

Annual Report 2025–26



RESTITUTE



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Executive summary

Between April 2025 and March 2026, Restitute provided specialist, independent support to parents, carers, partners, siblings and other loved ones affected by sexual abuse, sexual violence and other serious crimes.

Across all funding streams, 439 families were either receiving support, progressing through assessment and onboarding, or waiting to access the service. Restitute's reach extended across 44 counties in England and Wales, reflecting growing recognition of the service and the continuing lack of alternative specialist support for non-abusing family members, who are too often overlooked despite the role they play in safety, recovery and family stability.

439	44	112	11.9k	81.4%
Families supported, assessed or waiting	Counties in England and Wales reached	Families on waiting list at peak	Visits to our website	Wellbeing gains maintained at long-term follow-up

Families supported by Restitute continued to report strong improvements in wellbeing, health and carer confidence. Average scores reduced from 35.84 to 24.09 for wellbeing, from 20.87 to 16.70 for carer confidence, and from 24.08 to 20.14 for health. Long-term follow-up also suggests that many gains are sustained beyond active support, particularly in emotional coping, practical confidence and day-to-day functioning.

Demand pressures also remained significant. Waiting lists peaked at 112 families and referrals had to be temporarily closed for part of the year in order to protect safe delivery. Restitute also strengthened digital access to help, professional training, lived experience involvement, research and policy influence, including *Falling Through the Cracks*, which brought together around 180 delegates and achieved a 91% impact score. Wider policy and parliamentary engagement also increased recognition of the support needs of parents and carers affected by abuse and violence.

Why this work matters

Restitute exists because parents, carers, partners, siblings and other loved ones affected by sexual abuse, sexual violence and other serious crimes are rarely recognised or supported in their own right. Many are left to manage trauma, disrupted family life and complex systems with little specialist help, despite the role they often play in holding families together.

Children and other primary victims are more likely to recover well when they have a believing, stable non-abusing parent or carer around them. Family members are often managing disclosure, police and court processes, safeguarding concerns, changes in behaviour, financial strain, disrupted education and housing pressures while trying to keep everyday life going.

Too often, non-abusing parents and carers are expected to carry risk and responsibility without recognition, practical help or space to process what has happened. That can deepen distress, destabilise family relationships and make disclosure and recovery harder. Some children and young people also hold back from disclosing abuse because they fear the impact on the people they love.

One recent referral involved a single grandparent caring for a child after physical abuse by the child's mother. Although a court order was in place, no funding was attached and the grandparent was left trying to navigate the system without financial support for the child. Cases like this show how quickly family members can become the people holding risk, responsibility and cost, while still being treated as peripheral by the systems around them.

Families need support that is separate from the help offered to the primary victim: somewhere they can speak honestly, ask difficult questions and receive practical guidance, advocacy and emotional support of their own.

How this work is funded

Restitute's work is funded through a mix of public funding, trust and foundation support, and donations. This included funding from the Home Office, The National Lottery Community Fund, Essex County Council, Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner, Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner, and Suffolk Community Foundation, alongside donations from people and organisations who wanted to support families affected by abuse and violence. Donations totalled £10,615, including £6,000 from LDH (La Doria) Ltd. This funding supported direct work with families as well as digital resources, training, research, and the staffing, supervision and systems needed to deliver safely.

"When your family feels like it is falling apart after child abuse, accessing non-judgemental practical support for parents and carers through Restitute has been one of the most critical services that my office has funded. I cannot believe we didn't start this sooner."

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner - Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Support for families

Support for families remained the core of Restitute's work. Restitute provided independent support to parents, carers, partners, siblings and other loved ones facing the impact of sexual abuse, sexual violence and other serious crimes, combining emotional support with practical help to manage risk, disruption and complex systems.

Support was shaped around what families needed rather than a fixed programme. Some needed sustained emotional support alongside advocacy, crisis support and therapeutic parenting guidance. Others needed help to navigate police, social care, education, housing, benefits, family court or safeguarding processes. Some needed support to make home feel safe again, manage challenging behaviour, or stabilise day-to-day living after crisis and disruption.

