

2011

IN REVIEW





“From a single telephone call to Pharmacist Support when I was feeling extremely low, there has been a ripple effect in terms of the support and advice I have received.”



A modern day charity for pharmacy professionals

Pharmacist Support is proud to have been providing financial support to pharmacists and their families for over 160 years.

The past 3 years, however, have seen us grow and develop into a modern day charity, providing a more holistic approach to those who contact us for assistance. We have noted a marked shift in the age of people reaching out to the charity for support - from retirees, widows or widowers to those of working age – and a consequent change in the type and complexity of issues raised. In response to this we have had to adapt the ways in which we work, expanding existing activities, developing new services and ensuring that we tailor our assistance in a way that is responsive to need. You can read more about just how the charity was able to meet need during 2011 on page 4.

Whilst we continue to provide personal, face to face contact, we are also looking at new ways to engage with and reach a new and changing audience, investing in informative online resources, including our website and social media. The past couple of years have seen the charity’s online activity flourish as individuals now reach out to us for support via Twitter, Facebook and through internet forums. Why not join the 1500 (and growing!) healthcare professionals and organisations already connected to us and follow us @pharmasupport or find us on facebook.com.

During 2011 we also increased our face to face awareness raising activities and the number of presentations given, added to our pool of online factsheets and provided more people with specialist advice. Read more on page 3 about how the charity has been sharing information with pharmacists and other related organisations to benefit the profession as a whole.

2011 marked the 21st anniversary of the provision of our Health Support Programme. Take a look at page 5 to find out how the Charity continues to support those recovering from addiction.

On pages 4 and 5 you can also read how much of our work revolves around the reduction of stress and how we are working to alleviate financial hardship. For information on how we have sourced our income and where we have spent our funds turn to page 6.

160 years on, the call for our support continues to grow and we hope that this review highlights just how important our services still are today.

David Thomson, Chair



2011 in numbers

10,000

indirect acts of support via our website where we provide online information and downloadable factsheets

1,000

individual acts of support to pharmacists and their families, former pharmacists and pharmacy students in need, comprised of:

404

callers seeking information and guidance, supported via our information and enquiry line

280

calls made by our Listening Friends volunteers to pharmacists and their families struggling with a variety of stressful situations

147

individuals in need supported financially by the charity

129

individuals provided with specialist advice in the areas of debt, benefits and employment

21

individuals supported with addiction issues

20

home visits delivered by volunteers and charity staff to elderly, vulnerable or disabled annual grant recipients

Sharing information

Information gathering and sharing is a large part of the charity's work today, with enquiries doubling over the past few years. Since its launch in September 2008, the Information and enquiry service has seen continuous growth. In 2011 the charity dealt with over 400 enquiries - a rise of 16% on the previous year. In terms of the nature of enquiries, the issues people bring to us are often complex and callers are frequently experiencing problems that cover a number of different areas.

The biggest subject areas in 2011, not surprisingly, were financial issues at 35% of all enquiries and employment issues at 26%. Preregistration issues were third at almost 19%.

For recording purposes the Charity assigns an enquiry to one of seven broad subject areas. Examples of the types of enquiries dealt with include anything from an unwanted change to terms and conditions of employment, bullying, whistle blowing or looking for work, to bereavement, relationship breakdown, ill health, landlord responsibilities and benefit entitlement.

Enquiry subjects also inform our factsheet topics, and during 2011 we added new factsheets on bullying and on options for people who fail the third sitting of the registration exam. You can find these on our website at www.pharmacistsupport.org

Lucy's story

Lucy is a community locum pharmacist. In January 2011, following a year out of work due to illness, her husband Paul was finally diagnosed with a very aggressive form of cancer. At this point Paul began intensive chemotherapy treatment and Lucy quit her job to become a full time carer.

“I was in great need of advice and support in what were very pressured personal circumstances. Pharmacist Support initially provided me with financial assistance as I had no income at all. I was also given direct assistance with debt and benefits advice which has been invaluable, as I would not have known how to cope with filling in, e.g. tax returns effectively or who to approach for benefits advice.

