Widowed and Young

Annual Report 2025













www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

Support. Understanding. Friendship

Registered Charity No: 1164988

Introduction



A word from WAY's Chief Executive and Chair



Throughout 2025, amidst a challenging external landscape marked by widespread public anxiety, financial strain on households and shifting political environments, WAY's peer-led support system has proved to be an indispensable lifeline.

We know that WAY is a club that none of us ever wished to be eligible to join. Yet, our members tell us every day how much comfort they find in walking this path together, and we are constantly moved by the kindness and peer support that WAY's members share across our network.

An incredible 1,144 events were coordinated across the country in 2025, brought to life by 61 local groups stretching from the Scottish Highlands to the coast of Cornwall – offering our 4,423 members a safe, quiet space to connect with peers who understand what they are going through.

This year, WAY welcomed 1,404 new members into our community. Yet, we know there are so many more young widows who are still navigating their grief in isolation, with national statistics showing that more than 27,000 people aged 19-50 sadly die every year. This means we still have a mountain to climb to ensure that anyone who needs a hand to hold can find us.

Helping members stay connected

Over the last few years, so many of our members have shared that digital connectivity is a vital lifeline when the world feels overwhelming. We have responded by raising funds needed to invest in our online spaces.

Following the launch of our updated Member Hub in 2023, we have continued to work hard, making thoughtful improvements to the member area and our public pages with limited funds and capacity, striving to keep our platforms safe and accessible and across more than 100 closed Facebook and Member Hub forums.

The relentless cost-of-living increase has continued to affect many of our members deeply, and 72% of our members told us they are holding heavy worries about household finances. In response, we stepped up our support to ensure that financial hardship never stands in the way of finding our support.

We processed 205 applications to ease the cost of annual fees through WAY's Memorial Fund.

Despite the tough financial climate, our community fundraising exceeded all expectations, raising an incredible £155,091, through the sheer generosity of our supporters. These funds, alongside our reserves, allowed us to continue investing in member services and subsidising highly valued national activities, including our annual AGM and Spa Retreat in Bournemouth, which brought over 120 of us together.

Our superb volunteers remain the unbreakable foundations on which WAY's peer-to-peer networks thrive. We are incredibly lucky to have so many members who turn their own grief experience into support for others. The year ended with 182 dedicated volunteers covering 206 roles across the UK.

We are also deeply appreciative of our strategic partners, including Irwin Mitchell Solicitors and child bereavement charity Winston's Wish (now Child Bereavement UK), who have helped us to broaden our reach and navigate a challenging environment to preserve and improve our services.

WAY is incredibly fortunate to have so many people who care passionately about protecting our charity. We are sincerely grateful to all our committed volunteers, trustees and small dedicated staff team, who provide the structure for the charity's day-to-day operations.

We would also like to give our most heartfelt thanks to WAY's incredible fundraisers, donors and corporate partners. Without your immense generosity, in a year as challenging as 2025, WAY simply could not continue to do what we do. And finally, we want to extend our most heartfelt thank you to each and every WAY member in our wonderful community.

Stephanie Patrick
Chief Executive Officer

Joanna Sedley-Burke
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Our Story

95% of WAY members said that WAY membership of £30 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 support line offering bereavement counselling.

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.



"Finding WAY and a community of people that just get it was – and continues to be – absolutely invaluable. I have made some incredible friends for life... They've given me advice, listened to me overthink absolutely everything, been there when I've cried, screamed, just not known what to do ... and when I've laughed. They have celebrated achievements and been with me when I've been at rock bottom, both virtually through weekly Zoom calls and in person. I honestly could not have got through without my WAY tribe and thankfully I don't have to."

Lisa, WAY member and fundraiser

* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2026 (286 responses).

WAY in Numbers

WAY impacted the lives of **4,423** young widows in 2025

helping them to navigate their bereavement by offering friendship, support and understanding.



What WAY does

WAY members and volunteers organised **1,434** in person and virtual events in 2025.

182 amazing volunteers helped to support our work throughout the year.

Generous supporters raised **£155,091** (inc. Gift Aid), helping us to reach more people in need of support.

205 young widowed people received financial assistance through our Memorial Fund (up 13% on last year).

Our Impact in 2025

How WAY helped

59% of members found that meeting people in the same situation has helped.*

Our small team of **4 employed** members of staff continued to support our members.

84% of members felt that they had better knowledge about grief and bereavement.*

82% felt less isolated.*

More than **33,500** people helped us to spread the word by following us across our social media channels.

128,849 separate communications were sent out to our members throughout the year.

50 pieces of press coverage were generated in 2025.

59,997 people visited our website in 2025.

* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2026 (286 members).

Our Members

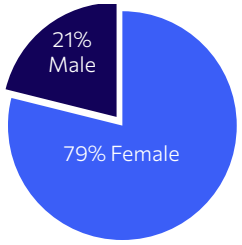
1,404 new members joined WAY's peer support network in 2025.

