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 as well as our national and international online clinical services offer affordable counselling and psychotherapy to people facing difficulties in their relationships and parenting. Our evidence-based, innovative projects such as 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. Company number: 241618 registered in England and Wales. The Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology.

Contact us:
‘70 Warren Street, London W1T 5PB
and:
10 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
020 7380 1975
info@TavistockRelationships.org

Training:
020 7380 8288
training@TavistockRelationships.ac.uk
www.TavistockRelationships.ac.uk

Press:
020 7380 1952

Clinical Services:
020 7380 1960
appointments@TavistockRelationships.org
www.TavistockRelationships.org

@TavistockRelationships
Tavistock-Relationships
@TaviRelations
Tavistock Relationships

Certain photos posed by models for illustrative purposes.


Tavistock Relationships has enjoyed another busy and effective year, during which all three facets of the charity’s activity – clinical delivery, training and innovation – have seen significant growth.

It has not always been easy, in the context of continued public spending cuts and an uncertain political environment, but we have focused hard on our core values and purposes, and this has helped us navigate our way forward. I want to pay particular tribute to all our staff for their dedication and professional commitment to their work.

Our clinical service delivered an impressive number of sessions last year, totalling nearly 20,000, a rise of 14% on the previous one; while demand for our online therapy service – which enables those living outside London to access our services – has begun to grow appreciably.

This year saw Tavistock Relationships further expand the training it provides outside London, with a Certificate in the Study of the Couple Relationship being established in Frome, to add to the practitioner course set up last year. The quality of our training continues to translate into the provision of meaningful and effective support for couples, with the recovery rates of those accessing Couple Therapy for Depression – a talking therapy in which we have trained the majority of practitioners delivering it – being the strongest performing of all therapies provided in the NHS’s Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services.

In relation to our innovation work, we trained almost 150 adoption practitioners this year in developing their understanding of the importance of the couple relationship through the adoption process, as well as delivering an intervention to adoptive couples which showed significant improvement in the quality of the couple’s relationship, as well as significant reductions in their psychological distress. In addition, we have continued to build on the work we have developed in relation to mentalisation-based therapy to help parental couples with a history of domestic violence, working with 23 couples in the London Borough of Harrow where there were safeguarding concerns regarding children.

This year we have been joined by new trustees; Patricia Key, Katharine Pinney, and Lizzie Insall. We said goodbye to Kip Meek, Agnes Bryan and Gordon Lane and I want to take this opportunity to thank them sincerely for many years of dedicated and diligent service to the charity.

Professor Nick Pearce, Chair
Our relationships affect almost every aspect of our lives, as adults and as children – our mental health and our wellbeing, our physical health, our work and school achievement. Relationship distress affects an estimated 2.87 million people in the UK* yet services to help the couples and families who are affected by this are not universally available.

If this situation were changed, so that relationship support was accessible to everyone, the benefits would be immense. About this, the research evidence is clear: therapeutic help for couples can improve the mental health and wellbeing of the adults involved and can transform the psychological inheritance of future generations. The couple relationship is the site for the inter-generational transmission of mental health and should be at the forefront of our therapeutic efforts, at the centre of our thinking in health and social care, throughout the lifespan, from cradle to grave.

This is our 70th anniversary year and since its beginning, Tavistock Relationships has worked to:

- alleviate relationship difficulties and psychological distress, helping couples, individuals and families in difficulty in their relationships, seeking to improve the mental health and wellbeing of adults and their children
- train new generations of couple therapists and counsellors, as well as the wider health and social care workforce to address couple and parental relationship problems
- develop innovative therapeutic relationship-focused services across the life-course, striving to establish new approaches to meeting the challenges facing families in our time.

This year, the funding environment has been a challenging one for our sector as a whole, and we have responded by strengthening the core elements of what we do: our practitioner training and clinical delivery, alongside our innovation work. To this end, we have had significant success – growing our core services and helping more people this
year than ever before, with close to 20,000 clinical sessions delivered to couples and individuals. We have increased the numbers of practitioners we have trained this year, to join the new generation of couple therapists and counsellors. And, with the help of government and other funders, we have expanded the range of new programmes we have developed.

