

2009

IN

REVIEW



Pharmacist Support
working for pharmacists & their families

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CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Throughout 2009 Pharmacist Support continued to build on the success of its re-launch the previous year as it is transformed into a modern, progressive charity in tune with the needs of a growing number of people. We received more enquiries and helped more people than ever before and our website is fast becoming a major source of information for pharmacists as well as other professional organisations.

The Trustees maintained a close interest in the Charity's work, ensuring the key objectives and strategic direction remained appropriate and relevant. Building on the success of the Heath Support Programme, a new partnership with Action on Addiction began in September 2009. This provides an enhanced service to pharmacists and their families and the early results are encouraging, with specialist provision now available 24/7.

On behalf of the trustees I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Charity Manager David Qualter who left to take up an equally challenging post in the public sector. A worthy successor, Diane Leicester, was recruited in October and she brings considerable experience from her work at Help the Aged.



The Charity depends on countless people to deliver its services and I would like to thank the dedicated team who work tirelessly behind the scenes and the volunteers who readily give up their time to help their fellow pharmacists. We're also indebted to the committed individuals from various partner organisations, whose invaluable contribution ensures the Charity achieves its aims and enables us to continue to support those most in need.

DAVID THOMSON
CHAIR / BOARD OF TRUSTEES

“
TRANSFORMED INTO A MODERN, PROGRESSIVE CHARITY IN TUNE WITH THE NEEDS OF A GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE
”

OUR SERVICES: INCREASED DEMAND THROUGHOUT 2009

Significant growth across all of our services

Pharmacist Support offers a helping hand, free of charge, to pharmacists who find themselves facing difficulties. All the support we provide is confidential and tailored to an individual's particular needs and circumstances.

The number of people who received financial assistance increased by 42% on 2008

Having undergone a major transformation the previous year, it was crucial that the Charity did not lose momentum. 2009 saw us focus on consolidating service delivery and furthering our awareness raising. In addition we concentrated on building new relationships and strengthening existing ones.

General enquiries rose by 45% to 291

The total number of calls made by our Listening Friend volunteers increased by almost 10%

INFORMATION & SIGNPOSTING SERVICE

There was a considerable increase in enquiries and requests for information in 2009 – up 45% to 291. The types of requests received included:

- students/potential students without access to regular student finance who were looking for sources of funding to support them during studies
- preregistration trainees experiencing problems at work, or seeking help during periods when they were not working
- enquiries from individuals affected by a range of medical conditions
- individuals looking for support to return to practice
- enquiries about professional services, such as legal representation for investigations, accountants & business valuations
- sources of help for a whole range of addictions including alcohol, drugs, gambling and compulsive spending

In response to these requests for help, our information service continued to expand. Factsheets were developed and a directory of useful organisations were made available via the website.



IT HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS BOOST TO US BOTH EMOTIONALLY TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY LIFE MORE FULLY; ESPECIALLY FOR STEWART TO BE ABLE TO TRAVEL COMFORTABLY AND SEE THE SCENERY AROUND



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The number of people receiving financial assistance increased dramatically, as did the total amount of grant aid awarded. In 2009 we provided a total of £253,000 in financial assistance to 164 recipients. This was an increase of 30% on 2008 figures when we provided £192,000 to 115 people.

We continued to be approached by increasing numbers of younger people, including preregistration trainees and pharmacy students. In terms of financial assistance given, the most marked rise was in the under 30s group where the percentage of individuals receiving a grant nearly doubled (15% in 2008 up to 26% in 2009). By contrast, there was a large drop in financial assistance to those aged 61 and over.



IMPROVING MOBILITY

Stuart suffers from a type of muscular dystrophy and is a wheelchair user. His wife Christine has worked as a pharmacist for over 40 years, but due to a ruptured tendon was unable to work more than two half days a week while she waited for a major orthopaedic operation. The couple were in need of a replacement vehicle that Stuart could easily get into. They were able to raise some

of the money by taking out a loan, but were still £8,000 short. Grants from Pharmacist Support and other charities enabled the couple to go ahead with the purchase. Since then Stuart and Christine have been able to get out and about again, and the vehicle has enabled Christine to drive pain free to hospital appointments.

