



WAY Widowed & Young

Annual Report 2019



Registered Charity 1164988



Support. Understanding. Friendship.

Introduction

Welcome to WAY's Annual Report for 2019.

WAY is the only national charity in the UK for people aged 50 or under when their partner died. It's a peer-to-peer support group operating with a network of volunteers who have been bereaved at a young age themselves, so they understand exactly what other members are going through.

WAY was founded in 1997 and had more than 3,200 members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at the end of 2019. The charity aims to provide peer-to-peer support to young widowed people – married or not, with or without children, whatever their sexual orientation – as they adjust to life after the death of their partner.

To achieve this, WAY provides:

- A public website with guidance for members about getting through bereavement as well as information about how their friends and relatives can help.
- A public presence on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube) to provide up-to-date information on WAY and current issues facing people who have been widowed at a young age.
- Many opportunities for members to meet others in the

same situation, either face to face through organised meetings, or online in our members only forum.

- A new member information booklet upon joining, a regular printed newsletter and a monthly informational e-newsletter.
- A confidential telephone helpline that's available for members 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, offering bereavement support as well as 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 press and other avenues. We have networked with other organisations in the sector and beyond, working together to achieve our shared goals.

Within this report, we will outline the major issues and achievements of 2019, as well as presenting an analysis of the general financial position of the charity and fundraising activities for the year.

WAY's Objectives

- To advance the education of the public to raise the awareness of the needs of people who are widowed and young.
- To relieve persons in need, following bereavement by offering a peer-to-peer support network for anyone aged 50 or under, at time of bereavement, who is overcoming the loss of a partner, married or not, with or without children, whatever their sexual orientation.



"During the darkest, loneliest, most painful time of your life, you realise you're not alone. You can share your pain with people who relate to it, understand it and share in it – one of the most valuable resources I can imagine."

Jen

Letter from WAY's Chief Executive

It has been an exciting, busy and hugely productive year for WAY – providing a peer-to-peer network for more members than ever before, offering a listening ear, seeing friendships form, welcoming new volunteers, organising events and supporting members financially to participate in WAY.

We had an exceptional fundraising year and enjoyed an outstanding year of support from our friends and members who climbed hills, ran marathons, raced dragon boats and more. As well as receiving generous funding from corporate supporters and raising additional funds through applications to external sources, we are delighted to have raised an astounding sum of over £160,000 through various fundraising initiatives including Gift Aid (see page 13).

Alongside our fundraising efforts, we raised awareness of the organisation and also campaigned to improve bereavement support for those widowed at a young age. Our members and volunteers also shared their stories on TV, radio, online and in print both nationally and locally – helping us to spread the word about WAY far and wide (see page 10).

We did all of this and more – but there's still so much more to be done.

Our firm financial footing is allowing us to focus on strengthening the quality of support we provide within our network – ensuring we have a robust, sustainable infrastructure in place to uphold the peer-to-peer relationships that are so beneficial to WAY's members.

We understand that listening to the voices of our members to help understand their needs and deliver services that exceed expectations is key to our charity's success. And we are pleased to see that these efforts are helping us to retain more of our members than ever at 68% (see page 7 for more details).

We have been busy building the foundations in 2019 upon which we can grow – from increasing our income streams, developing working groups to influence change, expanding support for volunteers through our new National Volunteer Manager Veronica Currie (see page 12), and ensuring we encapsulate the feedback of members to highlight our long-term ambitions and goals in our 2020 strategic plan (more details will be unveiled further over the coming year).

A sincere thank you to everyone who has contributed to our achievements during 2019 – our remarkable members, committed volunteers, supportive trustee Board, devoted staff and our generous donors throughout the UK.

We hope you enjoy reading about our highlights of 2019 – we simply could not do any of our work without you!


Rebecca Cooper
Chief Executive
WAY Widowed & Young



A Word from WAY's Chair


As I write this at the end of another calendar year, Christmas is over and the dark, chill days of winter are to be with us for a while yet. But the end of one year is the start of another and by the time this is published, spring will be upon us with its promise of warmth and light and new growth.

As part of this cycle I hope that the steps we are putting in place as a Board will continue to work and develop for the benefit of all our members – for those we have yet to reach and, most sadly, for those who are not yet eligible to join us.

WAY has come a very long way over the past few years. It has grown from being a small but vital resource to one that now has a record number of 3,200 members. With the appointment of our Chief Executive two years ago and the recent recruitment of our National Volunteer Manager, we have seen an expansion of what we can do and what we want to do in the future.

We expect to continue to grow and reach out to more of those who need us and to provide better and more consistent help and support to those who have already found us.

The best work of WAY is not done by the staff and the Board but by our members who continue to do remarkable things every day to help their fellow members and to raise money to keep us going. I hope that as a Board we can continue to provide the framework under which that day-to-day support can be most effective.