In practice, support was both practical and relational. It could involve helping a parent prepare for difficult meetings with schools, police or social care, reducing reactive patterns at home where stress and dysregulated behaviour had taken hold, or helping a family rebuild safer routines after crisis and disruption. Progress was not always dramatic. Sometimes it meant a calmer home, clearer boundaries, better day-to-day coping, or enough trust in support for a family to keep engaging.

Change often showed up in ordinary but important ways. One parent felt able to attend a work social event for the first time in years and came away with a major boost in confidence. Another described walking past the person who had harmed their family without reacting, using tools learned through support to stay calm and in control. Others spoke about returning to university, sleeping and eating better, taking their first full day for themselves in years, or feeling more able to challenge professionals and secure the right help for their child.

Families reported improvements in wellbeing, health and carer confidence over the course of support. The strongest changes were in emotional wellbeing, day-to-day coping and practical confidence as a carer. Long-term follow-up also suggests that many gains were maintained beyond active support.

Quantitative outcomes

Each outcome is measured from 1 to 5, with lower scores indicating better outcomes.

Wellbeing scores reduced from 35.84 at baseline to 31.11 at six weeks, 29.13 at midpoint and 24.09 at exit.

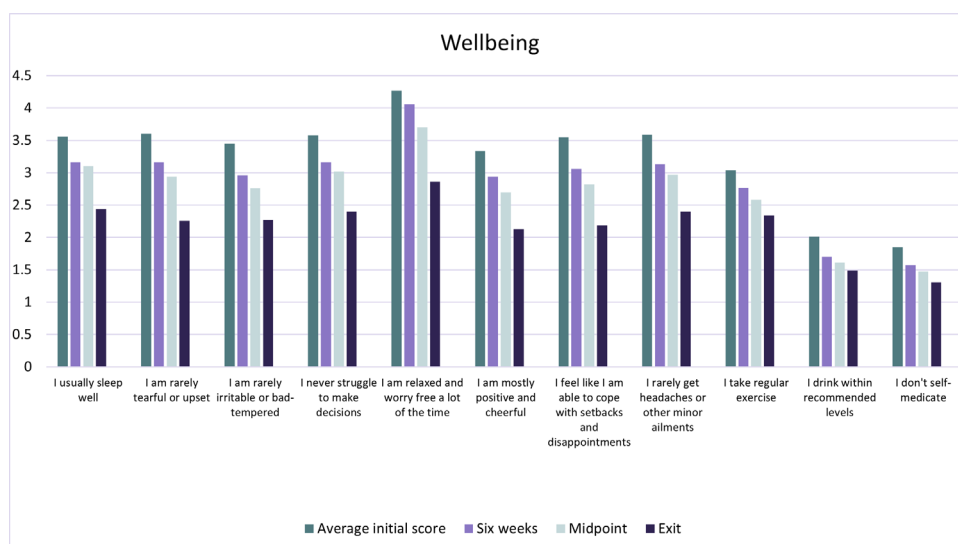
The biggest shifts were in feeling less tearful or upset, feeling more positive and cheerful, coping better with setbacks and disappointments, and feeling more relaxed and less worried.

