

**W&Y** Widowed  
and Young



# Annual Report 2022



[www.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk)  
Support. Understanding. Friendship

Registered Charity No: 1164988

# Introduction



## A word from WAY's Chief Executive and Chair of Trustees



As the country finally eased out of lockdown restrictions, 2022 began with huge celebrations for WAY as we marked the charity's 25th anniversary. A birthday party was held 25 years to the day of the charity's very first members' meeting in Cardiff – the city where WAY was born in 1997.

We were delighted to be joined by members from around the country, including the charity's founder **Caroline Sarll** and some of the very earliest WAY pioneers. To mark this milestone anniversary, we refreshed WAY's branding and gave the charity a new, more modern look and even created our very own bespoke Swanpersand (a cross between a swan and &) to help reach out to new and younger members.

WAY's birthday celebrations continued to provide a theme for the rest of the year and there were events in each of the four nations of the UK. This included WAY's first **face-to-face AGM** since before the pandemic, which was attended by nearly 100 members in Glasgow.

2022 saw our **membership rise by 9%** and we sadly welcomed 1,725 new members into our fold. The need for WAY has never been greater. The return to 'in person' events allowed our members to offer wisdom, kindness and understanding to each other – the special support that can only come from others who have experienced the unique loss of being widowed young.

This year also saw more members than ever putting themselves forward to help others in our community. We had an 11% increase in those choosing to **volunteer**, ensuring that our members are supported through digital platforms and WAY's 62 local groups.

**Diversity and inclusion** was a strong focus for our charity in 2022. We introduced member working groups representing the LGBTQ+ community and from diverse cultural backgrounds to help make changes to ensure that WAY is welcoming and inclusive to all.

We were also painfully aware that the cost-of-living crisis hit WAY members hard – 63% of members in our 2022 survey reported being concerned about their finances.\* WAY's **Memorial Fund** – which was set up to support members who are struggling financially – saw a 43% increase in applications and supported more members than ever.

Despite these challenges, WAY members raised an incredible **£105,654** through a range of activities and donations this year. Without the efforts of our incredible fundraisers, donors and corporate partners, WAY simply could not sustain the vital peer support to our 4,650+ members. This support not only ensures that our current member activities continue, but also allows us to reach out to people who may need us in the future too.

Sincere gratitude goes to all of our committed volunteers, fellow trustees and dedicated staff team, who provide the structure for the charity's day-to-day operations and are key in driving forward WAY's vision to ensure that everyone who needs WAY can find us.

Finally, and most importantly... thank you to our incredible community of members, who continue to inspire and motivate us every day with their resilience, compassion and generosity of spirit.

**Stephanie Patrick** (pictured above left)  
Chief Executive

**Joanna Sedley-Burke** (pictured above right)  
Chair of Trustees

\* Based on feedback from 357 members in WAY's Impact Survey 2022

# Our Story

93% of WAY members said that WAY membership of £25 per year is good/somewhat good value for money.\*

WAY is the only national charity in the UK for people aged 50 or under when their partner died.

Founded in 1997, it's a club that nobody wants to be eligible to join, but we are so glad that our members find us. We provide a safe space for people who have been widowed at a young age – offering friendship, support and understanding.

WAY offers a unique peer-to-peer support network, led by volunteers who have all been bereaved at a young age themselves so they understand exactly what other members are going through.

As well as offering a secure members only website and opportunities to meet and chat online and in person, our members also have access to a confidential telephone helpline offering bereavement support, legal, financial and health advice.

WAY also raises awareness of issues affecting those widowed young, campaigns on current issues such as changes to bereavement benefits and seeks out opportunities to publicise the existence of the charity wherever possible, through the media and other avenues, to show that there is support out there to help people navigate life after loss.

**"Being a member of WAY has changed my life and helped me to rebuild. I will always miss Paul. And sometimes I still can't believe the story of what is actually my life. Yet somehow, I have found happiness and life again after loss. However, I am sure I wouldn't be where I am today without WAY."**

WAY Ambassador, Karen (pictured below, far right)



\* Based on survey responses for 2022 from 381 members in May 2023.

WAY impacted the lives of **4,650** young widows in 2022 - up **9%** on 2021



helping them to navigate their bereavement by offering support and advice, both online and in person.



## What WAY does



WAY members organised **1,164** in person and virtual events in 2022, which had more than **5,390** attendees.



