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Email support



Welcome to our Annual Review 2013-14

Over the year since joining Cruse Bereavement Care as Chair I have enjoyed learning more about this wonderful organisation, and meeting some of the thousands of volunteers and staff who work so hard to ensure bereaved people have somewhere to turn when someone dies.

One of the things that most impressed me is the clear and ambitious targets set out in the 2013-18 Strategic Plan. I am delighted to be able to work with Cruse to implement this vision, and to help reach even more bereaved people.

Fiona Edwards, Chair





In 2013 Nigel Tricker stepped down as Chair after nine years in the role. On handing over to Fiona Edwards he said: 'Cruse is entering an exciting period in its long history of service to the community. I wish my successor as Chair, fellow Council Members and all Cruse volunteers and staff every success in the future'.

Making a difference: reaching even more bereaved people

The past year has been another successful one for Cruse. Highlights included a wonderful validation of our existing work with children and young people in Northern Ireland in *The Rainbow Makers* report, and the launch of new projects supporting the Military Family and helping those affected by drug or alcohol related bereavement.

Our volunteers support bereaved people through our five core services; working one to one, in groups, over the phone, by email, and with children and young people. In this Annual Review you can read some of their stories and those of the people they helped including Jane, one of our Youth Advisory Group, who bravely shared her story in front of a packed hall at our conference in July. No one who heard the group will forget their moving presentations and tributes to Cruse.

As well as providing our vital services we have been busy speaking up for bereaved people – responding to consultations, sitting on advisory groups and campaigning against changes to bereavement benefits.

To improve the way bereaved people are treated we have worked with the Bereavement Services Association to launch the *Bereavement Care*Service Standards and develop a training programme.

Our key motivation and inspiration is always the many thousands of bereaved people that we help each year. To provide this help and support we rely on our wonderful volunteers, supporters and staff, and I want to thank each and every one. I can't find a more eloquent way to do it than sharing this quote from an email I recently received from a bereaved person:

'Your organisation does a very difficult job and people like [my volunteer] are an incredible asset to providing such a valuable service. So a very big thank you to you, all the staff of Cruse, and especially [my volunteer] for switching the light back on when I felt so alone in the dark.'

Read on for more stories from those we have helped this year, and to find out about the different ways we are reaching even more bereaved people.



Debbie Kerslake, Chief Executive



The five ways we support bereaved people

Every bereaved person is different and their needs are different too.

We've been listening to what people want, and our goal is to reach even more bereaved people by helping in the ways they need it most.

There are 78 Cruse Areas who provide our services on the ground across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our ambitious goal is that by 2018 **every** Area will provide these five key services. Some Areas already meet this target, and many others are nearly there.

Our aim is that every Cruse Area will offer:

One-to-one support

Services for children and young people

Group support

Telephone support

Email support





One-to-one sessions are provided by our trained Bereavement Volunteers. This face-to-face support usually takes place in the bereaved person's own home, or in one of our offices or outposts. Bereaved people looking for this level of support can contact the National Helpline or the relevant Cruse Area directly. More than 50% do so on the advice of their GP.

29,803

The number of people we supported one-to-one





This year

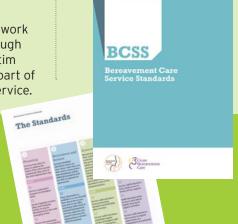
In 2013-14 we supported **29,803** people on a one-to-one basis.

We work to extend our services wherever they are needed. For example:

- In Northern Ireland we began projects to help victims and survivors bereaved as a result of the Troubles, and were awarded £284,000 as part of 'Together for You', a consortium of nine organisations improving mental health and wellbeing.
- In England and Wales we work with those bereaved through homicide referred by Victim Support caseworkers as part of the National Homicide Service.

We want to ensure that all bereaved people have access to the highest standards of care, and in early 2014 we were co-authors with the Bereavement Services Association of the cross-sector Bereavement Care Service Standards.

For more information, and to download a copy of the publication, go to www.cruse.org.uk/bcss



Our stories

Tarek Hussein

Tarek Hussein received support from Cruse in Shropshire after losing his girlfriend in 2013.

In his own words:

'I lost the best part of my life back in February 2013, when my best friend and girlfriend, Rachel Lucy Maddox, was tragically taken from me in a car accident on her way to my house one Saturday morning.

