



**Childhood  
First**  
healing  
hurt  
minds



**annual  
review 2014**

# welcome



**Stephen Blunden,**  
Chief Executive



**John Harrison,**  
Chair of Trustees

We hope that our 2014 Annual Review will be of interest to you. The children we work with are amongst the most emotionally and psychologically troubled in the UK. Untreated, some face a lifetime's engagement with social, psychiatric and judicial services, and the likelihood of repeating their trauma with their own children.

Our expertise is in creating therapeutic environments within which our unique psychotherapeutic approach, developed over 50 years, can heal minds, emotions and the capacity for healthy relationships.

Most children stay with us for at least two years. Those who arrive as adolescents catch up with their education, go on to college, even university, hold down jobs, live independently, and have healthy families of their own. Younger children will return to a family setting where possible, or progress to a less specialised facility, safe in the knowledge that they know how to make healthy relationships rather than to damage others or themselves.

The development of Earthsea House, a purpose-built therapeutic facility for younger children, was funded in 1999 by a partnership of Childhood First and Norfolk County Council. The support of the Council has been outstanding, and the service rightly identified by Government as a model of partnership working.

During the past year, the original agreement ended and we were delighted to be in a position to buy the Council's 50% share of Earthsea House. This provides a more stable planning environment for the

children, and gives us autonomy over the further development of the facility.

We have successfully reached our target of five placements for our pilot of Integrated Therapeutic Fostering (iTF), with our partner AFA Fostering, which uses elements of our residential approach to provide for children and young people who are able to live with specialised, therapeutically-supported, foster parents.

July saw the opening of a well-equipped new school facility for Gables House, funded largely by corporate giving, trust grants and the Kent Friends Group.

We have set up two new Friends Groups in Norfolk and London, to help us with fundraising and local support, both of which have run highly successful first events. Modelled on the successful Kent Friends Group, these volunteer groups make a vital contribution to the charity's life-saving work. We are looking to have our first group set up in Northamptonshire in 2015.

We are very grateful to all our supporters, from corporate contacts, trusts and challenge event participants, to our Friends, volunteers and staff. All members of the Childhood First family play a crucial role in this work.

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# key achievements

In addition to the complex and highly skilled care, education and treatment that is provided day-to-day in all five of our children's homes, our two special schools and our Integrated Therapeutic Fostering, the following developments were successfully completed or established in 2014:

## Northampton

- Encouraging young people's education through the development of alternative outdoor educational learning initiatives.
- Supporting young people's relationships with their family through the refurbishment of our onsite Visitor's Flat.

*"Awesome, a gem in the world, it is so unique. It is like the biggest diamond ever."  
An ex-Thornby resident*

## Kent

- Building an educational block for our new Gables community, so that the young people can be educated in a separate space to the residential community.
- Providing new and exciting recreational opportunities by building a BMX bike track for the children at our Greenfields Community.

*91% children and young people felt they were achieving more in their education than before arriving.*

## Norfolk

- Going on various outings and building community relationships through our annual joint community camping trip and other trips throughout the year, including to the Commonwealth Games.
- Purchasing our Earthsea House building so that we are able to increase our reach and offer places to children across England and Wales.

*93% of children and young people in our care feel they have a good relationship with the adults who look after them.*

## Nationally

- Piloting a new Theatre Programme, with theatre outings in the past year including Ghost, Stomp and the Lion King. All our children and young people have had the opportunity to go on at least one outing, and there are plans to go to the pantomime and see a production of the musical Wicked over Christmas. Feedback from these outings has included:

*"The children were amazed by the performance and seemed to really enjoy themselves."*

- Growing our Integrated Therapeutic Fostering for more children in Norfolk, with plans to expand to other regions.
- 12 Support Workers completed Integrated Systemic Therapy qualifications, including four graduating with Advanced Diplomas.

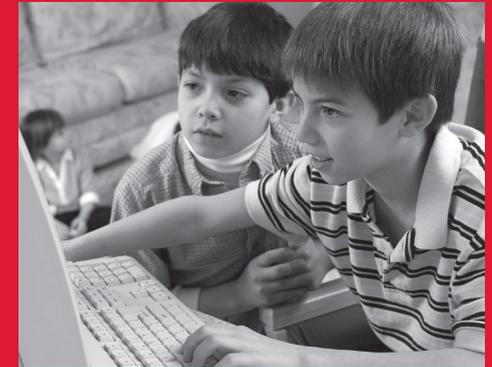
# case study

Max arrived with us aged 11. The first three years of his life had been spent locked up alone for long periods of time with only a bucket and no other stimulation or human contact. He had suffered multiple abuse as well as neglect and deprivation and one of his mother's boyfriends locked him in a box. He was beaten frequently. Aged 3 he was taken into care.

