

Our Impact 2020

**I learnt that
there would
be light in my
life again**

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 | Freephone helpline: **0808 802 6161**

 | Webchat service: **crusescotland.org.uk**

 | Email: **support@crusescotland.org.uk**

The need for bereavement support has never been greater

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Why we're here

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland is Scotland's bereavement support charity. We are here to build the resilience, and improve the wellbeing of, bereaved people across Scotland.

We offer a range of services to people who are experiencing grief:

- Information and advice
- National bereavement helpline and webchat service
- One-to-one counselling and listening
- Specialist support for children, young people and families
- Group and peer support

These community-based bereavement support services are open to all, regardless of circumstance, and are delivered by a team of dedicated and highly trained volunteers.

The first contact from a client ranges from the same day, to twenty years after a bereavement. We understand that the grieving process can be different for everyone and clients may need support at any stage of their journey. We're here whenever we're needed.

As the world struggles to contain and meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for bereavement support has never been greater. This year, many bereaved people have had to deal with increased trauma, being cut off from their usual support network, and even the inability to say goodbye at a loved one's side or funeral.

Those who are already struggling with bereavement, or whose relatives or friends die through other causes, have also been affected.

Through the flexibility, commitment and hard work of our staff and volunteers, Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland has continued to provide vital services notwithstanding the changing pandemic restrictions.

Please turn over to continue reading

Why we're here (cont'd)

We provide guidance on bereavement and COVID-19 on our website, whilst staff and volunteers working from home ensure the continued running of our helpline.

From 23 March, all adult clients requiring one-to-one support have been offered counselling or listening services by telephone.

We have also embraced digital technology, delivering online sessions to adults, children and young people, and in July, we launched a pilot webchat service in partnership with Grief Chat.

Since introducing telephone and online support, we have reduced our waiting list time across Scotland and are well placed to meet increasing demand from clients who have suffered a COVID-19 related bereavement.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all of our volunteers, funders and supporters who help us to counsel and care for the bereaved people of Scotland.

Keith Robertson
Chief Executive Officer





Something dark happened in my life

Catriona was 12 years old when her dad died of a heart attack, just two days before Christmas.

The impact of her dad's death took a great toll on Catriona's mental health. She recalls that both the event itself and the funeral were frightening for her as a young person, and she describes herself as being in a very dark place.

After a few months, Catriona's mum discovered that Cruse Scotland could offer support to her daughter. At first, Catriona was very nervous about attending bereavement support sessions. She felt that the reality of losing her dad had not yet sunk in. However, with the support of her mum, combined with the skills of Cruse volunteer, John, she began to trust in the process.

Catriona, now 17, explains, "Talking with John helped me realise that I was going to be okay. Something big and dark happened in my life but I learnt that there would be light in my life again. There would be good days to come and I would have a future.

"Looking back, I never understood what grief was doing to me and talking with John helped me process everything.

"Cruse supported me at a time when no-one else could. Meeting with John was a safe space where I could share anything about what was going on in my life. I now appreciate how important that was."

Catriona met regularly with John for about a year initially. She returned for a few sessions a year later and even now finds it a comfort to know support is available if she needs it.

Catriona recently used her heart-breaking experience to advocate for better mental health support in schools. Her powerful essay won her Scotland's BBC Young Reporter of the Year for 2020.



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Proud of the difference we've made

Our evidence-based service evaluation shows that Cruse Scotland intervention has a significant impact.



89%

clients reported significant impact on wellbeing



92%

felt able to return to work (if employed)



91%

felt less isolated

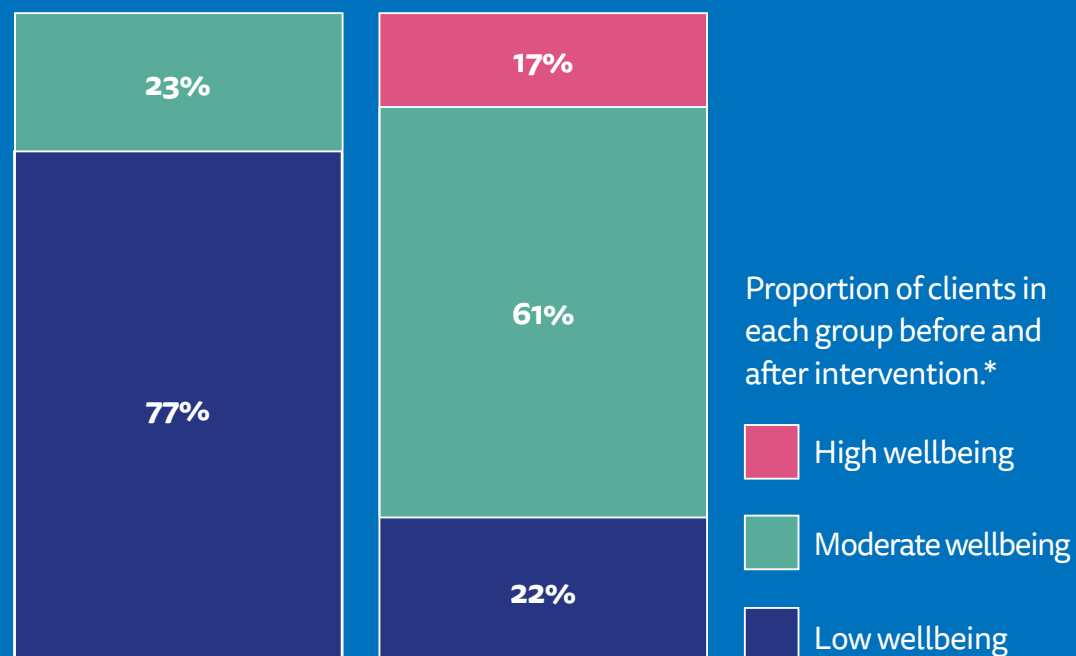


65%

clients visited GP less often

Before intervention

After intervention



Cruse Scotland isn't just one team or one service. Our range of services covers many sectors and offers support throughout the year.



