

Cumbria Family Support Ltd
ANNUAL REVIEW 2022 to 2023

SPECIAL 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION!



Registered in England Number 4151545
Registered Charity Number 1085861

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Welcome

I am delighted to be presenting this review as the Chair of Trustees - I have had the privilege to have been chair for almost two years, the time has flown by. I am particularly honoured to be the Chair of this Charity as we celebrate its 30th anniversary - a real milestone in our history!

We have again had magnificent support from local communities and other funders to enable our continued delivery of services and growth, and as you will read later in the report, have seen an unprecedented increase in the number of requests for support for families. I am very pleased we have been able to grow our capacity to support significantly more families this year.

Our staff and volunteers have an impressive range of experience and we have been able to strengthen this by the appointment of a specialist in learning difficulties and development. For a number of years we have wanted to appoint a Team Leader to strengthen the support we give the staff team and this year we have been able to do that. We have also appointed a Volunteer Coordinator who will focus on increasing and supporting our volunteers.

This year saw us bidding a fond farewell to a long-standing team member, Sarah Craig who supported so many families in Eden during her 27 years with the organisation. We also saw Sara Dawson leaving to return to full time teaching.

In this review you will read about some of the new services we have developed and how helpful families and children have found them. We were thrilled to open a child contact centre in Allerdale earlier in the year. Safe and supportive venues for parents to spend time with their children are few and far between in the County and we are proud that the support of our staff and volunteers means we are able to offer this service in four centres now.

We have continued to evolve and grow as a Trustee group and were delighted to appoint Stacey McCabe in Spring 2023. Stacey brings experience of working in education to the Trustee group. We are saying goodbye to Allan Buckley, one of our longstanding Trustees, who will be missed by all of us. Allan has been a Trustee for 10 years. Allan brought a wealth of experience as a retired Deputy Director of Social Services and a former Chair of Local Safeguarding Board. He was always first to volunteer for any working groups and spent many hours drafting and reviewing our policies.

We are also saying goodbye to Deb Royston our Chief Officer. Deb joined us just before the covid outbreak in 2020. In the time Deb has been with us she has made a significant contribution. She ensured that we continued to support families throughout the pandemic, expanded and developed our services, and this year has skilfully implemented the changes in our staffing structure.

Cumbria Family Support attracts high calibre staff and I believe that is because of its outstanding reputation for its work with families. I am very pleased that we have appointed Lynsey Buckle as the new Chief Officer. Lynsey will join us in the new year.

It is important to report that we have remained a "going concern" with income available to cover our financial commitments and confidence that we can meet the requirements of our funders. With the help of our Treasurer, we monitor our financial position closely and are careful not to commit to long term

expenditure that we may not be able to fund. We are committed to widening our sources of funding to ensure our future sustainability.

Finally I want to thank all of those who make the support we give families of the highest standard. Without our staff, volunteers, fellow Trustees, funders and stakeholders this would not be achievable.

Christine Renouf, Chair of Trustees



Our Trustees

Dot Metcalf:

Trustee since 2015.

Previous Chair of Trustees

Retired Social Services Manager with experience of working in the voluntary sector with a continued commitment to the welfare of children.

Christine Renouf:

Trustee since 2018.

Chair of Trustees

Retired Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Advocacy Service, previously worked for the NSPCC and the Probation Service. Committed to the value of Family Support.

Karen Morland:

Trustee since

2010.

Trustee Lead for Health & Safety Significant management & business experience. Previously Chair of the management committee.

Allan Buckley:

Trustee since 2014.

Vice Chair

Retired Deputy Director of Social Services for Rochdale. Previously trustee for Primary Care Trust and Chair of Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Peter Harrington:

Trustee since 2010.

Treasurer

Chartered Accountant for over 23 years.



Venetia Young:

Trustee since 2017.

Trustee Lead for Safeguarding Retired GP specialising in Mental Health and Safeguarding Lead for Adults. Trained Family Therapist. Co-author of the book "Ten minutes for the family".

Andrew Hill:

Trustee since 2020.

Trustee Lead for Contact Centres Specialist Family Lawyer with over 25 years' experience working in Kendal and Carlisle. Member of the Law Society's Family Law Panel (advanced) specialising in Financial Claims and Private Children law cases.

Mary Edwards:

Trustee since 2020.

Trustee Lead for Parent's Forum

Deacon in the Anglican Church in Penrith, and part of the Churches Together in Penrith network.

Walter McCulloch:

Trustee since 2022.

Lengthy history of senior management within Children's Social Care ranging from Safeguarding, Youth Justice, Youth Work, and Social Work. A lead for Signs of Safety in previous Local Authorities.

Stacey McCabe:

Trustee since 2022.

Current Deputy Head of a Virtual School (Local Authority service to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for children in care, previously in care, or on the Edge of Care). Over 20 years' experience in Education / school settings

Sue Walker:

Trustee since 2020

Volunteer Representative Many years' experience as a Volunteer with Cumbria Family Support and currently volunteering also with Salvation Army

Our Team

At Cumbria Family Support (CFS) we are fortunate to have a wonderful staff team. Between them the paid staff team have worked for CFS for over 50 years! Our structure is detailed below and on the next page you can see the "real people"- always good to put a name to a face!

Our paid and volunteer staff team continue to bring a wealth of experience to the organisation:

- We have members of our paid staff team who:
 - Are qualified and registered Social Workers
 - Are specialist in Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
 - Are qualified in Childcare
 - Have significant professional expertise in Learning & Development
 - Have significant residential care experience
 - Have significant experience in recruiting and training volunteers....and much much more!
- Two of our previous Student Social Workers have been successful in securing part time roles with us, complimenting their Social Work journeys.
- 4 of 13 people employed by CFS in a paid capacity started their journey with us as CFS Volunteers.
- Our CEO who joined in late January 2020 has over 25 years' experience working in the statutory and voluntary sector, primarily in Criminal Justice and Youth Offending. She also has a number of years' experience leading Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding work for the Local Authority's Children's Services.
- Our volunteer workforce includes retired teachers, youth workers, specialist advisory teachers, higher level teaching assistant, youth court bench chair, and many who have relevant other personal or professional experience to bring the role.