SPECIALIST ADVICE

The charity's specialist advice service had its first full year of operation in 2009. Delivered in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau, it provides assistance in debt, benefits and employment law. A total of 95 people were helped by our specialist advisers with successful outcomes for over 90%.

Welfare benefits were the principal enquiry area accounting for over 50% of all new enquiries, with debt making up 26% and employment issues 18%.

DEBT ADVICE

There have been three main groups who have sought debt advice:

1. people affected by illness, family breakdown and/or loss of employment
2. preregistration trainees nearing their final examination struggling with everyday living expenses and debts
3. pharmacists who are still working, but whose businesses are struggling

As part of this service we have assisted clients:

- in claiming benefits to which they are entitled including mortgage interest payments, council tax benefit and tax credits
- in negotiating with mortgage lenders, successfully avoiding repossessions in all cases
- in setting up affordable payments for other priority debts and bills
- in petitioning for bankruptcy
- with generic financial advice on pensions and the making of full and final settlements with creditors.

WELFARE BENEFITS ADVICE

We have helped clients secure an additional £40,945 in welfare benefits including claims for incapacity benefit, employment and support allowance, housing and council tax benefit and health in pregnancy payments. Often people are not aware of the types of benefits that exist to which they may be entitled.

EMPLOYMENT ADVICE

We have supported clients with contract variations, disciplinary procedures, dismissal, capacity issues and sex and disability discrimination. Assistance was also provided which enabled a client to keep their job. See an example of this assistance in the following case study.

CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION

Following a period of illness Jim was dismissed by his employers. Upon contact with the Charity he was immediately passed to our specialist CAB adviser who assisted him in claiming all appropriate welfare benefit entitlements and advised him on his rights under employment law.

The adviser informed Jim that the employer may have acted illegally in the termination of his employment and that he was protected under the Disability Discrimination Act. Following initial negotiations with the former employer, the adviser began preparing the necessary tribunal papers. At this point the employer re entered negotiations with the CAB (acting on Jim's behalf), and they agreed to pay compensation of over £5000 for outstanding payments due to him under contract.

When Jim originally approached the Charity for help he had experienced a significant drop in income and needed help with livings costs. A grant from Pharmacist Support eased some of his financial worries and enabled him to get by while he awaited the outcome of his applications for welfare benefit and fought his unfair dismissal.



I AM INDEBTED TO PHARMACIST SUPPORT FOR THEIR ONGOING COMMITMENT. I AM NOW GETTING MY LIFE BACK WITH FULL ACCEPTANCE OF MY BREAKDOWN... WITHOUT PHARMACIST SUPPORT I WOULD NOT BE HERE TODAY AND I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL.



ADDICTION SUPPORT

The Health Support Programme exists to help pharmacists who experience problems with alcohol, drug, or other types of dependency. In September 2009 the charity launched a new partnership with Action on Addiction (AonA) – the only UK charity working across the addiction field in research, prevention, treatment, professional education and family support. In the first four months of the partnership, AonA supported seven people through a variety of addiction problems. In the past this type of support has prevented marriage breakdown, fitness to practice proceedings and has led to a return to full-time work for the people involved. The Charity looks forward to a productive long term relationship that gives pharmacists and their families the help they need.



FIGHTING ADDICTION

Jane has worked as a pharmacist for over 30 years and is married with two daughters. She struggled with the ongoing pressures of being the breadwinner, which, along with high expectations of herself eventually led to a loss of control and finally a nervous breakdown. Following arrest for dishonesty through addiction, Jane was advised to seek help from her GP and in turn Pharmacist Support. With our help Jane attended a 4-week treatment programme at Clouds House, run by Action on Addiction followed by a series of aftercare programs.

Suspended for theft and dishonesty for a period of 18 months meant Jane needed to find a way to support her family.

One of our specialist advisers explained the benefits she was entitled to and fortunately Jane eventually found some work. Even though it was at the minimum wage it helped her to regain her confidence. Eventually Jane was allowed to practise again under conditional registration. She slowly returned to pharmacy practice and is now back working full time again.

LISTENING FRIENDS

Our Listening Friends scheme provides callers in need of a listening ear the opportunity to talk confidentially with a trained volunteer pharmacist. Calls cover a variety of stressful situations, including pressures that apply to the pharmacy profession, ill health, student pressures, bullying and bereavement.