Needless to say everyone who knew and loved Rachel was devastated at the huge hole created in our lives. I had no idea what I was going to do without Rachel, we had been building the foundations of a life together. Every aspect of my everyday life was turned upside down and I felt as if I was cut in half and was always missing something — I had seen or spoken to Rachel every day from the day we met. No matter how many people told me they were there for me I felt no one truly understood how alone I was without Rach.

That's when I heard about Cruse Bereavement Care. In the beginning I didn't want to have any form of help, as I just thought, "What is talking about Rachel not being here going to do? It won't change anything". I was adamant that I was not going, but as time passed I could feel myself getting worse – not looking after myself and becoming detached from everyone.

After the initial few sessions, my guard dropped and they became 50min slots where I could talk about Rachel, or how I'm feeling about anything. I didn't feel like I was shoving my tragedy down people's throats, or making others feel awkward.

My Cruse Volunteer was very helpful, and I couldn't thank them enough. I decided that I would complete a mud run/obstacle race/challenge event every month for 2014 to raise funds and awareness. They are all challenging, but the rewarding feeling I get from completing a run is multiplied when I think how many people could receive the support from Cruse when they need it most.'



Pamela Kilgour

Pamela Kilgour is a volunteer for Norwich Cruse and has worked one-to-one with bereaved people in person and over the phone for two years.

In her own words:

'I think listening skills and empathy are the most important skills for a Bereavement Volunteer. Most people want to tell their story. They may find it hard to talk to family and friends, or don't want to upset them. Many also want reassurance that what they are going through is normal.

When I started to work with bereaved people I was not left out on a limb at all. The training was intensive but I thoroughly enjoyed it. I have regular supervision and I can also contact my supervisor at other times if needed.

As sessions go on you can tell when someone is benefiting – they may tell you that they feel a bit lighter, or that they managed to do a bit more, or haven't cried quite as much that week. Helping people is really satisfying – but rather than feel elated or proud you feel humble and privileged to be able to follow them on their journey. It really is such a worthwhile job – I would recommend it to anyone.'



Cruse is the biggest provider of bereavement support for children and young people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Many of our volunteers take up additional training so that they can work with children and young people, both one-to-one or in special groups and projects. Others are recruited with previous experience of working with children and young people.

This year

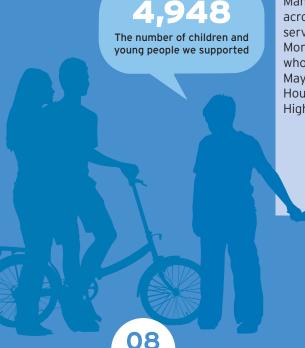
Across the Cruse network we supported **4,948 children and young people** up to the age of 25.

Many of our children's volunteers across the network have had their services recognised, including Morgannwg children's volunteers who accepted awards from the Mayor of Swansea at the Mansion House and awards from the High Sheriff in Neath.

In Autumn 2013 Cruse published an evaluation of its services to children and young people in Northern Ireland.

The Rainbow Makers report shows how over **800 children** aged 4-18 have received support through the Young Cruse project, from its initial launch in 2008. The evaluation fully involved children and young people and went on to be featured at the 'International Grief and Bereavement' conference in Hong Kong.

Find out more at www.cruse.org. uk/news/rainbow-makers



Our stories

Jane Molloy

Jane Molloy was nine years old when she lost her grandmother and 10 years old when she lost her grandfather. She is now 14 and has been a part of the Cruse Youth Advisory Group (YAG) in Northern Ireland for nearly five years.



In her own words:

'It is very hard to put into words how I felt about my nanny. She was like a second mother to me. I loved her so much. I was totally heartbroken when she died and didn't know how I was going to cope.

At the wake and the funeral, people kept telling me it was going to be

okay and that they knew how I felt. But NO! There was not one person who knew how I felt, except me.

I felt isolated and as if I wasn't being told completely everything. I knew mummy was grieving too so I didn't want to burden her. I lay in my room unable to sleep, speak or eat. I was also unable to attend school. My parents started to get worried and I was put in touch with a Cruse volunteer.

My volunteer was called Mary. I will never forget her for as long as I live: I clicked with her straight away. I wasn't afraid to talk to her or open up to her and she didn't mind if I cried. She let me. When I spoke, she would always stop and listen and she always waited until I was completely finished.