**166** amazing volunteers helped to support our work throughout the year.

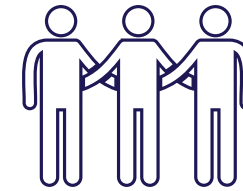


Generous supporters raised **£105,654**, helping us to reach more people in need of support.



**194** young widowed people were gifted annual membership of £25 through our Memorial Fund, which saw a **43%** increase in applications.

## How WAY helped



**76%** of members found that meeting people in the same situation has helped.\*



Our small team grew to **5 employed** members of staff, helping to better support our members.



**83%** of members felt that they had better knowledge about grief and bereavement.\*\*



**79%** of members felt less isolated.\*\*



More than **28,000** people helped us to spread the word by following us across our social media channels.



Members were updated with **117,681** communications throughout the year.

**71** press articles were generated throughout the year.



**107,340** people visited our website during the year.

\* Based on survey responses for 2022 from 372 members in May 2023.

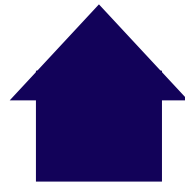
\*\* Based on survey responses for 2022 from 400 members in May 2023.

# Our Members

**1,725** new members joined WAY's peer support network in 2022.



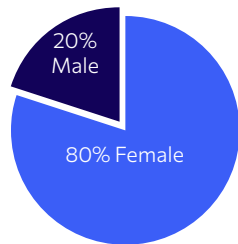
**69%** of members renewed their membership



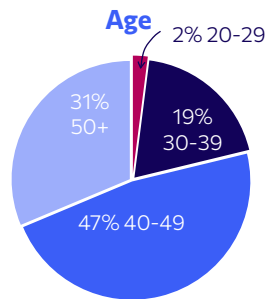
WAY's membership grew by **9%**

## Demographics

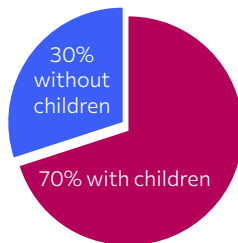
### Gender



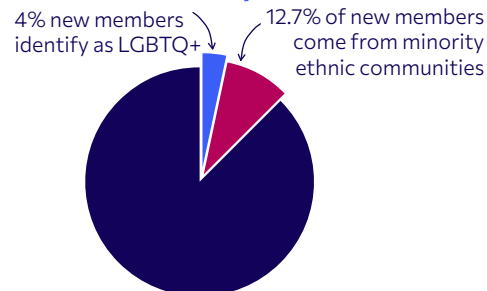
### Age



### With/without children



### Diversity



# Our Member Services

WAY continued to provide a range of vital services and support for all of our members as they navigate their bereavement journey, including:



Our members' only website, which listed **1,164** events, and allowed members to connect and communicate privately with each other.



**197** online events, with **417** members attending.



Our closed Facebook group and a large range of subgroups, which were accessed by **83%** of members.



More than **400** people made use of the telephone helpline offering counselling services, legal and financial advice.



**71%** of members used the telephone counselling service experienced a positive change.



**101** events for new members were held, with **213** members attending.



More than **190** members were supported financially through our Memorial Fund.

"There are no shortcuts in grief but walking the path alongside others means we can share and support ourselves, no matter how tough it gets.

The beauty of WAY is that you get out what you want, and you give what you want – no more or less. Having plucked up the courage to join a new members' Zoom chat, I met someone I'm now proud to call a friend. He was bereaved about the same time, was struggling in many of the same ways as me and was also now flying solo with two children of similar ages."

Pete, WAY Member (pictured on left)



# Events



**73%  
of WAY  
members rated  
face-to-face  
meetings  
as one of the top 5  
WAY services\***

As the pandemic restrictions eased, it was wonderful to see the return of more and more face-to-face WAY events, which are a lifeline for so many of our members:

- In February, we were able to welcome 100 WAY members and children to our first activity weekend in two years.
- In February, we also hosted 50 people at our 25th anniversary celebrations in Cardiff, the birthplace of WAY.
- In April, we organised a highly successful adult-only adventure weekend for our members in Wales.
- In May, we held our first in-person Big Picnic weekend since 2019 – with more than 400 members and supporters getting together at 30+ picnic locations across the UK, from Scotland to South Wales.
- Also in May, we held our first ever Community Fun Day in Birmingham as part of our anniversary celebrations.
- In June, 50 WAY members and children got together in Derbyshire over the Father's Day weekend to make new memories.
- In September, more than 100 WAY members headed to Glasgow to take part in the charity's first face-to-face AGM since the pandemic.
- In October, a group of 15 WAY members and children enjoyed an activity weekend in Scotland.



