



PHARMACIST
SUPPORT

Impact Report 2020

Impact report for the year ended
31 December 2020



About Pharmacist Support

An independent, trusted charity, we exist to support the general health and wellbeing of our pharmacy family, by providing a wide variety of support services to pharmacists and their families, former pharmacists and pharmacy students.

Our support aims to meet their wellbeing needs, whether those be financial, physical, mental or social. Our aspiration is to support an empowered and resilient pharmacy workforce.

Our connection to the profession is deep. Established by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain back in 1841, we have spent 180 years supporting members of our pharmacy family through difficult times. In 2006 we became an independent organisation, growing from our benevolent fund roots into an independent modern charity.

We've listened carefully to people from all sectors of the profession, and deeply understand and empathise with the issues affecting pharmacy today. In our 2019 market research, 97% of all potential service users surveyed felt they needed some form of support from the charity, with 71% of all respondents citing mental health as a key issue affecting the sector.

Our legal objects, recently updated, are specifically restricted to the relief of financial need or other distress, and the advancement of general health and wellbeing of:

⌚ any individual whose name is or ever has been on the Register of Pharmacists maintained by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) (or formerly maintained by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain), and their dependents;

⌚ any Trainees in Great Britain; or

⌚ any Pharmacy Students in Great Britain.

In January 2020 we launched a new five-year strategy with a refreshed vision and mission. Our new strategy has guided us through the pandemic and has ensured that our renewed focus and mission has been at the forefront of all that we do.



Our vision

No one in our pharmacy family will face challenging times without us by their side.

Our mission

To champion the wellbeing of our pharmacy family.

We believe in better!

By 2025 we want:

More potential beneficiaries aware of who we are and what we do - enabling more people to seek support.

To see pharmacists empowered to improve their wellbeing, creating a more resilient pharmacy workforce.

A sector actively working together to improve the wellbeing of our pharmacy family.

To increase our impact as a charity whilst ensuring long term financial sustainability.

To achieve this, the charity set the following priorities in its **five year strategy** (2020-2025) :



About our Pharmacy Family



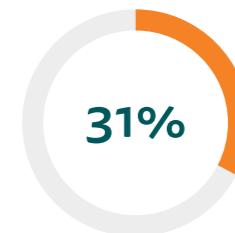
At a glance



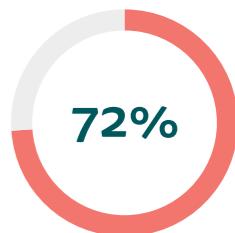
Pharmacists **needed support** managing stress at work*



Respondents believe that COVID-19 had impacted their mental health & wellbeing to a **partial extent**



Respondents believe that COVID-19 had impacted their mental health & wellbeing to a **significant extent**



Respondents reported that their work had negatively impacted their **mental health** and **wellbeing**

Like other healthcare professions, pharmacy has been presented with new challenges never experienced before in 2020. Those contacting the charity have experienced a range of issues and worries related to COVID-19 including coping with changes in pharmacy practice, dealing with abusive customers and anxieties around catching and spreading the virus.

Before COVID-19 hit, 61% of pharmacists told us that they needed support managing stress at work. A Workforce Wellbeing Survey carried out with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society in late 2020 suggested that the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce is at best adequate, with existing pressures exacerbated by the pandemic. Almost half of the respondents told us that their mental health was either 'not good' or 'poor'. 54% of respondents believed that COVID-19 had impacted their mental health and wellbeing to a partial extent, while 31% believed it had to a significant extent. 72% of respondents reported that their work had negatively impacted their mental health and wellbeing with reasons including workload, inadequate staffing, long hours and a lack of work-life balance. In addition, a survey with the British Pharmaceutical Students'

Association carried out in 2020 revealed that 66% of student and trainee respondents were feeling anxious about the pandemic, with 85% saying they were not seeking support for their wellbeing.

As we embarked on delivery of our new wellbeing strategy at the beginning of 2020, we were not aware of just how important our new strategy and focus on wellbeing would be to ensure that those in our pharmacy family were supported through challenging times. We deeply understand that not only do members of our pharmacy family face enormous pressures in their work lives, but many individuals are facing challenges emotionally and psychologically too. The Workforce Wellbeing Survey highlighted that whilst over half of employers provide mental health and wellbeing support, 44% of pharmacists reported feeling uncomfortable accessing it. Reasons given centred around confidentiality and trust, stigma, judgement and the potential for it to harm their career.

