

**W&Y** Widowed  
and Young

# Annual Report 2024



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

Registered Charity No: 1164988

# Introduction



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



Welcome to WAY Widowed and Young's 2024 Annual Report.

Firstly, and most significantly, we would like to thank our community of wonderful members who have continued to embody what WAY is all about.

WAY is a club that nobody wants to be eligible to join, but our members are so glad that they have found us – and we continue to be inspired by the incredible support that is shared across our community.

There were an unbelievable **1,143 events** organised by WAY and our members across the UK in 2024, which helped our members to find other people who understand what they are going through (see p8 for more on our events).

This year WAY has supported **4,523 people** who have been widowed young, including 1,508 new members. However, we know that there are many more young widows who have yet to find us – as there are sadly nearly 24,000\* people aged 18-50 who die every year.

We still have a lot of work to do to try and reach these people and ensure that anyone who needs WAY can find us. To help achieve this goal, we have continued to engage with the media and work alongside other bereavement networks. In 2024, we reached more than **2,000 bereavement professionals** at events and conferences and the audiences of **66 media outlets** to help spread the word about our charity.

### Improving our services

Over the last few years, many of our members have fed back that WAY's member-only platform was difficult to use, and the charity has worked hard to raise funds to invest in this area of member services. Following the launch of our new **Members Hub** in 2023, 2024 saw the continued bedding in of the new system. We have continued to listen to our members and make improvements to the members area and the public facing pages of

our website with limited funds and capacity available. This remains an ongoing area of focus for the charity.

We also launched a new counselling service delivered by our valued partner, bereavement specialists **Professional Help**.

The cost-of-living crisis has continued to affect our members with 71%\*\* reporting that they are concerned about their finances. We were able to support members who were struggling to meet the cost of the membership fee by increasing the amount available in WAY's **Memorial Fund** in 2024.

Despite the tough financial environment, our fantastic fundraisers exceeded our expectations and our substantial reserves still allowed us to continue to invest funds in developing member services and activities to increase the reach of the charity. WAY does not receive any statutory funding and is reliant on every penny raised, so we would like to thank every single person who has supported WAY in 2024 (see p11 for more on fundraising).

Our superb volunteers have continued to provide the foundations upon which WAY's peer-to-peer networks are built. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many volunteers who are passionate about supporting WAY members (read more on p10).

We would also like to say a huge thank you to our strategic partners – the law firm **Irwin Mitchell** and child bereavement charity **Winston's Wish** – who have both helped us to increase the reach of the charity and to improve services to our members (see p15 for more).

We are sincerely grateful to all of our committed volunteers, trustees and dedicated staff team who make sure WAY is a lifeline for so many of our members.

**Stephanie Patrick, Chief Executive**  
**Joanna Sedley-Burke, Chair of the Board of Trustees**

# Our Story

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, legal and financial advice.

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

**"WAY has provided invaluable support and advice. I have formed friendships and connections with other widows and gained a community of people who understand, so I feel less alone in my grief. Taking out a WAY membership was one of the best decisions I have ever made and being a member still makes the world of difference in my life."**

WAY Member



\* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2025.

**95% of WAY members said that WAY membership of £30 per year is good/somewhat good value for money\***



WAY impacted the lives of  
**4,523**  
young widows in 2024



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



## What WAY does



WAY members organised **1,143**  
in person and virtual events in 2024 (up 28% on 2023).



**184** amazing volunteers  
helped to support our work throughout the year (up 8%).

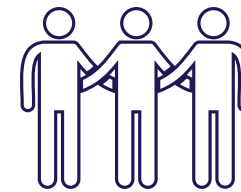


Generous supporters raised **£150,000**,  
helping us to reach more people in need of support.



**178** young widowed people received financial  
assistance through our Memorial Fund.

## How WAY helped



**78%** of members found  
that meeting people in the  
same situation has helped.\*



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



**85%** of members felt  
that they had better  
knowledge about grief and  
bereavement.\*



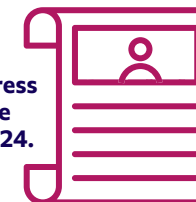
**82%** felt less isolated.\*



More than  
**30,000** people  
helped us to  
spread the word by  
following us across  
our social media  
channels.