Bill James
Chair of the Board of Trustees
WAY Widowed & Young



WAY in Numbers - our impact in 2019



3,277
members

WAY had 3,277 paid up members on 31 December 2019 (up 12% on 2018)



90
volunteers

At the end of 2019, WAY had 90 volunteers across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland - up 27% on last year's numbers.



711 events
3,300 attendees

Between them, our members organised 711 events across the UK in 2019 - attended by more than 3,300 people.



16
Holidays

Our members organised 16 holidays or weekends away in 2019 - from Center Parcs in Sherwood Forest to Villa Pia in Italy.



800+ people
32 locations

More than 800 people attended WAY's Big Picnic events at 32 locations across the UK in May 2019.



168
AGM attendees

168 people attended WAY's AGM in Southampton in March 2019



195 members & children at Activity Weekends

195 members & children attended three WAY activity weekends in Grantham, Derbyshire and Wiltshire.



47% of our members had signed up to pay their membership by Direct Debit by the end of 2019 (up 7.1% on last year)



60 articles published

WAY and our members were featured in 60 articles in newspapers, magazines and online in 2019.



WAY members appeared on 17 TV shows.



WAY members were interviewed on 32 radio shows.



More than 2,200 people signed up to receive our Friends of WAY newsletter by December 2019.

19,300 printed publications
55,300 electronic newsletters

Over the past year, we sent our members more than 19,300 printed publications and more than 55,300 newsletters.



More than 769,000 emails were sent out by WAY in 2019.



We sent out more than 5,700 leaflets to help spread the word about WAY.



35 Members Supported by our Memorial Fund

In 2019, 35 of our members were supported by our Memorial Fund, which helps people who are struggling financially to attend WAY events or pay their membership fees.



We had more than 99,400 visitors to our website in 2019 and more than 212,000 visits to our web pages.



8,400 Facebook Likes

We had more than 8,400 Likes on our public Facebook page at the end of 2019 - up from 7,000 in 2018.



We had more than 4,600 followers on Twitter - up by 1,000 since 2018.



We had more than 2,000 followers on Instagram - up 54% on 2018.

£160,000 raised

WAY raised more than £160,000 through various fundraising initiatives in 2019, including Gift Aid.

WAY's Governance

WAY's Board of Trustees met six times in 2019 to provide governance oversight to WAY. This included five formal board meetings and the Annual General Meeting in Southampton, which was attended by more than 160 members.

During 2019, we continued to evaluate Board practices to make sure that our trustees are as effective as possible – both individually and collectively – so they can make a positive impact on the charity and help the organisation to fulfil its charitable objectives.

Initiatives have included:

- Undertaking a skills matrix, to ensure trustees have the appropriate mix of skills, experience, knowledge and attributes.
- Recruiting new trustees specifically targeting gaps that have been identified.
- Improving practices to safeguard our members and trustees.
- Reviewing all of WAY's Policies and Procedures.
- Developing working groups on specific topics, including the Website Working Group.

Through its behaviour, governance oversight and activities on behalf of the charity, the Board of Trustees protects and enhances the longstanding reputation of WAY. Board members have acted as ambassadors for WAY during 2019, attending numerous events throughout the UK. This has included representation at cheque presentations, awareness raising events, talking to the media and attending the parliamentary launch of **National Grief Awareness Week**.

Strategic Plan

The Board recognised the need to update WAY's Strategic Plan to ensure this reflects the current structure of the organisation, as well as meeting the needs of WAY members.

At the end of 2018, the charity undertook a membership survey. The Board wanted to ensure that a Strategic Plan would encapsulate this feedback to highlight our long-term ambitions and outline our organisational goals.

In order to do this successfully, it was recognised that WAY should seek the support of external expertise to undertake an analysis of data captured.

An application was made to the **Cranfield Trust**, which matches charities with skilled professionals to undertake projects on a pro bono basis.

The application was successful and in summer 2019, the project was assigned to Adam Smith, a Senior Lecturer at Nottingham Trent University. Adam volunteers his time and expertise freely to support WAY and has also recruited additional expertise to support the data analysis process within the project. This will directly feed into the development of a long-term Strategic Plan for WAY, which will be unveiled in 2020.



Meet WAY's Board of Trustees



Bill James, Chair, WAY Member, appointed November 2017

I was widowed in 2006. My wife, Helen, died of cancer when our daughter was only days old. I have since been a WAY member in Scotland, London, The Netherlands and finally in Gloucestershire where we are now settled. I joined the Board in 2017 following my return from working abroad as an accountant in the oil industry.



Graham Briscoe, Independent Trustee, appointed March 2018

I have worked in many management services roles throughout my 30-year corporate career with Royal Sun Alliance across IT, quality and customer service management and transformational change. Since retirement I have built up a portfolio of Trustee roles across further education, universities, the NHS and housing associations. I was appointed as an Independent Trustee for WAY in March 2018 – bringing knowledge and experience of charity governance to support WAY's Board.