After 5 short-term placements Max was placed with a wealthy family for 5 years as a pre-adoptive placement but he was eventually removed because of the impact of his extraordinary and difficult behaviour on the family, and he came to Childhood First.

Max was unable to form relationships with others because he was too terrified of people as a result of his early experiences. He read voraciously and used computer software with a high degree of skill.

The therapeutic staff and the teachers worked hard with Max to help him overcome his traumatic past and slowly he began to communicate through short poems. This was a very skilled method of communication about the most difficult possible human experiences and feelings, as an alternative to acting them out. Although unable to communicate directly, he interacted with others through the computer and in the form of poetry, which clearly felt less threatening.



After two years of work in this way, with many setbacks along the way, Max now attends our on-site school, has made relationships with some other children and has developed an attachment to his keyworker. He has overcome his eating problems so that he can eat with the rest of the group. Night times remain difficult and he still sometimes wets the bed. There remains a way to go, but a 'normal' and enjoyable life is beginning to look like a possibility.

# financial results 2013/14

## Income

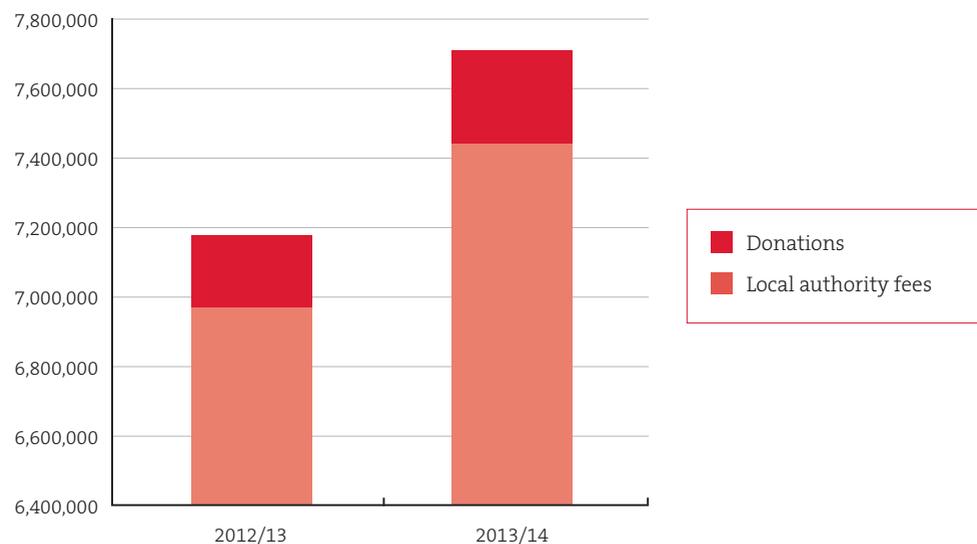
	2013/14	2012/13
Income	£7.7m	£7.2m
Expenditure	£7.1m	£6.6m

Childhood First has been slowly increasing assets to ensure we can reach out to more and more children and young people who desperately need our help and continue to support those who are already benefiting from our care. For the year ended 31 March 2014, we increased our assets by £462k to a healthy £5,656k to ensure the future and growth of the organisation. This includes capital investment in the properties where the children reside, of £3,945k.

In 2013/14, income has increased by 7%, including a 29% increase in donations. Because we spend 95% of our funds on Therapeutic Residential Care, the children individually receive the direct benefit of increases in income and donations.

Donations are crucial to us, in funding developments so that we can meet the needs of more children, and improve the experiences of those already in our care.

