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What's Up welcomes new sponsor

The Child Health Services Trust has signed a multi-year agreement to join Griffin's and White Pages® as a primary sponsor of What's Up.

"The addition of the Christchurch-based trust to our family of principal supporters is very welcome," says Grant Taylor, Executive Director of What's Up.

"We have had some real challenges over the past year maintaining sufficient resources to meet the growing demand for What's Up services from children and young people," says Grant. "The Child Health Services Trust has generously stepped in following Kellogg's decision to move on after a much-valued four year sponsorship."

The Trust was set up in 2001 to provide funding for projects aimed at helping children and young people in communities throughout New Zealand.

Trust chairperson, Kay Trotter says "many organisations working for children and young people are struggling with ever decreasing funding and ever increasing client bases. What's Up is a case in point. We are delighted to be able to financially support the What's Up team so it can concentrate on working for New Zealand children."

In May 2004, the Trust gave What's Up \$25,000 to help keep the telephone lines open while a sponsorship deal was negotiated with White Pages®.



Art up for sale

Artworks from the covers of 18 White Pages directories go under the hammer in a November auction to raise funds for What's Up.

The winning artworks, created by emerging and established artists from throughout New Zealand, will be sold along with another 82 entries submitted for this year's prestigious White Pages Art Awards. They can be viewed on line at www.whitepagesarts.co.nz and may be purchased by live auction, online tender, postal bidding or direct sale.

"This is a great opportunity to purchase an iconic art work, while also helping an organisation that makes a real difference to the lives of young New Zealanders," says Sarah Martin, Sponsorship Manager at Yellow Pages.



International standards proposed for World's childlines

Uniform data collection systems and minimum practice standards will be instigated across at least 70 childlines, including What's Up.

Delegates at the Child Helpline International (CHI) meeting in Amsterdam in March, agreed that the proposed measures would be implemented once finalised.

"CHI's 70 member childlines answer more than 10 million calls every year from children and young people in need of help or support," says What's Up Executive Director Grant Taylor, who attended the meeting.

"They are in a unique position to gather knowledge on the status and needs of children around the world, from the child's perspective. And data collected is already of great value to organisations such as the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child."

The proposed data collection system should be in place by the end of 2005, and is very similar to that used by What's Up. "We'll only need to make minor adjustments to mesh with it," says Grant.

A statement of principles and standards of practice is also being developed.

"Negotiating this document is more complex," says Grant, "as each childline has its own priorities and objectives and is working with a population of children with different needs."

"The eventual document will provide each childline with a framework in which to examine its operations and identify

areas for improvement. It should also enhance public confidence in the value of childlines and provide other organisations, such as funding bodies, with a useful evaluation tool."

"It was heartening to see that the work put into setting up a service with best practice standards has put What's Up at the forefront of world thought on these issues. At the Amsterdam conference it was clear that What's Up's data collection systems and operating standards were among the leading models for other helplines to follow."

"At the conference and since my return, I have answered many requests from overseas colleagues seeking information on how we address various issues. Some colleagues in other developed nations have expressed surprise that our systems and achievements in New Zealand are so advanced and this has spurred them to look closely at their own achievements. In particular there is great potential for What's Up to help childlines in neighbouring countries in the Asia-Pacific region develop their capabilities."

"And we have also learned much from our counterparts overseas," he added. "What's Up already has a strong collegial relationship with Kids Help Line in Australia. Establishing connections with other organisations will enrich the pool of support and information available to What's Up as it strives to offer the best possible service to children and young people in New Zealand."

Grant's travel costs to the CHI meeting were covered by What's Up supporter Jason Friedlander.

Overseas childlines identified by What's Up as key peers

Australia Kids Help Line
<http://www.kidshelpline.com.au>

Austria 147 Rat Auf Draht
<http://confetti.orf.at>

Canada Kids Help Phone
<http://kidshelp.sympatico.ca>

England NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Italy Telefono Azzurro Centro Nazionale d'Ascolto Telefonico
<http://www.azzurro.it>

What's Up part of global movement

What's Up is one of many telephone counselling services set up around the world to help children.