69% of members renewed their membership.

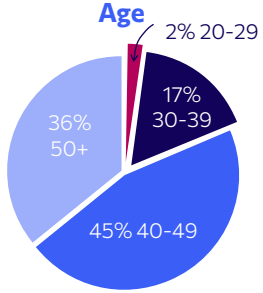
95% of members would recommend WAY to other people.*

Demographics

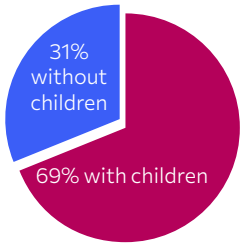
Gender



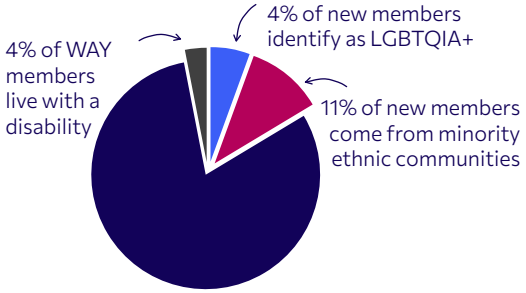
Age



With/without children



Diversity



* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2026.

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:

Improving our telephone support services, which include bereavement counselling provided by Professional Help as well as legal and financial advice offered by Irwin Mitchell.

159 people made use of these telephone support services in 2025.

80% of members who used the telephone counselling service found it helpful.*

Between them, WAY members and volunteers organised **1,144** events via our Member Hub with more than **4,000** attendees.

248 online events were held for members.

Our closed Facebook group and a large range of subgroups were accessed by **68%** of members.

205 members were supported financially through our Memorial Fund.

* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2026 (286 members).

"I found the WAY community through a Google search not long after Jamie's passing. I was very emotional and trying to see what support was out there. At the time, I was having to pay for the funeral and many other bills and I didn't have the money to purchase a membership. But I really wanted to be part of a community who understood. As much as my family and friends tried their best, they didn't understand what I was going through.

I applied to the WAY Memorial Fund, which supports people with the joining fee if needed, and I was thrilled to be accepted. I have been on the WAY Facebook groups every single day since and found a lot of comfort in reading and talking to others – sometimes just a listening ear, sometimes support and empathy. Sometimes I have even felt able to offer advice to others. It just feels like such a safe space as we are all in this same boat that none of us wanted to be on but here we are. I have used WAY support networks as my first choice of support when I am having a bad moment, and although I still have those moments, they are very, very slowly getting less frequent."

Georgina, WAY member

Events





63%
of WAY members rated face-to-face meetings as one of the top five WAY services*



Throughout the year, WAY members connected through a wide range of activities, both in person and online. From coffee mornings, walks and pub meet-ups to virtual quizzes, bingo, yoga sessions and book clubs, there were countless opportunities to meet others who understand life after loss.

These connections are made possible by the dedication of WAY's volunteers and members, who organise events and activities across 61 local areas throughout the UK, ensuring support and friendship are never too far away.

National events in 2025

Alongside local activities, WAY's Operations Team organised a number of national events, giving members and their families the chance to come together, make memories and build lasting friendships.

Big Picnic Weekend

In May, more than 550 members, friends and family gathered at 36 picnic locations across the UK for WAY's annual **Big Picnic Weekend**. From Northern Ireland to Cornwall, and from Glasgow to Carmarthenshire, communities came together to enjoy good company and the spring sunshine.

Weekends aWAY

February saw nearly 80 members and children head to **PGL Caythorpe Court** near Grantham for a fun-filled weekend of adventure. The event offered plenty of opportunities for laughter, friendship and mutual support.

In August, members travelled to **Dovedale in the Peak District** for a three-day break focused on friendship, understanding and connection.

September brought WAY's largest annual gathering, with more than 120 members attending the **AGM and Spa Retreat in Bournemouth**. The weekend also featured the much-loved dinner dance, offering members the chance to celebrate, reconnect and enjoy time together.

"I feel in a completely different place since the event and it was so amazing meeting up with people I already knew and making new friends. We might be in the worst club ever but we most definitely are not alone."

Sarah, AGM attendee

* Based on survey responses in our June 2026 Impact Survey.

Campaigning for Change



Raising awareness of the needs of young widowed people and campaigning on their behalf remains a core part of WAY's mission.

In 2025, WAY continued to champion the needs of young widowed families at the highest policy levels through its **Blank Space campaign**, which calls for a more compassionate birth registration process for bereaved mothers whose partners die before their child's birth is registered.

In February, former WAY Chair **Caroline Voaden MP** brought the campaign to Parliament, helping to raise awareness of the challenges faced by unmarried bereaved mothers.