## Year on year comparison of income

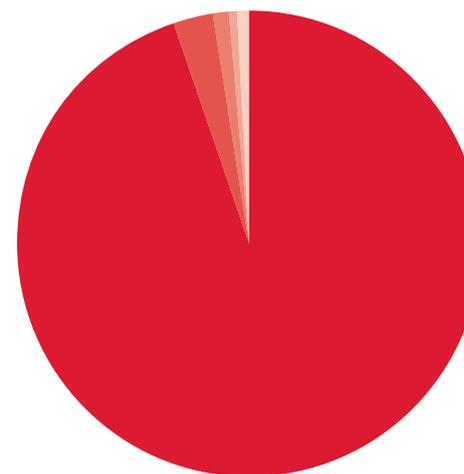


## The Multiplier effect

Through Childhood First's support, children and young people at the very bottom of the care sector, with the most severe problems and the worst potential outcomes, receive the specialist support that they need. Whilst the Government pays for the costs of the children in our care, we rely on charitable donations for expanding and developing our support. We turn away

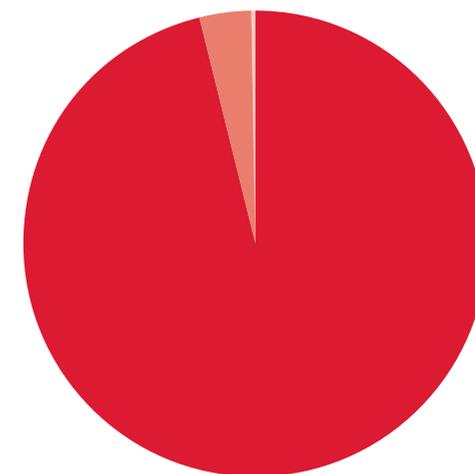
more children than we take, hence we need to continue to grow. We are confident that **every £5 donated will be turned into at least £100 of funding** for the most vulnerable group of children, with the most complex psychological needs, in the UK.

## Total expenditure



- Therapeutic residential care: £6,785,000
- Fundraising: £189,000
- Placement and family support: £93,000
- Governance costs: £35,000
- Capital expenditure: £49,000

## Total income



- Local authority fees: £7,434,000
- Donations: £282,000
- Investment income: £10,000

# thank you

## Trusts

The Whitehead Monckton Charitable Foundation were one of the first organisations to pledge their support for the building of our new Gables Classroom block, enabling us to separate young people's schooling from their everyday living, helping to increase their concentration levels and engagement with learning. In total over £130,000 was raised for this project, which opened in July this year.

**A massive thanks to all our supporters, including:**

The Ellerdale Trust, The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation, The Clover Trust; The Fitzmaurice Trust; The Pennycress Trust; The Paget Trust; The Felicity Wilde Charitable Trust; The Wilson Foundation; the Helen Jean Cope Charity; The Red Hill Charitable Trust; The Norfolk Community Foundation; The Phillips Charitable Trust; The Evan Cornish Foundation; Whitegates Children's Trust; The Frederick and Phyllis Cann Charitable Trust; The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust; The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust; the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust; the Godinton Charitable Trust; The John Jarrold Charitable Trust; The Sir James Roll Charitable Trust; The Monica Rabagliati Charitable Trust; The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust GC; Inverforth Charitable Trust; Elizabeth and Prince Zaiger Charitable Trust and The Dyer's Company Charitable Trust.

## Corporate

Talbot Underwriting continued their support of Childhood First and have over the past two years raised over £70,000.

The funds they have raised have helped pay for a therapy suite, books, toys, outdoor play equipment and a classroom block.

**Thank you so much to our other corporate supporters, including:**

Covington and Burling  
House of Fraser Norwich  
J.M. Finn & Co



## Friends Groups

**Thank you to all our Friends Group lead Committee Members:**

Sarah Scarratt (Chair), Kent  
Catriona Prest (Secretary), Kent  
Deirdre Massey, Kent  
Amanda Petch, Kent  
Marylyn Bacon, Kent  
Natacha Woods, Kent  
Sarah Dean, Kent  
Nikki Taylor, Kent  
Trish Philips (Chair), Norfolk  
Holly Rawkins (Chair), Norfolk  
Dina Hambro, Norfolk  
Linn Hendry-Rothstein (Chair), London

## Challenge Events Fundraisers

**Thank you to all our challenge events fundraisers – from running and swimming, to cycling and trekking:**

Dawn Bartlett	Joanna Lowe
Charmaine Batt	Rod Mearing
Molly Buckingham	Mark McVeigh
Bethany Byrne	Sean Mee
Robin Childs	Jeremy Olsen
Annabel Davies	Ollie Olsen
Michelle Dray	Alan Radford
Chantal Duarte	Amy Seed
Katie Ford	Catherine Shearer
Tina Fox	Lucy Shipp
Scott Grant	Nick Strong
Richard Gill	Andy Strudwick
Sarah Harland	Scott Thomson
Timothy Harbord	Steve Tresadern
Cat Hughston	Alex Walker
Kerry Jones	Kathryn Waters
Elaine Kelly	Matthew Watson
Jason Lamb	Jennifer Welsh
Louis Lengthorn	Simon Whitfield
Christine Lester	



# plans for next year

Childhood First has ambitious plans for increasing the support that we offer to severely traumatised children and young people through the launch of a five year Capital Appeal. Below is some more specific information on our long term plans for each of our communities and what we hope to achieve over the next year.