In 2009 we noted an increase in calls from men. The majority of these calls were from pharmacists working in a community setting. Similar to 2008, the highest percentage of new callers were again preregistration trainees, but this was almost equalled by relief/locum pharmacists.

Calls to the service covered a range of issues but fell into two main categories – those of a professional nature and those dealing with domestic and social issues – although in many cases, it is difficult to separate the two. The majority of cases in 2009 related to professional issues, including employment, stress at work, discrimination and harassment.

In 2009 we handled 334 calls, 74 were from new callers

Almost half of the new callers were aged under 31, with a further 30% falling into the 31 - 45 age range

TELL US YOUR STORY

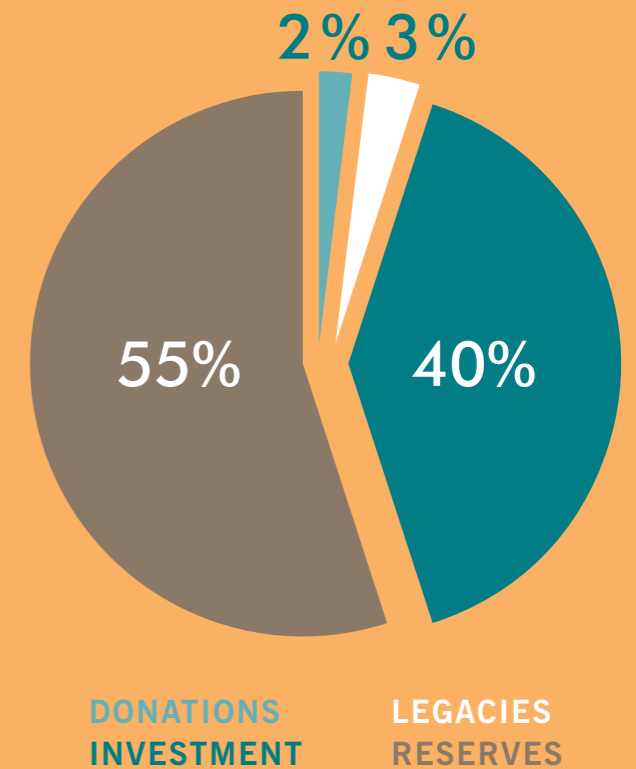
Pharmacist Support continually assesses its services, and we rely on feedback to ensure that the support we provide is appropriate and effective. We are also keen to share, wherever possible, people's experiences which highlight the assistance available. These can be powerful reminders to people that they are not alone, and that there is support available to help them through any difficult times. We are particularly keen to hear from those who have used the Listening Friends service over the years.

As a confidential and sometimes anonymous service it is often difficult to monitor and illustrate the value that many have received from it.

Feedback forms and case study templates can be found on our website. Alternatively you can request a copy be posted out to you. Please note – any personal information will be removed should you wish to remain anonymous.

