



**TAVISTOCK**  
RELATIONSHIPS

*Supporting Couples Strengthening Families Safeguarding Children*



**Annual Review 2016**

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# Chair's Message

2016 has been a year of transition for TCCR. Not only did we change our name to Tavistock Relationships, but we also said goodbye to much loved and highly respected Chief Executive, Susanna Abse.

Susanna first joined TCCR in 2001. She led the organisation through a period of sustained growth and change, expanding our services, developing new programmes and raising our profile in public policy. The organisation grew from employing 19 core staff and eight visiting staff, with an annual turnover of £0.8m in 2001, to 56 core staff and 100 visiting staff, with an annual turnover of £5m in 2016. Under Susanna's leadership, Tavistock Relationships became an influential organisation with significant impact and reach. We are hugely indebted to Susanna and will miss her greatly, although, as ever in the world of relationships, she will continue to be involved with us as she starts a new chapter in her life.

The trustees and staff are delighted that Andrew Balfour has been appointed as our new Chief Executive. Andrew has a wealth

of experience at Tavistock Relationships, having worked as Director of Clinical Services and latterly Executive Director of Services at the organisation, and is a leading researcher and practitioner of psychoanalytic couple therapy. We look forward to continued success under his leadership.

We have also been pleased to welcome new trustees to the board in 2015–16: Rupert Harrison, Professor Mavis Maclean; and we're soon to be joined by Jane Smith.

The year ahead will be a challenging one for Tavistock Relationships, as for the country as a whole: navigating the new landscape of Brexit and potentially choppy economic waters. But we have significant new plans for development, and will continue to grow and offer new services and programmes to ensure that the benefits of couple therapy can be offered more and more widely in the UK and beyond.

**Professor Nick Pearce  
Chair**



## Board of Trustees

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# Report from the Chief Executive



**I am proud to take on the leadership of Tavistock Relationships, an organisation which has been at the centre of innovation and development in the field of couple and relationship support for nearly 70 years. These are uncertain and challenging times, with the political and social landscape shifting more than it has done in a generation. With increasing economic pressure and ever-greater threats to social cohesion, and the concomitant effects on mental health and wellbeing, the evidence of the vital importance of our relationships throughout our lives is more relevant than ever.**

The message of research in this area is clear: the qualities of our relationships have profound implications from our earliest years, for the emotional, cognitive and physical development of our children, to our last years – in old age, affecting the likelihood of hospitalisation, the rate of progression of disease in dementia, and even mortality

rates. Our relationships are the crucible of our mental health throughout our lives. Intervening in relationship difficulties offers the possibility of interrupting the intergenerational transmission of mental health problems and cycles of emotional deprivation and of strengthening mental health, resilience and wellbeing throughout the lifespan. The need for accessible relationship help for couples across the UK is huge. It is estimated that 18% of people in relationships – 2.87 million people – are currently in distressed relationships (Sserwanja and Marjoribanks, 2016). The cost of relationship breakdown is estimated at £47 billion and this cost is more than economic, with consequences for the physical and mental health of both children and adults. At Tavistock Relationships we have seen a 40% rise in demand over the past four years. We are proud of the fact that we continue to offer our services to everyone, whatever their financial circumstances. We are proud too of the robust evidence for their effectiveness, with excellent rates of

recovery for people seen in therapy here. Our outcomes are equally successful with clients whatever their ethnic or socio-economic background, and more than half of those couples who come believing that they are going to separate no longer wish to by the time they finish therapy.

Our innovation and research work this year bear testimony to the organisation's continued capacity to use research and clinical practice-based study of the couple relationship to develop new ways of meeting the needs of couples and families. These projects have yielded exciting results, reaching into areas where psychological help for couples has up to now been unavailable. Working with separated parents in entrenched conflict which had been played-out within the court process, we successfully engaged the majority in attending sessions together, and for those who did so, significant improvements in their capacity to co-parent their children were achieved. Continued funding of our Parents as

Partners programme has enabled us to expand this work, reaching more couples who are struggling with their parenting relationship. The results have been impressive – we believe that this is the

“These are uncertain and challenging times, with the political and social landscape shifting more than it has done in a generation.”

first UK couple relationship programme to be able to evidence positive outcomes for children. This year we have also found significant improvements in children's

outcomes from our pilot programme for adoptive couples, and new funding in the coming year will allow us to take this promising work further. Other initiatives have included a ground-breaking project with Harrow Children's Services to help couples where there has been domestic violence and we have continued to develop our work with couples who are living with dementia – reflecting the organisation's breadth of focus upon the psychological needs of couples across the lifespan.

Increasing challenges are faced across health and social care in the UK, and the evidence from research and practice is that such care needs to include a focus upon the relational context of individuals in order to establish sustained impact. Helping such services by training and working with front line staff has always been central to Tavistock Relationships' approach. This year we have trained and supported a range of front line staff to develop skills in identifying and addressing relationship distress among

“Now, more than ever, there is a need to put couple and family relationships centre stage in order to improve children’s outcomes.”

some of the most vulnerable members of society.