Jacqueline Dewdney, Trustee, WAY Member, appointed September 2019

I have been widowed for over seven years, and a member of WAY for over six years. As the admin of WAY's closed Facebook group for four years, I know how WAY works and have seen how the many members are helped through the charity. I am the mother of a 25 year old so I fully understand the challenges facing members with children who have left home.



Louise Dodds, Trustee, WAY Member, appointed September 2019

I was widowed at 29 when my partner, Andy, was killed in a freak cycling accident in Grenoble, France in 2015. I joined WAY in February 2016. The charity has helped me to take ownership of my grief and my life and has supported me through my worst days and smiled with me on my best days. In 2018 I became Area Contact for WAY in the North East and then joined the Board in September 2019. I feel it's a fantastic opportunity to give back to the charity.



Chris Lima, Independent Trustee, appointed March 2018

I have more than 10 years' experience as a Company Director and I am a bereavement support volunteer with Cruse. Being a Trustee of WAY has allowed me to use some of the skills gained in these areas at the same time as being part of a wonderful organisation, meeting so many inspiring individuals who are providing valuable peer support in many different ways.



Stuart Scarbrough, Trustee, WAY Member, re-appointed in March 2019

I was widowed at 31 with two small children. I was fortunate enough to find WAY six months later. A big part of WAY, for me, is the nationwide holidays. This is where peer-to-peer support is at its best, escaping everyday life, whilst creating new memories with others who get it. As a Trustee I am privileged to play an important part in organising these holidays.



Jo Sedley-Burke, Trustee, WAY Member, appointed December 2018

I am a shareholder and Non-Executive Director of the IT solutions and services business, Sovereign Business Integration Group Plc. I have more than 20 years' experience in the public and third sector. I am passionate about equality and campaigned with Stonewall for the right to have a civil partnership and then marriage for same-sex couples. I joined WAY as a member in 2018, following the death of my wife Paula, and joined the Board the same year.



Kate Siegler, Trustee, Chair of WAY Website Working Group, WAY Member, appointed March 2019

I was widowed in February 2017, 10 weeks after I married my beloved husband Jonathan. I became a member of WAY in 2017 and joined WAY's Board in 2019. I'm an experienced independent consultant, and have worked with many household names in retail – leading digital and business transformation projects with expertise in strategy, e-commerce and business change. I'm passionate about representing the views of fellow members, whilst using my business acumen to support the aim and ambitions of the charity.

Our members



"WAY has helped me with support in the earlier days. I have made life-long friends. There is always someone who is there to support you and now I feel I am able to support others too."

WAY member

WAY has **3,200** members and a **68%** retention rate

By the end of 2019, we had more than 3,200 members – taking us over the 3,000 mark for the first time. We have seen a huge increase in member retention rates – with 2,066 members choosing to renew their membership this year (68%). We are pleased to note that the time we have taken to listen to our members and respond to their needs is really helping to create a service that members truly value.

Although 1,360 new members joined WAY in 2019, this figure was down slightly (7.9%) on last year. We are working on ways to reach out to more new members through social media, media and a refresh of our website as well as outreach through Project Swan (see page 12).

We were pleased to learn through the member registration process that 38% of our members found WAY through a personal recommendation, which is a ringing endorsement for our charity! The introduction of a **Direct Debit** system back in 2017 has made it easier for members to continue their membership seamlessly. We are very pleased that 47% of our members are now signed up to pay their membership fees by Direct Debit each year, which makes membership administration far more straightforward – both for members and for our Membership Services Team.

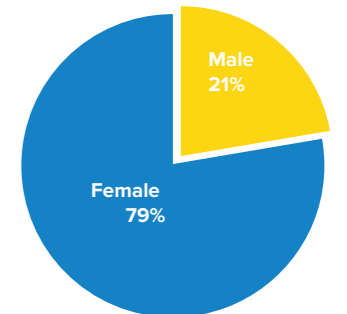
We are very aware that many of our members can struggle financially as a result of their bereavement and its consequences. Our **Memorial Fund** was set up in 2017 to offer members assistance with attending WAY events and with their membership fees. In 2019, we saw a steep increase in the number of people applying for support and we were able to offer assistance to 35 members.

After listening to feedback from our members, we also introduced a **Gift Membership scheme** for the first time that allows people to buy a year's membership for a friend or family member who may be struggling to afford the £25 annual joining fee.

We are continuing to make sure that our **Membership Services Team** in Derby has the resources it needs to provide the right level of support to our growing membership. In 2019, we had one full-time Membership Services Manager **Colette Scarbrough-Jelfs**, a National Volunteer Manager **Veronica Currie**, who works remotely, and one part-time administrator.

