This is Danyal.
We can’t bring his father back but last year we supported Danyal and his family, and thousands of others like them.

Real people. Real impact.
2011/12 Annual Review
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Danyal at the Cruse (Birmingham Area) Family Support Group. Photo ©Jacky Chapman
Each year, when we compile the data relating to our services over the previous twelve months, one statistic stands out for its remarkable consistency. For many years now we have found that over 50% of those who come to Cruse for support do so at the suggestion of their GP. There should be no great surprise here. Local doctors, working day in day out with patients who have experienced bereavement in a wide range of circumstances, are well placed to recognise that Cruse is the organisation to turn to when someone has died, and that our bereavement volunteers can offer real help at this time of great personal distress.

Our Annual Review for this year illustrates this. Entitled ‘Real People. Real Impact’ it includes case studies which show how Cruse has been able to help a number of individuals and families in the wake of devastating bereavements. They are representative of the 39,000 clients to whom Cruse gave one-to-one support during the past year. And many more have been given support in groups or through our telephone support service, or have contacted Cruse for information and advice. The overall number of bereaved people coming to Cruse for help continues to rise inexorably.

Cruse has always given support free of charge and we are determined to keep it that way. But just as our volunteers undertake their work for bereaved people with great professionalism, we also have to run our charity in a professional way to meet the ever increasing demand for our services. We have now virtually completed the reorganisation of our local network into approximately 72 Areas throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland; this has greatly extended our reach, allows us to offer the full range of our services consistently across the country and makes best use of our limited resources.

During the past year we have also begun to restructure our Helpline, making use of new systems and home working to offer wider support to the increasing numbers who contact us by telephone and email. Cruse is meeting increasing requests for help in a tough economic environment. The NHS re-organisation, with the move from Primary Care Trusts to Clinical Commissioning Groups, has added further uncertainty to our constant efforts to obtain the funding that we need to provide our services. As the mists clear, we hope to discover that the new CCGs will recognise the value of Cruse – as so many local GPs obviously do.

Nigel Tricker
Chair
Message from the Chief Executive

We live in a world where organisations are being increasingly challenged to demonstrate their impact. Cruse is no exception. What difference do we make to the lives of those who seek our support? Cruse’s vision is that ‘all bereaved people have somewhere to turn when someone dies’. We do this through enhancing society’s awareness of bereavement and delivering a range of services.

Our impact is far-reaching, whether influencing government policy, developing the skills of those who come into contact with bereaved people or directly providing services. For a bereaved person it can be life-saving. Thanks to Cruse they may have a volunteer to provide reassurance, advice and support, and help them develop coping strategies. They may also have a supportive manager enabling them to return to work, and a GP who understands that bereavement is not an illness, although it can have a devastating impact on mental and physical health.

We have achieved a great deal this year. We supported more bereaved people than ever before. We continued to develop specialist services for the military family with new leaflets, a DVD about children’s bereavement and an e-learning training course. We continue to influence services across the world. Our journal Bereavement Care sold in 19 countries. Our Gold Standard Project which aims to ‘bridge the gap’ between NHS and community services was featured at the International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Miami.

The numbers tell the scale of our work – the stories, the individual tragedies and lives irrevocably changed.

These are challenging times and as more and more bereaved people turn to us for help we must be able to respond to their need.

In this special year Cruse was honoured to be represented at the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Service at St Paul’s Cathedral. This was followed by LOCOG commissioning Cruse to provide bereavement support for the Olympics and the Paralympics. These are a tribute to Cruse’s expertise and the vital contribution that Cruse volunteers make in their communities.

None of what Cruse achieves would be possible without the passion, dedication and skills of our volunteers and members of staff and the support of all those who recognise the vital importance of what we do.

We are experts in bereavement care, providing somewhere to turn when someone dies. Working professionally and caring passionately, our vital work continues to have a real impact on real lives.

Debbie Kerslake
Chief executive
My Cruse bereavement volunteer Sarah provided the listening and understanding ear that I could find nowhere else.”

Barbara Want
Nick Clarke, much-loved BBC radio presenter of The World at One died of cancer in 2006 leaving his wife Barbara Want and their twin sons aged four.

In Barbara’s words
‘In their grief and bewilderment at the loss of their dad, the boys looked to me. And I wasn’t there for them. It shames me to think of what I did and of what I thought. I shouted at them at night, and they often found me sobbing on the floor.

Even worse, I started to feel like they were a burden to me and I struggled to find any love for them. How could I lose that most basic instinct, maternal love? I started to think I was abnormal, and to hate myself.