As you read on, you will see that our work is diverse, yet it interweaves three related areas of activity which are always at the heart of what we do: **we train expert practitioners** to be the new generation of couple therapists and researchers; **we deliver a range of therapies** to couples in distress, and **we research and innovate**, to develop new ways of working with people who have not previously had access to relationship help. As part of realising our mission, we link our clinical research and innovation work with our policy voice to disseminate what we know and to influence the policy landscape with the aim that psychological help for couples should become accessible to all who need it.

In the policy arena, this year Tavistock Relationships, along with our colleagues within the Relationships Alliance, has worked hard to ensure that the impact of adult couple relationships on a range of areas affecting social policy is understood by politicians and

policy-makers. At last, it seems that the importance of parental couple relationships for children’s life chances is becoming recognised in Government policy, and despite the current political uncertainties, we wait with cautious hope to see what new opportunities for development this may bring.

Now, more than ever, there is a need to put couple and family relationships centre-stage in order to improve children’s outcomes and to enhance the health and wellbeing of adults who are living with relationship distress, so helping to build a happier, healthier and more stable society. As you read about the work we have done this year, you will see that at Tavistock Relationships we are passionately committed to this project, constantly innovating and developing new ways of providing relationship help which is responsive to the changing social and psychological pressures facing couples and families in our time.

**Andrew Balfour**  
**Chief Executive**

## Our Vision

A world where good quality relationships provide stability and security for families to nurture children and adults to reach their potential in life, and form the foundation for health and wellbeing for individuals and society as a whole.

## Our Aims

- to create wider understanding of the importance of the quality of our relationships for our lives, our children's lives and our society
- to ensure the highest professional standards and evidence-based practice in all couple services, present and future
- to increase the availability of couple-focussed support so every couple can access help when they need it
- to widen the scope of interventions for relationship help so that a greater range of support is accessible to couples and families, tailored to their specific needs and problems
- to help couples overcome stigma and anxiety about seeking professional help for their relationship

## Our Mission

To ensure that effective relationship support is accessible to all.

## Our Objectives

We will achieve our aims by:

- developing and disseminating the research on couple relationships and how best to support them
- promoting the value of seeking relationship help, particularly when going through life's transitions
- training couple therapists to deliver the highest quality, expert help
- providing affordable, accessible, evidence-based services
- supporting front line practice to develop a stronger focus on adult relationships
- developing innovative intervention projects, applying psychosocial and clinical expertise to supporting families

# The Year's Highlights

## Parents as Partners

Our Parents as Partners groupwork programme for parents who are struggling with conflict and stress in their relationship and in their parenting showed impressive results, demonstrating significant increases in the quality of the couple relationship, reduction in violent problem-solving and improvement in children's emotional health.



## Autumn Conference

Our 2015 Autumn Conference was an ambitious collaboration with the International Association of Couple and Family Psychoanalysis, with speakers from the US, Argentina, Italy, France and the UK presenting cutting edge thinking to an international audience. The conference papers will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Couple and Family Psychoanalysis* and in the Italian journal *Interazioni*.



**European Regional Couple  
and Family Psychoanalytic  
Conference 2015**



## Programmes Success

The Parents in Dispute project, which works with separated parents who have been in long-term conflict over their children which is played out through the family court system, showed that nearly three-quarters of the parents who attended were helped to work together in joint sessions, and these parents achieved a significant increase in the strength of their parenting alliance. This was a remarkable result given the long-standing stress, conflict and difficulty that these parents had experienced in relation to their co-parenting. Our ground-breaking couple relationship-focused dementia programme, Living Together with Dementia, was boosted this year by further innovation funding from City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which will facilitate training and supervising staff to deliver the programme locally.



## Relationship Support Evidence Review

We published *What Works in Relationship Support*, a comprehensive evidence review which sets out what we know about effective practice in relationship support; its publication represents a significant milestone as recognition increases among researchers and policy-makers of the importance of relationships to a range of social policy areas.



# Tavistock Relationships

## A New Name and Identity

**In July 2016, TCCR changed its name to Tavistock Relationships.** The new name reflects the history and tradition of the charity while providing a simpler identity which can encompass the wider programme of work that the organisation has developed over the last decade. The name speaks to the very heart of what the organisation is about – understanding and exploring the dynamics between people and organisations as they form partnerships of all types.

Although the couple is at the heart of our work, both the word relationships and the imagery of our new logo symbolise a wider commitment to the social and emotional health of

society as a whole. The name, developed in partnership with staff and users, also reflects the language of our clients – since whether they are in a partnership or alone, and whatever their sexuality or gender, help with relationships is what they are seeking. Retaining our 'Tavistock' identity was also important to the organisation as we continue to emphasise the centrality of psychoanalytic theory and practice to our work.