Providing information, advice and reassurance

13,935 calls received on national bereavement helpline

43,184 visits to website

4,400 packs sent out to people who were bereaved

62% of our clients are signposted to Cruse Scotland from their GP or other NHS adviser



Counselling and listening sessions

496 adults in first six months of their bereavement attended 733 early support sessions

1,347 adults attended assessments for bereavement support needs

1,147 adults attended 5,519 listening/counselling

42 clients were identified as at risk of suicide or self-harm following initial evaluation



Volunteer involvement

The charity wouldn't survive without the contribution of volunteers

214 volunteers contributed 25,584 hours (equivalent to 730 working weeks)



Children and young people

131 children and young people attended 886 specialist support sessions, tailored to their individual needs

2,183 young people supported indirectly through parents/carers



Support groups

4 Step-by-Step social support groups ran in Fife

Monthly support groups took place in Dalkeith and Glasgow



I learnt a lot about myself at that time

2020 has been an exceptionally hard year, not least for those who have faced bereavement.

Cruse volunteer, Lilian, can particularly empathise with families affected by COVID-19. Her own son, Daniel, died in 2002, aged just 21, from an unknown virus which migrated into his brain and killed him in six short days.

Lilian, her family and Daniel's friends were absolutely devastated. He had been a fit, healthy young man prior to this. Lilian describes it as a surreal nightmare and remembers carrying Daniel's ashes home in an urn, unable to relate this to the handsome, strong boy her son had been just a few weeks earlier.

As his mother, not only did Lilian have to try to deal with her own overwhelming grief, but also support her other two children and Daniel's girlfriend. Lilian reflects, "I learnt a lot about myself at that time, and I clearly remembered Daniel saying, weeks before he became ill, that I should start doing counselling, which I had previously practiced,

and also that I should never become a 'couch potato'! I took him at his word and decided that I could help others going through the shock and stress of bereavement."

Having previously volunteered with Cruse Scotland, Lilian decided to undertake a Diploma in Counselling at Glasgow University and returned to the charity armed with a professional qualification, alongside personal experience of grief and loss. She now volunteers for Cruse as a fully qualified Counsellor.

Lilian believes that she can truly understand what people are going through when a loved one dies, having experienced the devastation, the mixed feelings of denial and disbelief, anger and guilt which often accompany such a loss. She also feels she can offer hope; showing that people can ultimately come through this life-changing experience and still live a meaningful life, as she has done.



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How you can help Cruse Scotland

Support us

During a tumultuous year of grief, anxiety and isolation, Cruse Scotland has made significant progress to ensure the bereaved people of Scotland have the support and advice.

We have adopted digital resources to counsel clients remotely, extended our helpline hours, as well as introduced a free phone number and webchat service.

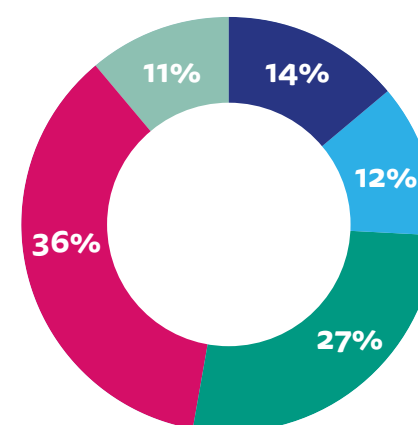
Demand for bereavement support is expected to increase as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. To sustain and grow our specialist bereavement services to face this challenge, we need your help by:

- donating money to fund our services
- volunteering to provide bereavement support
- providing expertise to develop our charity

To donate or fundraise for Cruse Scotland, visit our page on Just Giving: www.justgiving.com/cbcs

If you have time and skills to help us, please contact us (details on the back cover).

In 2019/20 Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland's income was £636,979 and expenditure was £584,478 that generated a surplus of £52,501



Income 2019/20 – £636,979

- Local Authorities
- NHS
- Scottish Government
- Charitable Trusts
- Donations / Earned income

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I had lost my purpose in life

Viv's mum passed away in October 2018, then her dad died 4 months later after suffering from dementia.

She felt alone and lost, not wanting to burden friends and family, and facing resurfacing grief from her brother's death 4 years earlier.

Viv bottled up her complex feelings, "I felt that I had lost my purpose in life. There were also feelings of relief and then guilt after my dad died and I was worried that I wasn't talking about any of it."

When she was feeling particularly low, Viv found the helpline number on the Cruse Scotland website and made the positive step forward of giving it a call. "From the very first conversation, I felt that everyone I spoke to was someone that I could really talk to and who understood how I was feeling. It also helped that it was someone that I didn't know."

Viv was offered one-to-one counselling. She remembers that the rooms felt safe and private, and she was immediately put at ease by the counsellor;

"This was the right place to be. I was scared to start talking as I had built up a dam around my feelings and I didn't want to break that down. However, counselling provided the space to talk, think things through and express my emotions."

When Viv felt ready to stop counselling sessions, she was offered to join Step-by-Step, Cruse Scotland's local peer support group. She says, "Joining the group has made me go out and about and meet other people. Even though we are all different, we are all there for the same reason. My mum would be pleased that I was coming along and trying new things!"

Viv knows there will be ups and downs ahead but feels more able to weather them with the ongoing connection to Cruse Scotland, and the support that Step-by-Step provides.



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If you require bereavement support, call our
national helpline on **0808 802 6161** or visit
crusescotland.org.uk

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