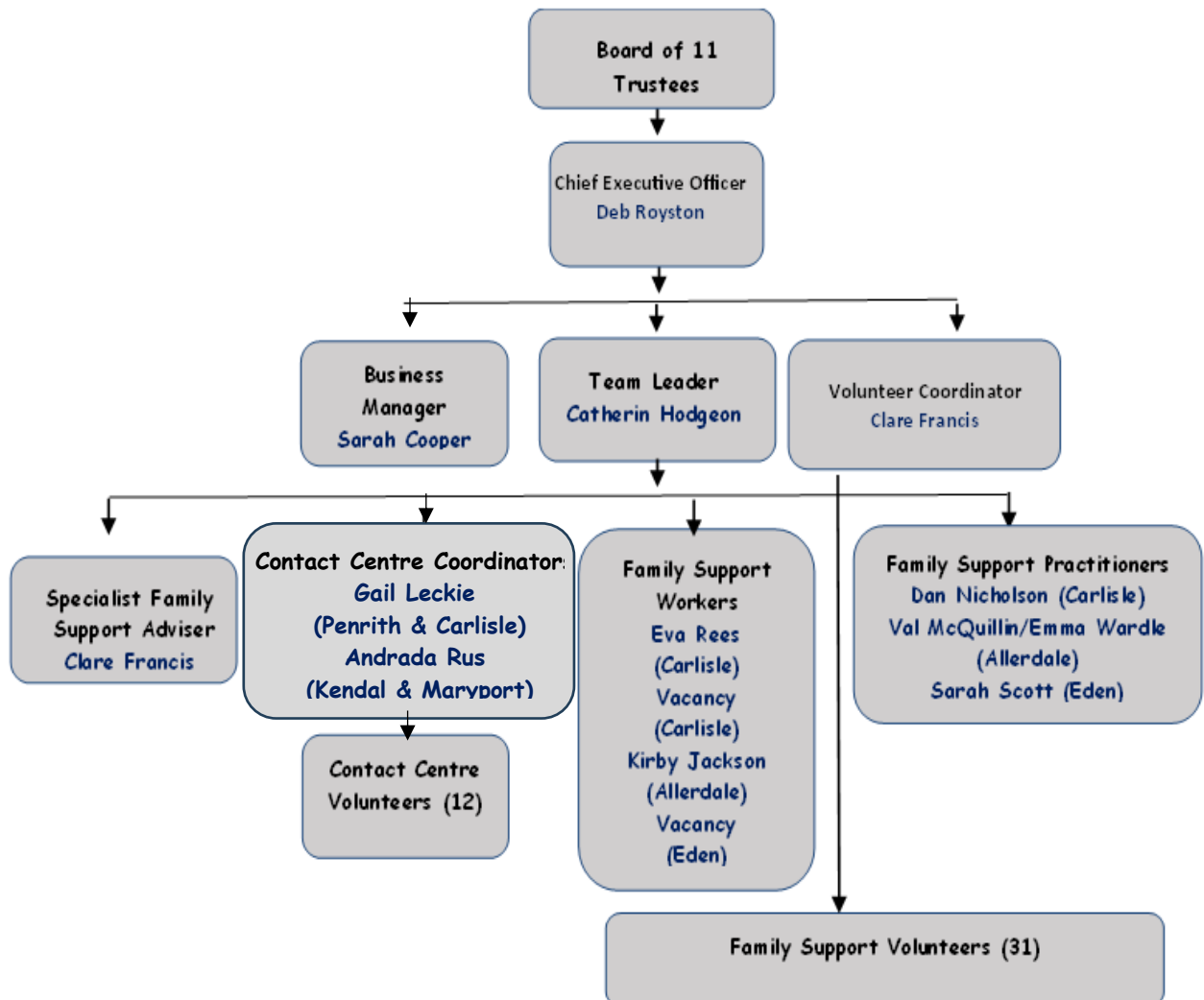
During 2022-203 we reviewed a number of areas of our delivery, including the range and types of roles we have. In Summer 2023 we implemented the outcome of our staffing review. This say key changes to our staff roles:

- Our Office Manager role was replaced by a Business Manager role
- Introduced a Team Leader role
- Introduced a Volunteer Coordinator role
- Our Family Support Coordinators became Family Support Practitioners

The impact of the above is designed to be:

- Increasing practice oversight and therefore aid more effective support to our children and families
- Strengthening the safeguarding capacity in the team
- Enabling us to utilise data and family feedback more to inform our practice
- Increasing the number of volunteers we can recruit and utilise to support more families
- Strengthening the ways in which we can gain the voice of children and young people and help them shape our work..

The chart below gives an overview of the new structure and on the next page you can put faces to names, after all we are very much focused on people at Cumbria Family Support!





Sarah Cooper
Business Manager



Deb Royston
Chief Executive Officer



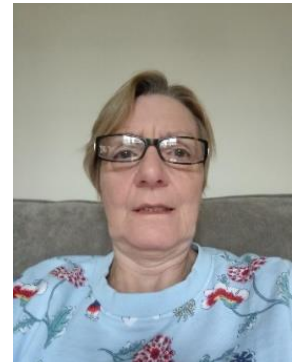
Catherine Hodgeon
Team Leader



Andrada Rus,
Kendal & Allerdale Contact
Centre Coordinator



Gail Leckie
Eden & Carlisle Contact
Centre Coordinator



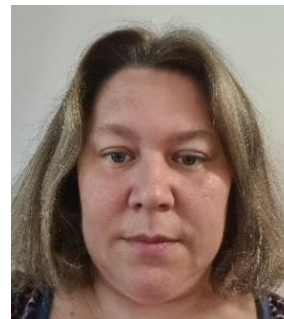
Clare Francis
Specialist Family Support Advisor
& Volunteer Coordinator



Dan Nicholson,
Family Support
Practitioner; Carlisle



Val McQuillin
Family Support
Practitioner; Allerdale



Emma Wardle
Family Support Worker, Eden &
Family Support Coordinator,
Allerdale



Sarah Scott
Family Support
Practitioner; Eden



Eva Rees
Family Support
Worker; Carlisle



Vacant
Family Support
Worker Carlisle



Vacant
Empowering Families
Officer; Carlisle
Youth Zone



Kirby Jackson
Family Support
Worker; Allerdale



Vacant
Family Support
Worker Eden

Moving Forwards and new opportunities

What a year we have seen! Building on from Christine's introduction, it is wonderful to see how we have been able to not only maintain but enhance and deliver our services over the last 12 months. In the 3 ½ years since I joined the organisation the 12 months from July 2022 to this summer have felt almost like we have been able to focus less on "coping with Covid" (not that it isn't still affecting ourselves and others), and more on development and looking forward. This has not only allowed us to review and develop the roles our staff team have, we have also updated our Quality Standards and Training Policy. Both will help us continue to update and further enhance the impact of the work we do.

At the end of last year's review, we highlighted 5 key new developments we hoped to report successfully upon in this year's review. How did we do....?

What we hoped for.....

- (1) We have just started our new Parent Support Groups- the first round of these will conclude in November and we will look forward to telling you next year about how much the parents have benefited from them and that we have run several more.
- (2) We have recently started a pilot Art Therapy programme- we look forward to telling you about how well this has gone and the support we have been able to provide to parents.
- (3) Having recently been successful in a funding application to Allerdale GDF Community Partnership, we now have funding to develop and deliver a supported Child Contact Centre in Allerdale from January 2023.
- (4) As part of the above funding, we will also be joining the West Cumbria Local Focus Hub - helping to deliver even more wrap around and "whole family" support with a range of new partners.
- (5) We will know in the next few months if we have been successful in our partnership bid alongside Carlisle Youth Zone to recruit an Empowering Families Officer, employed by CFS and based in the Youth Zone.

How have we done.....