As part of this re-brand, Tavistock Relationships has a new website integrating the training, policy and research pages with our offer to couples seeking help.



# Innovation and Development

Tavistock Relationships has a long tradition of identifying complex problems and designing interventions that address the needs of couples and troubled families. Using the best evidence available together with experience from clinical practice, we develop new ways of working and measure the impact of our interventions. Once we have confidence in our new programmes, we disseminate them via training and supervision. By investing in the capacity to undertake high quality research ourselves, we can help illuminate for others in the field which interventions seem to be most effective and what underlying mechanisms and dynamics are at play in the families we seek to help.

## Developing a Couple Focus in Adoption Services

Couples who adopt often experience considerable strains in their relationship which can lead to adoption breakdown and poorer outcomes for adoptive children and their families. As a result the DfE commissioned Tavistock Relationships to develop, pilot and evaluate a therapeutic service aimed at supporting the relationships of adoptive couples. The project, in partnership with the British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF – later CoramBAAF) also included the development of a two-day training course for social workers specialising in adoption and fostering. The course was designed to increase awareness of the importance of the parental couple relationship, with the aim of helping to prevent adoption and family breakdown, and support better outcomes for adopted children. The training days received a 100% satisfaction rating.

As part of the project an Expert Advisory Group was established to look at programme scoping, delivery and evaluation. This was chaired by Tavistock Relationships Senior Fellow, Professor Gordon Harold, University of Sussex, and included representation from the DfE.

The clinical offer devised for adoptive parents consisted of either 20 weeks of psychodynamic couple therapy (for 20 parental couples) or our Adopting Together – Parents as Partners groups (offered for 12 parental couples). The final evaluation of this project showed very promising results with significant improvements in a number of areas. Most excitingly, outcomes from the couple therapy showed statistically significant improvements in children's outcomes.



Project leads Julie Humphries and Krisztina Glausius also wrote a practitioner pamphlet for staff in the field, which was edited by senior lead on the Adopting Together Project, Susanna Abse.

The DfE has commissioned Tavistock Relationships to deliver further training for the adoption workforce and a further 30 couples will be offered couple therapy; building the evidence base for the value of this work during 2016–18.

## Parents as Partners – a Groupwork Programme for Co-parents

This has been a significant year for the Parents as Partners programme, with a mixture of important endings and new beginnings. It was a year in which Professors Phil and Carolyn Cowan stepped back from their formal role as consultants, and a year in which the programme was disseminated to local authorities such as Manchester, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Blackpool, Swansea and Croydon. The team also delivered some important innovations during the year; adapting the programme with the Cowan's oversight, for adoptive parents and for couples who are separated.

Findings from the latest programme evaluation results based on nearly 200 parents who attended the first 18 groups and including follow up data after six months, show very encouraging results. Parents reported significant increases in the quality of the couple relationship and reductions in violent problem-solving, as well as significant improvements in psychological wellbeing. Most excitingly, the programme was able to show significant reductions in children's emotional and behavioural difficulties. We believe this is the first UK couple-focussed programme that evidences positive outcomes for children. Despite the UK programme working generally with families with more complex needs than those in the US research, the latest findings were in line with, and sometimes

better than, the longitudinal findings from the Cowans' 'Supporting Father Involvement' programme.

The DWP awarded the programme follow-on funding for 2016–17, and Tavistock Relationships will continue to work in partnership with Family Action to deliver groups to hundreds of parents in London and Kent over the coming year.

## Parents in Dispute: Working with Parents in Entrenched Post Separation Conflict

The Parents in Dispute project concluded this year with a set of remarkable results. Supported by the Department of Work and Pensions Innovation Fund, the programme was delivered by our experienced therapists using a mentalisation-based therapeutic approach. The programme worked with separated parents who were in entrenched conflict in the Court process, referred to us by our partner in the project, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass). Cafcass and the Family Courts Judiciary have been concerned for a long time about a significant number of parents who make repeated returns to the Family Court seeking to challenge each other about decisions that affect their





children. Of the couples referred, the highest duration of a case in court was 358 weeks and the combined total of 30 cases which were closely analysed was 2,613 weeks or 50.25 years in court.

Using the form of mentalisation-based therapy which Tavistock Relationships developed specifically for this group, together with a risk assessment tool from Australia (DOORS), we worked with each parent, paying attention to risks and anxieties, and preparing them for sessions together. Remarkably, given their mutual, long-standing conflict, nearly three-quarters of the parents who attended were helped to work in joint sessions. For these parents, the evaluation showed that the programme enabled a significant increase in the strength of their parenting alliance.

Strengthening the relationship between separated parents is of particular importance given the growing body of evidence which indicates that the quality of co-parenting has both direct and indirect effects on child outcomes.

A full report on the project was prepared and the findings can be found on our website.