I cannot thank Cruse enough for their help, encouragement and co-operation for and with me and my family. I have learnt so much in my five years as a YAG member. I have met lifelong friends – people who actually DO know how I feel and what I have been through.

There is an old saying 'Children should be seen and not heard'.
But children need to be heard and hopefully people will soon realise that a child's sense of loss is as great as an adult's.'

Glenys Benford-Lewis

Glenys Benford-Lewis is a volunteer with the Morgannwg Area of Cruse. She works one-toone with both adults and children.

In her own words:

'The difference between working with bereaved adults and children is that in children the process takes longer. At each stage as their understanding of death grows they will need to reach a new place of resolution. But if they don't have this opportunity the damage can be long lasting – recently I took part in a radio phone-in, and some callers in their 60s, 70s and 80s were still suffering from losing a parent as a child because they had never had a chance to talk about it.

Our Cruse Area offers one-to-one support to children and young people and we are also starting up a support group. We hold a 'fun day' every half term. We arrange different activities – one time we all learned circus skills. Sometimes you see a very shy, timid child come in through the door and a completely different child going out. Before they go home we ask everyone what the best bit was. I always remember one little boy, about six, who said "seeing my mummy smile".'



Hearing about the experiences of other bereaved people and supporting one another can be a huge help when you are going through bereavement. Our Areas offer a variety of ways for people to meet up and benefit from shared support, including group-support sessions led by a trained facilitator and local friendship groups.

This year

This year we supported **5,483 people in groups** across the Cruse network.

During 2013-14 we have worked on a number of exciting new projects which will help people to support each other in groups and through peer support.

Keep up to date with all our projects at www.cruse.org.uk/news

- We are working in partnership with Adfam to support families who have been bereaved through drugs and alcohol. We want to break down some of the stigma and build a network of peersupport for bereaved families.
- The Department of Health
 has recognised our work with
 Samaritans and awarded them
 funding so that together we can
 develop joint support groups for
 those who have lost someone
 close to suicide.
- We are expanding our work with the Military Family following an award of £518,810, from the Libor Fund, by the Ministry of Defence. This includes working with the military to develop peer support.

5,483

The number of people we supported in groups

Our stories

Sara Sheard

Sara Sheard's mother died four years ago. She attends a family support group together with her daughters, age three and eight.

In her own words:

'Meeting the Birmingham Cruse team has been amazing for us. It allows us to have family time together – I can't pick up any housework and it lets me focus on me and my girls. In the group activities, you reflect on emotions around loss, and we also play games and listen to stories.

The group really helps my eldest daughter. It's sometimes hard for me to help her when I am trying to come to terms with it myself.



I miss my mom and I need my mom, but this is not possible... I need the group to help me be strong and keep going, to remember to have fun, and to show me people do care.'

Rachel Power

Rachel Power attends the Birmingham bereaved by suicide group. Her ex-partner took his own life in January 2012.

In her own words:

'The group is a safe haven and gives us a chance to open up and talk to other people who have been through the same thing. With suicide there is a social stigma, and acquaintances can say really insensitive things. My friends and family are great but you want to protect them. Coming to the group helps you to realise you are not the only one.

I still go to the group whenever I can, but if I can't make it, that's fine. Earlier on it would have felt like the end of the world to have to miss a session. It keeps you grounded.'

Val O'Garro and Pauline Kimbley

Val O'Garro is a facilitator, supervisor and trainer for Cruse and Pauline Kimbley is a volunteer who provides support in groups – both are based in Birmingham.

In Val's words:

'We offer specialist group support for those bereaved as a result of murder, suicide, and cancer. We also have a family group, and a holding group for new clients. Our most successful group venture is our weekly "Friendship Group" which is a social opportunity for people who are ready to pick up their lives, in a group of people in similar situations."



In Pauline's words:

'When I was bereaved, the help and support I received through Cruse gave me the knowledge and confidence to go forward with my life. Later on, I decided to become a volunteer. After training, my supervisor asked if I would like to shadow her in the holding group.

This group offers a one off initial appointment where bereaved people are encouraged to talk openly and share their experiences and strategies for coping. To start with I found leading a group slightly daunting but gradually with support my confidence has grown.'