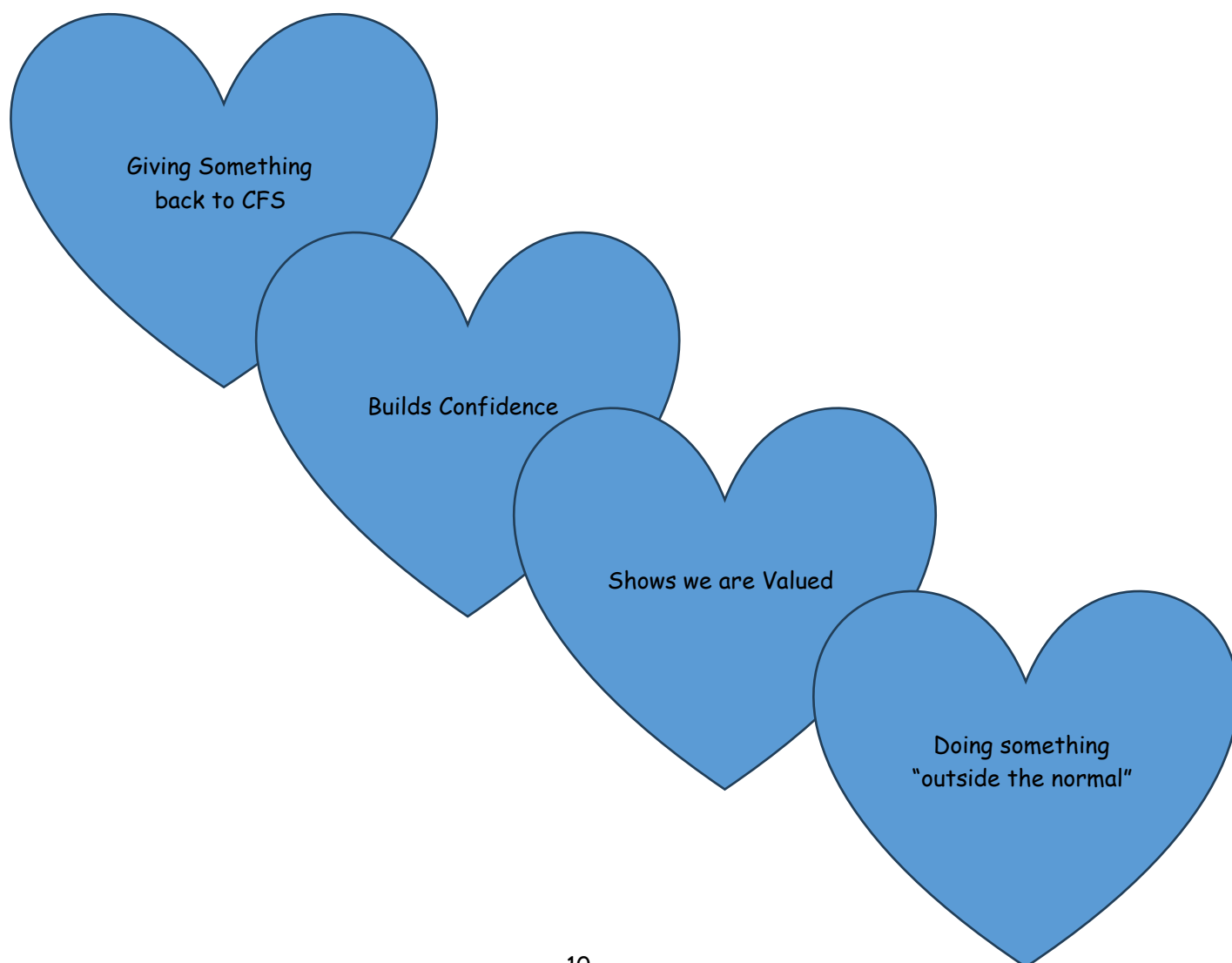
- (1) We ran a group in each of our delivery areas. We had parents attend each of the groups but the numbers were low. We learnt from this, those who did attend gave great feedback. In 2023/24 we will re run these and implement the learning we gained (from participants, staff, and our Parents' Forum).
- (2) We have managed to maintain this project across the last year working with 2 mums in Penrith. They have really enjoyed the sessions and we are hopeful you might see some of their work on display soon!
- (3) We were successful in appointing a Coordinator, and through the kindness of Family Action, a venue was secured in Maryport. The centre was up and running from the summer and we have had 2 families so far. Our biggest challenges though is volunteers to support its running...a challenge we have yet to have success with!
- (4) We now have an additional part time Family Support Coordinator fully engaged with the Hub, and specifically focused on referrals from Hub partners. Along with other CFS colleagues we have been involved in lots of community events in the Workington area through the Local Focus Hub.
- (5) We were successful!! WE are raring to go but it has taken a couple of attempts so far to find just the right person for the role. Delighted to say though hot off the press...The new Empowering Families Officer was appointed early October.....more details to follow!

In addition, we have been able to really enhance the impact of our Parent's Forum. The Parent's Forum exists to draw on the expertise and experience of parents and provide a way for parents to give feedback on the work of Cumbria Family Support and contribute to the development of the service so that it continues to give effective and relevant support to families in need. We have managed to significantly increase membership, and now have parents participating from all the 3 areas that we cover in Family Support (i.e. Carlisle, Eden and Allerdale). We also now have a volunteer role dedicated to supporting the Forum.

Over the last year, the Forum has helped us to:

- Review if anything (other than for the 30th Anniversary) needs changed with CFS logo
- Explore ways we can help families who we struggle to engage with
- Improve the content of our feedback surveys/forms
- Review the delivery of the first "Parent's Together" groups
- Start to explore different ways we can reduce rural isolation for our families
- Look at different ideas for fundraising
- Provide feedback on our Strategic and Operational Objectives

The parents attending the forum have told us that they also feel they benefit from being part of the Forum:



Some of the other highlights from the last 12 months...

- We have been fortunate to draw in funding to distribute to families from Eden and Allerdale Local Authority grants, resulting in over £15,000 of support directly to families for food, white goods, essential services etc.
- Held a Volunteer Celebration, Support and Learning event (see page XXXX for more details!)
- Introduced a new dedicated Parent Forum Support Volunteer role
- Hosted 3 Student Social Worker placements
- Continued to host SENDAC (Cumbria Parent Carer Forum), including employing a temporary Coordinator on SENDAC's behalf
- Participated in the Early Help roadshows held by Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Commenced a pilot project with University of Cumbria delivering skills days with their MA and BA Social Work Students
- Donations of family meals at Easter and Mothering Sunday meant 2 of our families could enjoy some quality time at Whitbarrow Holiday Village
- Participated in a Connecting Communities initiative with CDEC (Cumbria Development Education Centre)- designed to hear the voices in our communities that can often be excluded/marginalised
- Received funding from the office of the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner. This enabled us to deliver, in partnership with Cumbria Constabulary, a competition to support the "Call it Out Cumbria" campaign in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls
- Participated in various media items such as the "Perfect Family" day on BBC Radio Cumbria
- Thanks to COMF funding from the Local Authority (Cumbria County Council prior to the Local Government reform) we have been able to appoint a Volunteer Coordinator
- Thanks to funding from Allerdale District Council, as well as funding to pass directly to families via supermarket vouchers to help with the Cost-of-Living Crisis, we were also enabled to run the Happy Tummies project, delivering healthy cooking and food planning/preparation fun for all the family across the summer holidays in Workington.
- Received £650 from Greggs in Penrith which has enabled us to continue the Art Therapy pilot
- Received donations £1000 and £2000 respectively from Dodd & Co., and a private donation, which have allowed us to continue to invest in our services, and our staff learning and development