**129,449**  
separate  
communications  
were sent out to our  
members  
throughout the year.

**66** pieces of press  
coverage were  
generated in 2024.



**76,426** people  
visited our website  
in 2024.

\* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2025.

# Our Members

**1,508** new members joined WAY's peer support network in 2024.



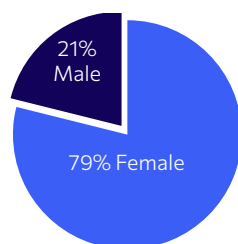
of members renewed their membership.

**97%** of members would recommend WAY to other people\*

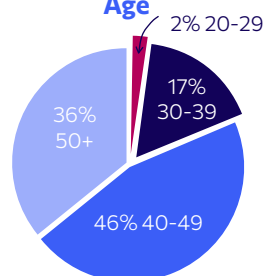


## Demographics

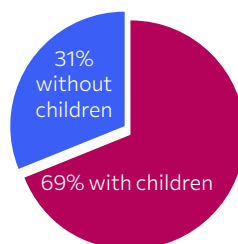
**Gender**



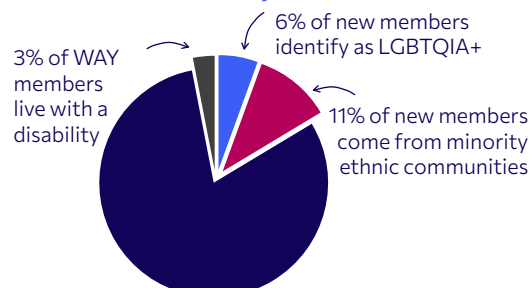
**Age**



**With/without children**



**Diversity**



\* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2025.

# 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**.



**140** people made use of these telephone support services in 2024.



**78%** of members who used the telephone counselling service found it helpful.\*



Between them, WAY members and volunteers organised **1,143** events via our Member Hub



**248** online events were held for members.



Our closed Facebook group and a large range of subgroups were accessed by **78%** of members.



**178** members were supported financially through our Memorial Fund (this included payment of membership for 148 new members).

\* Based on member responses in WAY's Annual Impact Survey June 2025.

We took the difficult decision to increase **WAY's membership fee** from £25 to £30 per year in 2024. The cost of WAY membership had remained unchanged for more than a decade and during this time, the cost of goods and services has continued to rise steadily. At £2.50 per month, we believe WAY membership represents exceptional value for money.

In 2024, we also made the decision to move our member newsletter **WAY Forward** to a digital platform to help save paper and transport emissions. Members can still opt to receive a printed version of the newsletter if they prefer.

**"WAY has helped massively with feelings of loneliness and bereavement. The new member Zooms allowed me a safe space to interact with others at a time when face-to-face was overwhelming, and the national nature of them meant there was always someone at a similar stage. The face-to-face groups have given me a new group of people who aren't scared of the word death and who may I think develop into friendships outside the WAY umbrella."**

WAY Member



# Events



67%  
of WAY  
members rated  
face-to-face  
meetings  
as one of the top five  
WAY services\*



Across the UK, WAY members came together in a variety of ways – from relaxed catch-ups in local parks, cafés and pubs to virtual get-togethers like online bingo, quizzes, yoga classes and book discussions.

These events are largely made possible by the enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteers and members, who help to coordinate activities through 62 local groups covering every corner of the UK – from the Highlands of Scotland to the coast of Cornwall and from Wales to Northern Ireland.

WAY's Operations Team also organised four national events during the year for members across the country to get together with other young widowed people and their families:

## Big Picnic weekend

More than 400 WAY members, friends and family rolled out their picnic blankets at 29 picturesque picnic locations across the country for our sunny Big Picnic weekend in May 2024 – from Cornwall to Cumbria and from Belfast to Glasgow.

## Weekends aWAY

Nearly 100 WAY members and children headed to **PGL Caythorpe Court** near Grantham for a weekend of adventure in February. The two days were full of laughter, kindness and camaraderie.

In June, 52 members and children got together in **Derbyshire** over the Father's Day weekend to enjoy activities including high ropes, kata canoes and go karting – and to make new memories together.

In September, more than 70 members headed to Crewe for the charity's biggest annual gathering – our **Annual General Meeting and Spa Retreat**, which also included a dinner dance.

