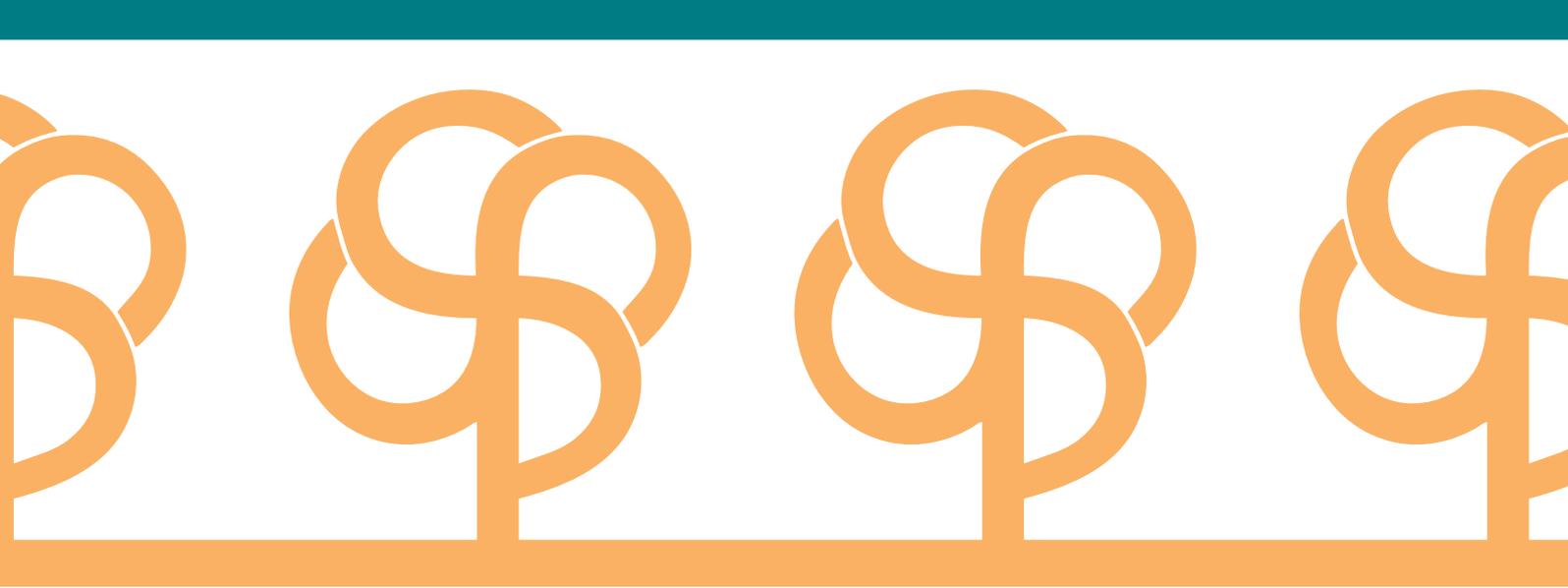


**2010 IN REVIEW**  
People Like Me



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## Chairman's Statement

### Colleagues and Friends

I welcome this opportunity to update you on the activities of Pharmacist Support over the past year. The Charity provides much needed help and support to those amongst us in need of assistance and has had another eventful year dealing with approaches from an increasing number of pharmacists, their families and pharmacy students as they struggle to cope with a wide range of issues and challenges.

The economic climate continues to impact directly on the work of the Charity, affecting both the source of revenue available to fund our work and the numbers seeking advice and assistance. More people are contacting the Manchester office enquiry line and Listening Friends helpline with employment, stress and debt related issues. The Charity is a vibrant forward looking organisation and we continue to tailor our offering to suit the needs of our target audience.

A highlight of the year was the 15th anniversary of Listening Friends which we marked in November. Colleagues past and present joined together to celebrate the undoubted success of the venture. Our volunteers are, in many respects, the unsung heroes of the organisation, readily giving up their time to help others in need and we are grateful for their dedication and commitment.