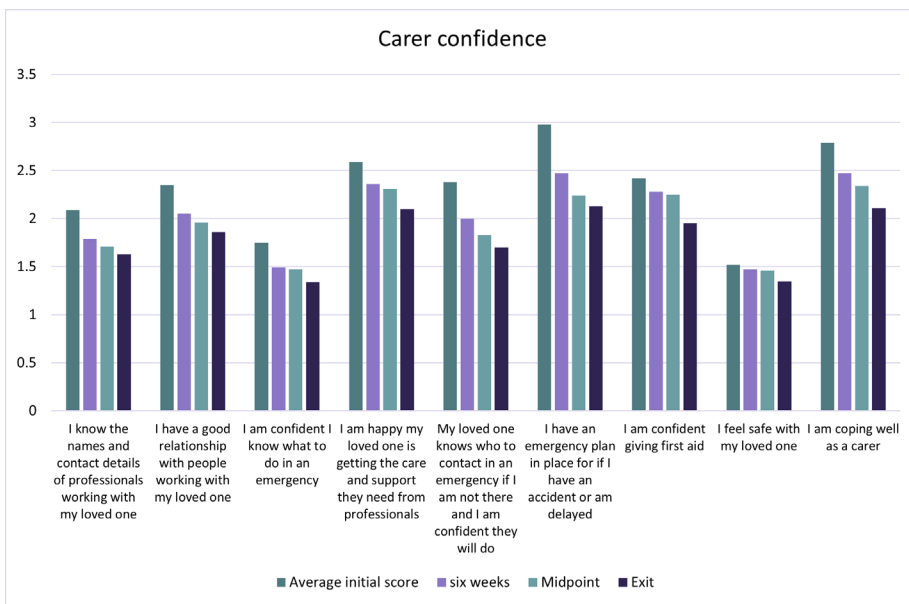
www.restitute.org



“ Restitute gives me a safe space, where I can talk freely without fear of judgment and shame ”

Mum to a survivor of CSA



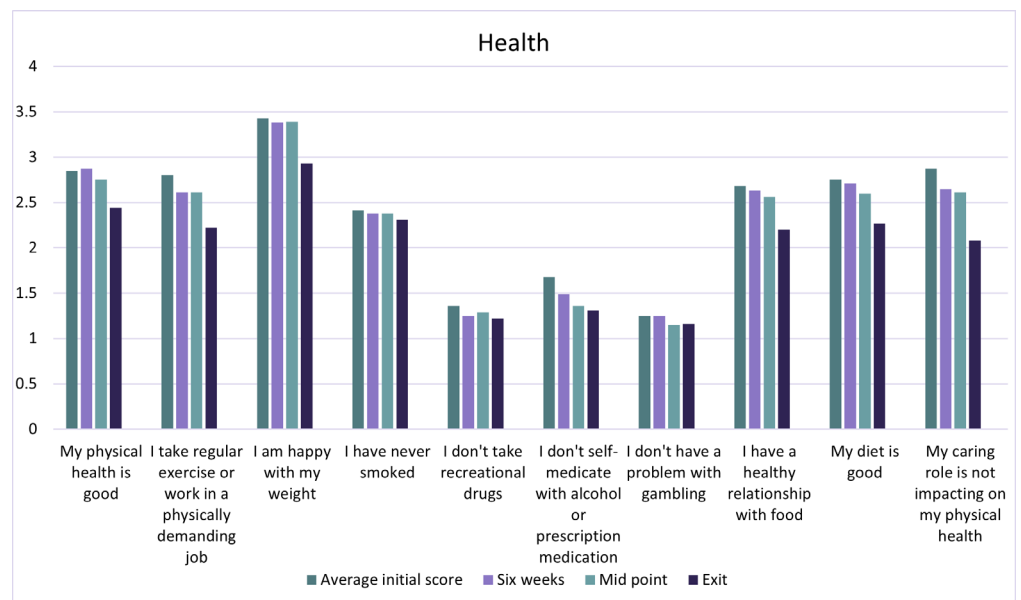


Carer confidence scores reduced from 20.87 at baseline to 19.22 at six weeks, 18.10 at midpoint and 16.70 at exit.

The clearest changes were in emergency planning, coping as a carer, knowing who to contact in an emergency, and confidence that a loved one would know what to do if the carer was not there.

Health scores reduced from 24.08 at baseline to 22.94 at six weeks, 22.44 at midpoint and 20.14 at exit.

The most significant changes were in diet, exercise, self-care and the impact of caring on physical health.