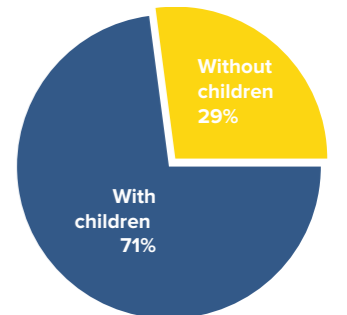
Member Demographics

Gender split*: Members who chose to list 'unspecified' represented 0.03% of our membership.

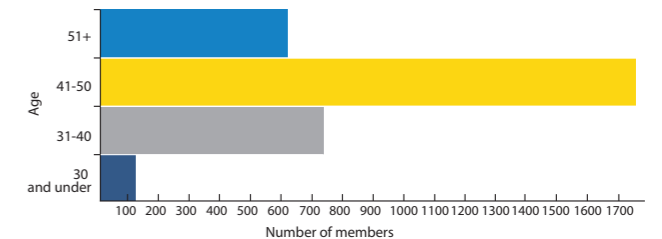


*This reflects government statistics on the numbers of men widowed below the age of 50, compared to the number of women.

With/without children:



Age of WAY members:



Please note that anyone is eligible to join WAY if they have been widowed before their 51st birthday and they can remain a member for as long as they wish. A number of years ago WAY member Gaynor Williams set up a group for those who missed out on WAY membership due to age restrictions – an organisation called **WAY Up** that supports widows and widowers aged 50 and over. For more information, visit <https://way-up.co.uk>

Our services

In 2019, we have focused on strengthening and bolstering the services for our members, after listening to feedback from our 2018 Member Survey.

WAY provides a range of services to help our members through different stages of their bereavement journey, whether they have been newly bereaved or whether they have been widowed for some years.

WAY membership includes:

- Access to our members only website (with the chance to talk to other members via messages, private forum and chatroom)
- Access to our members' only closed Facebook group and a range of subgroups
- Local group activities and national events
- Weekends away and holidays with other members
- A regular members' magazine and monthly e-newsletter
- Free telephone helpline, offering counselling support as well as legal and financial advice
- Unique volunteering opportunities

We are committed to making our services as good as they possibly can be for our members and have been working alongside the Cranfield Trust to develop our long-term strategic plan. Adam Smith, a lecturer at Nottingham Trent University, is supporting WAY on a voluntary basis with a team from the university to analyse the findings from our last member survey and to really hone our future strategic direction for the benefit of our members.

The new strategy will help us to prioritise how income from fundraising initiatives is best used for our members and to further our aim of raising awareness and reaching out to more people who need support. We want to make sure that we build upon the great foundations that have been laid over the past 22 years – ensuring that WAY is inclusive, values individual differences and that all members feel welcome, accepted, included and listened to.

WAY's website

WAY's Board of Trustees has for a number of years been responsible for the ongoing development of the organisation's website. The board is keen to build on this position and advance digital technologies to best support its members and to increase awareness of the needs of people who are widowed and young, the charity and the work it undertakes.

The wide-ranging scope of activities undertaken by the board and the ever-increasing advancement in digital technologies led to the development of a specific WAY **Website Working Group**, drawing on the specialist skillset of members and ensuring that members have a voice in the future digital developments within WAY.

Launched at the 2019 AGM, WAY members were invited to express their interest in volunteering for the Website Working Group. It is responsible for contributing to the continuing development of WAY's website, including design and structure, and reviewing and updating the content and functionality – along with exploring opportunities for further digital developments.



“WAY has been a lifeline for me. I felt so alone when my husband died, and so young compared to most widows. Just knowing there were others out there in a similar situation has been very empowering and has enabled me to cope much better. There is always help online from WAY members!”
WAY Member

It's recognised that, in order to ensure the website meets the needs of both new and existing members, long-term developments and investment is needed. Funding opportunities will be examined further as the group makes proposals to the Board of Trustees for website improvements.

Members of the group have been assigned tasks and research is currently being undertaken with regards to website design along with exploring developments to functionality. The group first met in July 2019 and have been meeting regularly since.

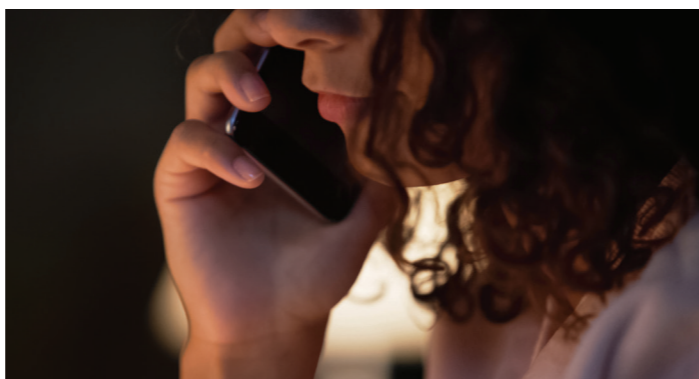
Chief Executive Rebecca Cooper said: *“The website is a fundamental part of WAY, it's how new members join and offers online support 24/7. We are aware that it's time to look at ways in which we can improve the site. In order to do this effectively, it's vital that members are involved in future developments to ensure the site meets members' needs.”*