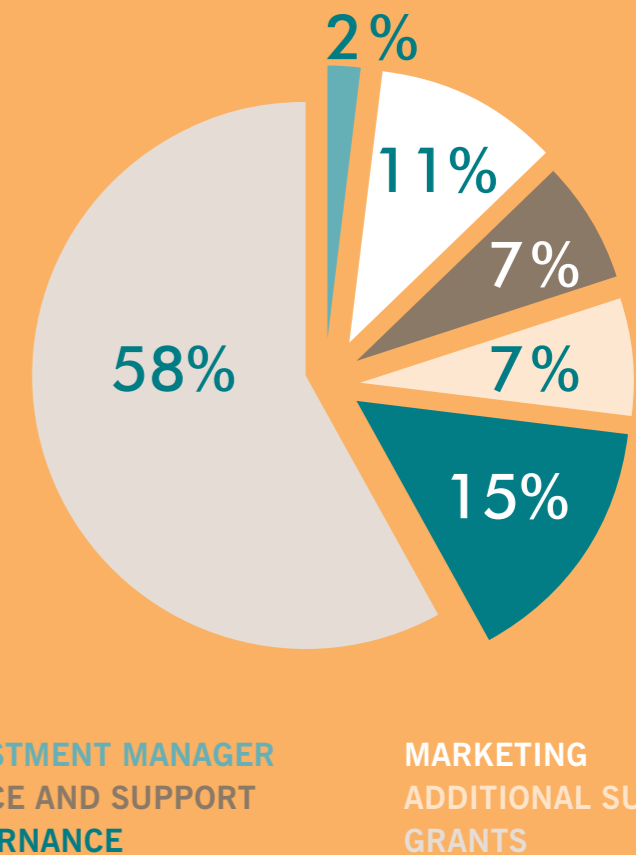
INCOME

In a year when the effects of the economic downturn persisted, many organisations, including Pharmacist Support, felt the impact and saw a reduction in income. In 2009 donations and legacies to the charity fell by 60% and overall income dropped by 20% (£234k) to just under £800k.



EXPENDITURE

During 2009 Pharmacist Support increased its spend on charitable activities, providing more support to pharmacists and their families, preregistration trainees and pharmacy students. Grants and financial assistance expenditure increased by 30% on 2008 to over £460k. Our advice and support spend also increased with the introduction of our specialist advice service (providing assistance in debt, benefits and employment law). The charity spend on Addiction support reduced slightly. This was due to a break in service while the charity sought and launched a new partnership with a specialist provider. In line with our financial policies however, we continued to utilise returns on investments and our reserves to support the charity's work.



For a more detailed report on the Charity's income and expenditure, please visit www.pharmacistsupport.org

FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEERING

A VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVE

Why did you want to volunteer?

I am already a volunteer tutor for my local PCT's Expert Patient Program. I was looking to take on something else in a way that would fit in with my work and which also allowed me to use a skill that I think I have. I think that I am a very good listener.

What do you get out of being a Listening Friend?

The feeling that I have helped someone. I get to utilise some of my skills in a way that at work you just don't seem to have enough time to do i.e. listen.

The really brilliant bit about this scheme for me is that the other person doesn't know me. It's completely anonymous – a fantastic idea! It's not often that you can truly help someone without them trying to do something back for you or feeling indebted to you.

Why do you think the service is important?

It allows clients to talk to someone who can relate to them as pharmacists. It is completely free, confidential and as I've said before, an anonymous service. Clients know that we will not judge them, but we will give them the space and time to tell their story. We don't make the decisions for them, but we allow them to find their way and hopefully make the decision-making process clearer and easier.

GET INVOLVED IN A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

A large proportion of our work relies heavily on the dedication of over 30 Listening Friends and volunteer home visitors located across the country. They ensure our programmes continue to thrive and enable us to help an ever-growing number of pharmacists needing support and assistance.

In 2009 we recruited eight new Listening Friend volunteers and five new volunteer home visitors. Home visitors visit grant applicants and recipients at home, providing face to face contact, identifying needs, discussing concerns and providing assistance with application forms where required

MAKE A DIFFERENCE. DONATE NOW

We rely on contributions and donations from pharmacists to continue to provide our essential support services. Donations can now be made online via our website (www.pharmacistsupport.org), and if you are a UK taxpayer, you can donate tax free through Gift Aid.

On the website you can organise and create your own fundraising pages, donate via a legacy or solicit donations in memory of a friend or relative. Creating personalised fundraising pages takes just a few clicks of a mouse.

For more information on volunteering or donating to Pharmacist Support, email us on info@pharmacistsupport.org or contact a member of the support team on 0808 168 2233.

YOUR PHARMACIST SUPPORT TEAM

TRUSTEES:

David Thomson (Chairman)
David Morgan (Vice-Chairman)
Dr Leonard Brookes (Treasurer)
Seema Agha
Catherine Beman
Professor David Johns
Doreen Laity
Arthur Williams

STAFF:

Charity Manager:	Diane Leicester
Information and Administration Officer:	Paulette Storey
Development Officer:	Kate Westbrook
Case Officer:	Christine Ayers
Admin Assistant:	Tom Stephenson

VOLUNTEERS:

Listening Friends Chair:	Alan Nathan
Listening Friends Coordinators:	Kathryn Featherstone Charles Morecroft Tyagi Gyan Ian Phillips

And team of 30+ Listening Friend and Home Visitor Volunteers

CONTACT DETAILS

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