**"WAY has been a lifeline. I had no friends that had any idea how I felt until I joined WAY. Losing your partner is the most devastating experience and finding people who just get it has been incredibly helpful and the support has been amazing."**

WAY Member

# Campaigning for Change

**It's a core part of WAY's mission to raise awareness and understanding among the public of the needs of people who are widowed and young – and to campaign on their behalf.**

We continued to remind people of deadlines to apply for retrospective payments after our decade-long campaign to extend bereavement benefit payments to **cohabiting** couples with dependent children.

In 2024, we launched our **Stand up for Bereaved Families** campaign to coincide with the July General Election. We encouraged our members and supporters to write to newly elected MPs after the election to ask them to support our calls to:

- Extend Bereavement Support Payments beyond 18 months and uprate payments.
- Extend Bereavement Support Payments to cohabiting couples without children.
- Reconsider National Insurance eligibility for Bereavement Support Payment applicants.

Our campaign got off to a flying start when we attracted media coverage on Radio 4's **MoneyBox** show in July, which was also mentioned on the main Radio 4 and Radio 2 news bulletins.

We were also thrilled when the Liberal Democrats passed a motion at their autumn conference in support of extending bereavement benefits. We were able to meet with former WAY Chair and South Devon MP **Caroline Voaden** in November to enlist her support for our key campaign asks.

Our Chair **Joanna Sedley-Burke** and Chief Executive **Stephanie Patrick** were also invited to the Houses of Parliament by Thurrock MP **Jen Craft** to discuss our Blank Space campaign, which is calling for the birth registration process to be made simpler and more compassionate for mothers whose partner died before their baby's birth was registered.

WAY Ambassador and Blank Space campaigner **Orlanda Bryars** shared her story at the Irwin Mitchell Bereavement Conference in December and we are looking forward to continuing to work together towards birth certificate equality for non-married mothers.

## Bill on Assisted Dying

Our Chief Executive was also invited to Westminster to present WAY members' thoughts and experiences around the Bill on Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults to MPs and bereavement charity leaders at an event convened by the bereavement signposting organisation **At a Loss** in November.

Although WAY remains neutral on this bill, we were keen to make sure that WAY members had the chance to share their experiences to help inform MPs on this very important issue ahead of a key parliamentary second reading held on 29 November 2024.

A survey of WAY members showed that more than one third of respondents believe the Bill would have made their bereavement easier; one third said it would have made no difference, one quarter said they weren't sure and the remaining 6% felt that it would have made their experience more difficult.

As a Steering Group member of the **All Parliamentary Group on Grief Support and the Impact of Death on Society**, we continue to be involved in discussions as the Bill moves through the parliamentary process.

**"The Blank Space campaign is something so close to my heart, and yet for ages it felt like an impossible task to try to achieve or run or to make any difference. Without WAY's contributions, determination and support, I really feel I would have given up."**

Orlanda, WAY Ambassador



# Our Volunteers



The vast majority of WAY volunteers are members themselves, juggling everyday life, their grief and whatever challenges come their way – yet they step forward to support others along their journey too. WAY simply could not do what it aims to do without them!

At the end of 2024, WAY had 184 volunteers covering 207 different roles, which is 8% up on the previous year. Roles range from local area contacts, who welcome new members to an area; setting up local area events; being admins and moderators of WAY's closed Facebook subgroups; hosting online discussion groups and activities; being Trustees and ensuring good governance of the charity; helping with diversity working groups; raising awareness of the charity and supporting campaigns; attending bereavement network events or using specialist skills to help support the charity in a very focused way.

WAY's online presence continues to be important to members who need to be able to connect with others who 'get it'. Due to member feedback, and with the support of volunteers, WAY expanded our online events to encourage members to connect in meaningful ways.

While continuing to offer regular weekly or monthly online activities such as bingo, book club, quizzes and yoga, volunteers have also enabled the increase of Zoom events for those who have been widowed for more than a year and the addition of online spaces for those bereaved by suicide, bereaved suddenly or widowed before their 36th birthday.

WAY listens to members and when asked, members step forward to volunteer and respond by offering what support they can.



**184** volunteers covered **207** volunteer roles – with some volunteers helping in multiple roles.



We saw an **8%** increase in formal volunteers in 2024 compared to 2023.



**93%** of members have volunteers in their local areas.

WAY was built by volunteers and they continue to drive our peer-to-peer support network across the UK.