Telephone helpline

We would like to encourage more WAY members to make use of the free 24-hour telephone helpline that we introduced in 2016 as a benefit of WAY membership, offering:

- 24-hour telephone counselling and support: members can speak in confidence to a fully qualified counsellor at any time of the night or day, completely free of charge
- Personal legal advice and confidential information: members can get support from a fully qualified professional with any personal finance or legal matters
- Health or medical advice across a range of medical and well-being issues
- Access to an online portal that offers further advice and support

There is no limit to the number of calls a member can make to this helpline. The service is open 24/7, 365 days a year and anonymity is assured at all times.



WAY events

One of the main benefits of being a WAY member is the opportunity to get together with other young widows and widowers across the country who understand exactly what you're going through.

Through our members only website, our volunteers and members are able to organise their own meet ups – from coffee mornings to evenings out. Between them, our Area Contacts and members organised 711 events across the country in 2019 with more than 3,300 attendees.

Every member plays an active role in creating a safe and supportive environment for each other – whether they meet in person or online. This year, our staff and trustees have undertaken safeguarding training and we have updated our policies and procedures and created a dedicated section of our website that offers safety guidance for our members. With this in mind, we worked with JMW Solicitors this year to develop a clause for every event booked via our website to help safeguard and protect our members and event organisers.

As well as local events, WAY holds several national events throughout the year, including our flagship Big Picnic weekend in May. In 2019 we had 32 picnics across the country – from Aberdeen to the Isle of Wight, attracting more than 800 members, friends, family and supporters.

In 2019, WAY also organised four other national events that were open to all our members including our flagship AGM event in Southampton that was attended by more than 160 members. 195 members and children also attended three WAY activity weekends in Grantham, Derbyshire and Scotland.

More than

70

WAY members and children went along to WAY's activity weekend for families and children at PGL Caythorpe Court, Grantham in January 2019.

160

WAY members attended our AGM in Southampton in March 2019.

More than

58

WAY members and children gathered at Comrie Croft in Scotland in August.

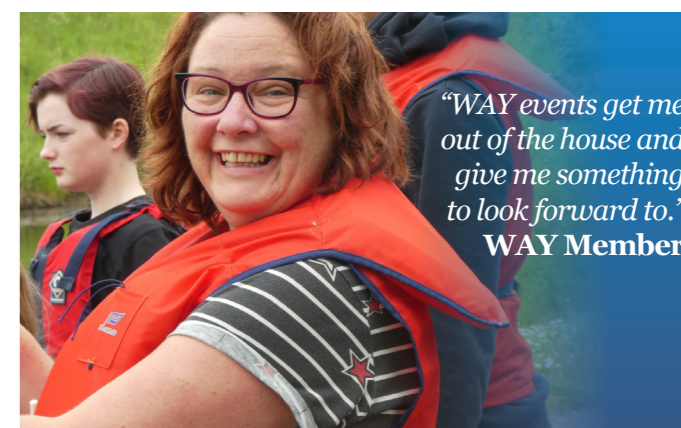
67

WAY members and kids got together at the National Forest Youth Hostel in Derbyshire in June 2019.

In addition to these official WAY events, WAY members have organised 16 get togethers across the UK and even abroad over the last year, including walking weekends in the Lake District, activity weekends at Center Parcs in Sherwood Forest, skiing in the New Year and a visit to the beautiful Villa Pia in Italy.



“WAY has helped me connect with local people in the same situation as me, which is hugely helpful when you're grieving. Every meetup/event I've been to has been worthwhile and it's wonderful to actually forget my sadness and have a laugh with people who won't judge me.”
WAY Member



“WAY events get me out of the house and give me something to look forward to.”
WAY Member



Communications

WAY provides our members with advice and support through various different communication channels:

- Our regular **WAY Forward** magazine, which gives members an opportunity to share their stories and experiences with others three times a year.
- Our monthly **enewsletter**, which provides a round up of what's going on with WAY, including all the latest events. We sent out more than 55,300 enewsletters to members last year.
- **Facebook:** WAY has a closed Facebook group for members only, which runs alongside the WAY website as an informal platform for members to communicate with each other. Members have also set up local Facebook groups for many of our areas to help local members keep in touch with each other as well as subgroups for members with specific interests and experiences.

It is also part of WAY's remit to reach out to members of the public and to raise awareness of the needs of people who are widowed at a young age, which includes reaching out to potential new members. We do this through various platforms, including social media and press coverage and the news section of our public website.