* Before COVID-19

Public Benefit

Charities have a duty under section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. As Trustees, we aim and work to fulfil our objects in line with the requirements for demonstrating public benefit and that the beneficiaries we aim to assist are clear, identifiable, and related to these objects. We make every effort to ensure that all potential beneficiaries in need have access to our services. We maintain close links with organisations across the profession including the regulator, the professional body and the union. We support the health and wellbeing of our pharmacy family through the provision of grants to individuals and the provision of a broad range of services with our partner organisations.

We aim to direct our financial assistance, and services towards those people who are in the greatest need, and unable to help themselves. We have a very clear grants policy that is used to form decisions on grant eligibility. We have evolved from our beginnings as a traditional "benevolent" charity and now provide a range of wellbeing services and support to everyone in the pharmacy profession.

Our Support

In response to the changing needs of the profession, we continue to develop our services to help alleviate the stresses and pressures faced by our pharmacy family. We have established a range of free and confidential support services. Our information and enquiry service is run by individuals within the team with expert knowledge of the sector. The enquiry service is open every weekday (except Bank Holidays) between 9am and 5pm and acts as a gateway to all our other services. The majority of enquiries are via phone or email. Information and signposting are provided through this service, and online via our website.

The Charity partners with Citizens Advice Manchester to provide the specialist advice service. This enables service users to access advisors for tailored high-quality advice and information on employment; welfare benefits, debt and housing issues.

Our addiction support programme assists individuals experiencing problems with alcohol, drugs, gambling, eating disorders or other types of dependency. This service provides access to fully qualified addiction specialists and we can facilitate and support access to residential treatment. We also provide ongoing support through a facilitated peer support group comprising a small group of pharmacists who have used the service and have successfully maintained their recovery.



Information & Enquiries



Financial Assistance



Counselling & Peer Support



Specialist Advice



Wardley Wellbeing Service



Addiction Support Programme

"The services are just incredible. Great service. Supportive and person-centred team."

Service User

Our financial assistance provides annual and one-off grants to support mental or physical quality of life. There is specific financial help available for students via the student hardship grant. Once a year the charity opens its national bursary scheme to all fully accredited pharmacy schools in Great Britain. Bursaries of £3,000 or £5,000 are awarded to help MPharm students entering their final year of study. To apply students must demonstrate financial hardship, outstanding and exceptional qualities to overcome an ongoing adversity, an expectation by their university of a positive contribution to pharmacy in Great Britain and sound academic performance.

The Wardley wellbeing service provides a range of proactive resources via the newly created Wardley Wellbeing Hub. The hub is a practical area of our site dedicated to wellbeing. It hosts a range of resources and pharmacy stories, with the aim of helping individuals take control of their wellbeing and support colleagues and peers to do the same. We also deliver a range of workshops through this service.

Lastly, our newly badged counselling and peer support service includes our well-established Listening Friends scheme which provides peer support for those wishing to speak with a fellow

pharmacist about work-related issues. Listening Friends is staffed by volunteer pharmacists. This service now also includes counselling (launched in 2021).

During 2020, development was focused in two areas; proactive wellbeing assistance to support those in the profession to look after their own mental health through the Wardley wellbeing service; and support for those experiencing psychological and emotional issues.



Our Values

Wellbeing is embedded into everyday activities throughout Pharmacist Support. Our services put people first, create positive impact and deliver on our aspiration as a charity for an empowered and resilient pharmacy workforce. As a charity, our values are very important to us and guide the way we work. If and when a beneficiary contacts us for support, they can expect to be treated in a compassionate and empathetic way.



People first

We are **compassionate**. We **listen**. We are **empathetic**. We bring people **together**.



Empowerment

We make **good things** happen. We encourage and build **resilience**. We create **positive** impact.



Positivity

We believe in **better**. We champion our pharmacy **family**. We **never** give up.