## Helping Couples with Complex, Challenging Issues – Mentalisation Based Treatment for Couples (MBT-CT)

Having developed mentalisation-based therapy for post separation conflict, in 2014, we decided to extend the use of this type of intervention to couples who are still together in a relationship. We are using this approach with couples whose presentation is particularly complex and whose heightened state of distress presents considerable technical challenges within therapy. These are couples who often find it difficult to manage their emotional states, and this is frequently linked to a history of mental illness, self-harm and domestic violence.

The couples seen within this service are often characterised by extreme dysregulation and by what can broadly be referred to as ‘borderline’ features. The use of the term ‘borderline’ does not necessarily refer to a diagnostic group, but rather to illustrate the mental functioning of a group of couples whose thinking and emotional experiences become highly disorganised within an

attachment relationship, such as with their partner. Tavistock Relationships has given priority to this work in order to find a way of helping vulnerable and disadvantaged couples who are often perceived as hard to help.

During 2014–15 we were commissioned by the DWP to offer three days of training in MBT-CT, enabling other agencies in the sector to learn how to use this intervention. Following the training, counsellors from Marriage Care joined the weekly workshop for supervision and further professional development.

## Working with Domestic Violence in Harrow

In January, Tavistock Relationships and Harrow Children’s Services began a ground-breaking new project to pilot the delivery of mentalisation-based therapy to couples where there has been violence. This pilot project worked with 10 couples, carefully selected and assessed before treatment began.

The intervention is not intended for, nor is it appropriate for, domestic violence in which one partner uses violent and non-violent tactics to try to control their partner, but rather for couples where violence is situational, arising out of unmanaged stresses in the relationship.

Domestic violence of this kind (often called 'situational couple violence') is much more prevalent than the 'perpetrator/victim' type, and yet there has been an historic reluctance to look at the couple relationship and individual

dynamics which can underpin it. Harrow's decision to utilise this new model is a sign that services are starting to recognise that traditional approaches are not effective for many people in reducing incidents of domestic violence.

Tavistock Relationships is undertaking a full evaluation of the pilot which will be completed in the Autumn of 2016.

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## Living Together with Dementia – a Psycho-social Home-based Intervention

Living Together with Dementia is a unique programme which focusses upon supporting the couple's relationship where one partner has a dementia. It is a brief, structured therapeutic intervention, drawing upon video-based approaches which were originally developed to support children with socio-cognitive impairments. It uses everyday activities as a shared focus for increasing the understanding of each partner's experiences, strengthening their relationship and its capacity to function as a protective resource for the couple, enhancing resilience and so helping them to maintain their independence for longer.

Following a successful two-year pilot in Camden, this year we received further innovation funding from City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in order to train and supervise City and Hackney staff to deliver the programme locally. More than twenty



staff from health, social care and the voluntary sector within City and Hackney have undertaken the training and are delivering the intervention to couples with supervision from our LTWD project staff.

We are researching the impact of the intervention and the training, and are also looking at outcomes in terms of carer burden, quality of relationship and mental health, as well as the couples' experiences of working within the Living Together with Dementia approach.

This year Andrew Balfour, Tavistock Relationships' newly appointed CEO and developer of LTWD was invited to present this work at a number of key conferences including: The British Psychological Society's Annual Conference of Neuropsychology in London, The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry Annual Conference in Nottingham, and The Royal College of Psychiatrists Faculty of Medical Psychotherapy Annual Conference in Leeds.

# Developing the Workforce

## Training and Consultation

**Tavistock Relationships provides training programmes that support the training and key needs of the relationship support sector, as well as providing professional development to those in children's services, the health service and the family law profession.**

### Training Expert Practitioners

In September 2015 we launched a new programme of practitioner trainings consisting of three master's level programmes which are now fully university validated and professionally approved. These programmes are the MA in Couple and Individual Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy; the MA in Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy; and the MSc in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy; as well as the already established Professional Doctorate in Couple Psychotherapy.

Programmes have been restructured so that there are core modules shared in common across the programmes, with supplementary modules to meet specialist psychodynamic, psychoanalytic

and psychosexual professional requirements. The new programme features an updated curriculum with a stronger focus on recent research in neuroscience and its application to work with couples.

This year saw a 10.2% increase in participants on practitioner trainings with a doubling of the intake of the previous year on our introductory courses.

We have also built on our customary range of exciting short courses, conferences and lectures this year, to maintain and develop our reputation as a provider of high-quality Continuing Professional Development. Short courses have included: Working with Alcohol and Substance Misuse in Couples; Thinking Psychoanalytically about the Family; Echoes of the Nursery: Sibling Transferences in the Adult Couple



**94%** of our students completing evaluation forms on our practitioner trainings reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their courses.

**“Excellent – this has impacted on me, my ideas of how to work with couples in angry dysregulated states of mind, my technique and clinical practice.”**

Workshop evaluation feedback

**“Extremely interesting and informative course that will be very useful to my practice.”**

Psychosexual Workshops Participant

**“I especially valued learning with the diversity and mix of cultures and nationalities of the delegates.”**

Summer School Attendee

Relationship; Working with Shame and Humiliation in the Couple Relationship; Infidelity and the Couple Relationship; and Les Liaisons Dangereuses: The uses and Abuses of Sex in Couple and Family Relationship.