No organisation would be successful without a very able and effective team back at base. Diane and her team, based in Manchester, have continued to work with enthusiasm and dedication to meet the aims of the Charity and we can be justifiably proud of the work they have undertaken on our behalf. Likewise, my fellow trustees have worked tirelessly in advancing the work of the Charity.

Our work cannot continue without the generosity of donors and we are extremely grateful to those who have contributed over the past year. This is particularly appreciated at this period in time.

My sincere thanks go to all who have been associated with the Charity and particularly to you for your interest in our work. This year, the theme of our annual review is People like me. We have adopted this theme to describe the positive impact that the Charity's services have had on a range of different people, using quotes from those individuals to illustrate the effect this support has had on their lives. We hope this review gives you an insight into Pharmacist Support. More information is available on our website at [www.pharmacistsupport.org](http://www.pharmacistsupport.org)

**David Thomson**  
Chair / Board of Trustees



*"Our volunteers are, in many respects, the unsung heroes of the organisation, readily giving up their time to help others in need and we are grateful for their dedication and commitment."*

## A Year In Review

At Pharmacist Support, every enquiry is dealt with sensitively and in confidence. We aim to provide a holistic approach to those who contact the charity for support, tailoring each response to the needs of the individual.

Our services are provided by charity staff and volunteers as well as via partnership organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Action on Addiction (AonA), making effective use of both pharmacy related and other areas of specialist knowledge.

Many of the people who contact us feel isolated and alone and are often reluctant to ask for help, for a variety of different reasons. Callers range from pharmacists who are experiencing problems at work, such as unwelcome changes to their terms and conditions, to trainees experiencing problems with their tutors, worried about sign off before sitting their exams. We also receive calls from people off or out of work, because of an illness, or work related stress, or because they are unable to find employment.

In these cases the individual or family has often been struggling for a considerable time, only contacting the charity when things get desperate. These individuals are usually quite stressed and have often used up savings, built up credit card debts and arrears of utility bills, rent or mortgage payments or have suffered from ill health and are facing an uncertain future.



## A Difficult Year

2010 continued to be a difficult year for many and a busy one for the Charity. Over the year we provided more than 800 direct acts of support to individuals in need and there were over four thousand interactions with people seeking information or assistance via our website, where we provide online information and downloadable factsheets.

Use of the enquiry service continued to grow. Enquiries were wide ranging and we have continued to use the frequency/popularity of an enquiry subject to inform our fact sheet topics. Our enquiry service aims either to provide an answer to a query posed or locate an authoritative source on which to signpost the caller.

Analysis of the enquires enables us to identify areas of social policy, giving us an understanding of the issues affecting the sector. Wherever possible we look to raise the profile of these issues to benefit all pharmacists.

### Common enquiries over the year included:

- **preregistration issues**, such as bullying
- **employment issues**, such as contract issues, recovering money owed and disciplinary proceedings
- **people unable to work through ill health**
- **financial issues**
- **fitness to practice issues**, including people subject to investigation looking for legal advice and enquiries about what to declare
- **people struggling to find work**
- **returning to practice**
- **people with health conditions/disabilities** looking for help to purchase or install equipment and/or adaptations.

### 2010 Highlight

**Calls to our enquiry line jumped almost 20% on 2009 figures to 347**



# Preregistration Issues

We received a significant number of enquiries (over 30%) in 2010 from preregistration trainees. Issues raised frequently were bullying, a lack of support and financial problems. Some were struggling with pressures in the lead up to exams and especially around results time. Others were struggling to support themselves between re-sits.

Another major issue which became apparent during the latter part of the year related to trainees who had failed their exam twice and were required by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) to undertake a further six month supervised period of full time employment.