"Call it Out Cumbria" Competition Launch



Connecting Communities with CDEC



"CFS represented at an Early Help Roadshow



Donation from Dodd & Co.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT....HAPPY TUMMIES



This year we have been fortunate to receive funding to pilot a new programme "Happy Tummies". The funding received from Allerdale Borough Council / Cumberland Council and the Allerdale GDF Partnership allowed us to develop and run the 6 session programme in two locations in Workington. Supported by our partners from the Allerdale Local Focus Hub, the sessions were a great hit and covered:

- Branded vs non Branded shopping! Taste tests!
- Picnics and Packed Lunches- how to keep the children happy without spending a fortune
- Shopping with confidence (especially with children in tow) / batch cooking / food safety
- Food and Mood / Presentation / "Fussy eaters"/ Benefits of the Slow Cooker
- Grow Your Own and Community Gardens
- Reflections, rewards and even end of holiday haircuts!!



Finally, thanks to incredible businesses and individuals we have yet again been able to support our families at Christmas and Easter 2022-2023. We have received food, services, and cash donations (over £3000).

At Christmas this enabled us to hold 3 brilliant Christmas parties, with Santa managing to get to all three. All children and families that we support have had gifts, festive food treats and hampers. We have also had a number of non perishable general food donations that continued to help families in the New Year. At Easter we received donations from Whitbarrow Holiday Village and Swansway Motog Group.

HUGE THANK YOU ALSO TO.....

- Thompsons of Penrith - QEGS- Stephens Equipment Rental
- Burnetts Solicitors - Edwin Thompson Properties - Mother's Union
- Stainton Community - St Nicholas Church - Askham Church
- Whitbarrow Holiday Village - Viberoptix - Morrisons Carlisle
- Swansway Group/ Audi Carlisle - Leo Group
- Lakes College - Sainsbury's Penrith - Adam Clarke
- Northgate Vehicle Hire - Puddle Ducks Childminding
- Blue Watch Workington/Whitehaven Cumbria Fire & Rescue
- Stan Palmer- Rainbow Wishes Foundation - CFM Cash4Kids
- All the individual contributors via Just Giving



How we support families in the Community

Our incredible team of paid staff and volunteers work so hard to keep our families supported and make sure they remain at the heart of all that we do.

Our mission statement is:

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.

We aim to relieve family difficulties and offer support, to reduce isolation and health inequalities and to empower children and their parents to be the best that they can be. We provide our unique flexible approach to supporting families, ensuring positive changes are embedded into family life and helping to eradicate issues entrenched through generations. Overall, we focus on achieving a sustainable outcome for children, families and the positive impact this has on the wider community. We also benefit community members by employing a supported and well-trained volunteer force drawn from local communities.

We know there is a need for our work- our referrers and families have told us through word and deed i.e., taking up the offer of support, positive feedback, and making referrals to us.

We employ a range of ways of helping families.

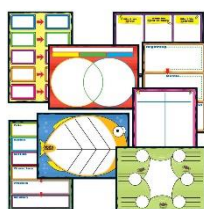


➤ Listening Ear/ Befriending Support

➤ Provide General advice and Support, particularly helping to access other specialist services, signposting and also advocating on behalf of families

➤ Provide a "Family Organiser" role...

➤ Practical Support (shopping support / decluttering/ tip runs)

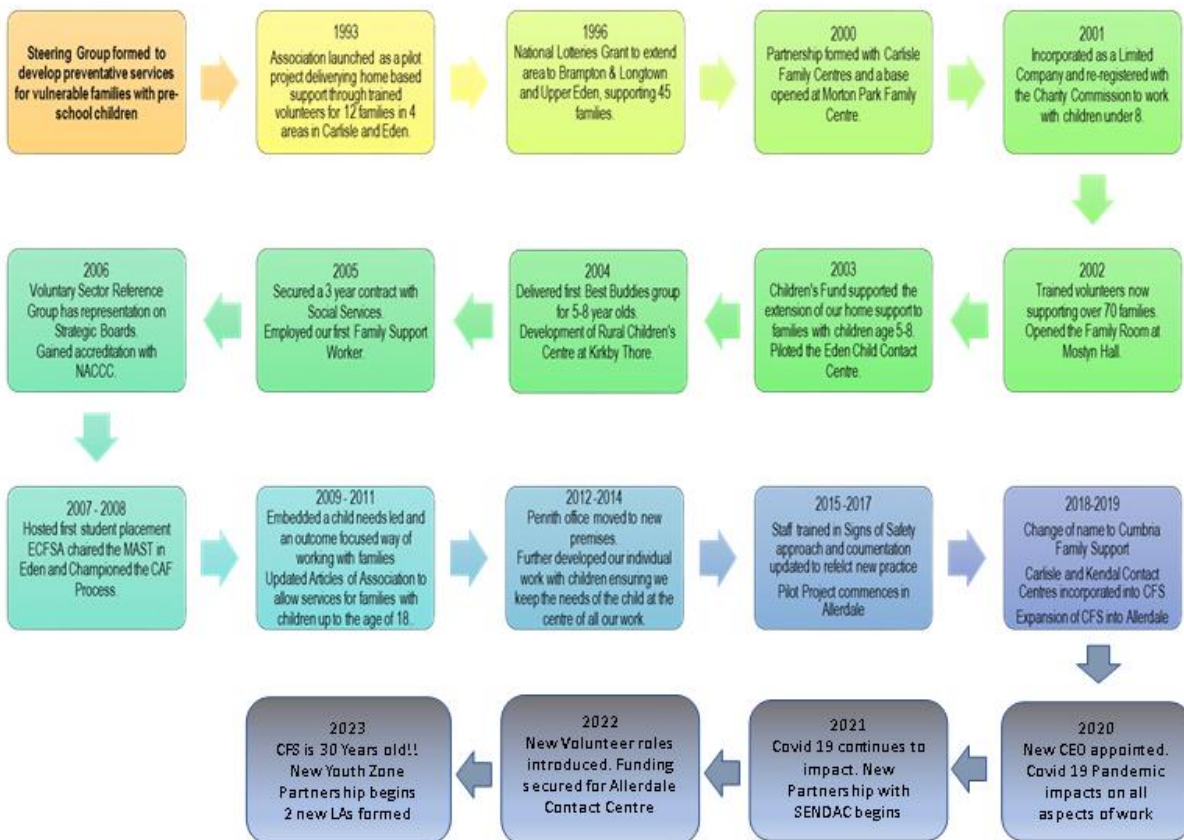


➤ Offer parenting support through general advice, role modelling and use of evidence based parenting programmes

➤ Run four supported Child Contact Centres providing a safe setting for children to have time with the non resident parent or grandparent.