My Cruse bereavement volunteer Sarah provided the listening and understanding ear that I could find nowhere else. She was someone I was able to trust and be honest with, and reassured me that everything I was feeling was normal. “Grief is the most powerful emotion there is,” she explained, “it wipes away all other feelings, even love, but the love will return, I promise you.”

Confessing to what I was doing to the boys was hard, but I needed to find a way to stop. Sarah helped me work out ways to manage my rage with the boys, by dealing with it as soon as I felt it rising, rather than leaving it to take control of me. It was the first of many times she helped me to piece together the splinters of my life.’

Barbara dedicated her book Why not me?: A story of love and loss to her Cruse volunteer. In the book she describes the double burden of coping with her own grief as well as that of her children.

In Dave’s words
‘My younger sister Vicky died at the age of just 20 in tragic circumstances, and me and the rest of my family were completely devastated. The family issues were complex, and I felt isolated and had nowhere to turn and no-one to talk to. I was referred to Cruse for one-to-one support, and my bereavement volunteer was someone impartial I could unload on without the consequences that can come from talking to those who are also emotionally involved.

As I was going through different stages I would sometimes feel very angry or very emotional and my volunteer was able to reassure me it was all normal. Several times he gave me ‘food for thought’ statements which would come back later and help me look at things a bit differently.

I personally have found the support from Cruse to be invaluable during the worst time in my life, and I feel so passionately that we need to raise awareness of their services. We all have either lost someone, will lose someone, or will need to help someone who has lost someone – knowing Cruse is there to help is a great comfort.’

Dave Round was helped by Cruse after his sister died in 2009 and he now supports Cruse as a Community Champion within the consultancy organisation Capgemini.

Dave ran as part of a team in the British 10K London Run 2012, and recently organised a Zumbathon. Dave has also arranged for 10 desktop PCs to be donated to Cruse offices.
Shaun Harland-Jones is a project manager within Theale-based defence and security specialist SCS. The company has had staff working in conflict areas of Afghanistan since 2009 and has a long-running association with Cruse.

**In Shaun’s words**

‘When we first sent personnel out to Afghanistan, we wanted to make sure we had systems in place to inform and support next of kin should there be an incident, and the worst happen. It’s important to us that a member of staff is available to break the news, rather than an anonymous policeman or minister.

I set up a team of volunteers to work as Casualty Notification Officers (CNOs). We have a rota to ensure that two staff at any time are carrying a phone and are available 24/7 to drop everything and be ready to deliver bad news to the family. I contacted Cruse to help make sure the staff volunteers were up to this sensitive task. Cruse provided a two-day course for the first group of CNOs, and has also provided one-to-one training for staff as we get new volunteers on board. Everyone’s been happy with the training. They all think it’s superb; I’ve not had one bad word.

Our relationship with Cruse is ongoing including regular donations towards Cruse’s other work. We’ve also arranged to be able to call on Cruse staff directly in the event of an incident. As an organisation, having Cruse’s expertise behind us means we can feel secure supporting our staff working in areas of conflict.’
Pam Sanderson-Judd’s first husband Ken died suddenly at the age of 53. After eleven years of being treated by the GP for depression, Pam was referred to a mental health unit, who recognised her problems as relating to grief for her husband, compounded by recent losses of both parents, and referred her to Cruse.

**In Pam’s words**

‘My life was miserable – I couldn’t sleep, I couldn’t read, I couldn’t relax. I couldn’t think about Ken. If I came across pictures of him I’d just push them away.

My Cruse volunteer Wilma came to my house and it was just the most wonderful thing, to be given time to talk in my own comfort zone. I could say whatever I wanted and it was OK, she gave me permission to feel whatever I wanted, to laugh or cry. She helped me to relax and gave me my life and memories back again. Once I was able to get past the trauma and remember the ups and downs of 29 years of happy marriage, I was also able to move on and grieve for my parents.

I just wish someone had pointed me in this direction years ago. Recently I went to Center Parcs with my son and new grandson and we had such a good time. My son said to me: “Mum, you’re brilliant – this is the fun person you always were”. I just don’t know where I’d be by now if I hadn’t encountered Cruse. Now I can remember the people who I loved so much, and smile.’

In March 2012 Cruse Bereavement Care in Northern Ireland hosted a day of hope for 16 young people aged between 15 and 22 who had been bereaved by suicide. Young Cruse Coordinator Elaine Roub was involved in developing the concept out of a partnership between Cruse and the Southern Trust Project Life Implementation Group.