**"Being a volunteer for WAY allows me to share my experience, the advice I have been given and the resources I have used with others. I also find it important to be able to give back to the charity as I have gained so much and have had such good support over the last five years."**

Alison, WAY Volunteer

# Raising Funds for WAY



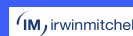
WAY does not receive any government funding, so we rely entirely on memberships, donations and fundraising to support our members. In 2024, our supporters achieved some remarkable fundraising successes, and collectively raised an impressive **£150,080 (inc Gift Aid)\*** for WAY.

Here are some of the highlights:

- A team of seven amazing WAY members, including **Xavier** (pictured above), took part in the Ultra Challenge Winter Walk – raising more than £2,000. While WAY members **Charles** and **Ed** walked their way to raising more than £800 between them through gruelling walking challenges.
- WAY supporter **Tom** and member **Jez** raised more than £4,700 by taking on the London Marathon in April, while member **Suzanne** raised over £400 for WAY in the Great North Run.
- Member **Vicki** also raised over £300 by taking part in the military yomp – the Fan Dance in June.
- WAY member **Cheri** and her two friends **Jessica** and **Rosanna** completed a Tough Mudder in April raising over £2,600; and member Laura and her friend Kate then took on Tough Mudder in September and raised £1,854.
- WAY member **David** took part in a mammoth four-charity fundraiser over the year, raising more than £700 for WAY.
- WAY members **Karli** and **Leona** raised £1,855 in lieu of wedding gifts.
- WAY's Volunteer Manager **Veronica** took part in four Kiltwalk events; she was joined by various members at different locations and together they raised £2,293.
- WAY supporters **Daniel**, **Hugh**, **Lee** and **Sam** took part in the Royal Parks Half Marathon in October raising £7,786 between them for WAY.
- Through her tenure as Ladies Captain at her local golf club, WAY member **Catherine** raised more than £3,800 in 2024.

**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 2024:



- Irwin Mitchell**, who joined in our Santa run raising £1,260 – Irwin Mitchell also awarded a £10,000 grant that was used to boost our Memorial Fund.
- A team from **Build Recruitment**, who raised £7,120 for WAY.
- David from **Senior Recruitment**, who put on a family fun day and golf weekend, raising an incredible £14,307 for WAY.
- Clench Widows** donated more than £13,000.
- WAY received generous donations of £3,867 from **Aberdeen Crematorium** and from **Worthing Crematorium** and £1,000 from **Berkshire Crematorium** 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](mailto:fundraising@widowedandyoung.org.uk)

\* All figures include Gift Aid.



Accounts to the end of December 2024  
Income & Expenditure Account

	2024	2023
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Membership Fees	128,235	121,080
Donations & Fundraising	113,635	107,421
Other Income	5,764	2,735
Gift Aid	36,445	29,796
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>284,079</b>	<b>261,032</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff Costs	181,694	210,416
Other Office/Admin Costs	23,199	24,951
Publications/Media/PR	43,748	44,624
Website	22,183	22,926
Helpline	13,333	18,996
Memorial Fund	5,615	5,230
Other	6,333	5,860
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>296,105</b>	<b>333,003</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>(12,026)</b>	<b>(71,971)</b>

Balance Sheet

	2024	
	£	£
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
IT	22,795	
<b>Debtors</b>		
Gift Aid	8,282	
		<b>31,077</b>
<b>Investment Accounts</b>		<b>121,813</b>
<b>Current Accounts</b>	22,790	
Less Uncleared Payments/(Credits)	8,264	
		<b>31,054</b>
<b>Set Aside Funds</b>		
Gift Membership	(525)	
		<b>(525)</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES AND DEFERRED INCOME</b>		
Liabilities	(18,047)	
Events	(6,275)	
		<b>(24,322)</b>
<b>TOTAL Assets</b>		<b>159,097</b>
<b>FINANCED BY:</b>		
Accumulated Surplus Brought Forward		171,123
Net Deficit/(Surplus) for the Year		(12,026)
		<b>159,097</b>



At our 2024 AGM in Cheshire:

- WAY members approved the re-appointment of trustee **Mike Etherington**, who has been on WAY's board since 2020.
- AGM attendees also approved the appointment of new trustees **Sarah Bowsher**, **Nadir Keshani** and **Gary McFarlane**, who are all WAY members.
- **Graham Briscoe** resigned from the Board following six years' service as an external WAY trustee.