The Cruse National Helpline is staffed by trained bereavement volunteers, who offer immediate emotional and practical support to anyone affected by a bereavement, as well as ongoing support. Our volunteers can help callers to talk things through. They can also help people find their local Cruse service, or direct people to other organisations and sources of information.

The number of calls taken by the National Helpline 0844 477 9400 National Helpline

12



This year

This year the Cruse National Helpline supported **9,978 people**. In addition our Area network gave ongoing telephone support to 1,469 people.

Our Early Intervention project aims to reach people within the first six months of their bereavement. targeting those deemed most at risk of developing prolonged grief disorder and offering six sessions of telephone support.

This year 123 people accessed the service and through use of the evaluation tools, the Bereavement Compass and Core 10, we have been able to demonstrate significant improvements in mental and physical health.

Many bereaved people find it easier and preferable to speak to someone over the phone. It offers flexibility and anonymity - and can offer a lifeline in emergency situations.

From December 2013 and into 2014 the Somerset Levels suffered severe flooding as part of wider winter storms. Our Somerset service was able to switch to telephone support for some bereaved people in the area, to ensure continuity of support.



Helen

Helen (not her real name) lost her sister in February 2014. She received support from our pilot Early Intervention Project, which provides six sessions of telephone or email support for those at risk of prolonged grief disorder.

In her own words:

'I have two young children and am very limited as to when I can get away. Talking on the phone was perfect for me as it fitted around my life.

For the first couple of sessions we took things guite slowly. The whole situation had been a shock and very traumatic. I was really worried about falling apart – not being able to hold things together and look after the kids. I also experienced my grief physically and was having lots of symptoms. My volunteer was amazing, and gave me lots of different coping strategies. The breathing exercises really helped with symptoms like feeling sick. Then over the next two sessions I was able to talk and go deeper into what had happened. As well as the grief of losing my sister, we talked about the tricky things in our relationship that would now never be resolved.

During the fourth session I experienced a real epiphany – all the physical symptoms lifted and I felt so much better. It was lovely to come into the last two sessions without feeling so wobbly and having dropped some of the baggage. I had never realised how powerful just talking could be, and how it could result in such profound physical and emotional changes.

Before I talked to Cruse I was feeling very fragile – I snapped at the kids and sometimes found it difficult just to be around them. After the sessions I felt like I was myself again and could parent in the way I wanted to. I can't thank Cruse and my volunteer enough.'

Suad Swage

Suad Swage has been working shifts on the Cruse National Helpline since October 2013.

In her own words:

When I saw the advert for Cruse helpline volunteers I was intrigued. I thought it looked different from anything else I had done and would be a new challenge. The training was very varied. Role playing calls gave us a chance to put what we learned into practice and get used to helping people at the end of a phone line.



Often people just need us to normalise their experiences but sometimes they may need to talk through issues and problems – these can sometimes arise many years after the death of their loved one. The hardest calls are those which deal with tough topics like suicidal thoughts or abuse. This is where the support of the other volunteers and my supervisor is crucial.

We all agree that answering calls has changed us personally. Working on the helpline has been rewarding and I always feel like I am making a difference to the caller. Whilst we are not here to fix people's problems, we can listen and empower them to find their own solutions.'



Bereaved people can receive support and information by email from our National Helpline. This can be a single enquiry or ongoing email support. Some Areas also offer this service and we will expand this provision over the next four years. For the future we are looking at other ways we can use technology, such as Skype, instant messaging and online forums.

4,630
The number of people

we supported via email

This year

We gave email support to **4,630 people** through our National Helpline and Area network

Our re-designed website (see page 15) had a total of **423,591 visits** in the first year, with:

- 293,405 unique visitors
- 1.7 million pageviews
- Nearly 1,000 new visitors every day
- Almost 70% of visitors are new to the site each time and 30% are returning.

We have increased our use of social media, which can be a great way to reach people. We use Facebook and Twitter for news updates, to share stories from our volunteers and clients, or simply to pass on an encouraging word or saying.

On 31 March 2014 we had **3,347 Facebook friends**, and growing more than doubling in a year.

We also have over **1,500 followers on Twitter** (@crusecare).

5,34 (Facebook friends





'The Cruse helpline is marvellous. They helped me start making sense of the private hell that is bereavement. I've a long way to go but without Cruse I'd be in an even darker place. Thank you.'