We have worked to establish new approaches to helping couples and families, seeking to reach people who have not previously had access to psychological help. Despite considerable developments since the inception of the NHS, also 70 this year, in the UK our systems of health and social care are still, on the whole, largely focussed upon the individual in isolation. This holds true right across the lifespan: from maternity services that rarely include the parental couple as the locus of care, to services for people with long-term conditions, such as dementia, that focus on the individual patient, without much consideration of the partner or family who are living with the realities of chronic illness alongside them. A key element of the work of Tavistock Relationships over the past seven decades has been to challenge the silos in our human services that this ‘atomized’ focus gives rise to, addressing key issues of contemporary family life from a perspective which sees our relationships as the most important social capital of all.

"Increasingly, we see how the clinical and research expertise we have developed can be applied to a wide range of societal problems, bringing to the fore the couple relationship as the site of intervention."

This year, we have further developed and researched our new programmes, which have included working with:

- adoptive couples
- parents in conflict, including working with families who have experienced domestic violence
- couples who are separating or divorcing
- parents in group settings, with further developments to our ‘Parents as Partners’ programme
- couples in the transition to later life and retirement
- couples living with dementia.

Increasingly, we see how the clinical and research expertise we have developed can be applied to a wide range of societal problems, bringing to the fore the couple relationship as the site of intervention. There is much more that could be done. Effective services are provided in the context of a focus on relationships and we would like to see all front line services include a focus on supporting the couple. This is why this year, as ever, Tavistock Relationships staff worked across the country delivering training in many varied settings working with staff delivering services across the lifespan – from local authority family services, early help and adoption, to older adults’ services.
We have also sought to widen our reach, taking our practitioner trainings outside London – establishing a Certificate Course in the Study of the Couple Relationship which is now running successfully in Bristol and also in Frome, Somerset. We have also reached more couples outside London, expanding our online therapy service very significantly this year.

The evidence of the effectiveness of our work is increasingly established, for our psychotherapy and counselling services delivered from our two London sites, and also for our innovation work – delivered in diverse settings in London and beyond. Across the entire range of our programmes we find excellent results – in terms of improvements in mental health and well-being, relationship satisfaction, children’s outcomes and other important impacts. For the third consecutive year, the annual Improving Access to Psychological Therapy Review shows that Couple Therapy for Depression is the strongest performing of all therapeutic modalities within IAPT in terms of recovery rates.

Whilst these are challenging times, with cuts to services and political uncertainty, there are also exciting opportunities ahead – as government and key agencies across society are increasingly recognising the importance of couple relationships and the impact of the inter-parental relationship on children’s outcomes. We welcome this development, which is bringing new opportunities and offers the hope that there may at last be significant expansion in the services offering relationship help to couples and families across the UK. As you will see as you read on, Tavistock Relationships is at the vanguard of these developments, continuing to follow our mission which we have pursued over 70 years, to ensure that high-quality, evidence-based relationship support is available to all.
Our Vision
A world in which strong relationships provide stability and security for adults and children, forming the foundation for the health and wellbeing of individuals and our society as a whole.

Our Mission
To ensure that effective relationship support is accessible to all.

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-focused 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 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 frontline 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

Helping More People

The headline figure to notice in terms of this year’s performance is the approximately 20,000 sessions of counselling and psychotherapy delivered by our clinical service (not including clinical work delivered within the innovation projects). The achievement of this year in terms of growth in our clinical work of 16% is considerable.

Widening our Reach

Growth of online therapy.

Development of Training Outside of London

Developed highly successful practitioner Certificate course in Bristol this year and have more students enrolled in the year ahead.

We have also established a training in Frome, Somerset, in collaboration with Wessex Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Evidencing our Effectiveness

IAPT Couple Therapy for Depression – for the second consecutive year, the annual IAPT review showed that Couple Therapy it is the strongest performing of all modalities in IAPT in terms of recovery rates.