“From the onset of referral to the regular sessions I received, each one put me at ease and made me feel I was being heard. I would not have got through the court case for my daughter without that support.” – parent and former client of Restitute

National influence, policy and partnerships

Restitute continued to contribute to national policy, partnership and influencing work on the position of non-abusing parents and carers within current systems. This work was informed by direct support to families and focused on improving recognition of parents and carers as people who need independent support of their own, as well as key safeguarding partners in the protection and recovery of children and other victims.

National policy engagement included work with Jess Asato MP in the House of Commons on the Victims and Courts Bill, engagement with the Ministry of Justice on IICSA Recommendation 16 and the position of non-abusing parents and carers within current systems, and contributions to the Victims' Code consultation. Baroness Sal Brinton also raised the issue in the House of Lords. During the Victims and Courts Bill debate on 27 October 2025, Pam Cox MP referred specifically to Restitute in Essex and argued that services of this kind do vital work and need stronger, longer-term commissioning arrangements.

"When we fail those third-party victims, we fail the primary victim, too."

Jess Asato MP, House of Commons, Victims and Courts Bill debate, 27 October 2025

Restitute also worked through the Improving Support for Parents and Carers Research Programme advisory group and the Empowering Parents, Supporting Survivors consortium, with Ivison Trust, We Stand and ActsFast among the organisations involved. This work kept the needs of parents and carers affected by child abuse and exploitation in view within wider policy and practice discussions.

Restitute contributed to the NHS England review of *Supporting Carers in General Practice: a framework of quality markers*, in which carers of victims of abuse are now explicitly included. Restitute was also included in the NHS Social Impact Framework and took part in national meetings, roundtables and advisory discussions across health, justice, safeguarding and victim support. Restitute's growing profile also included a visit to Downing Street with Agenda Alliance on International Women's Day.

Community involvement and lived experience

Restitute is a lived experience organisation. It was created by people who built the service they had needed when their own families were trying to cope with sexual abuse, sexual violence and other serious crimes. That perspective still shapes how support is delivered and helps families feel less judged, build trust more quickly and speak more openly about what is happening in their lives.



The Restitute Alumni Partnership gave former clients and supporters a practical way to stay involved in the organisation's wider work. Alumni and volunteers contributed to conference activity, research linked to child sexual abuse and the University of Suffolk, training, and support for families, including preparing hampers. Their involvement kept this wider work grounded in what families were actually dealing with.

Supporters also backed Restitute in practical ways. Fundraising included a 10k challenge, a 65th birthday fundraiser and a bake sale organised through a Victim Liaison Service. Donations also helped provide hampers for families.

Lived experience also shaped the quality of support itself. Families described the value of speaking to someone who felt grounded, relatable and genuinely invested in what happened next. One client wrote that her support worker "answered questions, listened and most importantly related and genuinely cared" and that, without that support, she did not know where she would have ended up while trying to get justice for her daughter through the courts. Others spoke about being able to ask difficult questions, speak openly about guilt, anger or fear, and feel heard without judgement.

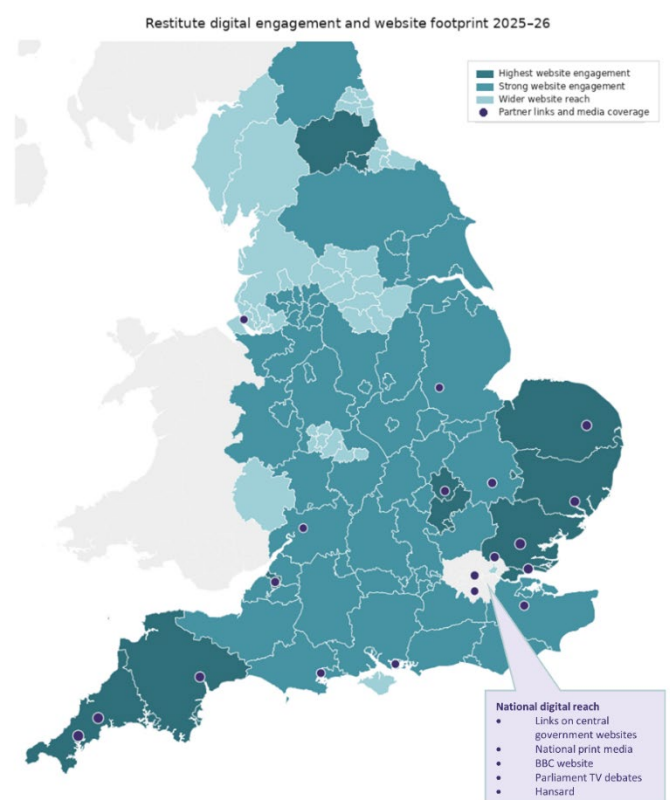
Restitute has continued to develop lived experience involvement in practical ways that can be sustained. Some people connected to earlier ambitions around ambassador roles moved into paid positions within the organisation, while others contributed through volunteering, research, training and practical support. This has kept lived experience close to delivery and wider organisational development without trying to force it into one model.