Trustee

Stuart Scarbrough  
Jo Sedley-Burke (Chair)  
Kate Spikings (formerly Siegler)  
Louise Fisher (formerly Dodds)  
Mike Etherington  
Bobbie Kelly  
Marcos Eleftheriou  
Sarah Bowsher  
Nadir Keshani  
Gary McFarlane

Appointed

2016  
2018  
2019  
2019  
2020  
2023  
2023  
2024  
2024  
2024

Thank you to WAY's trustees, who continue to ensure that the charity receives strong governance, driven by the needs of young widowed people.

"After organising events for the Glasgow area for a few years, I eventually signed up as an official WAY volunteer. Then, when the chance came round to be a trustee, I was interested right away. I wanted to be part of giving back to the charity that has done a lot for me as well as hopefully providing help to others."

Gary McFarlane, Trustee

# Strategy and Charity Objectives

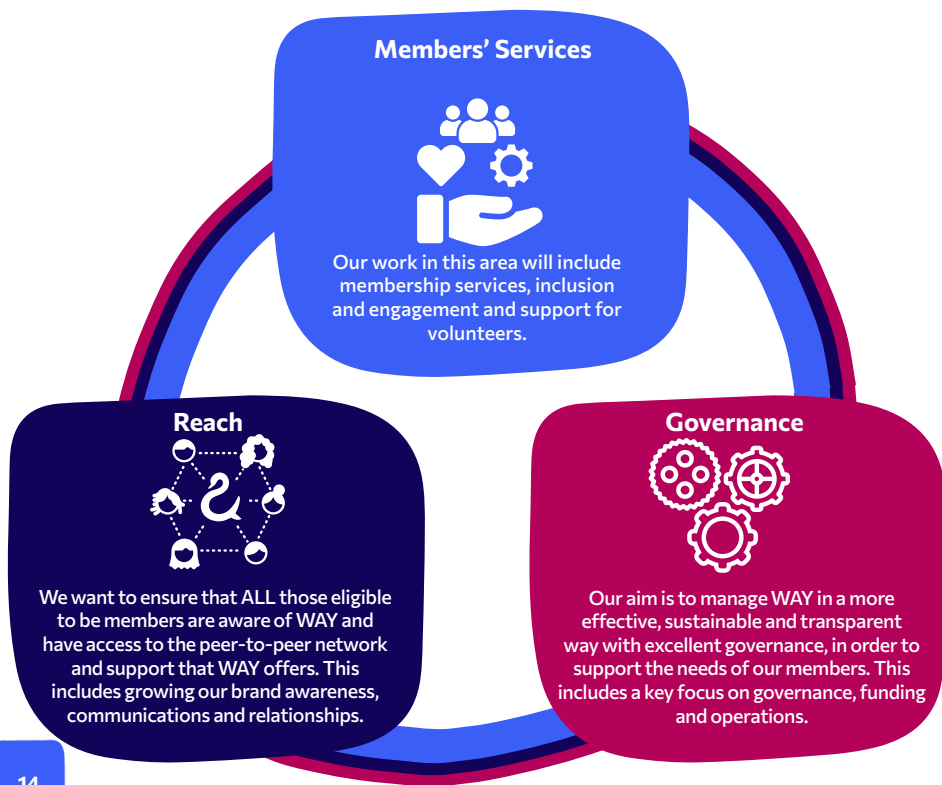
**WAY members help to shape our future and, after going through an organisational transformation in 2018, WAY carried out a range of consultations with our members to help inform the direction our charity should take in the future. We carried out an extensive survey of our members and volunteers to work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

From this, our 2021-2026 five-year Strategic Plan was born, which 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



Our strategic partnership with legal firm **Irwin Mitchell** was launched in 2023 and this led them to take over the financial and legal aspect of our telephone support line in 2024, resulting in 209 calls being taken throughout the year. They have also provided tailored support through a series of webinars on welfare benefits and wealth management as well as topics including inquests.

Irwin Mitchell have been fantastic supporters of WAY, giving us opportunities to share our work with their company and speak at their annual bereavement conference. In 2024, they donated over £10,000 to WAY, provided meeting spaces for our staff and volunteers and helped to develop a "How to Guide" for our Blank Space campaign.

**"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

WAY and the child bereavement charity **Winston's Wish** partnered 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 have 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.