We were contacted by trainees who were struggling to find an employer who would take them on. A number of them were offered unpaid work and were then in severe financial hardship, compounded by being unable to claim benefit as they could not demonstrate they were available for work or were actively seeking work. Pharmacist Support was able to assist by providing financial assistance, debt, benefits and employments advice or information.

## People Like Me **Sam's Story**

Sam is a preregistration trainee. He failed his first attempt at the exam and was unable to secure an extension to his current placement, or to find other work to support himself, his wife and child through the summer months. Due to the location of his placement, Sam had been living away from home which meant that the family had been paying two sets of bills and as a result were already juggling finances. Sam was stressed, not earning, he was unable to cover the cost of his re-sit and was worried about how he was going to support his family and revise.

Pharmacist Support put Sam in touch with our specialist adviser at the CAB who made sure he and his family were in receipt of all the benefits to which they were entitled. We provided financial assistance to help with living costs until the exam and provided funds to cover the examination fee. Even at that stage, all was not straight forward, as Sam explains...



*"Having passed the exam, I thought everything would be smooth sailing but that was not to be. The GPhC had misplaced my file and as a result I experienced a delay in getting onto the register. This was a traumatic experience for me as I was again unable to work and was stressed with bills still to meet. At this time I again received financial help from the very thoughtful and wonderful staff at Pharmacist Support. They also provided me with a listening friend and put me in touch with the PDA. This really helped me to pull through until I was registered. I have since secured employment in a community pharmacy where I work at the moment and am having a wonderful time practising as a Pharmacist. Many thanks for your tremendous support at the time most needed which made a world of difference.*

# Employment Issues

## 2010 Highlight

**107 individuals were referred to our specialist advisers at the CAB. Of these, 41 were successfully assisted with their complex employment enquiries. The total gains achieved for all assisted was worth in excess of £400,000\*.**

Problems at work are a major source of stress and we continue to experience an increase in the number of individuals seeking assistance with employment related issues.

We have helped people to resolve issues such as unlawful deductions from wages, notice periods and pay, changes to contracts, bullying and discrimination. We gave advice and

assistance with disciplinary hearings and helped a pharmacist being asked to pay for the cost of a locum to cover their absence whilst attending ante natal hospital appointments. This resulted in assistance with a grievance being raised; successful negotiations achieved a result of future flexible working hours for the pharmacist and a saving of over £2000 resulting from withdrawal of the request to pay locum cover costs.

**One of our specialist advisers at the CAB spoke to us about the impact bullying can have on an individual.**

*"I was in tears every day, I felt constantly humiliated and undermined and this had a terrible effect on my health and my family relationships. I resigned from my job because I felt that I had no choice and whatever the final outcome of my case, I can now begin to get my life back together as someone has validated what happened to me and is seeking justice on my behalf."*

*"In our experience" said adviser Marsha Healy "it is crucially important to our clients that they do have remedies in law to redress the wrong done to them but they also find great relief in the fact that they are finally being listened to and being taken seriously. As one of our clients told us."*



\*£412,000 of gains are made up of increases in income through identifying and claiming state benefits worth £89,648 per annum, in gaining pay entitlements worth £33,279 from employers and helping people with the rescheduling, management or write off of personal debt liabilities totalling over £290,000

# Health Issues

The Charity received a large number of calls from individuals unable to work through ill health. In some cases they needed help to get them through the next few months, but for others the impact was unfortunately more long term. Pharmacist Support has been able to help by providing specialist advice on benefit entitlement and with financial assistance.



## People Like Me **Maria's Story**

Following a bad accident, leaving her with multiple fractures, Maria was informed that it would be 4 – 6 months before she could return to work. As a locum with two children and a husband who was also self-employed, this left Maria and her family in a very difficult situation, with neither parent eligible for sick pay. Unable to care for herself or her children properly meant that Maria's husband had to significantly reduce his working hours.