Participants on these CPD courses increased by 25% during the year and our two-term Psychosexual Certificate, which provides an introduction to working with couples and their sexual relationship saw a growth of over 20% in the number of participants. During the year we also piloted our first online reading seminar.

## Writers on Writing Series

This continuation of a popular series, featuring writers who have managed to write successfully for the general public about psychoanalysis began

with Professor Andrew Samuels and Dr Will Davies, followed by author and psychologist Oliver James and distinguished clinicians Professor Joan Raphael Leff and Professor Jeremy Holmes. The series concluded with Dr Patrick Casement speaking on ‘Finding the Freedom to Write’

## Psychosexual Workshops

There has been continuing high demand for our psychosexual short courses, designed and delivered by Janice Hiller, consultant clinical psychologist and senior academic tutor in psychosexual studies. This year we ran four psychosexual short courses, training a total of 109 practitioners.





## Summer Schools

Two summer schools – one for qualified individual practitioners, and one which functions as an advanced training, combining lectures and clinical case discussions - were again well-subscribed by practitioners from the UK and abroad, with clinicians travelling from Scotland, Northern Ireland, Finland, Czechoslovakia and Israel to join these courses.

## Conferences

This year our Psychosexual Conference was titled “Sex and the Missing Couple” and featured keynote presentations by Janice Hiller and Professor Julia Heiman who is a Senior Research Fellow and former Director of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction. David Stuart, Substance Use Lead at 56 Dean Street (sexual health & HIV services), also spoke about “Same Sex Relationships in an Age of Smartphone Dating, Recreational Drug Use and HIV.”

The 2015 Autumn Conference was an ambitious collaboration with the International Association of Couple and Family Psychoanalysis to explore ‘Understanding Couples and Families – Similarities and Differences between Object Relations and Link Theory Perspectives’. Speakers from the US, Argentina, Italy, France and the UK gave

papers which are due to be published in a forthcoming issue of *Couple and Family Psychoanalysis Journal* and the Italian journal *Interazioni*.

This year's Enid Balint Lecture: ‘How to Cure Family Disturbance: Enid Balint and the Creation of Couple Psychoanalysis’ featured keynote speaker Professor Brett Kahr, Senior Fellow, who gave a masterful account of Tavistock Relationships’ history and its theoretical developments.



## External Lectures

Tavistock Relationships’ faculty staff were, as usual, in great demand this year delivering lectures to a wide variety of audiences including senior local authority children services, GPs, family court advisors, judges and policy makers. Staff travelled across the UK and the world, lecturing in places as varied as Belfast, Dublin, New York, Northampton and Hartlepool.

Mary Morgan, Tavistock Relationships Reader in Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, made teaching visits to Sweden in September, to Poland in November and March, and to New York in June 2015. She also represented Tavistock Relationships at the International Psychoanalytic Association Congress in Boston in July 2015 where she gave four papers.

## Supporting Front Line Practitioners

A new programme of couple relationship awareness and skills training for health visitors was commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions and was successfully delivered by us and our partner Fatherhood Institute to 185 staff. There were also exciting developments in commissioned training including programmes in Hartlepool and Rochdale on working with couples and families where there is domestic violence and conflict.

**“I definitely plan to use this thinking in my practice. This was a very valuable training and it is important for all health visitors.”**

Supporting Front Line Practitioners Participant



## IAPT Couple Therapy for Depression – Training in the NHS

2015/2016 saw the Couple Therapy for Depression training team break previous records in training more NHS therapists to deliver this model within IAPT services than ever before, which indicates that the tide is turning within the NHS and working with couples is beginning to gain traction.

## Trainings – Impact Analysis

Satisfaction with our courses was consistently high, with 94% of participants satisfied or very satisfied with the trainings. We have also looked further at the overall reach of our Health Visitor Training. Data gathered from 185 staff who attended our trainings showed that they and their 676 supervisees were working with over 48,898 cases; demonstrating the breadth of influence and impact of our courses.

# Research and Public Affairs

## Making an Impact on Practice and Policy

### Building on Investment

The research team has had a good year building on the investment in time and expertise that began in 2014–2015. We have consistently produced high-quality data and sophisticated analyses for the benefit of our service users, programme development and impact reporting to funders. We have continued to address the question of the extent to which our standard clinical services ‘work’, showing that our results surpass those of comparable services



such as IAPT. We have written about the characteristics of people who use our services, the range of distress they experience and the outcomes they achieve with our therapeutic help, and this has included an analysis of how well our services perform with black and minority ethnic clients. This shows that there is no difference in the amount of change that this particular group of clients make, even though they initially present for help with, on average, higher levels of distress. During the year we also completed a major review of the outcomes of over 800 clients presenting with high levels of both relationship and individual distress, which provides strong indication that couple therapy not only helps with the relationship but also has significant effects on individual indices of wellbeing and psychological functioning. This paper, which is now in press with a major journal, will be the largest ever naturalistic study of couple therapy outcomes worldwide.