Fairness

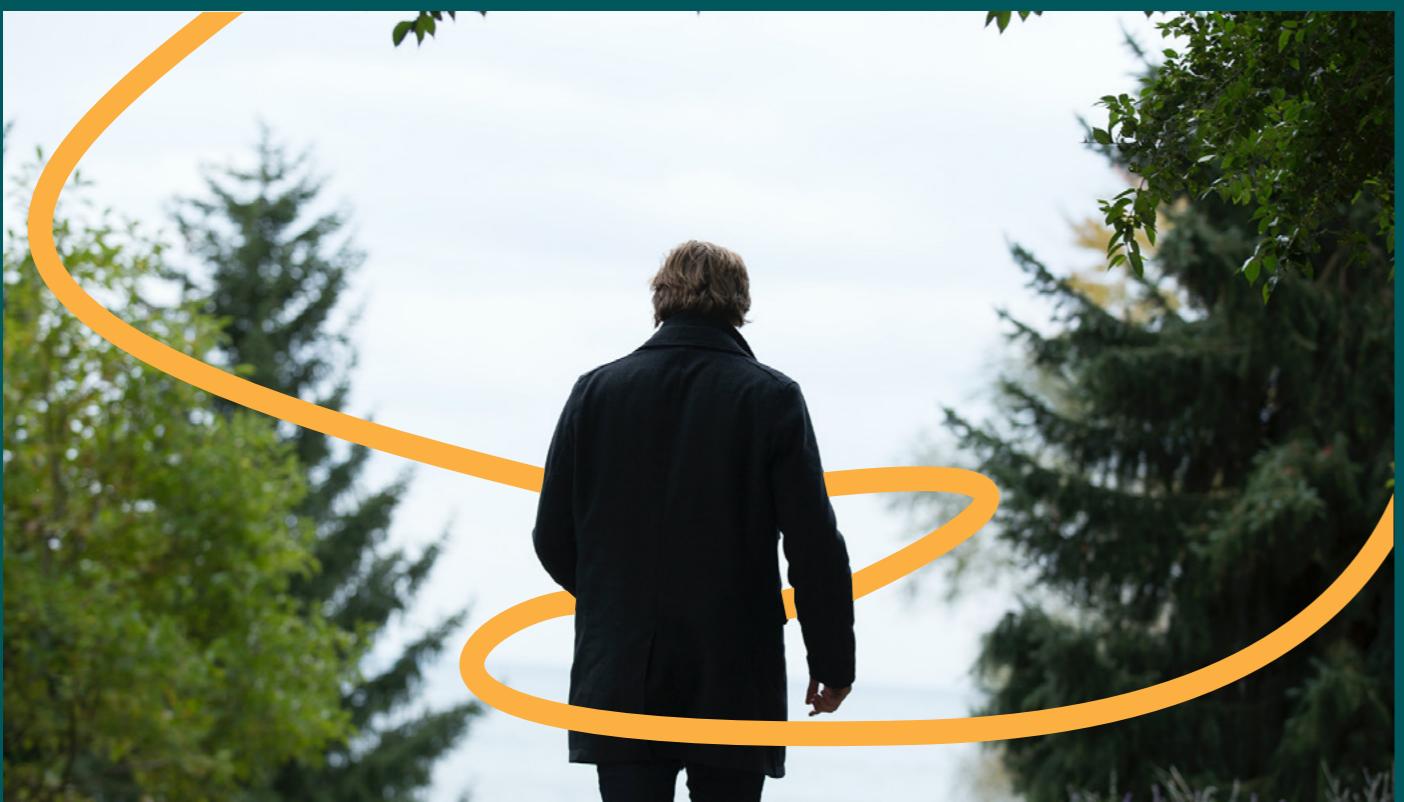
We are **non-judgemental**. We are **independent**. We work **with integrity**.

"Really helpful, supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere. It is very professional thank you very much!"

Service User

Joseph's Story

"I have greater emotional resilience and improved ability to focus on long-term goals objectively."



Pharmacist Support have assisted me through a period of severe financial hardship and helped me on my journey towards returning to the register. I could not have achieved what I have so far without their financial help, encouragement and advice.

My name is Joseph* and over 10 years ago I was working as a pharmacist manager. Unexpectedly and suddenly my partner suffered a severe and long-lasting medical episode. This took a drastic toll on my mental health and eventually led to addiction issues and a subsequent investigation by the regulatory body. Although I engaged with healthcare professionals and support services, I felt unable to attend a fitness to practise hearing and was removed from the register for a number of issues relating to my practice. I became depressed to the point where I neglected everything, including my own health and relationship with my family. Then, I lost my house and car due to financial troubles, and my only way to deal with the situation was intoxication and denial.

Eventually, with the support of my family, I received the treatment I needed through counselling and residential rehab. Upon completion of rehab, I finally felt in the position where I could consider the possibility of returning to the profession.

Beginning the journey towards return to practise and then bringing my knowledge up to date was no easy task. However, with the help from Pharmacist Support, I was able to start the ball rolling. Pharmacist Support has been with me at every stage and I have kept them up to date with my progress. I now find that I have greater emotional resilience and improved ability to focus on long-term goals objectively. However, it was only with the help from Pharmacist Support that enabled me to see these goals materialise. My long-term goal is to return to the profession as a pharmacist and use what I have learned along my journey to support others who are struggling.

* We have used a pseudonym to protect Joseph's identity

Volunteers

Volunteers play a crucial role at Pharmacist Support and help us to increase our reach and impact.