Comment left on facebook

Chris Cooke

Chris Cooke has been working on the National Helpline since October 2013, providing email and telephone support.

In his own words:

I have had several bereavements of family and close friends myself, and when I was looking for volunteer opportunities had heard good things about Cruse, so I decided to become a volunteer.

Sometimes people will say they are emailing because they worry they are feeling too upset to talk on the phone. People often apologise for how they are feeling, and say things like, "I shouldn't be feeling like this, it was 10 years ago". We reassure them it is OK, and grief affects everyone in a different way. We encourage them

to call when they are ready, if that's what they would like.

The helpline training was very good and informative. After working on the phones for a while I took the extra training to be able to answer emails. I fit replying to email around calls during my shift. We get very much the same kind of queries as on the phone – sometimes it's just a short request for help, sometimes people will type out their story in detail. With long emails I usually print it out so I can mark up the important points and cover them in the reply.

We are also looking into different technology which would let people "chat" with us on their computer if they didn't want to use the telephone or send a one-off message.

I remember someone in training saying it is a privilege to be able to hear or read people's stories and feelings, and I agree. Sometimes someone will say something you find poignant because it is similar to your own experience but we learn to keep that out of the call. The other volunteers are a great help. One time on the phone I said something that made the caller laugh and she thanked me and said that it was the first time she had laughed in six months.'

Our website

We re-launched our website with a fresh new look in April 2013.



The website is the first point of contact with Cruse for many bereaved people and gets around a thousand new visitors a day. As well as directing people to the helpline or to services in their local area, it is a vital resource in its own right. There is a wealth of free information on the site, including fact sheets and leaflets to download. Visitors can buy other publications from our online shop, read about Cruse campaigns, projects and news, client and volunteer case studies, and more!

We also offer information for professionals and all those who work with bereaved people, offer training and booking for the annual Cruse conference, and provide help for those interested in bereavement research.

Five things **you** can do to support Cruse

Without the commitment and compassion of our supporters we would not be able to provide our vital services to hundreds of thousands of bereaved people across the UK.

Here are five things you can do to support us:

1. Donate

We rely on contributions from our generous donors, individuals and organisations to keep our services running.

Consider setting up a standing order, or leaving a legacy to Cruse in your will. Find out more at **www.cruse.org. uk/donate**

2. Raise funds

Our many fundraisers give masses of time and energy every year to help raise funds. Whatever your interest there is sure to be something to take part in. You could help by:

- Running, cycling and swimming in events around the country.
- Holding fashion shows, quiz nights, football matches and coffee mornings.

- Taking part in one of our Footprints Walks.
- Asking your company or workplace to nominate us as Charity of the Year.

See www.cruse.org.uk/events-andchallenges or get in touch with your local Cruse Area.



Rachel Griggs-Ward skydiving to raise funds for Cruse

3. Raise awareness

Part of the Cruse strategy is to work to improve the way bereaved people are treated, and to develop our role as advocates for bereaved people. You can keep in touch with our work via www.cruse.org.uk/news

Help reduce the stigma of bereavement by talking to friends and colleagues about your own experiences and finding out about theirs.

Ask your workplace if they have a bereavement policy or if they have come across the new Acas guidance, developed in association with Cruse – find out more about what employers and line managers can do at www.cruse.org.uk/bereavement-at-work

If you come into contact with bereaved people in your work, request support and training. For more information see www.cruse.org.uk/training

If you are a professional working with bereaved people adopt the bereavement care service standards: see www.cruse.org.uk/bcss



Staff at Birmingham Cruse dress up to promote their 2014 'wear something purple' Footprints Walk.

4. Volunteer

Volunteers are at the heart of what we offer. As you can see from the profiles in this report becoming a Bereavement Volunteer can be incredibly rewarding. There are lots of opportunities whatever skills you have to offer – we need treasurers, administrators, fundraisers and more!

Find out how to get involved at **www.cruse.org.uk/volunteer** or get in touch with your local Cruse Area.