Momentum continued in June when **Labour MP Jen Craft** introduced a Ten-Minute Rule Bill seeking to allow the names of deceased, unmarried fathers to be included on birth certificates. This led to a meeting with Justice Minister Sarah Sackman to discuss potential legislative change.

WAY also joined the **All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Grief Support,** ensuring the experiences of young widowed people are represented in national bereavement policy discussions.

Blank Space in Scotland



During 2025, WAY expanded the Blank Space campaign into Scotland. Working with Scottish **MP John Grady** and legal experts at **Brodies LLP**, the charity developed guidance for women in Scotland whose unmarried partner dies before the birth of their child.

The campaign highlights how current legislation can force bereaved mothers through a complex, costly and distressing legal process to have their partner recognised on their child's birth certificate. WAY continues to call for a simpler, more compassionate approach that better reflects modern family life.

Guidance for women in Scotland, alongside existing information for England and Wales, is available through the Blank Space campaign pages of WAY's website:
www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/blank-space



"The current process is unnecessarily complex, compounds the trauma of bereavement, and feels inhumane. It piles additional emotional and financial pressure onto bereaved new mothers at what is already an immensely vulnerable time."

Karen, WAY member in Scotland and Blank Space campaigner

Volunteers at the Heart of WAY

WAY volunteers play a vital role in bringing the charity's mission to life. By offering peer support both online and in person, they help turn our national charity into a local community. Most volunteers are WAY members themselves – widowed before the age of 51 and motivated to use their lived experience to support others facing a similar journey.

At the end of 2025, 182 volunteers were carrying out 206 different roles across the charity. From welcoming new members as Area Contacts and organising local events, to moderating Facebook groups, hosting online discussions, serving as Trustees, supporting campaigns as Ambassadors, attending bereavement network events or sharing specialist skills, volunteers are involved in every aspect of WAY's work.

Volunteers also help shape the future of the charity through a range of Working Groups. These include groups focused on website development, cultural diversity and LGBTQIA+ inclusion. In 2025, a new Working Group was established for widowed parents, creating opportunities for both parents and their children to connect with others who truly understand their experiences.

While WAY's online community continues to thrive through Facebook groups, the Member Hub and Zoom events, members have not lost sight of the value of face-to-face connection. Around half of all in-person events are organised by volunteers, helping members build friendships and support networks within their local communities.

Online events also continued to grow during 2025, with between four and six volunteer-led events taking place every week, offering members even more opportunities to connect, share experiences and find support.

Volunteer highlights in 2025

182 volunteers covering 206 roles across WAY.

51 of 61 WAY regions supported by at least one Area Contact volunteer.

86% of regions have local volunteer support.



89% of members live in regions covered by local volunteers.

64% of regions have Area Contact teams rather than a single volunteer.

80% of regions with more than 100 members have a team of volunteers supporting local activity.

"WAY has been a lifeline. I'm a positive person and try to take all the opportunities that come my way. I like to give back and now I help welcome new members, show them what WAY is about and encourage them to come to meet ups. WAY really is a club that no one wants to join but it helps people through tough times. As an Area Contact, I love to bring people together and watch friendships grow."

Liz, Area Contact, Kent

Raising Funds for WAY



WAY does not receive any government funding, so we rely entirely on memberships, donations and fundraising to support our members. In 2025, our supporters achieved some remarkable fundraising escapades and collectively raised an impressive £155,091* for WAY.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

- A team of amazing WAY members and supporters took part in the **London Landmarks Half Marathon** in April – raising almost £4,000.
- In October, in another run around iconic London sights in the **Royal Parks Half Marathon**, member Hannah, and supporters Ellie and Nathan, together raised over £3,000.
- WAY supporter Gracie raised more than £3,700 by taking on the **London Marathon** in April, while member Ed rallied a team for WAY in the **Great North Run** raising a combined total of £6,000.
- Serica took part in the **Great Birmingham Run** and then delivered a sponsored Zumba event to raise over £3,000, which was split between WAY and the Fire Fighters charity in memory of her husband.
- Not prepared to be outdone by runners, WAY members Gemma and Louise, alongside supporters Alice, Elise and Abbie, took the plunge and raised over £1,500 at **Swim Serpentine** in October.
- Following her success in the **Great North Run**, WAY member Mel's brother organised a fundraising jiu-jitsu **24-hour Roll-a-thon** raising an additional £4,000.
- WAY member Michelle jumped out of a plane, raising £1,100 by skydiving.
- WAY member Anna took part in the **Glasgow Kiltwalk** in April, raising £1,700 for WAY.
- WAY member Fiona and supporter Sharon did the **Highland Fling Bridge Swing** in May, raising a combined total of £1,710.
- WAY supporter Felicity gathered university friends together for a reunion challenge, completing the **Yorkshire Three Peaks** in memory of two of those friends, raising £1,950 for WAY.