It's our 30th Birthday!!!!



We would be remiss if we didn't use this year's review to reflect on the 30th anniversary of the organisation. We are holding our celebration event on the day this review is published, at our AGM so next year's review will have lots of pictures and anecdotes from the day. But for now, let's look back at our proud history:

As you can see above- our pilot phase in 1993 saw us supporting 12 families. As this review is being written, we have 104 families in support and 80 on the waiting list!!

Alongside this, whilst this does not capture all our earliest families, for many years we have coded each family to help track their contact with the organisation. To give you a feel of how many referrals for service we have had over the years, the current codes are:

- In Carlisle we are at family C735
- In Eden/Penrith area we are at family E418
- In Allerdale/Workington area we are at family W101 (remembering we have only had a presence there for 6 years)

When we look back at 30 years ago, and the "90's" for many of us this doesn't seem so long ago, but here's a reminder of how things have changes so much.....especially technology!!



- "Smart Phone"- wasn't that just a mobile with a fancy cover. Now as CEO I can access any document I want, securely from our CFS SharePoint / complete work on our shared "Case Management" system / join virtual meetings...all from the tiny smart phone I carry around!
- Our records were hand written or at best typed on a word processor and printed off for filing. Now they are all electronic and can be accessed on the move!
- Family life now sees parents being able to keep in touch with their children when out and about; it does however we know, also brings the worries around social media etc!

To get a feel of where we all were as a team, some of the team have shared "What was I doing in 1993"; here is just a few of their memories...see if you can guess who was doing what (pages 7 & 8 might help)

I was in year 8 at St. Aidans Secondary school, Carlisle. My form was 8-66, my form tutor was Mr Greaves

My memories of 1993: Many things were much bigger and heavier - computers, TV's phones etc. No texting - people still wrote letters

Thirty years ago I was managing Children and Families Teams in Social Services in Buckinghamshire. We were still learning how to operate the 1989 Children Act, increasing skills and partnership working in safeguarding, putting more focus on children's wishes and feelings and trying to improve our practice in long term planning

Being born! (May 1993)

I was not around 30 years ago so I can't help much with that one ha-ha!

30 years ago I had just started my 2nd year of university in London, doing a BA in English Literature - which I can safely say I've never used!

What are the needs of our Supported Families?

Back to the present day and thinking about the last 12 months...

In the 12 months from September 2022 to August 2023, we received 156 new referrals for family support. This is a significant increase from the same period 2021-2022 (97).

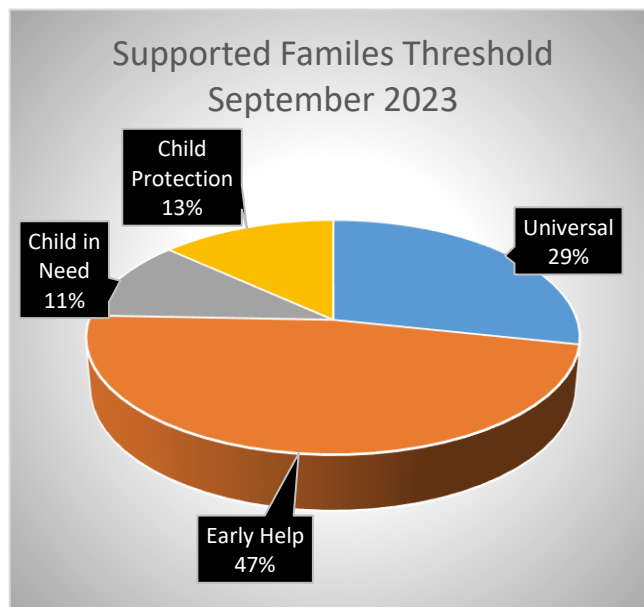
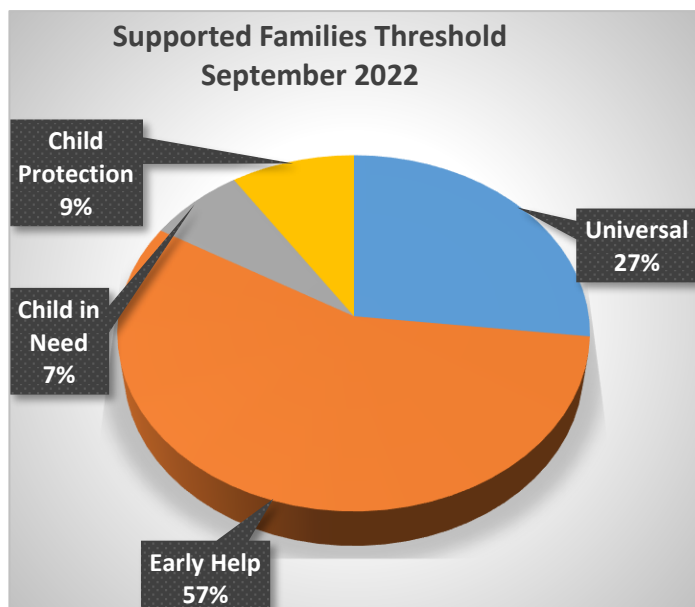
During September 2022 to August 2023 period we supported 214 families. In the same period the year before this was 172.

This reflects that we are finding the families referred to us are in greater need and we are managing to engage with more families in support, particularly as we have maintained a higher level of Family Support Worker capacity this year due to funding opportunities.

This has meant we have:

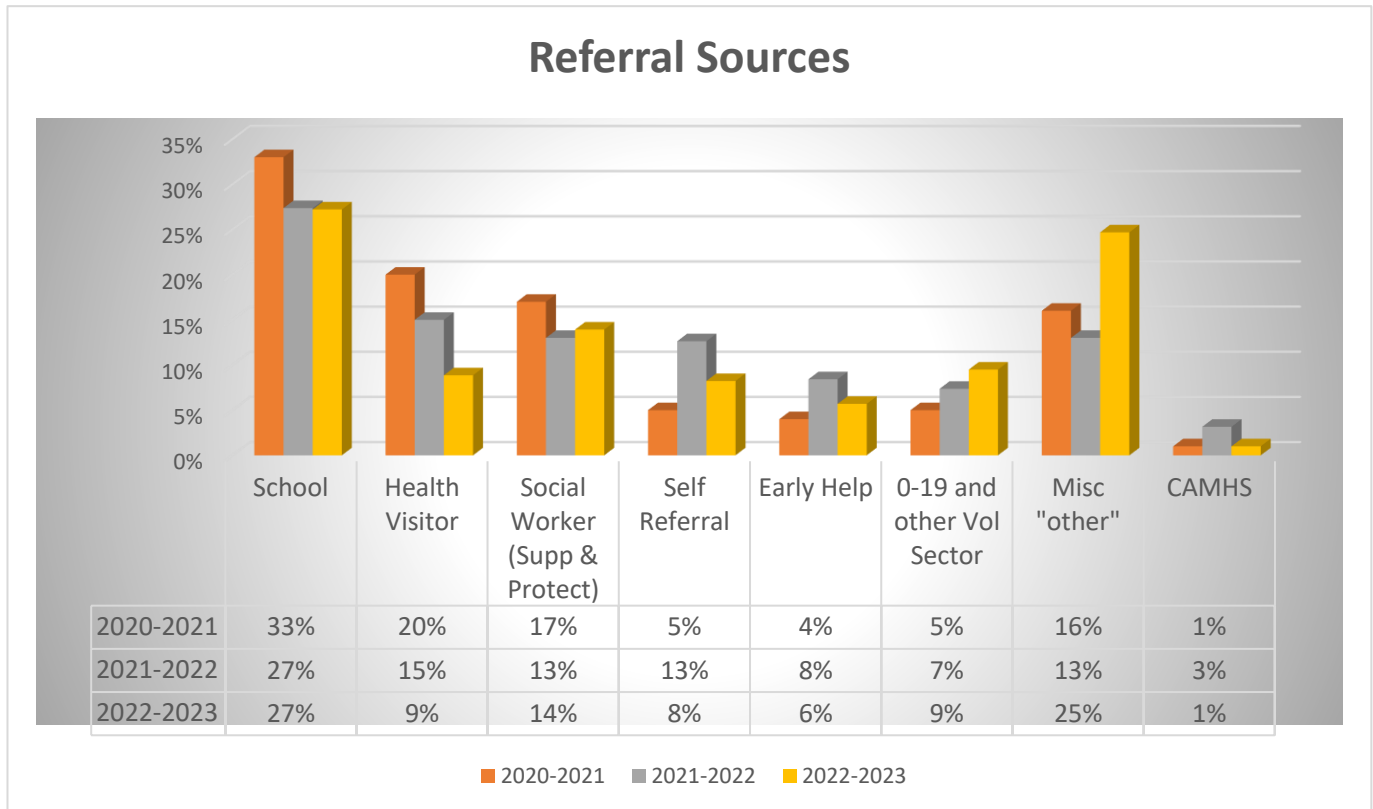
- Helped approximately 400 children & young people and, 320 parent/carers through home-based family support services
- Provided over 5500 hours of support for the families
- Provided almost 250 hours of supported contact time for 20 families.

At any given time across the last year, we have been actively supporting approximately 100 families. Cumbria Family Support prides itself on being able to support families at a preventative / Early Help level. We will however, continue to support the family if they are about to Step Down to Early Help or has Stepped Up to Child in Need or Child Protection. As of 31 August, for example the profile of families supported is detailed below¹¹: It is notable that overall in 2021/2022 we had 84% supported below the level of Social Work intervention. This has now reduced to 76%, yet again reflecting an increase in complexity of family needs.



¹¹ Of the families supported at an Early Help level, CFS was the coordinator for 18% (9) of them.

As you will see below, we have a wide range of referrers. We have seen some interesting changes to our referral sources when comparing the same period in 2021-2022 to this last year. Of note there is a significant increase in the percentage of referrals emanating "Other" sources. Category (which include Housing, Adult Mental Health and others), but a notable drop in Health Visitor, Social Worker and school referrals.

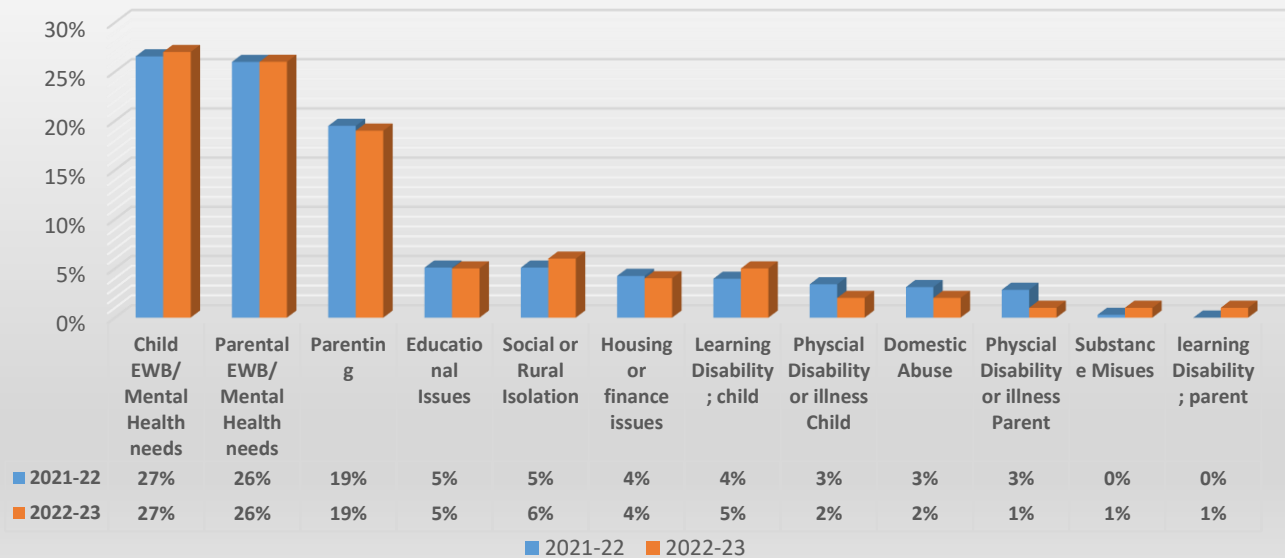


As can be seen below, the main reasons for referral have remained relatively similar over the last two years and, remain well aligned with our core organisational outcomes:

- 1) Children will experience increased emotional resilience and emotional wellbeing, resulting in them having improved relationships, self-esteem, and confidence.
- 2) Children and their families will have improved involvement in their communities and will therefore experience a reduction in isolation and social deprivation.
- 3) Children will feel confident in the way they are parented and feel safe in their homes and communities.

What is of note is since 2022 we have included "Educational issues" as this has never been a specific referral reason in the past but as we have noted in the narrative of so many referrals that issues pertaining to school attendance or engagement (primarily around emotional based school avoidance) is increasing, we have started to specifically gather information on this to analyse (and thus further develop our support offer) in relation to this.

Referral Reasons



We know that when a family is referred for generic support, there are often a number of underlying issues such as mental health difficulties, or, living with a learning difficulty or disability in the family that affect parenting skills, isolation and emotional resilience. Such difficulties are often not evident at the point of referral but become apparent as the trust builds between family members and CFS, and they share more of their family story with us. We have also evolved our recording systems so that we can capture this information more effectively to monitor trends and ensure our service delivery offer remains effective.

A review of supported families across 2022-2023 has shown that

- 61% have at least one parent for whom there are worries in relation to emotional wellbeing and/or mental health (in the previous year this was 50%).
- 49% of families have at least one child for whom there are worries in relation to emotional wellbeing and/or mental health (in the previous year this was 35%).