Pharmacist Support referred Maria onto our specialist adviser who assisted her in her application for employment and support allowance (including backdated payments). The Charity also provided a monthly grant to help the family with general household bills until Maria was able to return to work.



*"Aside from the exceptionally pleasant manner in which my case was handled, I was absolutely amazed to find out that you were able to help me financially as well. This money was a great help to my family. Since my accident I have dealt with many people and authorities, be it medical or financial and I can't say that I always felt that I was being treated with empathy. Each time I spoke to you though I felt that somebody at the other end of the line really believed and understood what I've been through. I am very grateful for what you have done.*

*I am still healing, but have gone back to work part time. Thank you for helping during a very tough time."*

# Financial Issues

## 2010 Highlight

**We provided almost £180,000 worth of financial assistance to 152 individuals in 2010.**

78 of these were applications from people contacting us for the first time and the majority of the financial assistance provided was to help with living costs.

The Charity also provided a regular grant to 52 individuals. In the main these are widows and widowers of pharmacists who have been adversely effected by the subsequent drop in income and have experienced financial difficulties since losing their spouses. These individuals receive regular funding in either monthly or quarterly payments as best suits their circumstances. We have an annual renewal process in place that ensures we are able to review their situation and to continue to provide support where appropriate.

As well as regular assistance, the Charity also provides fixed term and one off payments in the form of both grants and loans. This is for a range of purposes including the purchase of a washing machine, winter fuel bills, minor household repairs, return to practice training costs or GPhC registration fees. Some grants are given specifically for the purchase or installation of equipment or disability aids.

**People with health conditions/ disabilities looking for help to purchase or install equipment and/or adaptations**



## People Like Me **Manjit's Story**

*"We lost father in February 2003 when he suffered a severe stroke and was in hospital for five weeks before he died. Father used to care for mother as he had full mental capacity, so when he was admitted to hospital, mother had to be cared for, as she was already suffering with dementia and was unable to look after herself.*

*As she needed 24 hour care mother lived in nursing homes (for eight years), and the cost was overwhelming. To make her more comfortable, Pharmacist Support had made available a grant to purchase an electric reclining chair.*

*This improved her comfort considerably. When she passed away and because of depleted funds, a second grant of £1000 was made available to assist with funeral costs.*

*Pharmacist Support has been invaluable in bridging the financial gaps, and we have been so appreciative, of not only the funds that have been forthcoming, but also the very professional way the staff have dealt with our situation. So it is with great thanks and appreciation that we have been able to benefit from our father's profession and its benevolent fund. We can't thank you enough."*

# Other highlights and activities from the year:



## We assisted 36 pharmacists seeking help or information with addiction issues, 5 of whom accessed in-house treatment at Clouds House in Wiltshire, Action on Addiction's residential treatment centre.

Action on Addiction is our most recent partner; we joined forces with them towards the end of 2009, to enable the effective operation of the Health Support Programme. The Charity has provided addiction support to pharmacists for some 17 years, and the development of a partnership with the country's leading addiction charity illustrates our aim to provide a service to support pharmacists with addiction issues that is of the highest possible standard.

This partnership has enabled us to provide a 24/7 dedicated telephone line, which ensures that we are ready to assist when an individual takes the first step to conquering an addiction. We have also assisted individuals with grants and loans to enable them to obtain the treatment they require to help them take control of their futures.

## 280 calls were dealt with by our Listening Friends helpline volunteers

Providing an anonymous, empathetic and non judgemental listening ear, the Listening Friends scheme provides much needed support to those dealing with a variety of stressful situations. The service is confidential and is staffed by volunteers who are pharmacists themselves, so they are well placed to understand the unique pressures those in the profession may face.

Callers to the helpline are of all ages, backgrounds, sectors of pharmacy and job grades. In the current climate we have received calls from managers under great stress, faced with implementing major restructures (including redundancies) as well as calls from students worried about exams or how they can manage financially and from preregistration trainees having problems with their placement.