**In Elaine’s words**

‘Those of us who attended strongly felt the ‘heart’ of Hope Day – the pain these courageous young people wrestled with, the compassion of the dedicated volunteers who hosted the event, the atmosphere of fun mixed with anger and hope, and the power of ‘connectedness’ that happened throughout the day as young people found their voice amidst others who have shared their journey.

During the day young people took part in snow tubing and climbing, as well as reflective sessions on anger, guilt and courage. The day ended with a balloon release, and the participants attached a memory star to each balloon.

All the young people are keen to do more activities like Hope Day in the future and suggested a Hope Day reunion every year in March.

What really stood out from the young people’s feedback is the degree to which they connected with one another and felt understood and cared for in the midst of their grief. One commented: “I have a better understanding of how many people my age are in similar situations, which is comforting”. “Don’t cry because it’s over,” said another, “smile because of the memories”.’
Real people

“Don’t cry because it’s over... smile because of the memories.”

Participants at Young Cruse Hope Day, March 2012.
Cruse works to ensure that **all bereaved people have somewhere to turn when someone dies**. Working innovatively and compassionately, we help people to cope with the devastating effects of bereavement. To achieve the greatest possible impact, Cruse works with individuals, children and families, organisations, communities and society.

In 2011–12 Cruse was privileged to work with people from a wide range of communities and organisations.

**Working with individuals**
- As part of our commitment to ensuring that everyone can access excellent, free bereavement care when and where they need it, we provide a range of services including telephone, email, website and face-to-face support either 1:1 or in groups. Demand for 1:1 support has increased dramatically and was given to nearly 39,000 children, young people and adults.
- We worked with specialist staff caring for injured personnel including soldiers returning from Afghanistan at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at University Hospital Birmingham – Queen Elizabeth. We were able to enhance the support offered to military personnel facing the trauma of losing friends and colleagues in action.

**Working with children and families**
- Over the year we reviewed all our children’s and young people’s services in England, identifying areas where we need to expand. Cruse wants to reach children whatever their age, and we’ve seen a dramatic increase in the number of under fives being referred to us.
- In September Young Cruse in Northern Ireland celebrated its 6th Birthday at ‘Journey into Hope’, a childhood bereavement conference for parents and carers. The conference was opened by Health Minister Edwin Poots MLA, who commended Cruse volunteers and staff for offering ‘vital support, help and care during times of grief’. Eleven young people from the Cruse Youth Advisory Group made a huge contribution: leading workshops, sharing advice and their own personal stories, and helping with a balloon release.
Working with organisations

- In 2011 we began providing a commissioned bereavement counselling service for people referred by the Victim Support Homicide Service. Cruse provides services for those bereaved by murder or manslaughter including face-to-face, telephone and facilitated support groups, helping people when they are vulnerable.

- Working in partnership can broaden the bereavement care we offer our clients. We continue to develop our work with Samaritans providing care to those bereaved by suicide.

We were also delighted to win Big Lottery funding in partnership with the Stroke Association in Northern Ireland. The ‘Beyond Words’ project will provide a range of bereavement services for people aged 60 plus particularly stroke survivors and those living in sheltered accommodation.

Working with communities

- Volunteers around the UK can now provide telephone bereavement support from the convenience of their own homes as part of the National Helpline HomeNetwork. During 2011-2012 we used new telephone-training and ‘cloud’ technology to train volunteers. They can now also deliver a speedier response to the many emails our National Helpline receives.

- Our telephone service in Sutton & Merton has been extended to offer a new face-to-face service, helping us support many more bereaved people in the borough. We’ve produced a London-wide development plan to improve our service right across the capital. Cruse’s Area Development work is nearly complete. We are seeing improved access, with increasing numbers accessing local services across the community.
Working with society

- In 2011 Cruse Cymru was awarded funding to increase access to bereavement services by children and young people in Wales. The funding from the Wales Palliative Care Implementation Board is enabling us to develop and organise a consistent approach to the comprehensive support of bereaved children and young people – working with all other cross sector organisations. The programme was officially launched in December 2011 at the National Assembly of Wales, Cardiff Bay.

- Cruse Life President, Colin Murray Parkes was awarded the 2011 Times Sternberg Active Life Award, designed to recognise older individuals who make a significant contribution to public life. Colin was also presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Death Education Counselling (ADEC) for his outstanding contributions to the field of bereavement care. We congratulate Colin on these well-deserved honours.