### Beyond Service Evaluation

There has been rich activity too beyond routine service evaluation. We have carried out detailed analysis of our Parents as Partners group work intervention for couples, and have submitted a paper for publication. We also finalised work from the Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) of our mentalisation-based intervention for post-separation conflict, and research papers on both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study have been accepted for publication.

## Contributions and Lectures

During the year we contributed evidence and supported evaluations across several Government projects. Notably we contributed to the impact of our different interventions for couples and parents in the context of the Early Intervention Foundation Evidence Review. We were pleased that Parents as Partners achieved one of the highest ratings for its effects on children's outcomes, which represents an important milestone in the research on couple distress and its impacts on children's wellbeing.

During the year Tavistock Relationships' research staff gave lectures at the University of Cambridge and at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and we contributed a regular research review to the Couple and Family Psychoanalysis journal, as well as advising on the quality of research papers submitted there. This year, Dr David Hewison also continued to contribute to the work of the NICE panel reviewing the guidelines for the treatment of Depression.

## Supporting Couples Effectively – An Evidence Review

Bringing together our policy and research functions, in July 2015 we published an evidence review setting out what we know about the most effective practice in supporting couples. The review which is designed to give policy makers an overview of the impacts of different kinds of relationship support covers the evidence base for couple therapy, relationship education programmes for adults and parenting interventions which incorporate a focus on couple relationships.



## Influencing Public Policy

During the year we continued to influence public policy around a range of issues. The key policy focus was to raise awareness of the links between parental relationship quality and children's outcomes. Linked to this, we were very active in shaping the debate around the Government's Life Chances Strategy engaging in events and meetings as well as providing evidence. In March, a roundtable was held at our Warren Street site which attracted a high level audience, including two ex-ministers as well as the senior officials tasked with writing the Life Chances Strategy. Susanna Abse and Professors Philip and Carolyn Cowan presented evidence of the links between mental health issues in children and disturbed adult partnerships. Further meetings were held on this topic with the Children's and Young People's mental health alliance and evidence was given to two commissions currently preparing reports on children's mental health. We also held meetings with senior officials within the Department of Health responsible for adult and children's mental health where, as in all of these meetings, we put forward our central argument, that we can only meaningfully improve children's life chances if we attend to the quality of



parental relationships, mental health and parenting together.

During the year we also had three meetings at No 10 with senior advisers to the then Prime Minister, to discuss the focus of the Life Chances strategy, as well as meeting with the Behavioural Insights Team to discuss how to increase the take-up of relationally-focused parenting support.

In other work, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Strengthening Couple Relationships, for which we provide the secretariat, held meetings this year on the development of family relationship hubs and relational approaches to family justice.

Elsewhere, we have continued to play a leading role in the work of the Department of Health's taskforce 'Action for Choice in Therapy', an influential committee aiming to improve the availability of talking therapies, including couple therapy for depression in IAPT services. Allied to this, we contributed this year to shaping the new Accreditation Programme for Psychological Therapies Services, successfully arguing that a key standard should now require an IAPT service seeking accreditation to demonstrate that it makes information available to patients on the full range of talking therapies which NICE recommends. We hope that, in time, this will result in a greater amount of couple therapy for


depression being available nationally through IAPT.

Our work with the Relationships Alliance continued and wider network meetings were held through the year at our Warren Street office. In September 2015, Susanna Abse spoke at a fringe meeting at Conservative Party Conference, sponsored by The Relationship Alliance and the Centre for Social Justice.

Over the year we continued to expand our suite of policy briefings, including one on relational approaches to situational couple violence, which sets out the evidence base for the effectiveness of a couple-based approach to this particular type of domestic violence.

# Our Therapy Services

## Supporting Couples and Parents



“I’ve developed in my ability to approach situations that could potentially lead to conflict with my partner in a more thoughtful, calmer and more reflective way.”

“I was able to re-focus on myself in the relationship and after that able to slowly regain trust in it.”

“The process has been tough... (But)... I feel so much change in my way of thinking, my ability to listen and really hear what my partner is saying. Just a brilliant service.”

**High demand for our services continued and we delivered more than 17,000 sessions of therapy to 3,500 people last year. We have seen growth of nearly 40% in therapy services over the past four years, indicating rising demand for face-to-face services for couples in London, and we continued to offer help to people whatever their financial circumstances.**

We provided short and longer-term therapy to couples and individuals with relationship difficulties, as well as specialist help for those facing problems with their sex lives. Our two sites in Central London continued to provide Londoners with confidential and accessible centres where they can get expert help for problems with relationships, sexual issues and parenting.