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 2025:

- **Build Recruitment** continued their fundraising for WAY with a Golf Day and followed this up with various challenges and a few runs including the Santa in the City in December, raising £2,222.
- **Verity Garrington** and her clients based in York completed a 100k steps 24-hour challenge in July – raising a fabulous £1,688 for WAY.
- **Bierton Crematorium** chose WAY as its fundraising beneficiary for 2025. Throughout the year, staff supported the charity through cake sales and collections, while Business Development Manager Stephanie also took on the **Cotswold Way Ultra Challenge**, raising more than £500 herself.
- Jake from **Trunk Logistics** stepped up as part of Team WAY in the London Landmarks Half Marathon, raising more than £700.
- **Macildowie Recruitment** took part in various events throughout the year raising £967 for WAY.
- WAY received generous donations of £21,667 through the **Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management** (ICCM).

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

£30 pays for a year's funded membership of 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

** All figures include Gift Aid.*

Financial Review

Accounts to the end of December 2025

Income & Expenditure Account

	2025	2024
Income	£	£
Membership Fees	140,200	128,235
Donations & Fundraising	124,422	113,635
Other Income	12,599	5,764
Gift Aid	30,669	36,445
TOTAL INCOME	**307,890**	**284,079**
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	171,608	181,694
Other Office/Admin Costs	11,916	10,706
Publications/Media/PR	38,537	28,089
Website	38,239	38,149
Helpline	17,334	13,333
Memorial Fund	6,352	5,615
Other	17,917	18,518
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**301,903**	**296,104**
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	**5,987**	**(12,025)**

Balance Sheet

	2024	
CURRENT ASSETS	**£**	**£**
Fixed Assets		
IT	9,290	
Debtors		
Gift Aid	9,020	
		18,310
Investment Accounts	122,448	
Current Accounts	52,861	
Less Uncleared Payments/(Credits)	9,020	
		184,329
Set Aside Funds		
Gift Membership	(525)	
		(525)
CURRENT LIABILITIES AND DEFERRED INCOME		
Liabilities	(32,279)	
Events	(4,750)	
		(37,029)
TOTAL ASSETS		
FINANCED BY:		
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward		159,098
Net Deficit/(Surplus) for the Year		5,987
		165,085

WAY's Board



The 2025 AGM marked important updates to WAY's Board of Trustees.

- **Jo Sedley-Burke** and **Kate Spikings** were both reappointed.
- **Emma Charlesworth** was formally appointed as a trustee after being co-opted onto the Board.
- **Stuart Scarbrough** stepped down after nine years of dedicated service, particularly supporting member holidays and finance.
- **Marcos Eleftheriou** also gave notice of his resignation after two years supporting the charity with legal matters.

Trustee	Appointed
Joanna Sedley-Burke (Chair)	2018
Kate Spikings	2019
Louise Fisher	2019
Mike Etherington	2020
Bobbie Kelly	2023
Sarah Bowsher	2024
Nadir Keshani	2024
Gary McFarlane	2024
Emma Charlesworth	2025

"Being widowed young can be an isolating experience as it is hard to find people who understand what it's like. Joining WAY helped me to connect with others who have been through this experience and who get it. Becoming a Trustee felt like a natural step to give back to a charity that has been so important to me. Since my late husband died, I've raised over £15,000 for various charities important to my family, including WAY, and my aim is to bring the knowledge and experience gained in a personal capacity to the Trustee role and look for ways to raise much-needed funds for WAY to make sure it can continue to provide support to those who need it."