From a purely personal point of view, having access to a service like Listening Friends has sometimes felt like the only outlet I have for my personal anxieties and fears without worrying my own family

more than they are already. They have helped and supported me as much as they could but sometimes it is better to talk openly to people who simply listen and aren't directly connected to your day to day life – a bit like counselling.

Every time I've contacted the team at PS, I have been treated professionally and courteously and have never felt that I am being judged. Their kindness has been a comfort in what have been difficult and occasionally bleak times. Knowing there is somebody at the end of the phone who will help is a massive psychological benefit. ”

Alleviating financial hardship

Financially the Charity has assisted those experiencing hardship by:

- securing over £1.5m in gains (via state benefits, debt rescheduling / consolidation or write off and pay entitlements from employers)
- providing over £210,000 worth of assistance in grants and interest free loans
- providing £48,000 towards specialist in-house treatment for those recovering from addiction.

Working with others

On the back of the Charity's stress research, in April 2011 Pharmacist Support hosted its first ever round table event inviting practitioners, key industry opinion leaders and caring professionals to contribute to discussions surrounding the factors affecting work / life balance in the pharmacy sector today.

The Charity looks to use information from these discussions to develop further support for pharmacists struggling with stress in 2013. We also joined other pharmacy organisations looking at the support available to pharmacists returning to practice.

REDUCING STRESS

Much of the Charity's work aims to assist in the relief of stress. This can be via:

- financial assistance to provide some relief from the stress of mounting debts and help with the payment of everyday living expenses
- a one off call or series of calls with a Listening Friend volunteer who provides a listening ear to pharmacists struggling with a range of situations, both pharmacy and non - pharmacy related
- specialist advice delivered via our partnership with Manchester Citizens Advice Bureau, ensuring that the individuals we refer obtain tailored, high quality advice that enables them to understand their rights, responsibilities and options within the law. In many cases this information leads to a positive outcome for the enquirer, for example, a better understanding of priority debts and money management and assistance with debt consolidation – leading to more manageable repayment plans with creditors
- research and information sharing - we not only aim to increase the knowledge and reduce the stress levels of those who contact the charity, the information we receive and gather through our activities also supports our social policy work. This information enables us to raise the profile of issues not only for the benefit of our service users but the pharmacy sector as a whole.

- a visit from one of our home visitor volunteers or members of staff, providing a friendly face for our older, disabled or isolated annual grant recipients, offering assistance with filling out forms, highlighting to the individual any other types of support available as well as providing the charity with a better understanding of the grant recipient's needs and circumstances
- supporting recovery from addiction. Reaching out for help is often difficult. With people's lives, relationships and of course careers on the line, many choose to ignore the warning signs, or go to extreme lengths to hide their situation. Providing a dedicated telephone service ensures that we are ready and available at any time to assist when an individual takes their courageous first step in dealing with their addiction
- information and advice that enables the caller to resolve personal or professional issues, informing them of their rights and options and providing them with confidence to take the next step in dealing with a difficult issue. Alternatively, we may offer guidance on whom to turn to for further assistance.

Supporting recovery

During 2011, 21 individuals called our 24 hour Health Support Programme helpline, delivered in partnership with Action on Addiction – the country's leading addiction charity. Of these, three were assisted to access in-house treatment and one also accessed second stage treatment. Often described as a family disease, in 2011 we extended our offering to affected partners and family members and enabled the spouse of a pharmacist in recovery to attend a peer support residential programme.

In October 2011 we also launched a pilot programme to further extend our addiction support work. This service supports pharmacists unable to practice (due to either fitness to practice reasons or self removal during recovery), by increasing their skills to assist them in their return to employment through a combination of one to one career coaching plus information and training. The results of this pilot will be published on our website towards the end of 2012.

Funding our activities

INCOME

We are very grateful to the individuals and organisations that generously support the work of the Charity. Such gifts are particularly valued given the on-going economic challenges and are vital to the continuation of our work in assisting pharmacists and their families, both past, present and future. Legacies and donations received to fund the Charity's activities amounted to £15,000 in 2011.

All of the incoming funds and a small amount of our reserves were utilised in 2011 to fund our activities, in line with our financial strategy. Our total income for 2011 was made up of legacies, donations, investment returns and reserves.