In 2010 the Charity noted a slight reduction in calls to this helpline on the previous year, but to combat this increased our efforts to raise awareness of the service. This resulted in a number of articles in the pharmacy press and free advertising space generously provided by a couple of the monthly journals. With this support we were successful in reaching people in need, which in turn increased the number of calls to the scheme in the second half of the year.



"I rang Listening Friends a couple of times. On one occasion I was extremely isolated. My relationship broke down and I found myself out in the countryside, alone. Having this support and someone to talk to at this time was totally invaluable and extremely appreciated. On the second occasion I was going through a difficult time at work and needed an unbiased professional to talk through my issues with. I am hugely and eternally grateful. You are very very appreciated."

## People Like Me John's Story

*"I am a pharmacist qualified for 40 years. I began using codeine in 1972, and I was dismissed from numerous jobs because of it. Nothing was available at this time for addicted pharmacists in the UK, save a few private hospitals and psychiatric services in the NHS, and I ended up in a psychiatric ward, which did me no good at all.*

*My first contact with Pharmacist Support (PS) was in 1994, when it was the Sick Pharmacists' Scheme. I had had an epileptic fit at work and knew then that I was a sick person. Following a couple of stints in rehab, I finally gave up the codeine but started to drink. I was working as a locum and now I was drinking each morning and during work. I used to think that my work was not suffering, but in hindsight it must have been. In 2010 everything came to a head; someone smelt alcohol on me at work, and I was sent home. The case was referred to the GPhC, and a fitness to practice case was started against me. This was the spur that led me to seek treatment.*

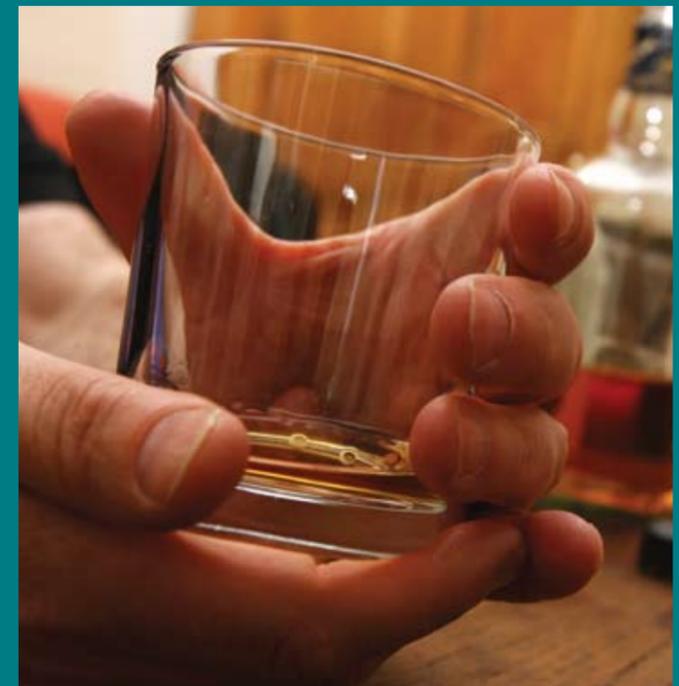
*My wife contacted PS - I couldn't do it. Asking for help is not something that comes easily to people in the grip of an addiction, and in my opinion it is the stigma of actually asking that is difficult to overcome. The Charity arranged for me to go in for treatment at Clouds House. I was then offered secondary treatment at Bayberry Clinic, but could not afford this, as we had used up most of our funds.*

*At this point PS stepped in and offered me a grant and interest free loan, to be paid back when I re entered work. PS also helped my wife with handling our financial affairs as I had not worked for a time and money was dwindling. The support she got had an effect on me, because I knew she was being looked after. As addiction is a family disease, PS arranged for my wife to attend a family course run by Clouds. It is the care that PS shows to pharmacists and their families that makes it easier for the affected pharmacist to continue in treatment, and not have to worry.*