Emma Charlesworth, Trustee

Strategy and Charity Objectives

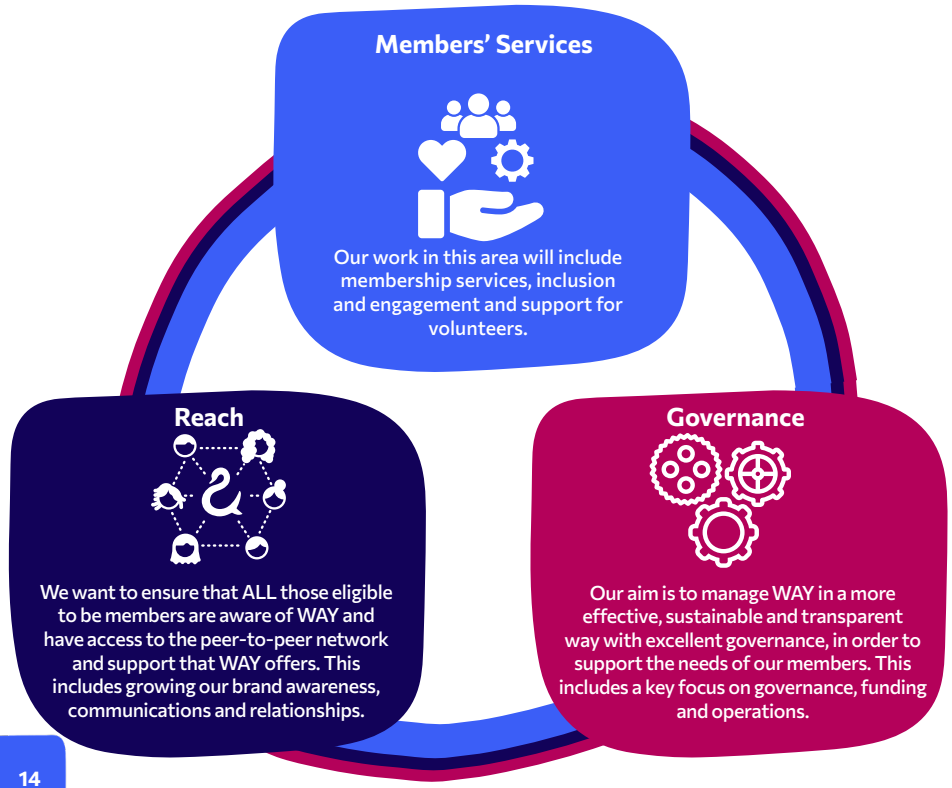
WAY members help to shape our future and, after going through an organisational transformation in 2018, WAY carried out a range of consultations with our members to help inform the direction our charity should take in future. We carried out an extensive survey of our members and volunteers to work out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



Our Strategic Partnerships

Irwin Mitchell

In December 2023, we entered into a strategic partnership with the solicitors **Irwin Mitchell**, who have been supporting WAY with fundraising and legal advice over the past five years.

Irwin Mitchell have been fantastic supporters of WAY, giving us opportunities to speak and share our work with their company, taking part in various fundraising events, offering meeting space and supporting our campaign work.

As part of our partnership, which concluded in November 2025, Irwin Mitchell took over the financial and legal aspect of our telephone support line. We would like to thank Irwin Mitchell for all their support and we look forward to announcing a new partnership in 2026.

"I personally have received counselling support and have also made good use of the helpline on days where the loss of Ross was all too much to manage."

WAY member and fundraiser Fiona

Winston's Wish (now Child Bereavement UK)

WAY and the child bereavement charity **Winston's Wish** came together in 2023 to provide full circle support for the whole family following a bereavement. As well as referring bereaved families to each other's services, the two charities joined forces to provide tips and advice to help parents as they support their bereaved children. These have been published in our newsletters and on our websites.

Our full circle partnership will continue now that Winston's Wish has merged with Child Bereavement UK. We will continue to partner on campaign and policy work, advocating for improved services and experiences for bereaved families.

"For anyone else on the same path as me, I really would recommend getting in touch with Winston's Wish (now Child Bereavement UK) and WAY. You never feel completely alone, even when the grief makes you feel totally isolated."

WAY member and mother of two, Chloe

WAY Widowed and Young

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

Registered Charity No: 1164988
Email: enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk | Telephone: 0300 201 0051
Registered Address: Advantage House, Stowe Court, Stowe Street, Lichfield WS13 6AQ

Charity Registration Number 1164988

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

WAY Widowed and Young

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

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WAY Widowed and Young

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Trustees	Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Marcos Eleftheriou Resigned 27/09/2025 Stuart Alan Scarbroug Resigned 27/09/2025 Louise Jane Fisher Mike Etherington Sarah Bowsher Katherine Denise Spikings Emma Charlesworth Appointed 17/07/2025 **Joanna Sedley-Burk Chair** Gary McFarlane Roberta Kelly Nadir Keshani
Secretary	Current Vacancy
Key management personnel	Stephanie Patrick Chief Executive appointed Aug 21
Registered office	Advantage House Stowe Court Stowe Street Lichfield WS13 6AQ
Trading address	N/A
Accountants	3S Accountancy Chartered Accountants 5-8 Priestgate Darlington DL1 1NL
Bankers	CAF Bank Limited 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill, West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ
Charity number	1164988

WAY Widowed and Young

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

The trustees present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2025. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland published on 16 July 2014. Legal and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report.

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

WAY was established in 1997 and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with an association Governing Document (the constitution). This was registered on 29 December 2015, amended on 4th March 2017, 18th September 2021 and 10th September 2022. The Charitable Objects were updated on 10th September 2022 to include 'gender, race and religion'.
The trustees meet at least five times a year, trustees serving during the period 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025 are listed on page 1.
All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration for duties carried out as a trustee. However, trustees claimed out of pocket expenses while undertaking volunteer duties during the year and reimbursement of any expenditure incurred purchasing goods and services required by the charity. The trustees may also be members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

At every Annual General Meeting, trustees who have served a term of 3 years are required to retire, but they are permitted to be re-elected or re-appointed by the members for a maximum of 3 consecutive terms or 9 years. At any one time, the constitution stipulates there should be a minimum of five Trustees. Members are also able to appoint two Trustees that are not WAY members.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Charity are:

i. To advance the education of the public to raise the awareness of the needs of people who are widowed and young.

ii. 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, inclusive of sexual orientation, gender, race and religion.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

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 4,423 members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at the end of 2025. The charity aims to provide peer-to-peer support to young widowed people – married or not, with or without children, inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender, race and religion – as they adjust to life after the death of their partner.