**“My lasting memories of the weekend are the open way other WAY members shared their stories with me, the constant laughter and ability to find humour in any situation. The environment and activities all made getting to know each so easy and provided what felt like the perfect setting to have a holiday from our grief.”**

Steve, WAY member (after Welsh activity weekend)

# Campaigning for Change

A key part of WAY's mission is “to raise awareness of the needs of people who are widowed and young”.

For many years, WAY members have been campaigning to extend bereavement benefits to non-married couples. In autumn 2022, we were delighted when the Government finally introduced a Remedial Order designed to extend payments to cohabiting couples with children.

At the end of the year, we were still waiting for this legislation to become law. And we were also supporting a campaign to extend payments to cohabiting couples without children too.

In 2022, one of our members also won a landmark legal challenge when it was deemed unlawful that he was denied Bereavement Support Payments because his wife, who was not able to work due to disability, had not paid enough National Insurance contributions during her lifetime. The Government subsequently appealed this ruling.

We will continue to campaign on behalf of young widowed people across the UK to make sure their voices are being heard at the highest levels.

**WAY Widowed and Young**

**Campaign: Cohabiting Couples**

**“Meeting people who ‘get it’ and seeing how others have been able to slowly rebuild their lives after such a profound loss has been so important in helping me come to terms with my own grief.”**

WAY member

# Our Volunteers



**Volunteering is the ultimate in peer support. Using their own lived experience, WAY members step forward to support both the charity and other members to help them navigate their bereavement.**

WAY had more volunteers in 2022 than ever before, with 166 members covering 188 different volunteering roles – from local area contacts to online volunteers.

2022 saw another increase in volunteering opportunities, with the addition of two **Diversity Working Groups**. Twelve members volunteered their time to take part in these groups, which are focusing on how to reach people who are eligible to join WAY from all communities – and how to support WAY's LGBTQ+ members and members from different cultural ethnicities.

The cost-of-living crisis impacted many of our members adversely. Over the winter months, WAY supported our volunteers by providing a free **volunteer Zoom account** to encourage people to host online events that are accessible to all without incurring any costs. Our volunteer Zoom account is open to any volunteer wishing to host regular online activities.



**11%** more people helped to volunteer in 2022 than in 2021.



**166** volunteers covered **188** volunteering roles – with some volunteers helping in multiple roles.



**88%** of regions have at least one volunteer, with **68%** of areas having more than one volunteer to help support members.



**82%** of new members reported in their 3-month survey that they had been welcomed by a volunteer in the area.

**“Every single week, someone else joins our group. I see it very much as a WAY family because there are people out there who haven't got a family as a result of what they've been through. We really can make a big difference by being there for them.”**

Becky, WAY volunteer and winner of our 2022 Mandy Burrows Award

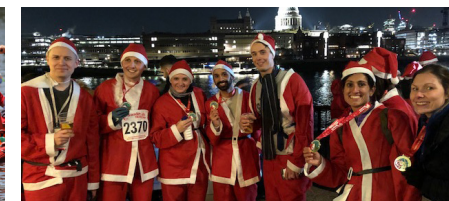
# Raising Funds for WAY

WAY receives no Government funding and so the money we need to support members must be raised through memberships, donations and fundraising.

2022 saw some amazing achievements from individual supporters – with 22 challenges throughout the year raising an incredible **£105,654** between them, including:

- Four brave Scots took on the **Aberdeen Kiltwalk**, raising £6k for WAY.
- A team of six walkers took on the **London2Brighton** 100km Ultra Challenge – raising over £8,000.
- Three members took part in the **RideLondon** 100 mile cycling challenge – together raising nearly £5k.
- Three brave members raised over £3k by jumping out of a plane.
- Five inspirational WAY supporters raised £4k by taking part in the **London Marathon** and half marathon events across the country.
- And last but not least, **Simon's Hot Stars Cycling Team** raised over £4k.

**Huge thanks to all our fantastic fundraisers who help make our work possible!**



We'd also like to thank the following companies and foundations that have supported WAY in 2022:



• **Irwin Mitchell Solicitors**, who joined in our Dragon Boat Race and our Santa run – raising over £1,700.



• **Mainstay Recruitment**, who walked a marathon and jumped out of a plane – raising over £2,000.



• **Purple Goat Agency**, whose fundraising crowdfunder raised £2,500 in 2022. WAY also received two donations totalling £30,000 through the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Recycling (ICCCM) from **Bangor Crematorium** and **South Essex Crematorium**.