**“It has changed the nature of our relationship and made my life so much better.”**

Our online offer, ‘ChatFirst’, was successfully launched in February 2016. This is available on our website and is aimed at potential clients thinking of coming into our clinical service who are unsure about booking an appointment who might find it helpful to ‘chat’ online to a counsellor to answer any queries or doubts they have about taking the first step towards getting help. This first online service will be followed by video counselling being made available

from Autumn 2016, which will extend our capacity to offer high quality help throughout the UK and beyond.

## **Evaluating Our Services – Who Do We See and How Do We Help?**

All clients are seen for initial consultation, and are assessed on validated, psychometric measures at the beginning, the end, and at points during their therapy. Our completion rates of pre- and post-therapy questionnaires by clients are consistently in the high range, according to national benchmarks.



## **Clients’ Psychological Profile at Intake**

At the initial consultation on measures of mental health, 59% of our clients are showing a level of psychological distress for which they would typically be expected to seek professional support (as compared to around 6.4% in the general population), and 71% of clients are suffering from mild, moderate or severe depression at their first visit.

Psychometric measures also showed that the majority of clients at their first appointment were significantly distressed in their relationship, and those who were reporting the most serious relationship problems were also reporting the most severe psychological distress; 78% of those coming who were experiencing significant distress in their relationship were also clinically depressed.

## Key stats:

More than  
**17,000**  
therapy sessions.

We helped  
**3,500**  
people with their  
relationship.

Very positive feedback  
from more than  
**95%**  
of clients.

**“The therapist was supportive and challenging in a helpful way to my partner and me. This enabled me to reach a point where we no longer need the service, but would happily revisit in the future.”**

## How Much Do We Help Our Clients? – Evaluating our Impact

- Psychometric measures show that we are achieving statistically significant reductions in clients' psychological distress as treatment progresses.
- Furthermore, 57.7% of clients demonstrate what is known as 'clinical 'recovery' (moving from above a threshold of 'clinical', i.e. significant distress, to below it) by the end of their therapy. This is a level of improvement that is notably higher than that reported for NHS IAPT services in the London Commissioning Region (41.6%).
- Our data also shows statistically significant improvements in relationship quality from intake to end of treatment.

## What our Clients Say about Tavistock Relationships – Measuring Client Satisfaction

Since January 2013, we have also been collecting information about clients' experience of the service they receive. We collect this information

using a questionnaire based on one developed by the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC), so that we are able to benchmark our results with other services across the country. Importantly, this questionnaire is administered at six weeks into clients' therapy and again at six months, so that we can gauge clients' satisfaction with the service with enough time to reflect on their feedback and respond.

**“Our counsellor never took sides, and asked difficult questions that we weren't able to ask ourselves.”**

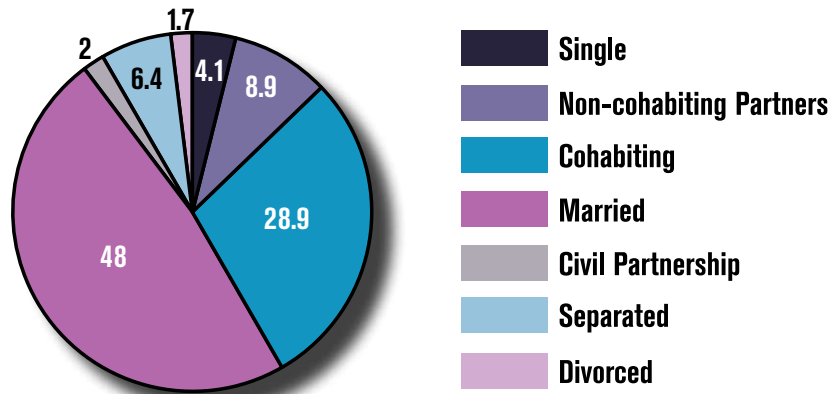
Data collected from 456 clients who responded to this questionnaire at six weeks into their therapy during 2015/16 indicated a high degree of satisfaction across all domains with over 95% being very positive about our services and the support they received. However, nearly 10% would have liked to have been seen more quickly, pointing to the importance of being able to respond promptly when couples get into difficulty in their relationship.



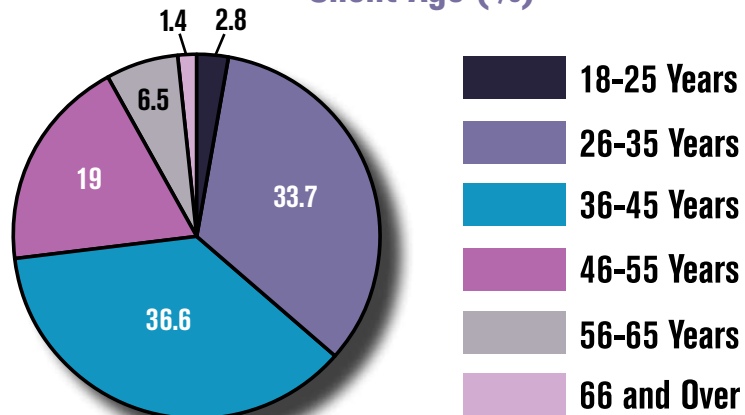
## Who Do We Help?