In 2025, WAY's peer-led support system remained an indispensable lifeline amid financial strains and shifting political environments. With 72% of members struggling financially (WAY Impact Survey 2025), the charity met demand by increasing Memorial Fund availability by 32% year-on-year, supporting 205 members unable to afford membership fees. Despite economic challenges, Community Fundraising exceeded expectations with a 9% year-on-year increase.

Strategic partnerships, including one with child bereavement charity Winston's Wish, expanded WAY's reach and improved member services.

Operationally, stable staffing over the past 12 months provided organisational consistency. WAY has continued investing in member services, and activities to expand its reach.

Whilst it is difficult to summarise everything achieved in 2025, key achievements from the past 12 months are detailed below.

"Membership" – the year closed with 4,423 members, which included 1,404 new members. Whilst member numbers dropped slightly, member retention rates increased when compared to 2024 with 69% choosing to renew this year. Through our members-only online hub, our volunteers and members can organise their own in-person meet-ups - from walks in the park, to group meals to virtual online events. There were 1,181 events hosted in 2025 and 4974 attendees which was a 25% increase when compared to 2024. This included: 109 new member zooms; 223 Online Events; 40% were food and drinks events. "" "

Volunteers" - WAY ended the year with 182 volunteers covering 207 roles across the UK. WAY volunteers are the backbone of the charity and WAY is incredibly fortunate to have so many members who are so passionate about supporting WAY. WAY's Volunteer Manager has provided invaluable support to our volunteers and has offered them chance to network and access training. Out of the 61 regions, 52 areas are covered by at least one Area Contact Volunteer, meaning that 85% of WAY regions are covered by a local volunteer member

Campaigning Activities - Nationally, WAY championed the needs of young widows at the highest levels in Westminster, advocating for Bereavement Support Payment improvements and a more compassionate birth registration process for unmarried, pregnant widows. Joining the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Grief Support further positioned WAY at the center of national policy discussions.

WAY Widowed and Young
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES continued
YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2025

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE continued

Website – Following the launch of our updated Members Hub in 2024, we have continued to work hard, making thoughtful improvements to the member area and our public pages with limited funds and capacity, striving to keep our platforms safe and accessible and across more than 100 closed Facebook and Member Hub forums.

Social Media - We continued to make strides on all our social media platforms, having a combined following which exceeds 33k. All of our social media platforms showed a strong performance in 2025, demonstrating a 137% increase in visits to WAY's website from social media posts , which converted to 217 new members.

Media Coverage –WAY was featured in 39 media opportunities throughout the year including TV, Press and Radio which helped us to reach new audiences and demostrated increased traffic to WAY's webiste.

Awareness-raising - WAY continued to work alongside other bereavement charities and networks to achieve our shared goals. Our staff spoke about WAY at various conferences which included a Bereavement Conference in Manchester and Suicide and Co Annual Conference in London. WAY hosted a stand at various national events including the National Suicide Conference, National Hospice Conference and Compassionate Communities Conference which directly reached over 2,000 bereavement professionals and led to relationships being developed at various hospices. WAY also continues working alongside other bereavement charities as part of the National Bereavement Alliance and to promote National Grief Awareness Week and sits on the National Childhood Bereavement steering group.

Fundraising- 2025 proved to be a successful year for fundraising despite the difficult financial landscape and raised almost £150k inc GA. The year saw a variety of individual virtual fundraisers and a growth in Facebook Birthday Fundraisers. WAY members ran several successful fundraising campaigns, including participation in events such as the London Parks Half Marathon, Kiltwalks and London Marathon. Corporate partners who also raised funds included Irwin Mitchell and Build Recruitment. Notable donations came in from Purple Goat of £5k and Irwin £10k from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors. WAY's newly launched Silver swan campaign also rose over £5500.

WAY AGM 2025

Every year since WAY was launched in 1997, the charity has held an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The annual gathering incorporating the AGM is the biggest WAY event of the year and has become a fixed and key point in the charity's social calendar. WAY's 2025 AGM was held at The Village Hotel in Bournemouth and was attended by 110 members in person and 1 virtually.

Income

As previously, income for the current year came from three main sources:

- Membership Fees
- Fundraising
- Donations and Grants

(2024 - £128,235). Membership fundraising activities showed an increase compared to the previous year at £37,837 (2024 £48,223) despite the ongoing 'cost of living' crisis. And during 2025, despite the sector-wide

As always we wish to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those who have worked hard to raise funds or make a donation in 2025. This support is invaluable in providing the resources needed to continue the charity's work.

