new Family Hubs. We need to continue to evidence the positive impact of our work.
2: We will ensure that CFS enables parents to increase their confidence and skills to allow them to be the best parents they can be	Many of our families struggle with the daily challenge of parenting. This is often because of other factors such as living with Mental Health difficulties, Neurodivergence conditions, Learning Difficulties and experiencing past trauma including Domestic Abuse. Our parenting support is vital to them, and they engage well in the 1-1 provision we provide.
3: We will ensure that CFS can further understand the impact of rural isolation for families and respond accordingly	Many of the families we work with experience isolation. However, this is often most evident by way of social isolation. We have recognised that the many families we support in rural areas may have other challenges that, beyond our offer being home based i.e., bringing service to them, we do want to understand and respond more to the challenges specifically of rurality where needed.
4: We will ensure that CFS has raised sufficient funds to sustain and further evolve the organisation beyond the current strategic plan, including linking in with others to understand opportunities and risks in relation to the new Cumberland and, Westmorland & Furness Local Authorities	With the impact of the pandemic, and the cost of living crisis our families are needing us for longer and often for more practical support. We have growing waiting lists due to increased demands. Whilst we have secured funding for 2023 and beyond, we need to continue to build on this for a secure future and one that can offer potential geographical expansion as a result of changed Local Authority boundaries and new opportunities.

<p>5: CFS will continue to work as a specialist generalist Family Support service, as well as developing access to “expertise” in specialist support services; particularly in relation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mental health - LDD /neurodivergent needs - Substance misuse - Gender Dysphoria 	<p>The families we support present with many complex needs. Access to specialist services can be compromised by way of a number of reasons e.g Long waiting lists, no local provisions, and, often the family members have other needs such as mental health difficulties that impact on their ability to access any available provision.</p> <p>It can therefore be tempting to seek to develop our own specialist services through partnership/new funding bids etc. However, CFS recognises its unique position, and one that has received significant positive feedback from families and referrers, in offering generic whole family support.</p> <p>Our objective is therefore to maintain our generic services, but continue to seek ways in which we can help families gain better access to services with particular specialist roles such as seeking funding to “buy in” time from others / arrange for dedicated clinics/surgeries etc.</p>
<p>6: CFS will continue to be recognised for our role in early intervention, increasing our reputation as a key support for adults as parents; linking in with the wider Public Health agenda</p>	<p>Often families can experience emerging needs that become apparent to services out with the children’s workforce such as Adult Mental Health, Adult Social Care etc. Not only does the work we do improve outcomes for children, it is often achieved by improving the lives of parents. The support we provide in terms of befriending, practical aid, exploring healthy lifestyles etc is linked closely with the priorities of the wider Public Health Services; we therefore feel it is important to link closer with those services.</p>
<p>7: CFS develops an approach which allows Lived Experience to enhance the delivery of our work</p>	<p>There is growing evidence that lived experience in the workforce is really important to delivering a trauma informed approach. At CFS we are conscious that we have many volunteers, paid staff and Trustees who have direct experience of the types of difficulties that our supported families face. We therefore aim to find a supportive way to harness this experience that is both beneficial to our supported families, and to our workforce.</p>
<p>8: CFS is an organisation recognised for ensuring, wherever possible, we minimise our carbon footprint and use of single use plastic</p>	<p>We cover a large geographical area in Cumbria Family Support. We have recognised that we need to ensure we are mindful of the impact our work can have on the environment by way of carbon footprint. Alongside this, in response to numerous times that children and young people have highlighted climate change as a priority, we are committed to taking action where we can to reduce our impact on the environment.</p>

9. RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

We have been able to meet our reserves policy for the last three years and continue to project our funding accordingly.

We have secured funding from the new Local Authorities (Cumberland, and, Westmorland & Furness) for our Targeted Family Support Contract which we have delivered on over recent years. This is a one year contract with the potential for a year's extension. We also have secured funding from several other sources which means we have funding in place at the start of 2023-2024 that will enable full operational delivery; and also have some multi year funding secured beyond April 2024. We have other funding applications in progress with funders which have been successful in recent years and we will continue to identify other new sources of funding during the life of this plan.

The development of a new three year funding strategy is a priority.