## How your support helps

**£5**

pays for access to the members area of our website

**£10**

pays for a member to access our helpline for a year

**£25**

pays for a year's funded membership to WAY

**£40**

pays to train a WAY volunteer

**£100**

pays for a member to access a funded place on a WAY weekend break

If you're interested in fundraising, please get in touch at [fundraising@widowedandyoung.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@widowedandyoung.org.uk)

## Accounts to the end of December 2022

### Income & Expenditure Account

	2022	2021
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Membership fees	120,675	113,450
Donations & fundraising	105,654	105,725
Other income	2,799	3,173
Gift Aid	35,860	31,679
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>264,988</b>	<b>254,026</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff costs	191,137	110,906
Other office/admin costs	29,638	29,789
Publications/media PR	51,305	38,532
Website	22,415	32,922
Helpline	8,663	9,595
Memorial Fund	5,635	3,575
Other	9,163	2,287
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>317,956</b>	<b>227,607</b>
Net surplus for the year	(52,968)	26,420

### Balance Sheet

	2022	
	£	£
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
IT Equipment	(22,132)	
<b>Debtors</b>		
Gift Aid	(7,991)	
Prepayments	(8,742)	
		<b>(38,865)</b>
<b>Current Accounts</b>	(197,627)	
Less Uncleared Payments/(Credits)	(8,363)	
		<b>(205,990)</b>
<b>Set Aside Funds</b>		
Gift Membership	400	
		<b>400</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES AND DEFERRED INCOME</b>		
Liabilities	720	
Events	640	
		<b>1,360</b>
<b>TOTAL Assets</b>		<b>(243,094)</b>
<b>FINANCED BY:</b>		
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward	(296,852)	
Net Deficit/(Surplus) for the Year	53,758	
		<b>(243,094)</b>



At our 2022 AGM in Glasgow, WAY members voted to approve proposed changes to the charity's Constitution to streamline it and update some of the procedures around Trustee recruitment.

In 2022, we were pleased to announce the appointment of our newest Trustee **Rammi Janack**, who brings a wealth of marketing and communications experience to the Board.

We were also very pleased that Chair **Joanna Sedley-Burke** and Trustee **Kate Siegler's** reappointments were confirmed at our AGM so that they can continue their great work in helping WAY to grow and reach out to more potential members.

Thanks to **Jacqueline Dewdney**, who gave notice of her intention to resign from the Board following two years' service as a WAY Trustee and stood down in February 2022.

Trustee	Appointed
Stuart Scarbrough	2016
Bill James (Treasurer)	2017
Graham Briscoe	2018
Jo Sedley-Burke (Chair)	2018
Kate Siegler	2019
Louise Dodds	2019
Jacqueline Dewdney	2019
Mike Etherington	2020
Rammi Janack	2022



Graham Briscoe remains on the Board as a non member Trustee after joining in 2018. WAY's constitution allows up to two non-member Trustees with specific skills, to be appointed on its board.



We were delighted to appoint **Caroline Sarll** as our Founder Patron as part of our 25th anniversary celebrations. Caroline started WAY in 1997 after her sister Amanda was widowed at the age of 35. Remembering how hard it had been for her mother, a young widow in the 1960s, she looked for support for her sister but was shocked to find that, 25 years after her father's death, there were still no organisations offering specific support to young bereaved widows and widowers. So Caroline decided to set up her own group in South Wales and WAY was born in Cardiff in 1997 with 30 members:

"I was adamant that WAY's focus would be on those widowed young helping others in the same position. I felt you had to have gone through an untimely loss to understand and have compassion for those experiencing the same. Quite simply, to be able to say: 'I know!'"