## Norfolk

Childhood First has been providing therapeutic support for children and young people in Norfolk for over 16 years. We have during this time developed a partnership with the Short Stay School for Norfolk Academy providing therapeutic educational support for most of the children in our care. Following the successful purchase of the remainder of Earthsea House from Norfolk County Council, we are developing its bedrooms to accommodate up to nine children.

We are planning to further develop Merrywood House with a brand new extension that will enlarge the recreational and educational capacity for each of the six residents aged 10-17. This will increase space for reading, homework and individual learning and leisure, as well providing further opportunities for group activities. Additionally, in parallel, we are planning to further develop much needed office space at Merrywood in the old garage adjacent to the house.

### Plans for the future

Longer term we intend to purchase a larger therapeutically designed property that will enable us to accommodate more children. We will also develop a semi-independence unit that will enable young people to make a healthy planned transition to independence once they reach that age when they approach leaving care.

## Kent

We have continued to grow our Kent facilities. In October 2012 we opened our newest community, The Gables, in Kent, as a response to the number of slightly older referrals we were receiving for our other

Kent community, Greenfields. The Gables can currently support four young people commencing at aged ten.

Recently we raised the £130,000 necessary to purchase a separate classroom block for the young people to have their lessons on-site.

### Plans for the future

Now we have the room we need to accommodate the young people's educational needs, we are looking towards the next phase of expansion. We plan to extend The Gables to accommodate a further seven young people, more than doubling our capacity and bringing the total number of young people we can support to 11.

The extension to the house will provide an additional eight bedrooms, two staff sleep-in rooms, two family bathrooms, kitchen extension and new sitting room. We have already completed the architect's drawings, and we anticipate the full cost of the project to be just over £900,000. We are at the very beginning of our fundraising efforts, but aim to raise the full amount over the next three years

## Northampton

Thornby Hall is a large residential community home set in the midst of 17 acres of land. We would like to develop and refurbish the home and the school to modernise and improve the 17th century building and to add a range of additional facilities.

### Plans for the future

Plans are under way to develop a Forest School programme, utilising the large acreage of space available to develop the curriculum to creatively meet the diverse educational needs of the young people.

## National

### Respite and Crisis Centre

Many of the children and young people referred to us come from placement breakdowns from residential homes, foster care and adoption. Some are in crisis to the extent that they cannot safely be introduced to a larger group of children without a period of transitional support. We would like to support these young people in crisis through establishing an Emergency and Respite Centre.

This centre would offer short term specialist therapeutic care for young people aged 11-17 years old, offering initially 12-13 weeks of emergency support, with the option of a 12 week extension. This support would be based on our specially developed Assessment Planning Treatment and Transition (APTT) framework.

The children would receive the support that they need during this crucial period including a safe environment for those young people exhibiting a level of emotional and psychological crisis that cannot be contained or treated within their current placement. There would be the opportunity for them to be placed in one of our residential communities in the long term, or move to therapeutic foster care, as appropriate.

## Integrated Therapeutic Fostering (iTF)

Since 2012 we have been delivering Integrated Therapeutic Fostering in Norfolk, in partnership with AFA Fostering. Based on our Integrated Systemic Therapy (iST) model that we use in our residential communities and adapted to a fostering environment, we provide specialist fostering support to severely traumatised children and young people.

We currently offer five specialist placements in Norfolk – we would like to multiply this, as well as providing the same service for children in other regions, including the East and West Midlands. We also plan to conduct a full evaluation of the service and use the findings to inform and direct our future practice.

## Therapeutic training

We provide accredited training to all therapeutic staff, through our Diploma in Integrated Systemic Therapy. Accredited by Middlesex University. Some staff continue their learning to Masters level. We have over the past year developed and implemented a formal training in therapeutic supervision of staff.

Our clinical team continue to develop this training, adapting the course and evaluating its effectiveness. We are adapting the course for a fostering environment for our Integrated Therapeutic Fostering (iTF) programme.

