

## The Economic case for relationship counselling

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The economic sense of investing in relationship counselling and early intervention is conclusive and well documented in research.

### Key Facts:

- Research shows that relationship counselling and early intervention services improve relationship satisfaction, strengthen relationships and prevent divorce and family breakdown. Investing in early intervention is therefore cost efficient for Local Authorities and the Scottish Executive rather than providing for high divorce rates and legal costs.
- SMC clients attend an average of just four sessions. It costs us £40 to deliver a session. At an average cost of £160 per couple this is a value for money service when compared to the £1.5 billion per year cost of family breakdown to the Scottish economy.



- Employers typically lose out when employees suffer relationship difficulties and/or breakdown. Work productivity decreases and time is lost due to absence and ill health associated with relationship problems (Forthoother et al, 1996; McAllister et al, 1995).
- Stable relationships are correlated with deprivation to the effect that becoming single increases deprivation and forming a partnership reduces it (Berthoud et al, 2004). Costs of family breakdown to the economy include welfare support and payments for children and parents.
- In terms of health costs, relationship difficulties spill over into the workplace with men and women in unhappy relationships suffering from increased stress levels and high blood pressure, which increases risk of heart attack or stroke (Barnett, 2005). Adults and children experiencing family breakdown are more vulnerable to physical and mental illness (McAllister et al, 1995; Sweeting et al, 1998). Stable relationships enhance physical and emotional well-being thereby reducing costs to health services and the economy (Mansfield, 1999; Kamp-Dush & Amato, 2005).

