

Frequently Asked Questions: WAY Widowed and Young's member fee increase

When is the membership fee increasing for WAY Widowed and Young's existing members and how much will it cost going forward?

Annual membership costs will be increased from £25 to £30 for **existing** members at the time of next renewal following WAY's AGM on 21 September 2024.

For example, Jo's membership renews in April 2024 so her membership will be £25 in April 2024 and £30 in April 2025.

When is the membership fee increasing for new members and how much will it cost?

Effective from 1 April 2024, the membership cost for **new** members joining WAY's peer support community will increase from £25 to £30 per year.

When was the membership fee last increased?

The membership fee was last increased for new and renewing members in September 2014. For over a decade, the cost of WAY membership has remained unchanged at £25 per year. However, during this time, the cost of goods and services has continued to rise steadily.

How have you managed to keep fees so low for so long?

As a charity dedicated to supporting young widowed people, we understand the financial challenges many of our members face. WAY has managed to subsidise the membership costs for more than a decade due to the amazing fundraising that our members and supporters have taken part in over the years. The generosity of our community has allowed us to draw on our reserves (see below) to maintain our current membership fee.

Why is the membership fee increasing now?

At WAY's 2023 AGM, trustees were able to continue to promise existing members that fees would not increase over the next 12 months. However, with a challenging financial backdrop confronting charities across the country, we are now faced with the difficult decision to increase our membership fees.

The actual cost of each WAY membership to the charity now stands at £60 per year. Despite our fundraising efforts, which have faced challenges in recent months, we find ourselves needing to make adjustments to ensure we can continue to provide the vital services and support that our members deserve.

How will you offer support to people who are struggling to afford the increase?

WAY's [Memorial Fund](#) will remain accessible to all members facing financial difficulties to help with membership fees and attending WAY events. We are committed to making sure that cost is never a barrier to accessing the friendship, support and understanding that WAY offers.

What does WAY's membership fee pay towards?

Being a member of the WAY community offers invaluable benefits, including:

- access to the unwavering support of our unique peer support network, which is supported by our WAY volunteers
- unlimited use of our private members hub and Facebook groups
- member meet ups both online and in person
- our monthly e-newsletter and *WAY Forward* magazine, which comes out three times a year
- a new improved telephone counselling support service, as well as legal advice.



What is WAY's policy on reserves?

The charity's policy, which is set by the Board of Trustees, is to maintain reserves worth 50% of anticipated running costs for WAY for the coming year. In our latest set of audited accounts in 2022, for example, the charity had total funds of just under £296,000 at the beginning of the year and income of £264,000. Total running costs were equal to £317,000, which meant that reserves needed to be at least £158,000 at the year end.

Surplus reserves were used to support our members and to reach out to more potential new members, resulting in a planned deficit of £53,000. Activities funded included increasing our Memorial Fund to help members who are struggling financially with joining fees and attending events, subsidising WAY's membership fees and investing in a new member-only website, including funding staff members to drive this project forward.

You can see more details in the financial pages of our Annual Reports [here](#) (the latest version is our 2022 report; the 2023 report will be available at our September 2024 AGM).

How will the increase affect Gift Memberships that have been bought for new or existing members prior to 1 April 2024?

Anyone who buys a WAY Gift Membership before 1 April 2024 will see the annual membership fee of £25 honoured until 31 March 2025

28 March 2024