Nine students completed the Supervising Practice Module and four students completed the Advanced Diploma during the year.



# Reflections Approaching Retirement



I joined Childhood First in 2001 when we were still using our former name Peper Harow Foundation. There have

been many changes in the outside world over these fourteen years, but equally within the organisation. I have met many children and adults and a have had a wide range of experiences in my role as a Director in Norfolk.

As I approach my retirement in July 2015, I have been looking back over this time and reflecting upon the key influences in my career. I had the privilege of being consulted to by Melvyn Rose (founding Director of Peper Harow) over several years before becoming aware that Earthsea House was seeking a Director. I had recently achieved an M.A. in Therapeutic Child Care, thanks to Adrian Ward and the tutorial team at Reading University and I was very keen to join an organisation with the ambition and expertise to provide outstanding therapeutic care, education and treatment for vulnerable young people.

When I arrived in 2001, Earthsea House had been working with children for some eighteen months or so. It was, I felt, in good shape, despite and perhaps because of some very real challenges in its early days. Over

time and with some very committed staff and support of David Lambert, then Chair of Trustees and the Council for Management the work continued to develop until I was able to hand over the Directorship of Earthsea House to my former Deputy Andy Lamb in 2012.

In 2005 an opportunity had presented itself to extend the work in Norfolk. By chance I heard that Merrywood House was available to lease and with the backing of Trustees and Chief Executive Stephen Blunden was able to create a facility for older children. It has been a difficult journey at times in bringing Merrywood House to where it is in the present day. I am particularly pleased to have been alongside Mike Tait, our Consultant Group Analyst, in the development of Group work and Psychodrama for current and past Merrywood young people.

Along with the work within the two communities, I have also been involved with the development of Childhood First's Integrated Therapeutic Fostering Service, through which we have been able to extend the model to help children living within families.

I consider it an honour to have been part of such important work. It is not without a sense of great loss and sadness that I prepare for my departure. It does, however, give me great pleasure to know about potential plans and opportunities both for the wider organisation and for individual members of staff and children. I wish you all well and every success going forward.

*Jeanette Langfield*

# what your support can help us to buy

**£250** Purchase a Leaving Care starter pack for the young people supported by our Leaving Care project, helping them with their transition to independence.

**£500** Contribute towards the costs of running our Theatre Programme, enabling children to go on theatre outings, providing them with new and exciting opportunities, and contributing to their education.

**£1,000** Contribute towards the costs of one family receiving support from our Placement Family Support Team; helping them while the child or young person is in our care, including with visits, planning and review meetings, and understanding and managing their behaviour, along with preparing them when the child is ready to leave and return back to them.

**£2,500** Towards the costs of developing outdoor activities-including increasing the use of bikes through setting up a bike trail, providing the benefits of exercise and time playing together.

**£3,000** Towards the cost of refurbishing playrooms, supporting the important role that play has in therapeutic support.

**£5,000** Purchase therapeutic toys for the younger children that live at our residential communities, for use in therapeutic play, allowing them to confront and process the trauma they have faced in a safe, non-threatening way.

**£7,500** Offering all age appropriate young people the opportunity to take driving lessons to increase confidence and support the transition to independence.

**£25,000** Robust 4x4 vehicle to engage young people encountering severe challenges and crisis help and support by providing emergency intervention, care and support. This includes outward bound activities with assessment, for short specified periods with the aim of providing long term placement in a planned therapeutic placement in one of our homes or in a suitable alternative.

**£30,000** For a mobile temporary respite facility, to provide emergency care for those young people experiencing crisis and imminent placement breakdown.

**£50,000** For a leaving care semi-independence unit in Thornby Hall, where young people get their first experience of living away, with support from our staff.

## Ways to participate in our work

- Donate online or by post
- Leave us a legacy
- Take part in a challenge
- Join one of our Friends Groups
- Join one of our London or regional Capital Appeal groups
- Become a Trustee or Honorary Patron
- Lend your influence in making the case for therapeutic work with troubled and troubling children
- Get your company involved by taking part in events, volunteering or nominating us as your charity of the year.



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**Ways to contact us**

**Phone:** 020 7928 7388

**Email:** [chiefexecutive@childhoodfirst.org.uk](mailto:chiefexecutive@childhoodfirst.org.uk)

**Visit:** [www.childhoodfirst.org.uk](http://www.childhoodfirst.org.uk)

**Childhood First**

210 Borough High Street

London SE1 1JX

**Registered charity no:** 286909