WAY has a freelance **Communications Manager, Vicky Anning**, who works alongside the Chief Executive and Membership Services Team on a part-time basis to help with WAY's communications outreach.

WAY in the media

We had a good year for media coverage in 2019, with a total of 60 articles appearing in newspapers, magazines and online – from *Good Housekeeping* to the *Huffington Post*. In addition, WAY and our members were also featured on 32 different radio programmes and 17 TV shows in 2019, which is really helping us to get the word out about WAY. 5% of our new members told us they found WAY through media coverage in 2019.

60 **Articles published**
WAY and our members were featured in 60 articles in newspapers, magazines and online on 2019.

17 **TV Shows**
WAY members appeared on 17 TV Shows.

32 **Radio Interviews**
WAY members were interviewed on 32 radio shows.



Social media

We continued to make great strides on our social media platforms and have particularly focused on bolstering our Instagram account this year to reach out to younger members. Our social media volunteer **Aimée Claire** has been working alongside our Communications Manager to run strategic social media campaigns around key dates including Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and National Grief Awareness Week and Christmas. We were also offered the fantastic opportunity to take over footballer Neville Southall's Twitter feed in November to mark **International Men's Day**, reaching out to his more than 150,000 followers. We hope to repeat this in 2020.

All of our social media platforms showed a strong performance in 2019, helping us to reach out to new audiences. 8% of new members told us they found WAY through social media.

Facebook

We had more than 8,400 Likes on our public Facebook page at the end of 2019 – up from 7,000 in 2018.

Twitter

We had more than 4,600 followers on Twitter – up by 1,000 since 2018.

Instagram

We had more than 2,000 followers on Instagram – up 54% on 2018.



Website

We had more than 99,400 visitors to our website in 2019 and more than 212,000 visits to our web pages.

Our Website Working Group is initially working on giving our public website a new look and fresh content, which will be unveiled in early 2020 and we hope will drive more traffic to our site. More than 30% of new members told us they found us through Internet searches, so making sure that we have a strong digital presence continues to be a key priority.

Raising awareness

In 2019, we continued to work alongside other bereavement charities and networks to achieve our shared goals. Our staff and trustees attended numerous events throughout the year including hosting a stand at **Suicide Bereavement UK's** International Conference and the **Simon Says** conference in Hampshire, and attending the **Forever and Always Adult Memorial Service** in London and other events at hospices including **Treetops Hospice** in Derbyshire.

WAY is also working alongside other bereavement charities including Cruse Bereavement Care, Winston's Wish, Grief Encounter, Child Bereavement UK and the Childhood Bereavement Network as part of the **National Bereavement Alliance** and the **Life Matters Task Force**. We are also a member of the all-party parliamentary group for bereavement support.

This year we were also involved in the launch of the **National Grief Awareness Week** in December, established by WAY member Linda Magstris who is founder of the Good Grief Trust (see picture below).



Campaigning

We were delighted to invite **Siobhan McLaughlin** and her lawyer **Laura Banks** as the keynote speakers at our March 2019 AGM. Siobhan talked about her own story and the landmark legal case challenging ineligibility for bereavement benefits for cohabiting parents and their children. Siobhan was awarded lifetime membership of WAY in recognition of her fierce determination to challenge this injustice, which she took all the way to the Supreme Court and won.

To mark the one-year anniversary of Siobhan's victory, our Campaign Spokesperson **Georgia Elms** was interviewed on both ITV and BBC news, highlighting the lack of government response so far.

Throughout 2019, WAY continued to campaign against cuts to Bereavement Support Payments that were introduced in April 2017. In June 2019, a group of WAY members travelled to Parliament to share their powerful stories before the Work and Pensions Select Committee (pictured right). This led to a report that was highly critical of the current system.

Raising awareness of the needs of people who are widowed young is a key part of our mission and we will continue to campaign on these important issues in 2020.

Charity Film Award success

We were delighted that WAY member **Rupert Murrell** won a silver award in the Charity Film Awards in 2019 for his beautiful film about a family being marooned on the *Island of Grief*. We were up against some of the UK's biggest charities and were very proud that Rupert's film did so well.



Our volunteers

WAY has **90** volunteers doing a range of jobs from proofreading to steering the new website

We have **27%** more volunteers than we did last year

77% of new members reported being welcomed by an Area Contact when they joined WAY

83% of WAY's 47 regions are covered by Area Contacts

WAY is incredibly fortunate to have so many members who are so passionate about the charity. Some of these members choose to give back to WAY through volunteering. WAY's volunteers are the life-force of the charity – without them, the charity could not do a fraction of what it manages to achieve.

With this in mind, WAY recognised that more support and structure would benefit its volunteers so decided to create an operational role of **National Volunteer Manager**. In October 2019, **Veronica Currie** (below right) was recruited to the post and is working hard to support and develop WAY's volunteer network.