Helping a family address their worries and improve their wellbeing can take time. We work hard to build up trust and confidence with our families and know there are often multiple difficulties they are facing, many of which are intergenerational. In the last year 52 families (34% [in 2021=2022 this was 22%]) of families that we have supported had Social Work services involved in the 12 months preceding their support from us. Of those, 30 (58%) are no longer receiving Social Work input (this was the same proportion the previous year).

Our commitment to supporting families until their difficulties have eased and they can manage independently is borne out by how long we stay alongside them. 69% of our families are supported for over a year. (This was 55% last year). Although our support for families, in a not time limited, we ensure it does not build dependency. We shape the focus and frequency of visits to reflect the changing needs of the families, listening to their views about this, and consulting with other professionals who are

involved. 100% of recent family feedback surveys which are completed when we close support, showed that families felt the level of visiting/support was "just right". Below we see some of the comments made by our supported families this year.....

The support has been amazing I couldn't have got through this year without the support I've had.

It's been a tough year and we've all benefited from all the support as a family.

The support we have had has been amazing & made a massive difference to our lives. I will always appreciate the help we've received :)

They gave me a break when I needed one with two young twins

It has made my life easier and also my support worker has been a women that has listened and advised whenever I needed someone

So helpful to know someone cares and is there to talk to, supports us with school too

And finally, we have been lucky enough this year to get an in depth testimony from one of the families we supported for 3 years; really showing the importance of a relationship based, open ended offer for support, working at the pace the family need us to, but knowing when it's time for us to let the family move on independently...

"MY EXPERIENCE WITH CUMBRIA FAMILY SUPPORT", Rachel 2023

"When I first became involved with Cumbria family support I was probably the lowest I've ever been, I had just had a breakdown and had asked for help for the first time in my adult life. I had a lot going on, lots of appointments and trying to work my way through severe depression every day. It was my children's school that first told me about Cumbria family support and their services. I accepted as I knew that although my family, friends and the professionals around me were amazing it was too much for them alone and we needed more help, it was a scary time and I was very nervous about the initial meet up. I needn't have been, Kirby along with one of her colleagues met me at home, they were so reassuring and we talked about what help I wanted and needed! I don't have a many memories of the initial few weeks but I do know Kirby was there every step of the way she helped with appointments both making them and taking me to them nothing was too much she never let me down, if I needed her she was there! She helped me with my house we worked together room by room helping me get it back to how it was before I was ill. she would take me out when I was terrified of leaving the house and set little goals for me encouraging me when I needed it but supporting me when I couldn't. Kirby was patient and kind, we would talk and work through my fears and she became my voice for the time I needed it, my children loved her too they would tell me off for her not coming when they were home 😊. As I got better we changed my goals and worked together to get me to where I am now. I'm in a much better place three years later and when Kirby came to me and said it was time to move on I didn't want her to leave but I knew that I was ready for the next part of my life, because of Kirby! I had the confidence to apply for a job, my children are seeing the best of me and I'm gaining confidence all the time this was unthinkable even a year ago 😊 I can't ever thank Cumbria family support and Kirby for everything they have done for my family and me I've made a promise to myself that I will keep going and get the life that I've always wanted for me and my family xxx Happy 30th anniversary to all of you and thank you so much for what you do for everyone every day xxx "

Staff Reflections and thoughts for next year.....

This year, we have asked the paid team to think about

- What they are proudest of as part of CFS for the last year
- What they wished might have been better
- Their aspirations for the next 12 months

What are you most proud of in the last 12 months

- ✓ Proud to support / promote the Charity which already has an outstanding reputation.
- ✓ Proud of how we will try and help anyone and everyone and how it can change the children's lives for the better
- ✓ I am most proud of the volunteers, who despite having reservations about doing more training required by NACCC, embrace every session with interest and commitment.
- ✓ I'm proud to lead such a dedicated team of staff, and proud of the families we support for being so resilient and tenacious in the face of the challenges they deal with (also proud and privileged that they keep letting me through their doors as it means I must be doing something right!)
- ✓ I really enjoyed being part of the University volunteering event. As a team I thought we provided the students with a really good insight into the support we provide and the approaches that underpin the work we do.
- ✓ My proudest moment as part of CFS was Christmas time last year and how magical it was
- ✓ Creating a greater awareness of CFS and beginning to recruit volunteers



In terms of what they wished might have been "better if"...there was a common theme around capacity....

- ? Although I'm happy that we can offer support to a large number of families, we have many waiting for support who I wish did not have to wait so long.
- ? *I would have liked for us to have recruited more volunteers over the last 12 months.*
- ? More funding to support the families that are in need of our services / more recruitment of volunteers.
- ? I wish families felt able to always engage, not cancel 5 minutes before your visit
- ? More families using the Eden centre
- ? I wish that our Allerdale centre had a smoother start to running it
- ? Things have evolved around recruitment of volunteers over last 30 years therefore doubling up of records, inconsistencies in recording..



And what about the next 12 months?.....

- To help families with young babies have a voice like older children who are being seen more often
- To continue to support and motivate the volunteers to continue their good work.
- My aspirations for the next 12 months are to successfully run 2 accredited Child Contact Centres
- Secure the resources, whether in the form of volunteers, staff or funding (hopefully all 3!) to support more families and widen our offer to them
- More co-ordinated systems for recording and reporting across the whole organisation from recording referrals / waiting lists to recruitment of volunteers
- To considerably increase team of volunteers



Supported Child Contact

Our 4 Centres (Penrith, Carlisle, Kendal and Maryport) continue to provide a relaxed friendly environment for parents and children to establish, renew and develop relationships.

We remain extremely appreciative of the support from Cumberland, and Westmorland & Furness Councils for use of their venues in Penrith, Maryport, and Carlisle.

Volunteers are vital to our Contact Centres as without them, we would not be able to run the service. We have very reliable volunteers who have a thorough understanding of the importance of children forming and maintaining a relationship with the parents with whom they do not live.

We remain committed to the full establishment of our Maryport Contact Centre- it has been a slow start both in terms of referrals and volunteers, but also the recruitment of volunteers. Notwithstanding this, we have a staff team who have rallied round to support its first few months of delivery and already seen two children being able to see their non resident parent in a safe and welcoming centre.

Finally, we remain grateful for the advice and guidance of NACCC (National Association of Child Contact Centres) across the last year.

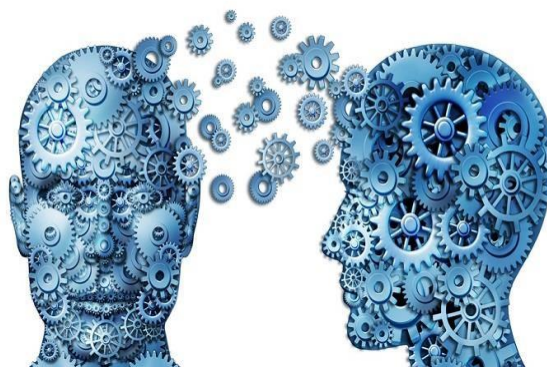


Partnership and Strategic Working

We have continued to be a learning organisation across the last year. We recognise not only the huge benefit that volunteers bring to our organisation, but that with the correct support and development, we are able to offer them opportunities for growth and development.