Success of our Innovation Programmes

Excellent results from our Adopting Together, Parents as Partners and Couple 50+ MOT programmes.
Tavistock Relationships has a history of helping couples and families with complex difficulties. Over the years we have developed new models of practice which we evaluate and disseminate, where we can robustly demonstrate our effectiveness. The areas that we have been working in this year include:

Adopting Together

The Department for Education-funded Adopting Together Project trained adoption practitioners in the importance of the couple relationship through the adoption process and delivered an evaluated couple intervention to adoptive couples.

Six training events were delivered to 147 adoption practitioners followed by advanced training events for senior adoption practitioners and team managers. A handbook, designed to help staff to be able to talk to prospective adoptive parents about their couple relationship, was also developed. Those attending said that they found both the training and the handbook extremely helpful and felt confident in returning to their agencies to assist their own staff in incorporating the importance of the couple relationship into their thinking and practice. Evaluation of the relationship support intervention that we offered to adoptive parents showed significant improvement in the quality of the couple's relationship as well as significant reductions in their psychological distress at the end of the intervention; the intervention also had a positive impact on children's wellbeing.

“It gave us focused support to help us stabilise our relationship and build resilience.”
Adopting Together Participants
Harrow ‘Safer Families’ Project

This project, undertaken in partnership with the London Borough of Harrow and funded by the Department for Education, used mentalisation-based therapy to help parental couples with a history of domestic violence. Prompted by the realisation that domestic violence was present in more than two thirds of cases where children were subject to child protection plans, the London Borough of Harrow became interested in the potential of a couple-focused mentalisation-based approach to reduce co-parental violence, and thereby protect children and reduce the burden on social workers and the police.

Working with a panel of colleagues from Children’s Services, the police, drug and alcohol services and the Domestic Violence Forum, the project screened couples for their suitability in order to ensure that only couples who were likely to engage with the process, and for whom it was judged to be safe to do so, could participate.

Over the year, we worked with 23 couples. Feedback from participants was positive, and analysis showed a highly significant reduction in both social work and police involvement with families.

Three of the therapists involved in the work have written a chapter for the new Tavistock Relationships book to be published later this year, and already there has been a lot of interest shown in this model. For example, we were invited to Stockholm to train social workers and clinicians there, where there seems to be as much need as in the UK for new approaches to domestic violence.

“The group was a life changer for us... I wish we had done it earlier. Sharing some time with other couples who go through similar problems, sharing their approach towards their issues and having two professionals who are amazing at guiding couples is so helpful towards improving relationships.”

Couple participating in Parents as Partners
Parents as Partners

Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, the Parents as Partners programme has been delivered successfully over the past five years, seeing over 500 couples, with consistent outcomes in improving couple relationships, parental mental health, children’s wellbeing and reducing couple conflict. The Parents as Partners team has also trained over one hundred practitioners to deliver the programme, and continues to provide support and supervision to colleagues nationally and internationally. This year, in discussion with the programme developers in the US, we introduced an adaptation with a shorter assessment phase and followed by eight group sessions (rather than 16). We have continued to supervise and support practitioners delivering the programme both nationally and internationally and we were delighted this year that new programmes started in both Malta and Poland, as well as in London. During the year we delivered the programme to 103 couples, evidencing very good outcomes for the shorter programme.

“... I enjoyed it a lot; it was sad it was ending, had wondered half way through if we had enough to talk about – but we did!”
Couple 50+ MOT participant

Couple 50+ MOT

The ‘Couple 50+ MOT’ is a brief intervention developed for couples aged over 50, which aims to strengthen their relationship by helping them to think together about the transitions that lie ahead, such as retirement. This year, with increased funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Transitions in Later Life programme, we trained 33 therapists in Bristol, Leeds and London in this approach. Feedback from the trainings and subsequent supervision (as trainees begin to see couples) has been positive.

In July we put on a well-attended conference on Loneliness in Later life where we presented this project and also helped convene a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Strengthening Couple Relationships on the topic of loneliness and relationships.
Developing the Workforce

Tavistock Relationships’ training programmes address the key needs of the sector, providing expertise and support to practitioners across the spectrum of relationship support as well as professional development to frontline staff in health, social care and other sectors.