*When a consultant doctor was brought into the Bayberry - drunk, I had a glimpse of how I must have been when treating my patients. From that moment on the desire to drink or to use was lifted from me. I felt better in that instant than I had felt for 40 years.*

*Alcohol no longer plays any part in my life - it is something that is just "there". My journey from fresh faced graduate to an older and wiser person has been a long and tortuous one, and without the help of Pharmacist Support both for me and my family, it would have been even more tortuous.*

*They have been that silver thread running through my journey, until at last I have arrived at my destination. With their help, I have finally "turned that corner".*



# 2010 awareness raising and knowledge building highlights:



Awareness raising is an integral part of the work of the charity. The ability to promote our activities enables us to ensure that we effectively work towards our aim of reaching the people who need our support, as well as assisting us in reaching new donors. We use a variety of methods to achieve this such as giving presentations to groups of pharmacists, preregistration trainees and students as well as other pharmacy groups, such as employers, unions and professional support networks.

We engage with individuals and organisations using a variety of social media including twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook and also place advertisements in the pharmacy press and publications unrelated to pharmacy that may provide access to other eligible groups (such as Saga magazine aimed at retired pharmacists and widows and widowers of pharmacists). This all helps increase familiarity with the charity brand as well as extending our reach.

## In 2010 the Pharmacist Support team:

- Attended 9 events reaching over 6,000 pharmacists and pharmacy students
- Developed our online presence resulting in a 25% increase in visits to the charity website
- Secured 16 pieces of media coverage in pharmacy publications with circulation figures of over 80,000
- Conducted a large scale piece of research on work/life balance within the pharmacy sector (based on 25,000 survey responses)
- Held a focus group centred on the support needs of pharmacy students, in order to explore further the assistance the charity can provide to this target group.



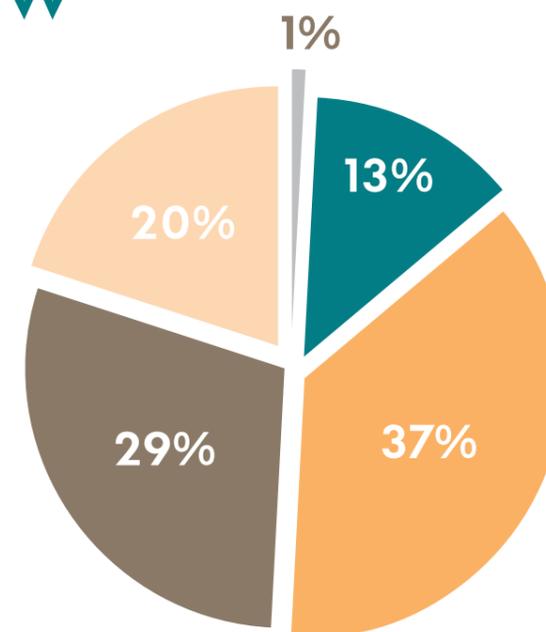
Laughter is the best medicine! Visitors to the Pharmacist Support stand with their caricatures at the Pharmacy Show 2010.

# Financial Review

## Income

During 2010 Pharmacist Support was very fortunate to receive an increased number of legacies from pharmacists wishing to support their profession through the Charity's work. In 2010 this amounted to a total of £103,000. The Charity is always sad to lose valued members of the profession, who themselves have helped others, but hope that through us their memory can live on. We are extremely grateful for these gifts and wish to thank their families for this kind gesture.

Unfortunately however, general donations to the Charity decreased for a second consecutive year. This served to remind us that people continue to feel the pressure of the economic environment and we increased our efforts of awareness raising in order to try to reach those that were struggling financially.