In 2024, we also began partnering on campaign and policy work, advocating for improved services and experiences for bereaved families both now and in the future.



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

WAY Member and mother of two, Chloe



## WAY's Mission

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

## WAY's Vision

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

## WAY's Values

Caring

Respectful

Innovative

Valued

Transparent

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

Registered Charity No: 1164988

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

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



**Charity Registration Number 1164988**



**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

**3S Accountancy**  
Chartered Accountants

**WAY Widowed and Young**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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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:

Graham Briscoe      Resigned 21/09/2024  
Ramanjit Janack

Marcos Eleftheriou  
Sarah Bowsher      Appointed 03/02/2024  
Katherine Denise Siegler  
Stuart Alan Scarbrough  
**Joanna Sedley-BurkChair**  
Gary McFarlane      Appointed 1/07/2024  
Roberta Kelly  
Nadir Keshani      Appointed 20/04/2024

**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 Services  
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 2024**

The trustees present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. 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 2024 to 31st December 2024 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.

## **WAY Widowed and Young**

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES continued**

### **YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

#### **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 4,523 members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at the end of 2024. 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 2024 the cost-of-living crisis continued to affect the nation. We met the ongoing demand for our services and were able to support members who were struggling to meet the cost of the membership fee by doubling the amount available in WAY's Memorial Fund. Strategic partnerships with Irwin Mitchell Solicitors and child bereavement charity Winston's Wish impacted positively to both the reach of the charity and to improve services to our members. Despite the tough financial environment being faced, Community Fundraising exceeded expectation and showed 4% increase year on year. Following the completion of the development of the new members hub, the Digital Marketing role was reduced from a full to a part time role, which resulted in the movement of staff. Our substantial reserves still allowed us to continue to invest funds in developing member services and activities to increase the reach of the charity. Whilst it is difficult to summarise everything that WAY has been involved in over the last 12 months, we have included key achievements below.

**Membership** – the year closed with 4,523 members, which included 1,508 new members. Member retention rates have dropped slightly with 68% choosing to renew their membership this year. We continue to work hard to listen to our members and respond to their needs, however the sharp increase in applications to the memorial fund and the slight drop in membership numbers signify that members are struggling to meet membership fees.

**Volunteers** - WAY ended the year with 184 volunteers covering 207 roles across the UK, up 8% year-on-year. 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 62 regions, 56 areas are covered by at least one Area Contact Volunteer, meaning that 84% of WAY regions are covered by a local volunteer member

Through our members-only website, 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 1,143 events hosted in 2024, which was a 23% increase year on year and 3,831 attendees. This included: 109 new member zooms; 228 Online Events; 44% were food and drinks events.



## **WAY Widowed and Young**

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES continued**

### **YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE continued**

members' preferences to ensure we best meet the charity's needs. We have used these funds to invest in this area of member services. The new Members Hub was launched on 1st October 2023 and 2024 saw the continued bedding in of the new system as members became accustomed to it. The Website Working Group have focused on continuing improvements to the members area and the public facing

**Social Media** - We continued to make strides on all our social media platforms, having a combined following which exceeds 30k. All of our social media platforms showed a strong performance in 2024, helping us to reach out to new audiences.

**Media Coverage** -WAY was featured in 66 media opportunities throughout the year including TV, Press and Radio which was 40% less than 2023. Media features show a substantial drop year-on-year because of focus on the Bereavement Allowance legislation changes in February 2023.

**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 Funeral Exhibition 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**- 2024 proved to be a successful year for fundraising despite the cost of living crisis. 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 Clench Widows of £13k and David Atherton of £14k from a Family fun day in Memory of a WAY members late husband.

#### **WAY AGM 2024**

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 2024 AGM was held at Crewe Hall in Cheshire and was attended by 76 members in person and 41 virtually.

## **WAY Widowed and Young**

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES continued YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

#### **Income**

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

- Membership Fees
- Fundraising
- Donations and Grants

Our membership numbers have steadied this year at 4,523 members. Membership fees have been increased for the first time in 10 years, therefore income from new memberships and renewals has grown to £128,235 (2023 - £121,080). Membership fundraising activities showed an increase compared to the previous year at £48,223 (2023 £32,982 ) despite the ongoing 'cost of living' crisis. And during 2024, despite the sector-wide difficulties in generating charitable donations, we saw only a small decline in revenue from external donations and grants to £65,402 (2023 £74,439)

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 2024. This support is invaluable in providing the resources needed to continue the charity's work.