54% RESERVES

44% INVESTMENT INCOME

2% DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

EXPENDITURE

We are pleased to report a significant increase in expenditure on charitable activities during 2011. Overall we noted an increase in both the numbers of individuals supported as well as the amount of assistance provided through our services.

The amount of financial assistance increased in 2011 with a continuing rise in numbers of people seeking assistance with living costs and help with one off items of expenditure. Advice and support costs for both the Listening Friends service as well as the specialist advice service increased at a modest level, whilst demand for the services themselves grew. Our governance costs reduced significantly by 52.6% on the previous year.

For a more detailed report on the Charity's income and expenditure please refer to the full financial report available on our website.

69% BENEVOLENCE

7% GOVERNANCE

7% ADVICE AND SUPPORT

6% ADDICTION AND SUPPORT

6% AWARENESS RAISING

4% INVESTMENT INCOME

1% FUNDRAISING

Support us

What difference can you make?

Did you know that Pharmacist Support is funded entirely by donations from pharmacists and their families?

In order to continue our work we rely on the generosity of people like you! This support may be in the form of a one off or monthly donation (perhaps through our online donations page) via a legacy or a fundraising event. Making a donation is simple. You can complete and return the donation form below, visit the Pharmacist Support website or contact the PS team by phone or email. You can even do it online via the RPS when renewing your membership.

By donating to the Charity you can help people like Aisha: *“Initially, just being able to talk to someone who listened, empathised and contacted me when they said they would was brilliant.”*

In general I am a copper, I have had to be as I have been on my own with the children from 3 days before my son was born. When my daughter's problems became really bad I had to seek help, as I thought she could die, she had collapsed at home, stopped breathing, was often falling and hurting herself and her existence was in danger. I am very grateful for the help for my daughter and myself and dread to think what the situation would be if you had not been there. ”

We would like to say a big thank you to all of the individuals and organisations, plus the families of legators who have generously supported our work over the past year.

Donation form

TITLE: _____ NAME: _____ SURNAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

I would like to make a gift of £ _____

(Tick box) I enclose a cheque / postal order payable to Pharmacist Support

(Tick box) Or please debit my Visa / Mastercard / Maestro Card with the amount specified

NAME ON CARD: _____

CARD NUMBER: _____ ISSUE NUMBER (MAESTRO ONLY): _____

START DATE: _____ EXPIRY DATE: _____

(Tick box) I am a UK tax payer and permit Pharmacist Support to reclaim tax, at no extra cost to myself on all donations I have made for the six years prior to this year and on all future donations I make, unless I notify you otherwise.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Raising awareness

To increase our awareness raising activities in 2011 we:

- attended 9 large events aimed at pharmacy students, prereg trainees, community and clinical pharmacists
- secured 34 pieces of press coverage
- partnered with Chemist & Druggist Magazine on their annual Salary Survey
- held a round table discussion with key industry leaders on stress and support for carers
- increased our Twitter follower numbers by over 50%
- increased activity on our Facebook page, resulting in a 1000% growth in page 'Likes'
- increased website activity by over 20% with nearly 10,000 visits to www.pharmacistsupport.org

Meet us

Look out for Pharmacist Support at the RPS conference, Clinical Pharmacy Congress and the Pharmacy Show as well as other local events across the UK.

If you would like us to attend an event, or give a presentation to your group, employees or students please contact Kate Westbrook on info@pharmacistsupport.org or complete and return the form below.

More information

Would you like more information on Pharmacist Support? Just fill in your details below.

TITLE _____ NAME _____ SURNAME _____

ORGANISATION (IF APPROPRIATE) _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ POSTCODE _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

(tick box) Please add me to your email distribution list

PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPROPRIATE

(tick box) I would be interested in arranging a visit / presentation from Pharmacist Support

(tick box) I am organising an event and can provide an information table / stand space for PS

(tick box) I would like to include a link to www.pharmacistsupport.org from my / our site

(tick box) I would like to include an article about the work of the charity in my / our newsletter



The Pharmacist Support Team

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Or check out our Facebook page:
facebook.com/PharmacistSupport

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