10. MANAGING THE BUSINESS PLAN

This Business Plan will help to guide prioritising and decision making during the next three years. It will be reviewed bi-annually by the Board of Trustees to reflect changes and achievements and to measure progress. The content of the Plan represents the views of staff, volunteers, parents and trustees. The Plan is a strategic approach to service development and can be used as evidence to potential funders.

11. OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES 2023-24

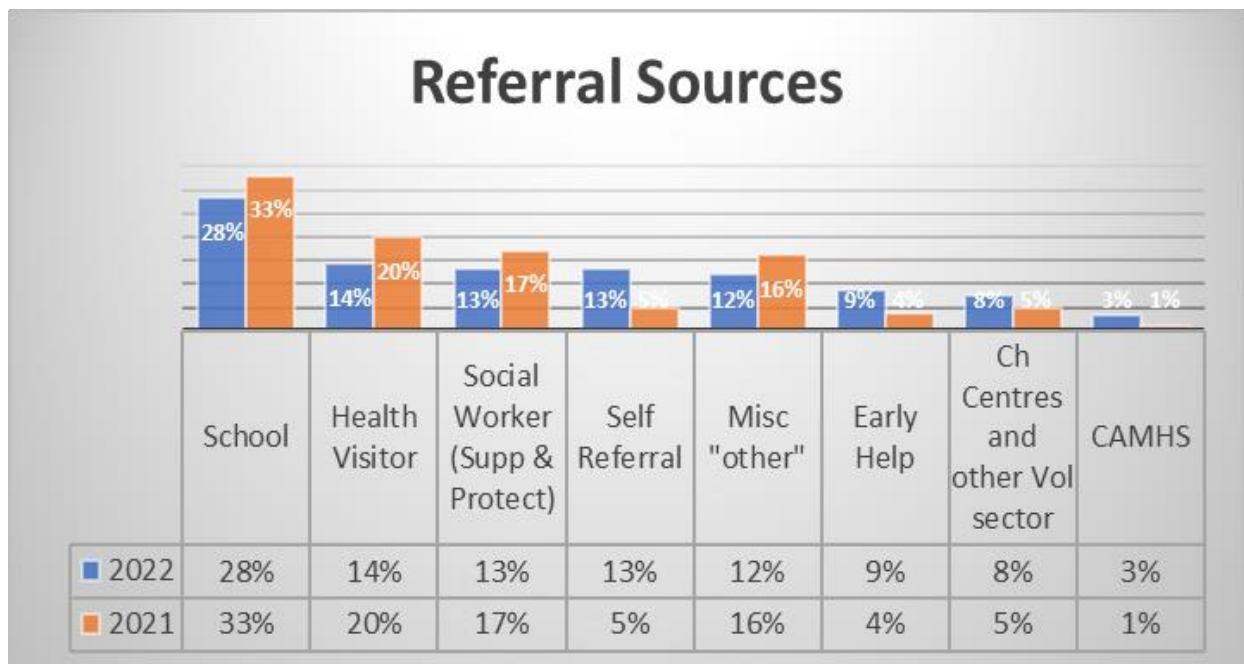
Appendix 2 details the operational objective for our work in 2023-2024, enabling CFS to monitor progress and impact across the year.