Donations

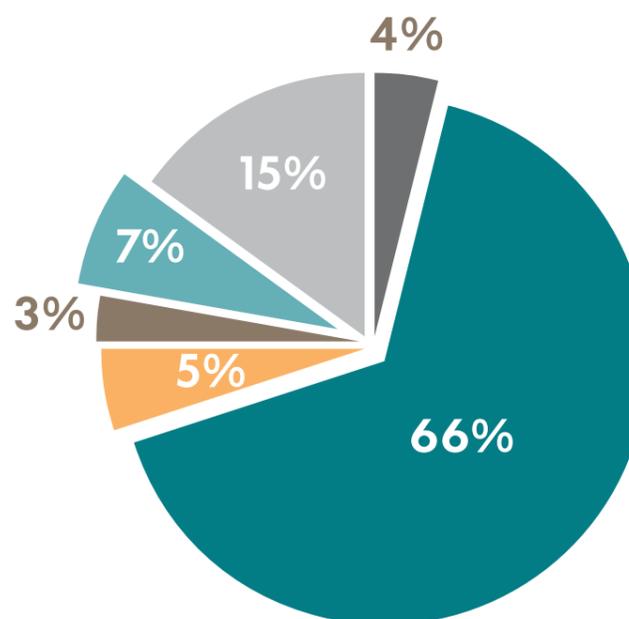
Legacies

Investment income

Reserves

Miscellaneous income\*

\*Miscellaneous income represents a transferred charitable fund from the RPS to assist those in need.



Investment Manager

Benevolence

Advice and Support

Addiction support

Awareness raising

Governance

## Expenditure

Pharmacist Support increased its total spend on charitable activities in 2010 to over £500,000. The largest rise in spend at 8.5% was for benevolence which includes grants and financial assistance expenditure. Advice and Support (including the Listening Friends service and Specialist advice service) also saw an increased spend of around 12%.

In our first full year of partnership with Action on Addiction we saw a reduction of nearly 50% on the previous year's spend and supported 36 individuals during the year.

Thanks to the solid foundations of the previous two years awareness raising work, we were able to be more creative with our approach and utilised our contacts and networks to achieve reductions in our spend without sacrificing our aim to extend the Charity's reach. This resulted in a 38% reduction in expenditure on awareness raising during 2010.

Governance costs were also reduced by 5% in 2010, with the Trustees opting to reduce the number of meetings held throughout the year to four (and a strategy day). Overall the Charity saw its total like for like expenditure decrease by £20k 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 at [www.pharmacistsupport.org](http://www.pharmacistsupport.org).

# We couldn't do what we do without your support

The Charity is very grateful to the many volunteers who help by staffing our Listening Friends helpline and home visiting scheme. Both schemes have a team of dedicated volunteers and would be unable to operate without their input. Volunteers also provide assistance with promoting the Charity's services and raising awareness of our work, giving time and commitment to make us a success.



## Home visits

The provision of home visits is firmly rooted within the Charity's objectives to provide pastoral support to our beneficiaries. We try therefore to ensure that we have some face to face contact with annual grant recipients. This approach increases understanding for us as to the individuals' needs and circumstances and also encourages awareness amongst the beneficiaries of what we can offer them, and how we can support them.

In 2010 this service provided over 30 home visits. These were delivered by a member of staff or one of our team of 10 volunteers. We try where possible to match the volunteer with the beneficiary, taking into consideration factors such as the background of the individual, whether they or their spouse were the pharmacist, as well as the geographical location.



# A Volunteer Perspective

**"Home Visitors make routine visits; they are the friendly faces / ambassadors of the service"**



Alan Nathan with Pharmacist Support Chairman David Thomson and Charity Manager Diane Leicester at the 15th Anniversary of the Listening Friends scheme.