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 £159k 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.

It has, for a while, been a key challenge for the Charity to identify how and where to best use surplus funds to support our members and to reach more of those eligible to become members. To this end the Board has invested funds during 2024 in making the short-term contract of of WAY's Membership and Finance Officer into a permanent position. This has resulted in a new deficit during the year of £12,025 (2023 deficit of £71,971) but this level of deficit is not expected to recur.

#### **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 . . . 26th April 2025. . . . . and signed on its behalf



Joanna Sedley-Burke  
Chair

WAY Widowed and Young

WAY Widowed and Young
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF WAY WIDOWED AND YOUNG
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
I report on the accounts of WAY Widowed and Young (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 5 to 10.
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.
<b>Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner</b>
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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act</li><li>• 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</li><li>• to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.</li></ul>
<b>Basis of independent examiner's report</b>
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.
<b>Independent examiner's statement</b>
In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention:
(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or</li><li>• 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),</li></ul> 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: . 26 April 2025



# WAY Widowed and Young

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (incorporating Income and Expenditure Account) YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Note	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
		£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	2	282,829	-	282,829	259,675
<b>Total</b>		<b>284,079</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>284,079</b>	<b>261,032</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		26,560	-	26,560	26,015
Charitable activities		267,774	1,770	269,544	306,986
<b>Total</b>	4	<b>294,334</b>	<b>1,770</b>	<b>296,104</b>	<b>333,001</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>(10,255)</b>	<b>(1,770)</b>	<b>(12,025)</b>	<b>(71,969)</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>		-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>(10,255)</b>	<b>(1,770)</b>	<b>(12,025)</b>	<b>(71,969)</b>
<b>Fund balances brought forward at 1 JANUARY 2024</b>		169,353	1,770	<b>171,123</b>	243,094
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 31 DECEMBER 2024</b>	10	<b>159,098</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>159,098</b>	<b>171,125</b>

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

# WAY Widowed and Young

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

			2024	2023
	Note	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Intangible Assets	11		21,897	35,709
Tangible Assets	11		898	1,107
			22,795	36,816
Debtors and prepayments	8	8,282		6,113
Cash at bank and in hand		152,868		163,018
		161,150		169,131
<b>Creditors</b>				
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(24,846)		(34,824)
<b>Net current assets</b>			136,303	134,307
<b>Net assets</b>			159,098	171,123
<b>Funds</b>				
Unrestricted Funds			159,098	169,353
Restricted funds			-	1,770
<b>Total charity funds</b>	10		159,098	171,123

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

Joanna Sedley-Bui   
Chair

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024****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 have 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**

	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Donations and Grants	65,402	-	<b>65,402</b>	74,439
Gift Aid	36,445	-	<b>36,445</b>	29,796
Membership Subscriptions	128,235	-	<b>###</b>	<b>###</b>
Fundraising	48,233	-	<b>48,233</b>	32,982
Other	4,514	-	<b>4,514</b>	1,378
	<b>282,829</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>###</b>	<b>###</b>

In 2024 a donation of £1,500 was received that has been classified as Designated Funds.

In 2023 a grant of £10,000 was classed as restricted funds.

## WAY Widowed and Young

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

#### YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

##### 3. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Income from activities</b>				
Merchandise	1,250	-	<b>1,250</b>	1,357
	<b>1,250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,250</b>	1,357

In 2024 and 2023 all income from activities was unrestricted.

##### 4. Analysis of total resources expended

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Cost of generating funds</b>				
Media & PR	26,560	-	<b>26,560</b>	27,815
	<b>26,560</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,560</b>	27,815
<b>Charitable Activities</b>				
Staff Costs	181,694	-	<b>181,694</b>	210,416
Member Services - WAY Forward, Helpline	16,709	-	<b>16,709</b>	35,805
Website Maintenance	24,337	-	<b>24,337</b>	24,635
Merchandise	2,119	-	<b>2,119</b>	2,863
Administration	9,085	-	<b>9,085</b>	8,206
Bank charges & other fees	5,481	-	<b>5,481</b>	5,071
Insurance	2,467	-	<b>2,467</b>	2,111
Independent Examination & Legal Fees	852	-	<b>852</b>	780
Volunteer Costs	2,100	-	<b>2,100</b>	2,014
Members Events	8,227	1,770	<b>9,997</b>	9,075
Project Swan	-	-	<b>-</b>	-
Depreciation	891	-	<b>891</b>	758
Amortisation	13,812	-	<b>13,812</b>	3,453
	<b>267,774</b>	<b>1,770</b>	<b>269,544</b>	305,187
	<b>294,334</b>	<b>1,770</b>	<b>296,104</b>	333,002