Appendix 1

EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING NEED FOR OUR SERVICE

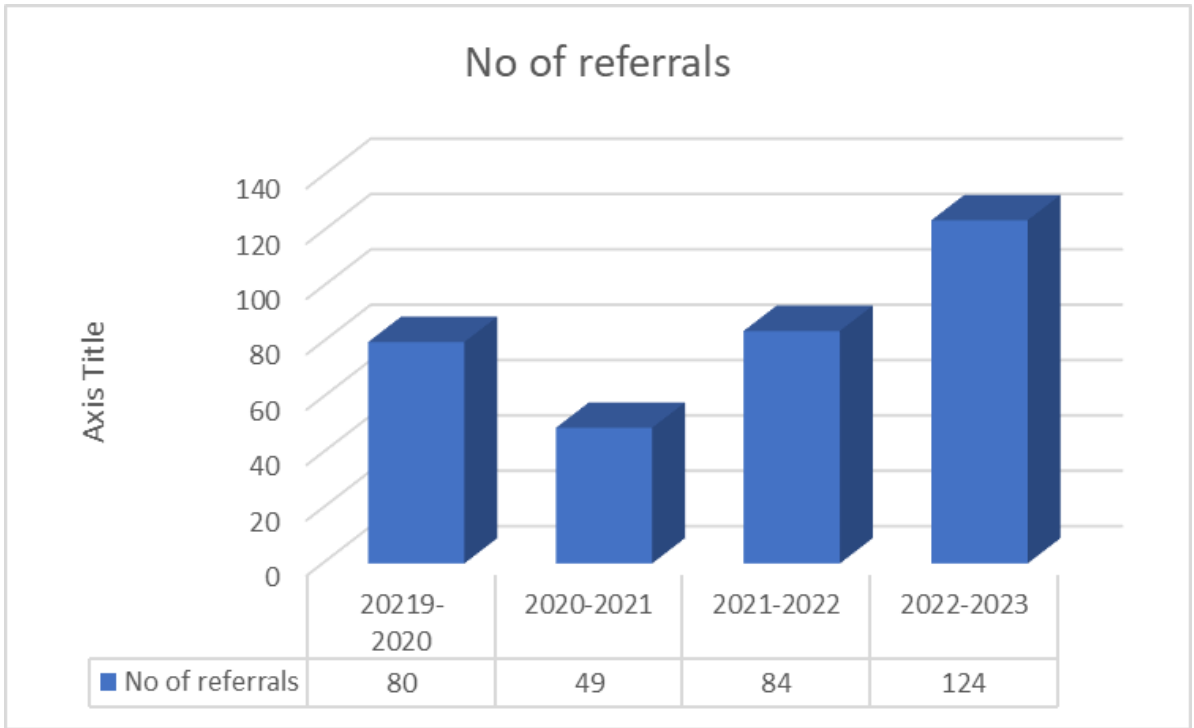
The demand for the service provided by Cumbria Family Support (CFS) has increased steadily since its inception in 1993. In 1993 we supported 12 families; we now support approximately 100 families on an individual basis at any one time.

Based on experience and trends in the growth of the demands in the service to date, we anticipate the need and demand for our service will continue to increase over the next three years. The charity began in a response to needs identified by Social Workers and Health Visitors who did not have the resources to meet those needs at the time. This is still the case today with resources becoming increasingly depleted over the years, although it is notable that there has been a recent shift to schools being the most common source of referral- accounting for over a quarter of referrals both in 2021 and 2022.