Consultation and Training Services

Working with local authorities is key to the growth of couple-focused work with families in statutory services, and this year we have again been commissioned by local authorities around the country to deliver one-day workshops to their staff to enhance their skills in working with parental relationships and understanding of inter-parental conflict and its impacts on children.

In addition, we have given conference presentations, such as at Islington’s Domestic Violence Conference, and spoken at a series of days in the London Borough of Harrow to support our project’s work, as well as giving seminars for senior managers in Children’s Services in Sheffield on inter-parental relationship quality and children’s outcomes. We also delivered training on working with couples with dementia to the Bristol Older Adults NHS service.

Our work influencing the Welsh Assembly’s use of inter-parental conflict evidence has led to a number of requests for training, and we are hopeful that Parents as Partners will become an intervention of choice for several Welsh local authorities as they redesign their early help and families first services to include parental couple interventions. We ran a training day for Cardiff City Council on the impact of Adverse Childhood Events and visited Merthyr, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot, amongst others, to train their frontline workforce.

We were asked to return to Luton City Council who had identified the need for housing officers to understand more about family relationships.

The other highly significant commission was from the Government’s ‘Think Ahead’, the fast-track training programme for Social Workers.
Couple Therapy for Depression Training for Delivery within the NHS, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)

The most recent annual report on psychological therapies within the national IAPT programme (published in February 2018) shows excellent recovery rates for Couple Therapy for Depression. For the third consecutive year, this intervention is the most effective of all the psychological treatments for depression and anxiety with an average recovery rate of 56.1% (compared with 49% for CBT and an overall national recovery rate within IAPT services of 49.3%). These outstanding recovery rates are in part due to the quality of training and supervision offered in this model by Tavistock Relationships. This year Tavistock Relationships has again seen an increase in training in Couple Therapy for Depression with a total of 90 practitioners trained in therapeutic methods helping us increase the capacity to deliver it across the UK. Additionally, the year saw three supervisors trained nationally, two CPDs run and additional supervision offered for those that needed extra help to become accredited.

Training Expert Practitioners

In an increasingly competitive market our practitioner trainings have continued to recruit well. Tavistock Relationships welcomed new students onto our MA in Couple and Individual Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy, our MA in Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and our MSc in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy.

In addition, our introductory courses also continued to be popular, with more than 60 introductory students registering during the year.

This year, for the first time, we started delivering our practitioner trainings outside London. We have recruited well to our Bristol training, in collaboration with Severnside Institute for Psychotherapy, and also to the training we are running in Frome, with Wessex Counselling Service.

"A high-quality course in every sense – lecturers, content and clinical support."

"It has added a new dimension to my life and I have enjoyed the learning."

"Excellent, challenging, supportive source of much learning."

"The course is very challenging and hugely satisfying. Life changing – the Tavistock Relationships team are sensitive and supportive. It is a centre of excellence. Thank you."
Short Courses

Certificate in Psychosexual Studies
We continue to attract students from all over the UK onto our Psychosexual Certificate Course. This CPD course consists of a series of eight Saturday workshops run over six months and provides an opportunity for individual and couple therapists, educational and health workers, to learn more about psychosexual work, how to assess for psychosexual problems and how to talk about sex with clients. Feedback for the workshops is very positive.

“The seminars were engaging, challenging and enjoyable and my learning was enhanced by great supervision.”
Psychosexual Course Graduate

Summer Schools
Two summer schools were again well-subscribed by practitioners from the UK and abroad, with clinicians travelling from all over Britain and abroad to join these courses. The Developing Summer School is for qualified individual practitioners who want to learn more about couple relationships from a psychodynamic perspective and the Advanced Summer School is an advanced training, combining lectures and clinical case discussions. This year’s theme was Revisiting the Couple Projective System.
Conferences and Lectures

Autumn Conference: Winnicott and the Couple
David Hewison and Andrew Balfour (Chair) from Tavistock Relationships were joined by Brett Kahr and Angela Joyce to examine the influence of the child psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott on our thinking about couple relationships.