Tavistock Relationships' clients are diverse in age, social economic group, age, sexuality and ethnic origin. The majority of clients (36.6%) seen in 2015/16 belonged to the 36–45 age group, closely followed by those in the 26–35 age group, who made up nearly 35%. As in the previous year, there was a slight increase in clients belonging to older age group of 56 and over at 7.9%, compared to 6.8% in financial year 2014/15. While the majority of our clients were in full or part-time employment, over 7% were unemployed, and nearly 6% of these were claiming either sickness benefit or job seekers' allowance. Around 7-8% of our clients described themselves as gay or bisexual and the majority of clients were either married or living together (77%). Around 8% of our clients described themselves as divorced or separated. 52% described themselves as White British. Other clients identified themselves as Asian (7.4%), Mixed race (5.9%), Black (4%), Chinese (1.2%).

### Client Relationship Status (%)



### Client Age (%)



# Our Finances

This year Tavistock Relationships' income rose slightly by 2% to just over £5m up from £4,994,445 last year.

Our work level has been steady, offering over 17,000 sessions to our clients from both our London sites - at Warren Street and at our second centre, at New Street. Similarly to last year, fees generated from clients have reached over £1.5m this year, whilst contract income has also increased.

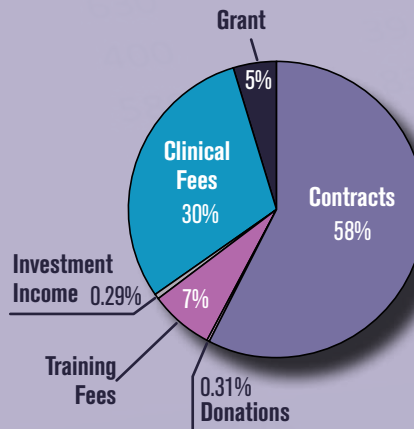
Fee income from our counselling and therapy services, together with our training delivery is balanced with central Government contract income at 42% and 48% of total income, respectively. This allows the organisation a degree of independence and enables us to plan for a sustainable.

We have managed our expenditure level closely, delivering our services successfully and in a cost effective manner. The result of both robust delivery and cost control is a surplus of £183k at the end of the year, an increase of 10% compared to last year when we achieved £167k surplus. This surplus is added to our reserves which ensure the organisation's financial health is further strengthened and prudent levels are maintained in relation to increased turnover.

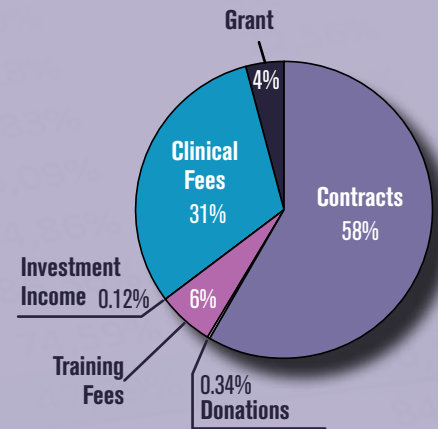
Despite the challenging funding environment, our income growth shows we are successful in our ambition to deliver effective high quality relationship support to more couples. We are building our funding base to ensure our work continues and our charitable mission can be delivered into the future.

	2015/16	2014/15
Contracts (Training and Projects)	2,941,809	2,910,002
Donations and other voluntary income	15,899	17,147
Training fees	354,762	300,086
Investment income	14,838	6,077
Clinical fees	1,538,895	1,555,991
Grant (Training and Projects)	230,600	205,143
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,096,803</b>	<b>4,994,445</b>

**Income 2015/2016**



**Income 2014/2015**



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**Humphries, J. and McCann, D.** (2015) 'Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy with Violent Couples: Understanding and Working with Domestic Violence', *Couple and Family Psychoanalysis*, 5(2), pp. 149-167.

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Established in 1948, Tavistock Relationships is an internationally renowned charity delivering and developing advanced practice, training and research in therapeutic and psycho-educational approaches to supporting couples.

We research, develop, pilot and raise awareness of best practice, providing services to couples and families, and disseminating our learning through academic and policy activities.

Our training programmes in couple and sex therapy range from introductory up to doctoral level and are accredited by bodies including The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and The British Psychoanalytic Council. Our London-based clinical services offer affordable counselling and psychotherapy to people facing difficulties in their relationships and parenting. Our evidence-based, innovative projects – Living Together with Dementia, Parents as Partners and Adopting Together support and improve the quality of our relationships when they are most challenged.

Tavistock Relationships, Registered Charity Number: 211058.  
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