Digital resources and access to help

Digital resources remained an important part of Restitute's offer. For many carers and family members, the website was a private first step: a way to understand what was happening, find information written for people in their position and look for help before speaking openly to a professional or to those closest to them. It also allowed people to seek support beyond their immediate area where privacy, stigma or lack of local provision made that important.

Local and regional pages were used across the site, with the most visited including Eastern England, the South West, the South East, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bedfordshire and Essex. Families and professionals were using the website well beyond places where Restitute was locally commissioned, often to find specialist information they were unlikely to get locally.

Self-help and information pages on self-harm, family and relationship breakdown, mental health, disclosure and criminal justice, rest and respite, finances, education and complaints were all well used. People were also using the site to reach other sources of help, including Victim Support, NHS resources for carers, Carers UK, CPS guidance, The Survivors Trust and Citizens Advice.



“I spent ages looking at the website before I contacted the service. The information is written FOR and BY parents and carers, so it made sense to me and meant I could get an idea of the values and the type of people I’d be likely to encounter when I did decide to contact them.” – parent and former client of Restitute

Training, outreach and awareness raising

Training, outreach and awareness raising remained an important part of Restitute’s work. This included improving understanding of the needs of parents, carers and other loved ones affected by sexual abuse, sexual violence and other serious crimes, strengthening referral quality and increasing visibility of hidden family need across safeguarding, health, justice and victim support.

Restitute’s national conference, *Falling Through the Cracks*, brought together around 180 delegates from policing, health, social care, victim services and lived experience. Delegate feedback gave the conference an overall impact score of 91%. It was also rated highly for likely positive impact on professional practice and for covering key areas affecting families caring for survivors of sexual abuse.



Restitute also contributed to professional learning beyond the conference. This included four online sessions for the London Safeguarding Partnership, each attended by more than 100 professionals, on understanding self-harm and working with parents of children who have survived child sexual abuse. Restitute also delivered specialist training linked to Bedfordshire Police, contributed to wider police workforce development and safeguarding learning, and delivered a workshop at the Children & Young People Now Early Intervention Conference.

“Supporting training for professionals has been an eye-opener. I had assumed they would understand the impact on third-party victims, but that is not always the case. Bringing the victim’s lens into training can only improve the support and services on offer to all.”
Chris, Headteacher

Restitute also carried out targeted outreach in the West Midlands and North West England. This included location-specific leaflets and social media content, and engagement with referrers in Cheshire to improve how referrals were discussed with families.

Research, evidence and learning shared

Research and evidence remained an important part of Restitute's wider work. The organisation continued to build evidence on the impact of abuse and violence on parents, carers and other loved ones, the kinds of support that make the biggest difference, and the longer-term family-level costs.

Former clients who had been away from the service for more than six months were invited to repeat the same assessments they completed during support. Follow-up suggests that gains were sustained beyond active support, with 81.4% of wellbeing gains maintained and 64.0% of health gains maintained. In carer confidence, some respondents reported further improvement after support ended, so the gain in this area was not only maintained but exceeded, reaching 112.5% of the improvement recorded by exit.