Lectures
The Disintermediation of Desire: the Body, Sexuality and Technology
This year’s annual Enid Balint Lecture was given by Professor Alessandra Lemma who explored the impact of technology on our psychic and sexual development. Catriona Wrottesley, Head of Studies at Tavistock Relationships, responded to the paper, exploring its application to psychoanalytic work with couples, with Andrew Balfour chairing the event.

Continuing Professional Development Courses
This year we have built on our range of workshops, short courses, conferences and lectures to maintain and develop our reputation as a provider of high-quality CPD, covering an innovative range of subject areas. All our autumn and spring events were sold out, many with waiting lists, and over 600 people attended events on our programme.

“The speaker’s knowledge was the highlight of the day. His knowledge and enthusiasm were inspiring.”

“I was impressed by the breadth of the lecturer’s knowledge.”

“Really interesting group discussion.”
This year we reaped the results of our sustained policy work in relation to Couple Therapy for Depression within IAPT services with the announcement of a significant new funding stream to train Relate therapists in this model, and a successful bid to train 60 practitioners.

Our parliamentary work saw the inclusion of a number of policy recommendations which we have been calling for in a manifesto signed by over 50 Conservative MPs and peers, and launched in Parliament, including a call for pilots of couple therapy in child and adolescent mental health services.

During the year we have contributed a number of responses to consultations, including to the Science and Technology Committee’s inquiry into Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Government’s green paper on Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision. We also submitted a response to the draft NICE guideline on depression and have been active in a coalition of charities and prominent mental health professionals lobbying NICE to address what we see as the methodological flaws employed in arriving at the recommendations in this first draft.

We have also had a number of productive meetings with officials from the Department of Work and Pensions as they continue their work to shape the tenders for relationship support activity, particularly centred on children affected by inter-parental conflict.

We have also led workshops and seminars to maintain our position as experts in effectiveness and impact for New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) and the Big Lottery. We have devoted some considerable time to working with the Welsh Civil Service, running a seminar and bringing Professors Phil and Carolyn Cowan to Cardiff to record a webinar on co-parenting along with Honor Rhodes on implementation science.
This year has been another busy year of writing, some of the fruits of which will be seen next year in Tavistock Relationships’ volume of papers celebrating our 70th Anniversary (Engaging Couples: New Directions in Therapeutic work with Families edited by Andrew Balfour, Christopher Clulow and Kate Thompson) and in the long-awaited work by Mary Morgan distilling the essentials of clinical technique in object-relations couple psychoanalysis (A Couple State of Mind: Psychoanalysis of Couples). Publications this year show the breadth and depth of Tavistock Relationships’ clinical, theoretical and research interests and activities. Aleksandra Novakovic and Marguerite Reid’s edited collection of papers, Couples Stories: Application of Psychoanalytic Ideas in Thinking about Couple Interaction aims at making couple psychoanalytic psychotherapy theory and practice intelligible to the interested lay-person and will be an essential teaching text for any couple therapy training.

We were disappointed by Taylor & Francis’ decision not to continue to publish the TIMP-sponsored journal Couple and Family Psychoanalysis after its move from its founding publishers Karnac. However, we have found a new publisher, Phoenix Publishing House, and hope that this is the start of a long and productive relationship with them.

During the year there has been a wide range of papers and chapters published, including a number of research papers by our new Head of Psychometrics, and papers on gender, sex therapy, attachment, complex cases, cross-cultural clinical work, and theory by other members of staff past and present.

We also had a significant personnel change, with Dr Michèle Birtel leaving us to return to academia. We are very fortunate to have been able to appoint Dr Ela Polek from the University of Cambridge to the role. Ela brings a depth of experience in quantitative research and has been appointed as our Head of Psychometrics.
Thank you very much for providing a low-cost service without which I would not have any help, or limited access with over six months wait with the NHS, and who knows what may have happened in that time to me. These sessions and service are so valuable.”
This year we have seen continued high demand for our therapy services and increased the total number of sessions to almost 20,000 sessions, a 14.24% increase over last year.