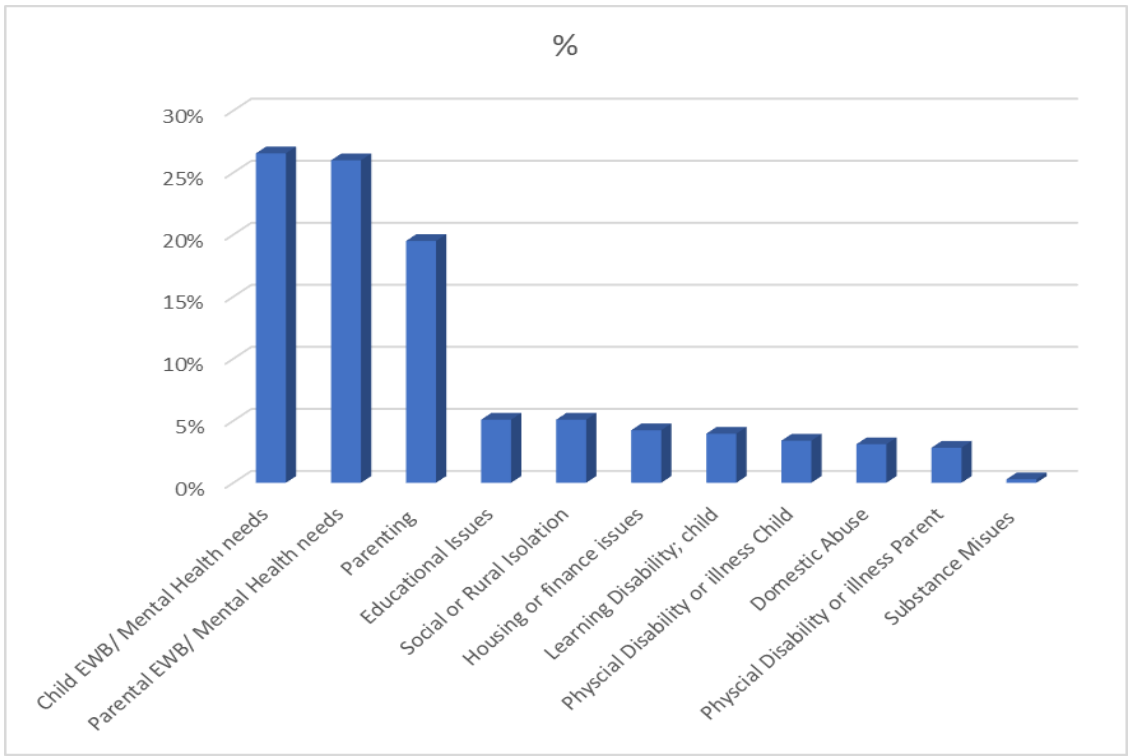


The number of potential users of the service is not easy to define as many factors come into play over a period of time which affect a family's ability to cope in difficult times.

As can be seen in the table below, the number of families referred to CFS has steadily increased over the last four years, except for the initial period where the Covid pandemic understandably impacted on this:



In terms of the presenting initial needs of for the families we support, the last four years have seen Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and / or Parenting as the top three reasons for referral. As a percentage of all referrals in each year, they have consistently related to the reason for the majority of referrals: this is the summary of 2022 referral reasons:



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES 2023-24

APPENDIX 2

Strategic Objective	Objectives agreed
<p>1 CFS will have a strong, valued and respected offer for family support; including being able to engage with “harder to help” families</p>	<p>(1) All our partner and family information clearly demonstrates our offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An “open ended offer” - Is targeted at prevention/Early Help - Is flexible - Is primarily delivered in families’ homes
	<p>(2) We will commence process of external accreditation/ evaluation</p>
	<p>(3) We will effectively utilise learning to understand the needs of all families including those who do not engage with support, using said learning to further improve our offer</p>
	<p>(4) We will consistently demonstrate the positive impact we have for families</p>
<p>2 We will ensure that CFS enables parents to increase their confidence and skills to allow them to be the best parents they can be</p>	<p>(1) 30% of families to engage with 1-1 sessions via the Parenting Links nurturing programme</p>
	<p>(2) We will set up at least 2 blocks of 6weeks Parents Together support groups in each delivery area and include an evaluation process</p>
	<p>(3) We will enable separated parents to better communicate and work collaboratively to enable their children to thrive when there is shared care</p>
<p>3 We will ensure that CFS can further understand the impact of rural isolation for families and respond accordingly</p>	<p>(1) We will undertake research to understand the impact of rurality for our families</p>
	<p>(2) We will develop an action plan for CFS to</p>
	<p>(3) Pro-actively address rural isolation for our families</p>
	<p>(4) Review and further develop our reach into rural areas</p>
<p>4 We will ensure that CFS has raised sufficient funds to sustain and further evolve the organisation beyond the current strategic plan, including linking in with others to understand opportunities and risks in relation to the new Cumberland and, Westmorland & Furness Local Authorities</p>	<p>(1) There will be a 3 year funding plan including resources required for its delivery</p>
	<p>(2) We will ensure those with influence understand the important role CFS plays in supporting families, through maximising opportunities to increase exposure to key strategic leaders i.e. the 2 new Chief Executives and Directors of Children’s Services, and, Local MPs</p>
	<p>(3) Undertake a gap analysis Mapping and understand similar organisations, and identify collaborative opportunities</p>

<p>5 CFS will continue to work as a specialist generalist Family Support service, as well as developing access to “expertise” in specialist support services; particularly in relation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mental health - LDD /neurodivergent needs - Substance misuse - Gender Dysphoria 	(1) Training will address sufficiently the skills for the whole staff (paid and volunteer) delivery team
	(2) We will identify options for access to “expert” support for our families
<p>6 CFS will continue to be recognised for our role in early intervention, increasing our reputation as a key support for adults as parents; linking in with the wider Public Health agenda</p>	(1) We will consolidate the opportunities presented by CFS being a partner in the Allerdale Hub (and other areas as opportunities arise)
	(2) We will offer support and advice to adult mental health about a “whole family approach”