During the year our team have undertaken a range of training. This has covered the following:

- Early Help
- Signs of Safety
- CSCP Safeguarding
- Outcome Star
- Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- Self-care - Drumming Circles
- Reducing Parental Conflict



In addition to the above we have continued to benefit from our strong relationship with the University of Cumbria. We have hosted three 70-day placements over the last 12 months- all of whom have now successfully completed their time with us. Even better, after competitive recruitment processes, 2 of them are now employed with CFS!

Recognising the importance of collaboration and a "whole system" approach, we ensure CFS are strategically placed to inform and influence practice across children and family services in Cumbria. The Chief officer has, over the last year:

- Co-chaired the Children & Young Peoples Voluntary Sector Reference Group
- Been a member of the Children's and Families' Partnership (formally Children's Trust Board) and chaired the Eden locality partnership group
- Co-chaired the Eden and Carlisle Practitioner's Forums of the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership's (CSCP)
- Been the voluntary sector representative on the main CSCP Board and the Carlisle and Eden Safeguarding Group
- Attended Eden, Carlisle and Allerdale Early Help and Family Support Panels.
- Provided a voluntary sector perspective as a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel

The above aids strategic work to minimise duplication and maximise partnership working. At an organisational level we have many years' experiences of working collaboratively with other providers such as Barnardos, Schools, and Childrens Services etc.

As well as the strategic level partnership work, our staff are well embedded with multi agency forums that aid practice and maximise the benefit of support services available for families. CFS Staff members

- Attend Carlisle and Eden practitioner forums.
- Take part in Early Help assessments and take on the coordination of these assessments if appropriate.
- Participate in the Domestic Violence Champions Network.
- Are represented in the Family Matters Cumbria training pool

We asked our partners whether we have met their expectations over the last year. 100% of respondents said that we deliver the support they need for their families, and they would recommend our services to their families. This is a selection of what they said we did well...what they told us:



CYPVSRG

Cumbria Safeguarding
Children Partnership



Cumbria
Children
and **Families**
Partnership

Links with the Community

Cumbria Family Support is well known in the area with voluntary and statutory agencies and community groups. We have a good reputation and have the trust of those we support and work with. Our commitment to provide a good service and our well-established track record is known and recognised by:

The Mothers' Union who donates goods for Hampers at Christmas and provide some of the families with financial help to have a break or a day out through them Away From It All fund.

The Penrith Lions who always find the money for us to hold Christmas parties for the children we support. They have also helped young people financially to further their education.

CFM Cash for kids who support the families at Christmas with their toy appeal.

Queen Elizabeth Grammar school who has consistently raised funds/provided gifts for the children at Christmas.

Communities such as Stainton, local churches and individuals donate gifts and raise hundreds of pounds towards hampers and presents for our families.

Swansway/Carlisle Audi who have donated goods and activity packs across the last year for our families.

Whitbarrow Holiday Village who have donated Christmas and Easter gifts, food for parties, and family meals.

Rainbow Wishes Foundation who have provided free tickets for many of our families for magical Christmas and Summer events.

Various Local Businesses supporting us at Christmas with cash donations, services and presents; Viberoptix, Thompsons of Penrith, Stephens Equipment Rental, Burnetts Solicitors, Edwin Thompson Properties, Whitbarrow Holiday Village, Morrisons, Leo Group, Lakes College, Sainsburys Penrith, Northgate Vehicle hire, Local Author Adam Clarke, Puddle Ducks Childminders, Cumbria Fire and Rescue, Stan Palmer



Looking Ahead

This year we refreshed our 3 year Business Plan and set both the Strategic Objectives for the 3 years, plus this year's Operational Objectives. We look forward to telling you next year how we have performance against these:

Strategic Objective	Objectives agreed
1 CFS will have a strong, valued and respected offer for family support; including being able to engage with "harder to help" families	(1) All our partner and family information clearly demonstrates our offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An "open ended offer" - Is targeted at prevention/Early Help - Is flexible - Is primarily delivered in families' homes
	(2) We will commence process of external accreditation/ evaluation
	(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
	(4) We will consistently demonstrate the positive impact we have for families
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	(1) 30% of families to engage with 1-1 sessions via the Parenting Links nurturing programme
	(2) We will set up at least 2 blocks of 6 weeks Parents Together support groups in each delivery area and include an evaluation process
	(3) We will enable separated parents to better communicate and work collaboratively to enable their children to thrive when there is shared care
3 We will ensure that CFS can further understand the impact of rural isolation for families and respond accordingly	(1) We will undertake research to understand the impact of rurality for our families
	(2) We will develop an action plan for CFS to
	(3) Pro-actively address rural isolation for our families
	(4) Review and further develop our reach into rural areas
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	(1) There will be a 3 year funding plan including resources required for its delivery
	(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
	(3) Undertake a gap analysis Mapping and understand similar organisations, and identify collaborative opportunities

<p>5 CFS will continue to work as a specialist generalist Family Support service, as we well as developing access to "expertise" in specialist support services particularly in relation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mental health - LDD / neurodivergent needs - Substance misuse - Gender Dysphoria 	<p>(1) Training will addresses sufficiently the skills for the whole staff (paid and volunteer) delivery team</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>(2) We will identify options for access to "expert" support for our families</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>(1) We will consolidate the opportunities presented by CFS being a partner in the Allerdale Hub (and other areas as opportunities arise)</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>(2) We will offer support and advice to adult mental health about a "whole family approach"</p>

Finances

Cumbria Family Support Ltd is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association.

The charity is in a positive financial position for 2022-2023. We secured sufficient funding to meet our current commitments for this financial year and meet our reserves policy plus winding up costs. However, we are mindful that we need to continue to secure funding to deliver services from 2024-2025. Although funding is secured towards some of this without further successful funding bids we would deplete our reserves below the reserves policy

Our dedicated volunteers provided over 3,000 hours of support.

We extend our thanks to the following organisations who funded our revenue costs for last year: Cumbria County Council (Children and Families' Services, Local Committees [Eden, Carlisle and Allerdale], Cumberland, and Westmorland & Furness Local Authorities, Children in Need, National Lottery Community Fund, The Henry Smith Charity, Cumbria Community Foundation Grants, Frances C Scott Charitable Trust, Freida S Scott Trust, Garfield Weston, People's Postcode Lottery Trust, Tyne & Wear Community (Muckle Trust), Penrith Lions, Mothers' Union, and Buckland Trust. In addition, we received many individual donations and generated additional income by hosting students on placement. Support from Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) enabled us to continue running Eden, Carlisle and Kendal Supported Child Contact Centres.

BANKERS

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Our Supporters

OUR SUPPORTERS Thank you to our many supporters. Their continued funding and support, year on year, has enabled our organisation to flourish and develop.





**Cumbria Family
Support**