At the end of 2018, WAY had a volunteer network of 70 members. At the end of 2019, this network is growing steadily. There are now:

- 67 volunteers supporting their local regions as either Area Contacts or Area Assists;
- 8 contributors to the Website Working Group;
- 3 members who help to support social media by contributing or by moderating;
- 4 volunteers in 'specialist' roles
- 8 Trustees.

This makes a grand total of 90 volunteers and the number is still growing, as there is still a need in all of the above volunteering capacities.

The charity is also identifying different ways to include training for volunteers, which may take the form of a full day in a central part of the country or via technology such as video conferencing, particularly for our Area Contacts who are geographically spread across the country.

As WAY's online profile continues to grow across different social media platforms, the charity is looking to expand the number of volunteers supporting us in this field. 2020 will also see the launch of **Project Swan**, funded by the **National Lottery Community Fund**. This project is about raising the profile of WAY in local communities and promoting the charity in public places, such as libraries, funeral directors, hospices, medical centres and community centres to help reach people who could benefit from our support.

Volunteers help to drive WAY forward and are very often the difference that brings the human element to the peer-to-peer support on which WAY was founded.

Our awards

The Mandy Burrows Memorial Award

In order to recognise the tireless work of our volunteers, in 2014 we launched the Mandy Burrows Award for Outstanding Contribution to WAY. This is an annual award held in honour of one of our members, Mandy Burrows.

We were pleased to announce the 2019 winner was **Ed Spooner** (pictured below), who served as a WAY trustee from 2016 to 2018 and has offered unstinting support and advice to WAY as an IT consultant and photographer at WAY event and as an admin for the WAY subgroup WAYers without Children (WAY Wocs).

Ed said: "I volunteer for WAY not for the recognition but because I remember how cruel, lonely and painful losing your partner can be and if I can make somebody else's journey that little bit easier then that's enough thanks for me."



Helen Bailey Award for Best Blog

We were also pleased to announce the winner of our new Helen Bailey Award for the best blog written by a WAY member, as voted by our members. We set up the award in memory of late WAY member Helen Bailey, who helped so many young widows and widowers through her own blog Planet Grief and through her book When Bad Things Happen in Good Bikinis.

The winner of the third Helen Bailey Award, announced at our 2019 AGM, was **Aimée Claire** for her moving blog about life as an unmarried widow – A Nameless Pain.

Aimée told us: "I found Helen Bailey's blog when I was still very raw in my own grief. I remember finding comfort in her words and I hope I can honour her memory by reaching others. Being part of WAY has honestly saved my life and I'm so thankful if my words can help even one person."



Raising Funds



"WAY has helped me so much and I want to raise money to give something back."
Suzanne, WAY fundraiser

2019 was an absolutely amazing year for WAY for fundraising. Our members and supporters raised record funds to help WAY build our unique peer to peer support network and to reach out to more young widowed people across the UK. Combined with Gift Aid and other donations, that brought our fundraising total in 2019 to £160,000.

WAY doesn't receive any government or statutory funding so we rely entirely on membership fees of £25 per year, fundraising and generous donations to pay for vital services for our members. This year, we received confirmation of funding from the **National Lottery Community Fund** for the first time. We were delighted that our application for £9,950 to support Project Swan was successful and we are working hard on rolling this out in 2020 (see page 12).



Our members and supporters have run marathons, raced Dragon Boats and climbed hills for WAY this year – between them raising an astonishing £48,700.



We have also received increasing support from corporate supporters in 2019:

WAY received £30,000 in donations from the **Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's** national metals recycling scheme. Cheques were collected this year from Coney Hill Cemetery & Crematorium in Gloucester, Markeaton Crematorium in Derby, Haycombe Crematorium in Bath, and Mortlake Crematorium in London (see picture below).



Thanks to our members putting WAY forward for support, we also received £9,000 from **Costello Medical** in Cambridge as part of the 10-year anniversary celebrations (thanks to WAY member Michael Darvell) and we have received £10,000 in donations from **Decanter**, the world's leading wine media brand, thanks to our nomination by WAY member Tina Gellie, with a further £10,000 promised for next year.



We were delighted that several groups of young people also decided to raise funds for WAY in 2019. **The Amanda Alder Dance Academy** raised £1,500 while Year 9 students from **Gordon's School** in Surrey raised £1,000 through the First Give programme (see picture below). WAY also received a number of gifts in kind during 2019 through requests to organisations such as Clarins, Virgin Trains, Brittany Ferries and Greggs Bakery.



We would like to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to everyone who has raised funds or made a donation to WAY over the past 12 months. Your support is hugely appreciated!

Thank you ~



WAY finances

2019 has seen WAY consolidate and grow further building on the foundations laid in 2018 when we appointed our new Chief Executive. As well as reinforcing the governance of the charity this has seen us able to build our financial strength through successful fundraising. In turn this has allowed for the appointment of a National Volunteer Manager (see page 12).