- Our Annual Conference ‘Bereavement Matters’ in Warwick was a huge success with over 350 delegates, from both external organisations and Cruse. The two days explored grief and bereavement issues and featured world-renowned experts including: Ted Bowman; Colin Murray Parkes; Dorothy Rowe; Atle Dyregrov and Henk Schut.

- Cruse continues to campaign for the rights of bereaved people. The first chief coroner for England and Wales was appointed in September, and Cruse played a key part in the campaign to create this important role. We also responded to the Department of Work and Pensions consultation on proposals to change the bereavement benefits system, taking advice from some of our past clients and drawing on their experience.


At the programme launch: Professor the Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Chair of the Palliative Care Implementation Board (right) and Jane Fitz, author of the research report into child bereavement services in Wales.

Colin Murray Parkes receives his ADEC Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Conference in Miami, June 2011.
Real impact: the facts and figures

In 2011/12
We gave information and advice to 39,162 people.
An increase of 14.3%

We gave one-to-one support to 38,922 people.
An increase of 12%

Our 5738 Cruse volunteers contributed 516,773 hours...

We continued to see a rise in demand for our children’s work.
In the last year we have supported 5343 children and young people up to 25 years old.
Including 381 children under five years old.

Over 50% of our clients were referred to us by their GP.
Our fundraisers

We wouldn’t be able to provide the services we do without the ongoing generosity of our many fundraisers and in 2011–12 we worked hard to build on people’s support of our work.

Up for the challenge

Our fundraisers have been busy supporting Cruse. We had a great kick start to the year with Jonathan Davies running in the London Marathon. Following on from Jonathan’s success, Hamish Gaunt and his team cycled their way across the UK from Land’s End to John O’Groats. Taking on long distances seemed to prove popular this year and Paul Ali and Paul Stout stepped up to the mark by taking part in a whopping seven runs covering 393 miles each. Cruse Areas and branches have also been incredibly busy with a huge variety of fundraising activities and events across the network – everything from an Elvis night and a carol service featuring author Gervase Phinn, through to garden parties and bag packing for supermarkets.

The Big Hug

Our Big Hug campaign entered its second year, as we face an ever-growing demand for our children and young people’s services. This year we added a twist – rather than just asking for a donation we ran a ‘Big Hug Winter Challenge’. We asked people to challenge themselves – set a tricky task which may not be as difficult for others, i.e. throw a dinner party, learn to swim or even give up a favourite food for a month... well done to all of those who succeeded in their challenge!

Royal Wedding

A particular highlight for Cruse was to be one of 26 charities personally picked by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to benefit from the Royal Wedding Charitable Gift Fund. We were selected on the strength of our work with the Armed Services and their families. Celebrations to mark the occasion included our volunteers and central office staff holding a Royal Tea Party.

Footprints... walk and remember

We held 15 Footprints walks across Cruse this year. The walks were developed from the Memory walks, a concept which began in Northern Ireland. Our first Footprints walks were held in 2011 across the Cruse network in Northern Ireland and England. Many enthusiastic walkers participated – young and old – the majority of whom were walking in memory of someone who had died. Walkers were able to share their stories or simply walk and participate in an act of remembrance at the end. We had such great feedback that we’ll be running more walks next year.
Last year we reported that we were facing a period of austerity and could expect many fundraising challenges in the year ahead. As the squeeze on public spending takes hold, the need for fundraising income becomes all the more vital to enable us to plan for the future, and – critically – to assure people that we will be here for them when they need us most.

Cruse is honoured by the generosity of our donors, which enables us to expand our services in line with our strategic objectives.

Sadly we can’t list everyone, but all are greatly appreciated. Last year we received exceptionally generous individual donations from Mr R D Clarke and Dr Hedley Clarke. We also received donations and grants from trusts, foundations and corporates and income from service level agreements with public sector bodies.

Our supporters

How can you support Cruse?

Thousands of people contact Cruse each year, looking for help when they are at their most vulnerable. We need your help to be able to continue delivering our free service. Please give what you can for people who have nowhere else to turn.

To find out how to donate please visit our website: www.cruse.org.uk

Thank you.
Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity providing bereavement support services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We offer support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies and work to enhance society’s care of bereaved people.

Cruse offers face-to-face, telephone, email and website support. We have a national helpline and local services throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and a website and freephone helpline specifically for children and young people. Our services are provided by trained volunteers and are confidential and free.

You can find Cruse online at [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Cruse’s children and young people’s website is at [www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk)

Our national helpline number is 0844 477 9400

The Cruse young people’s freephone helpline number is 0808 808 1677