5. Support our affinity schemes

Take a look at some of the many ways you can raise funds at no extra cost to you at www.cruse.org.uk/other-ways-to-give

5% Discount at Interflora

You can support us, **and receive a 5% discount**, by buying Interflora flowers and gifts from our website. Every time you buy online (at this website) Cruse receives 10% of the purchase price.

www.cruseflowers.org.uk

Remember us in your Will
Our new partnership with Irwin
Mitchell Solicitors offers you
a discount on their Will writing
service – with Cruse receiving a
percentage of their fees. You could
also consider leaving a gift to Cruse
in your Will – a legacy that will help
to support thousands of bereaved
people in the future. Find out more
at www.cruse.org.uk

Thank you!

This year, as always, Cruse supporters have been active shaking buckets, running, cycling, skydiving and taking part in all kinds of activities to raise funds for Cruse. Thank you all!

We have received a very generous donation from Mr R D Clarke. We can't list every donor individually but we would like to thank each and every one of you.

We would also like to acknowledge support from the following:

Trusts and Foundations

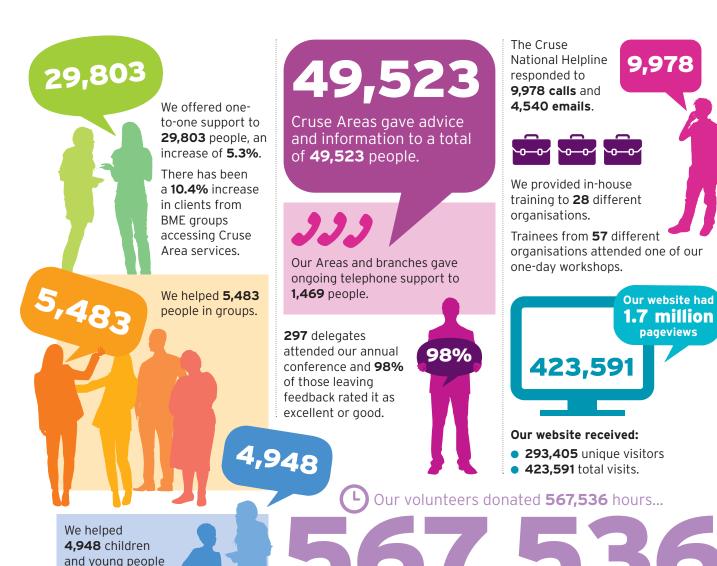
- The Hirschel Trust
- Ernest Hect Trust
- The Peacock Trust

Corporates

- Abacus Financial Services Ltd
- PTS
- SCS Limited

Public Sector

- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Department of Health
- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management
- Local Authorities
- Local Health Trusts
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Justice
- N.I. DHSSPS
- The Big Lottery
- The Wales Government



face-to-face.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2013-18

Our clients

We will reach even more bereaved people

We will support bereaved people in helping themselves

Our people

We will strengthen our Cruse community

We will develop the skills of our volunteers and staff and enhance the support

Our charity

We will improve the way bereaved people are treated

We will develop our role as advocates for bereaved people

Five in five

Within five years every Cruse Area will offer five key services:

- one-to-one support
- group support
- support for children
- telephone support
- email support

Resources

To resource our strategy we will strive to develop:

- a secure financial base
- effective people
- strong networks
- smart technology



Cruse Bereavement Care

Registered charity: 208078

A company limited by quarantee: 00638709 (London)

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Pamela Rutter � Janet Salter

Malcolm Shorney Joan Towle MBE Susan Turner

❖ = Executive Committee member

Committee chairs

Executive Committee Fiona Edwards

Client Services Committee Alan Caygill (interim chair)

Conference Planning Committee

Simon Godfrey

Organisational **Development Committee**

T Michael Pearson MBE

Training Committee Malcolm Shorney

Directorate team

Chief Executive Debbie Kerslake

Director of Services (Vacant)

Director of Finance and Administration and

Company Secretary James McCormack

Director, Cruse Cymru Janette Bourne

Director, Cruse Northern Ireland

Anne Townsend

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www.cruse.org.uk

Telephone:

Cruse England 020 8939 9530

Cruse Cymru 029 2088 6913

Cruse Northern Ireland 028 9079 2419





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

To donate to Cruse and support our vital work, please visit our website **www.cruse.org.uk**

You can find Cruse online at www.cruse.org.uk

Our national email support service is helpline@cruse.org.uk

Our National Helpline number is 0844 477 9400

Cruse's children and young people's website is at www.rd4u.org.uk

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