In 2001, Jeroo Billimoria, the founder of India's Childline, set up Child Helpline International (CHI), to provide a focal point for networking, resourcing and support for those childlines. CHI is a global movement of organisations dedicated to using modern telecommunications technology to advance child protection, welfare and rights issues in countries as diverse as Nepal, Yemen, Latvia, England, Canada and Japan. What's Up is one of 70 childlines to have signed on so far.

Child Helpline International is governed by a 12 member board, funded by two Dutch aid agencies and registered in the Netherlands.

www.childhelplineinternational.org

What's Up compares well internationally

Child Helpline International data for the year 2003, shows What's Up has the fourth lowest cost-per-call-answered and the fifth highest level of response to the needs of the children in its community compared with childlines in twelve other similarly developed nations. Those childlines ahead of What's Up have been running much longer, with the exception of Iceland's childline, which was established in 2002.

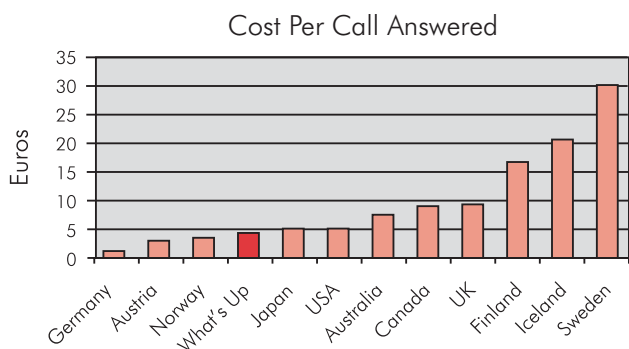


Figure 1. Cost per call answered

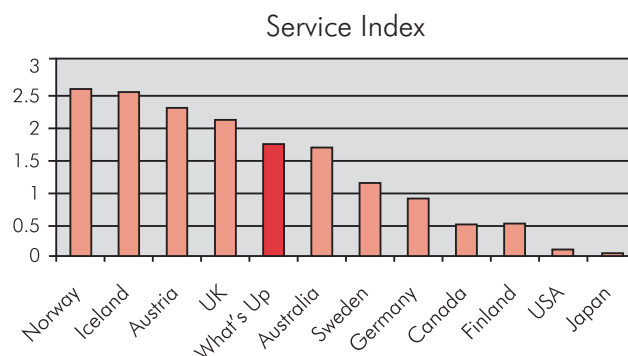


Figure 2. Service Performance. Index used is number of calls answered as a multiple of the CHI theoretical target for each country calculated from its level of national development, extent of its national telephone system, and the size of its population aged under 20 years.

White Pages promotes What's Up

Corporate sponsor White Pages® has launched a campaign to promote What's Up through its directories, magazine and website advertisements, radio interviews, White Pages Art Awards and website (www.whitepages.co.nz/whatsup).

"This is the first time we've used sponsorship to support a key business initiative," says Roger Shipp, General Manager of Yellow Pages® (publishers of White Pages®).

"Early indications are that our campaign is increasing awareness of What's Up and will continue to do so as the 2005 White Pages are delivered around the country."

"What's Up is highly regarded and popular with kids," says Roger. "We think helping build strong kids is one of the most powerful investments we can make in the future of our country."

The What's Up case management files

One of the special features of telephone counselling at What's Up is that callers can ask to speak to the particular counsellor. Research on counselling outcomes shows many of the benefits of counselling stem from the relationship between the counsellor and the client, rather than from the techniques or theories that the counsellor uses.

It is an unfortunate fact that many of the children and young people who call What's Up have complex problems and may be facing ongoing difficulties in their lives.

"So the opportunity for these callers to form a trusted relationship with a What's Up Counsellor and work with this Counsellor over an extended period of time is of great value," says What's Up Executive Director, Grant Taylor.

What's Up key facts

- What's Up is a free telephone counselling service for children and young people aged five to 18 years
- The What's Up help line number is 0800 WHATSUP (0800 942 8787)
- What's Up operates seven days a week from 12 midday to 12 midnight
- What's Up receives about 1,500 calls every day – current funding enables its Counsellors to answer about 401 of these.
- What's Up is unique in that it offers early intervention, rather than picking up the pieces later.
- More than 40% of the problems children and young people call What's Up about involve relationships with others – peers, family, partners.
- What's Up counsellors are paid professionals, trained specifically in techniques and skills for counselling children and young people by telephone.
- What's Up is operated by The Kids Help Foundation Trust, an independent New Zealand-registered charity, based in Auckland. What's Up works in association with Barnardos New Zealand and is supported by funding from Griffin's, White Pages® and the Child Health Services Trust.