Public benefit

The trustees have complied with the duty in the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Reserves

The Charity's policy, as decided by the Board of Trustees is to maintain reserves at the level of 50% of anticipated running costs for the coming year. With total funds of just over £165k at the end of the year, our reserves remain above that level. This year trustees made the decision to invest surplus funds in interest saving accounts using a Flagstone platform which is a low-risk investment tool.

In the last few years, the Charity has had surplus funds above the amount required to satisfy the reserves policy and these funds were invested in various ways to improve member services which led to substantial planned deficits. In 2025, this is no longer the case and therefore the aim was a breakeven budget (disregarding capital accrual) and this has resulted in a surplus during the year of £5987 (2024 deficit of £12,025).

Risk management

The trustees have assessed the risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements the trustees are required to:

a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
b) observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
c) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
d) state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
e) prepare the Financial Statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue operating.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the board on .28th July 2026 and signed on its behalf;



Joanna Sedley-Burke
Chair

WAY Widowed and Young

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF WAY WIDOWED AND YO

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

I report on the accounts of WAY Widowed and Young (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2025, which are set out on pages 7 to 12.

This report is made solely to the trustees of the charity, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees of the charity those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the trustees of the charity as a body for my examination, for this report or the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner
The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the 2011 Act and that an independent examination is needed. The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

· examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act

· to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and

· to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement
In connection with my examination, no material matteras have come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

· to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or

· to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements concerning the format and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination),

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

#VALUE!

Catherine Milbanke BSc BFP FCA
3S Accountancy, Chartered Accountants
5-8 Priestgate
Darlington
DL1 1NL

Date: . . . . . .

WAY Widowed and Young

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (incorporating Income and Expenditure Ac

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Incoming Resources					
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	**2**	287,174	20,000	**307,174**	**282,829**
Other trading activities	**3**	716	-	**716**	**1,250**
Total		**287,890**	**20,000**	**307,890**	**284,079**
Resources Expended					
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		35,803	-	**35,803**	26,560
Charitable activities		261,101	5,000	**266,101**	269,544
Total	**4**	**296,903**	**5,000**	**301,903**	**296,104**
Net income / (expenditure)		**(9,013)**	**15,000**	**5,987**	**(12,025)**
Transfers between funds		-	-	**-**	-
Net movement in funds		**(9,013)**	**15,000**	**5,987**	(12,025)
Fund balances brought forward at 1 JANUARY 2025		159,098	-	**159,098**	171,123
Fund balances carried forward at 31 DECEMBER 2025	**10**	**150,085**	**15,000**	**165,085**	**159,098**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

WAY Widowed and Young

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Note	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Fixed Assets					
Intangible Assets	**11**		**8,085**		**21,897**
Tangible Assets	**11**		**1,205**		**898**
			9,290		**22,795**
Current assets					
Debtors and prepayments	**8**	**9,020**		**8,282**	
Cash at bank and in hand		**184,329**		**152,868**	
		193,349		**161,150**	
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one	**9**	**(37,554)**		**(24,846)**	
Net current assets			**155,795**		**136,303**
Net assets			**165,085**		**159,098**
Funds					
Unrestricted Funds			**150,085**		**159,098**
Restricted funds			**15,000**		**-**
Total charity funds	**10**		**165,085**		**159,098**

These financial statements were approved and signed by the trustees and authorised for issue on



Joanna Sedley-Burke :
Chair

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

1. Accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been used consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the charity's accounts.

(i) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

The accounts ahave been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the notes to these accounts.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

(ii) Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

(iii) Incoming resources

Income is accounted for on an accruals basis. Grants are recognised as an incoming resource when the conditions for the receipt have been met and are accounted for in accordance with the headings they have been allocated to on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

(iv) Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure, it is probable settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

(v) Tangible and Intangible Assets

Tangible and intangible assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. The only tangible asset of the charity is computer equipment and this is capitalised at cost and depreciated over three years reflecting the expected useful life. Intangible assets reflect the cost of the development of the new member portal and is being depreciated over three years from the date at which the new portal was launched, which was October 2023

2. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Donations and Grants	66,585	20,000	**86,585**	65,402
Gift Aid	30,669	-	**30,669**	36,445
Membership Subscriptions	140,200	-	**###**	128,235
Fundraising	37,837	-	**37,837**	48,233
Other	11,883	-	**11,883**	4,514
	287,174	**20,000**	**###**	282,829

In 2025 gift memebrship of £1,320 is classified as Designated Funds (2024: £nil)
In 2025 donations of £nil (2024: £1,500) were received that were classified as Designated Funds.
All income was unrestricted in 2024.

3. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Income from activities				
Merchandise	716	-	**716**	**1,250**
	716	**-**	**716**	1,250

In 2025 and 2024 all income from activities was unrestricted.