We see people within our therapy services regardless of their financial circumstances, for as long as we – and they – judge to be necessary. Our unique model of service delivery allows us to offer high-quality, rigorously evaluated psychotherapy to meet the needs of couples and individuals through offering a range of different approaches depending on clients’ needs, including longer-term as well as briefer therapy.

Launching the ‘Parenting Consultation Service’ (April 2018)

With increasing demand on our clinical services from parents, it became clear that there was a need to add a service available to all parents, living together or apart, who would like to discuss their parenting issues in the context of their relationship. Our new Parenting Consultation Service offers couples an opportunity to reflect on the impact of parenting on their relationship, and the impact of their relationship on their children. We also have a special interest in supporting parents of children with a disability, and a specialised service for such parents is part of this work.
Development of Online Therapy Service via Webcam

Our online therapy service has consolidated and expanded over 2017/18. Aimed at increasing the accessibility of our clinical services to those living outside London, the service is delivered by experienced therapists with expertise in a wide range of therapeutic modalities. All therapists receive special training in working online, and attend regular online supervision, which in turn feeds constant improvement in the quality of the service.

The service uses a highly confidential, reliable and user-friendly online platform, with the highest standard of infrastructure to ensure data security. We have also developed a technical troubleshooting guide for clients and therapists.

Evaluating Our Therapy Services

This year, we have continued to monitor user feedback and to collect our routine outcome data, and have maintained excellent response rates, high satisfaction with our services and strong evidence of our effectiveness.

All clients are seen for initial consultation and are assessed on psychometric measures at the beginning, the end, and at points during their therapy.

“I feel our reasons for coming to TR have been understood and dealt with in a sensitive and professional manner and we are making slow but steady progress towards resolving them.”

“Good questions and listening.”

“The service is very professional. I am particularly impressed with how our therapist is able to listen, absorb and remember details of our sessions and relate them to discussions the next week.”
Who do we help?

The majority of clients seen at TR in financial year 2017/18 belonged to the 26-35 and 36-45 age groups (48% and 28%, respectively), followed by those in the 46-55 age group, who made up 11%.

### Age Groups of TR Clients (%)

- **18-25** – 6%
- **26-35** – 48%
- **36-45** – 28%
- **46-55** – 11%
- **56-65** – 6%
- **66 or over** – 1%

### Gender

49.64% of clients were female, 47.27% male and 0.2% transgender.

### Ethnicity

The majority of clients reported their ethnicity as White (73.69%); of this group, most clients were of White British ethnicity (48.22%) and other White (25.47%). Other clients identified themselves as Asian (7.35%), mixed race (5.57%), Black (3.37%), and Chinese (2.66%).

### Sexual Orientation

The majority of clients seen identified themselves as heterosexual (83.89%). The remainder of clients identified themselves as gay/lesbian (6.75%), bisexual (3.73 %) or did not indicate (5.51%).
The financial statements show a net deficit at year end of £172,804 after unrealised gains and loss adjustments and contributions towards the defined pension. This sum is a decrease of £188,276 on the previous financial year where the surplus was £15,472.

Our government contracts reduced significantly from last year at short notice, representing 35% of our total income last year, whereas this year only 22% of our income came from government funding. To some degree, the impact of this was mitigated by our ability to grow income from our core services, such as our clinical income, which rose 9% compared to 2016-17, reflecting a 14% growth in sessions delivered in our clinical services, and in addition we showed strong performance in other areas such as our IAPT delivery. Last year there was a cross-over, whereby our chief source of income shifted from central government funding to our clinical income; next year we are budgeting for clinical work to bring in very significantly more than government funding.

The now closed defined benefit pension scheme continues to present challenges with the deficit rising slightly this year. This was due to a reduction in the interest rate used to calculate the liabilities. During the year the Scheme and the Employer agreed a new recovery plan for the scheme, under which TR is making contributions of £8,167 per month until June 2018. The monthly contribution then falls to £4,167 and will continue at this level until March 2023.
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