# Strategy and Charity Objectives

# What WAY members say...

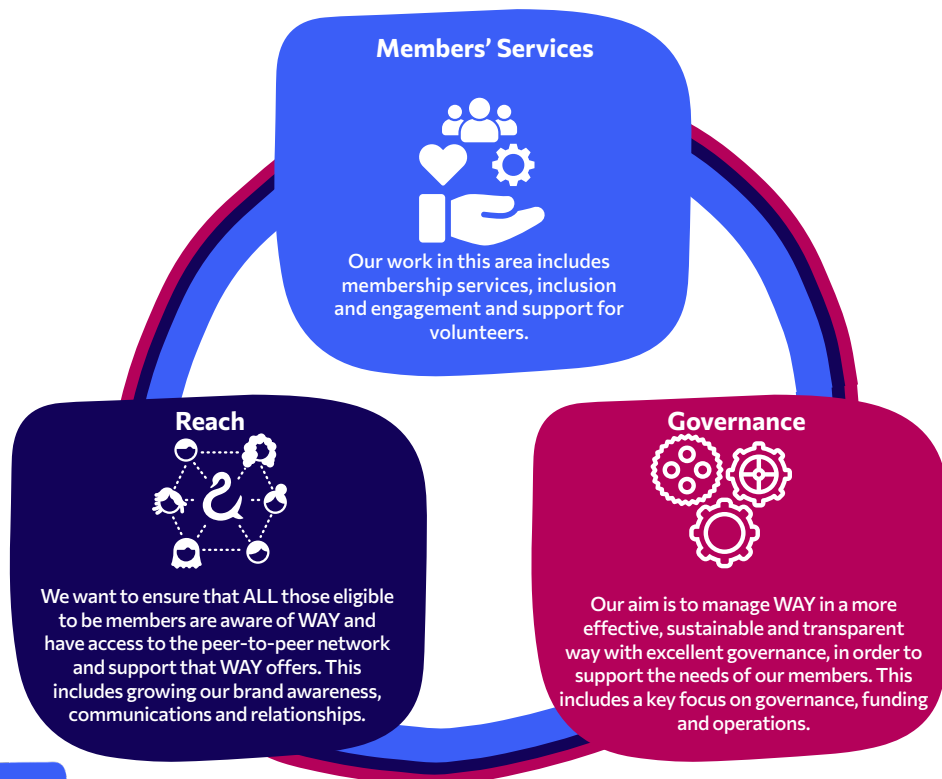
**WAY members help to shape our future and, after going through an organisational transformation in 2018, WAY carried out a range of consultations with our members to help inform the direction our charity should take in future. We carried out an extensive survey of our members and volunteers to work out the best way forward as our charity continues to grow.**

From this, our 2021-2026 five year Strategic Plan was born and reflects the views of all our members and volunteers to make sure the charity meets their needs, to draw out our long-term ambitions, to help outline our organisational priorities and to reflect our new structure.

WAY's Strategic Plan was developed in line with recommendations drawn from reports and takes on feedback from our members, staff and volunteers.

We would like to thank everyone who offered their valuable input – from completing WAY surveys to attending meetings, from talking to our team to taking part in working groups.

Our strategic plan is split into three key areas:



**“Losing John to Covid in January 2021, I felt like I’d lost my identity, my future and my hopes and dreams. Joining WAY was a spur of the moment thing. I thought ‘what’s the worst that can happen, it already has’. Joining WAY was the BEST widow decision I have made.”**  
 Nicola, WAY member and fundraiser (below)

**“Discovering the WAY Widowed and Young community has been really helpful for me. At first, I was resistant, unsure how talking to other widows could help. But I was wrong. It’s both reassuring and comforting to connect with others who have gone through similar experiences and to know you’re not alone... WAY is a very good tool that allows me to feel understood and supported.”**  
 Gavin, WAY member

**“WAY has been such a lifeline for me and I urge anyone who’s struggling to reach out for support. You don’t have to keep going on your own. There are other people who understand what you’re going through. Friends and connections are never more than a mouse click away.”**  
 Norman, WAY volunteer and Ambassador



**“WAY provided a sounding board for me. It’s a place where I both get help and can give it to others – and both of these have been hugely important to figuring out who I am now that I’m not who I was before all this.”**  
 Sarah, WAY member

**“Hearing from people at all different stages of widowhood – from the early stages to further down the line – was really helpful, as well as also knowing that, if I did have a question, the WAY groups offered a great place to get advice and opinions from others working through their own losses.”**  
 Ben, WAY member

**“Volunteering for me, especially for WAY, makes me proud. I am proud that I can help people see that there’s a place for everyone including those of the LGBTQIA+ community.”**  
 Jonathan, volunteer



## WAY's Mission

To offer unique support for those aged 50 or under when their partner died, through an inclusive peer-led network based upon mutual self-help. WAY also campaigns to raise awareness and understanding of the issues affecting those widowed young, and to influence relevant policy.

## WAY's Vision

To ensure ALL those eligible to be members are aware of WAY and have access to the peer-to-peer network and support that WAY offers.

## WAY's Values

Caring

Respectful

Innovative

Valued

Transparent

[www.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk)

Registered Charity No: 1164988

Email: [enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk) | Telephone: 0300 201 0051

Registered Address: Advantage House, Stowe Court, Stowe Street, Lichfield WS13 6AQ