##### 5. Governance

	2024 £	2023 £
Accountancy and professional fees	<b>852</b>	780
	<b>852</b>	780

##### 6. Trustees' remuneration

Except below, the trustees received £nil (2023: £nil) worth of emoluments during the period.

Expenses amounting to £743 (2023: £573) were reimbursed in 2024

## WAY Widowed and Young

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

#### YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

##### 7. Staff costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and Salaries	158,454	180,542
Employer National Insurance	10,773	15,040
Employer Pension Contributions (Defined Con	3,725	4,318
Temporary Staff	-	-
Other Payroll costs	8,742	10,516
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181,694</b>	<b>210,416</b>

By the end of 2024 there were five permanent members of staff (2023: 5)

##### 8. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Gift Aid	8,282	5,000
Other	-	1,113
	<b>8,282</b>	<b>6,113</b>

##### 9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	24,846	34,824
Other creditors	-	-
	<b>24,846</b>	<b>34,824</b>



**WAY Widowed and Young**  
**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

**10 Statement of Funds**

	Balance b/fwd £	Incoming £	Outgoing £	Transfer s £	Balance c/fwd £
Unrestricted funds - general	4,203	281,569	( 293,199)	18,600	<b>11,173</b>
Designated - Memorial Fund	-	1,500			<b>1,500</b>
Designated - Gift Membership	650	1,010	( 1,135)		<b>525</b>
Designated - Operating Fund	164,500			( 18,600)	<b>###</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<u>169,353</u>	<u>284,079</u>	<u>( 294,334)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>###</b></u>
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>					
	1,770	-	( 1,770)	-	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>1,770</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>( 1,770)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u><b>171,123</b></u>	<u><b>284,079</b></u>	<u><b>(296,104)</b></u>	<u><b>-</b></u>	<u><b>###</b></u>

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 2024, in line with our reserves policy

Made up of:

	2024			2023		
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
<b>Fixed assets</b>	-	22,795	<b>22,795</b>	-	36,816	<b>36,816</b>
<b>Current assets</b>						
Stock	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debtors and prepayments	-	8,282	<b>8,282</b>	-	6,113	<b>6,113</b>
Cash at bank and in hand	-	152,868	<b>152,868</b>	1,770	161,248	<b>###</b>
	-	161,150	<b>161,150</b>	1,770	167,361	<b>###</b>
<b>Creditors</b>	-	(24,846)	<b>(24,846)</b>	-	(34,824)	<b>(34,824)</b>
	-	159,098	<b>159,098</b>	1,770	169,353	<b>###</b>

**11 Fixed Assets**

	Tangible equipment	Intangible Website	TOTAL
<b>Cost</b>			
As At 1 Jan 2024	2,273	39,162	<b>41,435</b>
Additions	682	-	<b>682</b>
Disposals	-	-	-
<b>As at 31 December 2024</b>	<u><b>2,955</b></u>	<u><b>39,162</b></u>	<u><b>42,117</b></u>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
As At 1 Jan 2024	1,166	3,453	<b>4,619</b>
Disposals	-	-	-
Depreciation / amortisation	891	13,812	<b>14,703</b>
Impairment	-	-	-
<b>As at 31 December 2024</b>	<u><b>2,057</b></u>	<u><b>17,265</b></u>	<u><b>19,322</b></u>
<b>Net Book Value at 31 December 2024</b>	<u><b>898</b></u>	<u><b>21,897</b></u>	<u><b>22,795</b></u>
<b>Net Book Value at 31 December 2023</b>	<u><b>1,107</b></u>	<u><b>35,709</b></u>	<u><b>36,816</b></u>

WAY Widowed and Young

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

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

I report on the accounts of WAY Widowed and Young (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 5 to 10.

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 matters 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.

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

Date: . 26 April 2025