



Our Strategy 2021-2026



Photo: Gary Marson

www.widowedandyoung.org.uk
Support. Understanding. Friendship

Registered Charity No: 1164988

Background

Finding the right way forward
Developing WAY's 2021-2026 Strategy

After going through an organisational transformation in 2018, WAY Widowed and Young carried out a range of consultations with our members to help inform the direction our charity should take in future. As well as sharing questionnaires with new members, we also carried out an extensive survey of our members and volunteers to work out the best way forward as our charity continues to grow.

As we move towards our 25th birthday, WAY has more than 3,700 members – more members than we have ever had before. The WAY Board of Trustees wanted to make sure that the charity's strategic direction – encapsulated in our new Strategic Plan – would reflect the views of all our members and volunteers to make sure the charity met their needs, to draw out our long-term ambitions, to help outline our organisational priorities and reflect our new structure.

In order to do this successfully, we decided to seek the support of external expertise to bolster our capacity in this area and to undertake an analysis of the feedback data we had gathered. We submitted an application to the Cranfield Trust, which matches charities with skilled professionals to undertake projects on a pro bono basis.

Our application was successful and, in the summer of 2019, the project was assigned to Adam Smith, a Senior Lecturer at Nottingham Trent University. Adam volunteered his time and expertise freely to support WAY, working with our Board of Trustees and Chief Executive. Adam also recruited additional expertise from colleagues at the university, who volunteered to support the data analysis process and in turn to develop a WAY Strategic Report with key survey findings and recommendations.

WAY's new Strategic Plan has been developed in line with recommendations drawn from the report and takes on board 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 plan has been developed for the WAY team, our members, volunteers and all our supporters who have an interest in seeing WAY grow, develop and succeed.

WAY's Strategic Plan will be a roadmap to help our Board of Trustees and Chief Executive plan ahead effectively. It will set out clearly how we can best support our members and meet their needs, as well as ensuring we have achievable goals in place so we can be confident our activities work towards increasing our reach and effectively achieving 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.”



Our Values

Caring

'We promote friendship, understanding, kindness, compassion and a sense of belonging. Together we support each other.'

Respectful

'We will promote a supportive and inclusive culture in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued and where those with diverse experiences are able to participate and contribute.'

Innovative

'We are unique, creative and are committed to delivering high quality and innovative services. We will continue to find new or improved ways of working.'

Valued

'We are uncompromising in our desire to champion the voice of our members and to make a real difference.'

Transparent

'We are accountable and honest about what we do and how we do things. We are open to sharing ideas and working collaboratively to best serve our members. We seek to achieve best practice in all areas of our work.'

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 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.



To provide unique support to those who are 50 and under when they lose a partner, through an inclusive peer led network, throughout the UK.

Our work in this area will include:

Membership services

- Simplifying the sign up and verification process for new members joining the charity.
- Strengthening the peer-to-peer support network, through reviewing events and activities to ensure members have access to a range of timely and effective services.
- Expanding our volunteer recruitment activity to improve local support to members throughout the UK.
- Making digital improvements (inc. the WAY website) to enhance members' experience and access to WAY services.
- Having a National WAY monument.

Inclusion and Engagement

- Supporting and encouraging involvement of our members in the design and delivery of WAY services.
- Effectively communicating with our members to provide regular updates about the charity.
- Increasing promotion of the Memorial Fund for those who may need help to access the benefits of membership and to ensure there is sufficient annual provision through effective fundraising.
- Creating a supportive and inclusive culture, where those with diverse experiences can participate and contribute.

Volunteer Support

- Providing volunteers with access to appropriate training, development and support.
- Engaging and communicating with volunteers to shape their experience, celebrate their contribution and increase involvement in the development of our services.
- Improving our volunteer recruitment processes to appeal to a diverse range of members and to best support new/potential volunteers.



Photo: Gary Marson



To improve our reach, to ensure the maximum number of those eligible to be members are aware of WAY, whilst advancing the education of the public to raise awareness of the charity and the needs of people who are widowed young.

Our work in this area will include:

Communications (External)

- Increasing public social media followers to help WAY build brand awareness, reach new members, generate donations, support campaigning and drive traffic to the WAY website.
- Proactively building upon our work with traditional media (Newspapers, TV and Radio) to raise awareness of the charity and the needs of those widowed young.
- Continuing to champion the voice of those widowed young and deliver or contribute to campaigns that support their needs.
- Responding to consultations, engaging in relevant working groups, forums and evaluations that are appropriate to our charity.
- Exploring the needs of our audiences and considering formats in which we deliver information such as print, online and social media platforms to make sure our information is accessible.

Relationships

- Reaching out effectively to organisations, communities and people to raise awareness of the charity and increase signposting/referrals made to WAY.
- Working collaboratively with other organisations, where it best meets the needs of those widowed young.

Recognisable

- Developing a WAY Marketing plan.
- Refreshing our brand to ensure WAY is relevant, appeals to our young diverse membership and reflects our vision, mission and values.
- Seeking an appropriate charity Patron to improve recognition and raise awareness of the charity.
- Investing in PR and Advertising, where appropriate, so that people searching for help always find WAY.



To manage WAY in an effective, sustainable and transparent way with excellent governance, in order to support the needs of its members.

Our work in this area will include:

Governance

- Through active recruitment of Trustees, ensuring that our Board:
 - is diverse and representative of our membership; and
 - has the range of skills needed to ensure both legal and operational obligations are properly met.
- Establishing and implementing policies and procedures, appropriate to our size, to enable the effective day to day operations of the charity and to allow the Board to maintain effective oversight.
- Effectively monitoring and reviewing the progress of the strategic plan.

Funding

- Diversifying our income streams to develop existing fundraising activities and identifying new sources of funding.
- Increasing the number of charity members and in turn generating additional income.

Operations

- Ensuring our working culture encompasses our values, promoting staff satisfaction, wellbeing and inclusion. Staff will feel valued for their contribution and take pride in working for WAY.
- Increasing staff development and increasing the skills, knowledge and capabilities of our staff, ensuring they feel confident in their work and are best placed to undertake their role.



Photo: Ed Spooner

About WAY

WAY Widowed and Young is the only national charity in the UK for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner died. Founded in 1997, WAY now has more than 3,700 members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The charity provides 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.

WAY Members and Volunteers organise social events throughout the year - for drinks, meals out, walks and picnics. Our Members offer peer to peer support both online and face to face, including trips away for adults and families, offering an alternative social life for people who have lost their partner at a young age.

WAY has a secure members' only website that offers a safe place for members to meet and chat online 24 hours a day and members also have access to a 24-hour telephone helpline that offers free counselling and advice.

How WAY was founded

WAY was founded in 1997 by journalist Caroline Sarll after her sister Mandy was widowed at the age of 35. It was a double blow for both Caroline and her sister, because it was the 25th anniversary of their own father's death. You can read more about why WAY was founded here:

<https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/about/what-is-way/how-did-way-begin/>

Find out more at our website www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

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