Calls on the up and up

Calls to What's Up have increased significantly since October 2004, to an average of 1,500 calls a day in May 2005.

What's Up Executive Director, Grant Taylor, says it is not clear why so many children are calling the phone line for help but his educated guess is because they need it; they have access to phones; they are comfortable seeking help from trusted strangers; What's Up offers a good service that kids are happy to use and recommend to their friends; if you give kids a chance to express themselves in their own terms, they will take it.

"I think it is a mistake for adults to think that it is somehow wrong for kids to need or seek help from others, because they assume parents should be all that kids need. It is not necessarily a big problem if kids need help with something – most callers to child helplines are not in the depths of despair. I also think it is a mistake for adults to think that children should not be acting independently of their parents in furthering their own development.

"Kids need a community of people to help them grow up healthy and happy including teachers, nurses, doctors, parents, relatives, friends and siblings," says Grant. "A helpline is just a modern, telecommunications-based form of the village neighbourhood where there is always someone for kids to turn to for help when it is needed."

Paint and promote

Sixty-five Yellow Pages® staff from Christchurch let their fingers do the 'working' at Christchurch East School recently when they water-blasted and painted the exterior of several classrooms and cleaned up the school's gardens. As they got stuck in, staff, sporting What's Up tee shirts, distributed educational posters and stickers about their charity partner, What's Up, to the students.

"The team wanted to do something tangible to demonstrate its support of the local community," says Christchurch Area Manager, Jill Mann. "And it made sense to use the opportunity to spread the word about What's Up, and how proud we are to support a service which plays such a vital role in building strong kids."

Many calls remain unanswered despite excellent counsellor performance

What's Up Counsellors are answering more calls per hour than ever before but steep growth in the number of calls per day to What's Up has meant that the proportion of calls that go unanswered has increased in recent months.

In January 2004, the average number of calls a day to 0800 WHATSUP was 570. In January 2005 that number had risen to 1,068. Although What's Up telephone counsellors answered 150% more calls a day in January this year compared with the same period last year, the proportion answered dropped by 6%. That means an average of 576 calls a day went unanswered.

"Although children and young people are very good at using the redial button on the telephone, it is no doubt frustrating to be unable to get through when they first call," says Grant Taylor, What's Up Executive Director, "and the opportunity for the caller to speak in private about a sensitive issue might not arise again."

2004 call figures released

The 2004 statistics for What's Up are out. They show a drop in the total number of calls answered in comparison with 2003, as a result of cost-saving restrictions imposed for several months. These restrictions were eased in October, and the incoming call rate for the rest of 2004 increased substantially compared with the same time in 2003.

The top five reasons for children and young people calling What's Up remained constant over the past two years. These issues - peer relationships, bullying, family relationships, relationships with boyfriends/girlfriends, and pregnancy - accounted for about 70% of the issues raised.

Longer term trends are also being tracked, with calls about peer relationships, sexually transmitted infections and legal problems on the increase. In contrast, calls about drug use, life skills, study, and sexual orientation have decreased.

Males made 35% of calls, and females 65%. This is consistent with gender patterns in most human service agencies.

The average age of callers is 12. 45% of callers are 12 years old or younger and 89% are 15 or younger.

Check out the statistics summary on the What's Up website, www.whatsup.co.nz.



A number of initiatives are in motion to help ensure that callers who need to get through, can. Part of the solution lies in increasing the funding for What's Up's so that more counselling time can be employed to answer the incoming calls.

"The additional support from our newest sponsor, Child Health Services Trust, as well as funding from Child, Youth and Family, has really helped," says Grant, "but we still rely on public donations to make up the shortfall."

Every \$20 donated enables another 17 calls to be answered.

To donate funds, call the What's Up office on (09) 630 4144 with credit card details, call the What's Up donation line 0900 YOUR CALL (0900 96872) to have an automatic \$10 donation charged to your telephone account, or post a cheque to What's Up at PO Box 56-642, Dominion Rd, Auckland.