Former clients and senior staff contributed to the CSA Centre's report Support matters for parents: An overview of services supporting parents and carers of sexually abused children in England and Wales and to a forthcoming publication on the support parents and carers say they need and value. Restitute also began a new collaboration with the University of Bristol on the economic and wellbeing costs of sexual violence and abuse for parents and carers, and continued work with the University of Suffolk, Autism and ADHD, and PHOEBE on how sexual violence provision in Suffolk can better reflect lived experience, including the experiences of third-party victims.

Building capacity to deliver safely and well

Delivering specialist support in this area depends on more than frontline casework. Restitute continued to invest in the staffing, supervision, administration, governance and data systems needed to deliver safe, consistent and responsive support. Staff retention was 100%, with 16 members of staff across the organisation. All staff received supervision, and support worker team meetings began with a focus on wellbeing. Four members of staff completed Mental Health First Aid training, one qualified as an ISVA, and Restitute achieved the Gold Good Health at Work Award.

As the team has become more experienced, Restitute has been able to use capacity differently while keeping support safe and trauma-informed. This included experienced staff taking on more direct delivery work, some onboarding capacity being redirected into client support, and contact frequency being tailored more closely to need, including fortnightly support where appropriate and safe.



Work on Lamplight, Restitute's case management system, improved the completeness and usability of case data, strengthening the evidence available for monitoring, learning, reporting and research. Enhanced DBS certificates were also renewed where needed, bringing safeguarding checks into line across the organisation and making future oversight more manageable.

The Board began leading work to move Restitute from a Community Interest Company to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in order to widen access to future funding. As part of that transition, Cath

Pickles stepped down from the Board and now serves solely as Chief Executive Officer, creating a clearer separation between governance and executive leadership

Challenges and unmet need

Demand for Restitute's support continued to outstrip capacity. Waiting lists grew across the year and peaked at 112 families. Referrals then had to be temporarily closed for part of the year in order to protect the quality and safety of support already being delivered. This reflected the scale of unmet need, as well as the continuing lack of specialist support for parents, carers and other loved ones affected by abuse and violence.

Waiting times can deepen distress, increase pressure on health and wellbeing, prolong family instability and make it harder for carers to cope while navigating safeguarding, criminal justice, education and health systems. In some cases, the longer a family waits, the longer they may later need support.

A further challenge was the continued rise in cases recorded as Did Not Respond. In many cases, this did not mean families lacked need. Some were referred at points of acute pressure, before they were ready to engage, without full understanding or consent, or because wider statutory pressures pushed services to refer. Restitute continued to refine referral criteria, communication with referrers and engagement processes, but DNRs remained a challenge in a system where referrals were not always made at the right time or in the right way.

The year also exposed the tension between national demand and a largely local funding model. Families continued to seek support from across England and Wales, but funded provision remained uneven and often depended on local commissioning arrangements rather than need. This meant that families from unfunded areas continued to place pressure on nationally funded capacity.

Restitute also had to keep pace with ongoing change across policing, health, safeguarding and victims' services. For a small specialist organisation, that requires time, system awareness and relationship-building as well as direct delivery.

Looking ahead

Restitute's priority is to sustain access to specialist support for families while continuing to strengthen quality, evidence and long-term resilience. The need for this work has not reduced, and parents, carers and other loved ones are still too often left without support of their own.

Work will focus on improving referral quality, strengthening long-term follow-up and building a clearer evidence base on what families need and what support makes the biggest difference. This includes improving the quality of data held in Lamplight and contributing to research partnerships on the family-level impact of sexual abuse and violence.

Training, outreach and policy work will continue where it helps improve professional understanding, referral quality and recognition of parents and carers as people who need support in their own right. Access to specialist support remains uneven and is still too often shaped by geography or funding criteria rather than need. Restitute will continue to make the case, in practice and in public, that families affected by abuse need specialist support of their own.