**Alan has been a Home Visitor for the charity for a number of years now. Here he tells us why...**

**So Alan, what prompted you to get involved with the Home Visiting scheme?**

*I'd recently retired from my full-time job so had more time to spare. Being a member of the Council of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (1986-2002) had really changed my life and career. I felt that the profession had done a lot for me and given me a lot of privileges and I wanted to give something back. I wanted to add to the contribution I'd made in co-founding and chairing Listening Friends since its inception.*

**What do you get out of being a Home Visitor?**

*Seeing how pharmacists and their dependants benefit and are relieved of worry and made happier by the help that Pharmacist Support gives them.*

**Why do you think the Home Visiting service is important?**

*It maintains contact between Pharmacist Support and those being helped and puts a human face on the service.*

**What would you say is your favourite experience / most rewarding moment so far?**

*None of my doing really, but there was a pharmacist in a vulnerable state whom the charity had been supporting for a number of years. I visited him several times to try to help sort out his affairs and feared that he could be evicted from his home and end up out on the streets. I was delighted to learn that a family member with whom he had not been in contact for many years, had come forward and was helping him straighten things out.*

**Have there been any unexpected surprises in your journey so far as a volunteer?**

*That the 90 plus year old widow of a pharmacist who receives a grant from the charity has an exercise bike in her bathroom and uses it every day! Also, a very credible story from the same lady about the very strange goings on in her flat after a faith healer/medium moved in next door. (These were happening before she found out about what her neighbour did!)*

# Your donations make a real difference to people's lives

Pharmacist Support is a registered charity (No. 221438) funded by donations from pharmacists. We rely on contributions and donations from pharmacists to continue to provide these essential support services. Donations can be made online via our website ([www.pharmacistsupport.org](http://www.pharmacistsupport.org)), or can be posted to the charity by cheque. If you are a UK taxpayer, you can donate tax free through Gift Aid.

On our website you can also 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 is quick and simple to do. Just visit our website and we will guide you through the process.

For more information on volunteering, holding fundraising events or donating to Pharmacist Support, email us on [info@pharmacistsupport.org](mailto:info@pharmacistsupport.org) or contact a member of the support team on 0808 168 2233.

## Pharmacist Support would like to thank the following for their support -

### Gifts In Kind:

- Pharmacy Magazine, free advertising space
- Independent Community Pharmacist, free advertising space
- PJ, free magazine subscription
- C&D, free magazine subscription
- Pursuit Communications, free copy writing services

### Donations:

The Pharmaceutical Journal (Linked to responses to PJ survey).

The many individuals who generously made donations to the charity throughout the year.



# Your Pharmacist Support team

## Staff:

Charity Manager:  
Information and Administration Officer:  
Development Officer:  
Case Officer:  
Admin Assistant:  
Grants Officer:

Diane Leicester  
Paulette Storey  
Kate Westbrook  
Christine Ayers  
Tom Stephenson  
Rowena Simm (from Dec 2010)

## Volunteers:

Listening Friends Honorary Chair: Alan Nathan  
Listening Friends Coordinators: Kathryn Featherstone, Charles Morecroft, Gyan Tyagi, Ian Phillips  
And team of 30+ Listening Friend and Home Visitor volunteers

## Trustees

David Thomson (Chairman)  
David Morgan (Vice-Chairman)  
Dr Leonard Brookes (Treasurer)  
Seema Agha

Catherine Beman  
Professor David Johns  
Doreen Laity  
Arthur Williams



## Services



**SPECIALIST ADVICE**  
In debt, benefits  
and employment  
**0808 168 2233**



**HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAMME**  
Providing support  
with addiction  
**0808 168 5132**



**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**  
**0808 168 2233**



**LISTENING FRIENDS**  
A stress helpline  
**0808 168 5133**



**INFORMATION AND ENQUIRY LINE**  
**0808 168 2233**

## CONTACT DETAILS

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**Email: [info@pharmacistsupport.org](mailto:info@pharmacistsupport.org)**

Charity number: 221438

**Twitter: [@pharmasupport](https://twitter.com/pharmasupport)**

**Facebook: [facebook.com/PharmacistSupport](https://facebook.com/PharmacistSupport)**

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