4. Analysis of total resources expended

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 £	2024 £
Cost of generating funds				
Media & PR	35,803	-	**35,803**	**26,560**
	35,803	**-**	**35,803**	26,560
Charitable Activities				
Staff Costs	168,196	3,412	**171,608**	181,694
Member Services - WAY Forward, Helpline etc	23,243	-	**23,243**	16,709
Website Maintenance	24,427	-	**24,427**	24,337
Merchandise	1,786	-	**1,786**	2,119
Administration	8,296	720	**9,016**	9,085
Bank charges & other fees	5,749	-	**5,749**	5,481
Insurance	2,566	-	**2,566**	2,467
Independent Examination & Legal Fees	960	-	**960**	852
Volunteer Costs	1,675	868	**2,543**	2,100
Members Events	9,673	-	**9,673**	9,997
Project Swan	-	-	**-**	-
Depreciation	718	-	**718**	891
Amortisation	13,812	-	**13,812**	13,812
	261,101	**5,000**	**266,101**	269,544
	296,903	**5,000**	**301,903**	296,104

In 2024 all costs were unrestricted.

5. Governance

	2025 £	2024 £
Accountancy and professional fees	**960**	852
	960	852

6. Trustees' remuneration

Except below, the trustees received £nil (2024: £nil) worth of emoluments during the period.

Expenses amounting to £626 (2024: £743) were reimbursed in 2025

7. Staff costs

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and Salaries	**151,998**	158,454
Employer National Insurance	**7,702**	10,773
Employer Pension Contributions (Defined Contribution Scheme)	**3,589**	3,725
Temporary Staff	**-**	-
Other Payroll costs	**8,318**	8,742
TOTAL	**171,607**	181,694

By the end of 2025 there were four permanent members of staff (2024: 5).

8. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Gift Aid	**9,020**	8,282
Other	**-**	-
	9,020	8,282

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	**17,554**	**24,846**
Other creditors	**20,000**	-
	37,554	24,846

Other creditors of £20,000 relates to loans from two trustees. This amount is r
accruing interest and is repayable on demand.

10 Statement of Funds

	Balance b/fwd £	Incoming £	Outgoing £	Transfers £	Balance c/fwd £
Unrestricted funds - general	11,173	286,570	(295,508)	(3,400)	**(1,165)**
Designated - Memorial Fund	1,500				**1,500**
Designated - Gift Membership	525	1,320	(1,395)		**450**
Designated - Operating Fund	145,900			3,400	**###**
Total unrestricted funds	159,098	287,890	(296,903)	-	**###**
RESTRICTED FUNDS					
The Heart of WAY	-	20,000	(5,000)	-	**15,000**
Total restricted funds	-	20,000	(5,000)	-	15,000
TOTAL FUNDS	**159,098**	**307,890**	**(301,903)**	**-**	**###**

The designated Gift Membership represents funds received to cover membership costs for the recipient of the voucher

The designated Operating Fund represents 50% of our operating costs in 2025, in line with our reserves policy

The Heart of WAY, is a project to support, train, and empower WAY's volunteers

Made up of:	2025			2024		
	Restricted	**Unrestricted**	**Total**	**Restricted**	**Unrestricted**	**Total**
Fixed assets	-	9,290	**9,290**	-	22,795	**22,795**
Current assets						
Stock	-	-	**-**	-		
Debtors and prepayments	-	9,020	**9,020**	-	8,282	**8,282**
Cash at bank and in hand	15,000	169,329	**184,329**	-	152,868	**###**
	15,000	178,349	**193,349**	-	161,150	**###**
Creditors	-	(37,554)	**(37,554)**	-	(24,846)	**(24,846)**
	15,000	150,085	**165,085**	-	159,098	**###**

11 Fixed Assets

	Tangible equipment	Intangible Website	TOTAL
Cost			
As At 1 Jan 2025	2,955	39,162	**42,117**
Additions	1,026	-	**1,026**
Disposals	-	-	**-**
As at 31 December 2025	**3,981**	**39,162**	**43,143**
Depreciation			
As At 1 Jan 2025	2,057	17,265	**19,322**
Disposals	-	-	**-**
Depreciation / amortisation	718	13,812	**14,530**
Impairment	-	-	-
As at 31 December 2025	2,776	31,077	**33,853**
Net Book Value at 31 December 2025	**1,205**	**8,085**	**9,290**
Net Book Value at 31 December 2024	**898**	**21,897**	**22,795**

WAY Widowed and Young

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF WAY WIDOWED AND YOUNG
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

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Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the 2011 Act and that an independent examination is needed. The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

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Independent examiner's statement

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have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Catherine Milbanke BSc BFP FCA
3S Accountancy, Chartered Accountants
5-8 Priestgate
Darlington
DL1 1NL

Date: .....