As a result of the growth in our fundraising efforts, we have passed the threshold under which we need to present our accounts on an accruals basis.

On the income side we have seen growth in two key areas. Firstly, the continuing growth of our membership has been such that we now have more than 3,000 members for the first time. Income from new memberships and renewals has therefore grown to £85,600 (2018: £76,400).

Secondly our fundraising activities have seen a dramatic increase in income from two quite separate streams. Community fundraising – money raised from members both through donations and local fundraising efforts – has increased by almost a quarter to £48,700 (2018: £39,400).

In parallel to that, efforts to secure funding from external sources has been notably successful in 2019 with a total of £66,200 raised. In 2018 the comparable figure was £23,100 – but 2019 was the first year in which concerted efforts have been made in this area. This has included executing a fundraising plan, which has seen 80 applications made to trusts and foundations, writing to over 175 crematoriums and joining schemes such as Amazon Smile and PayPal Giving (see page 13).

There has also been an increase in revenue for events and for the AGM in particular, but as this revenue is generated to match the cost of such events there is little net impact. These events are a key part of the work that WAY does for its members and will continue to grow.

We had anticipated spending more than we had coming in during 2019, with expected increases in costs arising from staffing changes and the website. We have seen a big shift in staff costs in the last couple of years due to the appointment of our Chief Executive and the National Volunteer Manager. However, such has been the success of fundraising efforts that we continue to see revenues covering costs year on year.

RESERVES

Our policy is to retain between three and six-months' worth of running costs. With almost £190,000 in the bank at the end of the year our reserves remain well above this level.

The initiative to appoint a National Volunteer Manager came out of the desire to develop and improve what we do and having this current level of reserves enables us to look at and implement such changes. It remains a key challenge for the charity in the coming years to identify how and where it can best utilise these funds in order to support our members and to further our aim of reaching more potential members. To that end the Board is exploring ways to enhance WAY's digital platform with potential investment in both our website and other social media.

ACCOUNTING BASIS

These accounts are now prepared on an accruals basis as WAY has now moved beyond the threshold at which accounts can be prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.

WAY Widowed and Young		
CHARITY NUMBER 1164988		
Accounts to the end of December 2019		
BALANCE SHEET		
	2019	
CURRENT ASSETS	£	£
Lloyds Bank Current Account	8,089	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits		
		8,089
CAF Bank Current Account	175,915	
Less Memorial Fund/Gift Membership	(1,838)	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits	(3,209)	
		170,868
Memorial Fund	1,788	
Gift Membership	50	
Less Uncleared (Cheques)/Credits		
		1,838
TOTAL Assets		180,795
FINANCED BY:		
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward		118,594
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for the Year		62,201
		180,795

WAY Widowed and Young		
CHARITY NUMBER 1164988		
Accounts to the end of December 2019		
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT		
	2019	2018
	£	£
Income		
Members subscriptions	34,000	36,700
Members renewals	51,650	39,700
Donations	66,187	23,062
Fundraising	48,741	39,358
Income - Other	312	371
Merchandise	1,737	1,183
Gift Aid	45,675	21,210
TOTAL Income	248,302	161,584
Expenditure		
NCVO		(110)
Memorial Fund	(1,510)	(360)
Member Helpline	(6,096)	(4,402)
Administration	(17,140)	(12,622)
WAY Forward	(15,079)	(12,775)
WAY E-Newsletters	(2,150)	(1,600)
Annual Report	(1,372)	(729)
New Members Booklets	(751)	0
Media & PR	(16,786)	(11,961)
Staff Costs	(90,066)	(67,060)
Committee expenses	(846)	(2,682)
IT Expenditure	(4,524)	(1,319)
Merchandise	(4,102)	(2,097)
Big Picnic	(2,395)	(1,483)
Website	(16,710)	(22,420)
Bank Charges	(60)	(60)
Insurance	(912)	(551)
Audit Fees	(690)	(90)
Paypal/Just Giving/etc Fees	(4,456)	(4,717)
Total Expenditure	(185,645)	(147,038)
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year excluding Events	62,657	14,546
Holidays and Events	(456)	(3,482)
Net (deficit)/surplus for the year	62,201	11,064

The Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet on pages 14 and 15 are a summarised extract from the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019.

Financial statements have been subject to independent examination, as required by the Charities Act 2011. No matters of concern have been raised by the independent examiner.

Full financial statements for WAY Widowed and Young can be found on the Charity Commission website. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission





WAY Widowed & Young

Support. Understanding. Friendship.



WAY Widowed and Young

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Chair: Bill James

Chief Executive: Rebecca Cooper

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With thanks to all the photographers who have contributed to this Annual Report,
particularly Ed Spooner and Gary Marson for the Dragon Boat Race shots

Registered Charity No: 1164988