The charity relies heavily on volunteers to deliver its services. Our volunteers are based across the country and are supported by our staff. We provide regular updates, day-to-day support and learning and development opportunities. Through these activities we aim to bring our volunteers together to ensure that they are kept abreast of any changes within the Charity, to facilitate peer support activities and to enhance knowledge and skills in relevant areas so that they can carry out their roles effectively. We have three main groups of volunteers: Listening Friends, who provide peer support to beneficiaries; home visitors who visit our annual grant recipients; and charity ambassadors, who raise awareness of the Charity and its activities. During 2020 home visiting

was suspended due to risk associated with the pandemic and there was less ambassador activity due to fewer pharmacy focused events.

Within our five-year strategy, volunteering has been identified as an area for development. The Charity recruited a Volunteer Officer in 2020 to ensure a centralised and strategic approach to volunteers. Listening Friends played a vital role in service delivery in 2020 and the plan is to recruit a wider number of Listening Friends in 2021 to coincide with the 25th anniversary of this service.



Anne's Story

On 4th October 2020, our volunteer Anne Cawdron completed the Virtual London Marathon, raising £2340.95 for Pharmacist Support. Anne ran the marathon to raise awareness of the stress that Pharmacists in all sectors are facing on the front line. She felt COVID-19 had catapulted pharmacy into new ways of working and the profession had risen to the challenge. Although retiring in 2019, 40 years after first qualifying, during the outbreak Anne volunteered her services at a local pharmacy.

Experiencing the working conditions first hand, Anne recognised how valuable Pharmacist Support is and the importance of having an organisation where pharmacists can go for confidential advice and assistance. "When I needed help it was there for me; I'd hate to think that help was no longer available for other pharmacists in the future that might need it." Anne had accessed invaluable help from the charity almost 20 years ago. "Without that help I would never have achieved any of the things I have in both my professional and personal life. I always told myself that I would like to "give back" when I had the opportunity so, since stopping full time work, I

have been privileged to be able to volunteer with Pharmacist Support". Seeing what the charity does at close hand inspired Anne to fund raise so other pharmacists and their families may be able to benefit from the kind of help that was given to her.

"Without help from Pharmacist Support, I'd never have achieved any of the things I have in both my professional and personal life."

10,107 ACTS OF SUPPORT

provided through our new Wardley wellbeing hub



1,225 ENQUIRIES HANDLED

17 REFERRALS to our specialist Addiction Support counsellor

221 REFERRALS made to our Specialist Advice service

£34,000 GIVEN OUT IN STUDENT BURSARIES

100% OF PEOPLE

said financial assistance had enabled them to manage financially

92 GRANTS AWARDED
TOTALLING
£76,715



£174,723
VIA CONFIRMED GAINS
from welfare benefits advice

90% OF OUR SERVICE USERS REPORTED IMPROVED WELLBEING



"Thank you very much for your help. I didn't have anyone who understood the pharmacy world and could hear me out and offer advice. My stress is unburdened a lot after the anxiety over the past weeks. The advice was impartial and I was never pushed to do anything except present the facts and offer the options to improve. I now have a plan to tackle my problems and know I have help if I need it."



2020 Achievement & Impact

Strategic objective one:

Raise awareness of Pharmacist Support

Why?

So that more potential beneficiaries are aware of who we are and what we do - enabling more people to seek support.

What did we do in 2020?

We kickstarted 2020 by launching the charity's new strategy which reflected our new brand and tone of voice. Our year one actions against this objective have concentrated on delivering our new wellbeing focused messaging, to ensure that we remain relevant.

To increase awareness, in addition to existing partnerships, we also developed partnerships with several new organisations across the sector. Through these partner networks we were able to extend our reach, utilising their internal and external communication channels to raise awareness of our work. We worked closely with the Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA), the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE), the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association (BPSA) and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) to provide information on the Charity across the profession.

"Just want to say a huge thank you for the help given in my time of need. I did not know that this type of service was offered. I feel I can recommend Pharmacist Support to others who may benefit from it."

Service User

What we achieved during 2020

75%

35,000 PEOPLE

reached through online events

"I watched some Facebook live events. I found them interesting and relatable. It felt like getting simple tips from pharmacist friends. At work, it is too busy to talk to other colleagues, so it was nice to hear from other pharmacists. I mostly watched it during my lunchtime. It felt good."

An increased social media following



100%
Rise



100%
Rise



17%
Rise

↑ **17% increase**
in the number of subscribers to our charity newsletter

149,749

VISITS TO OUR WEBSITE

(up by 18% on 2019 figures)

with our website very much becoming a hub for information and support

INCREASE IN AWARENESS

70% of respondents to our joint workforce wellbeing survey with the RPS said they had heard of the charity
(up from 40% in our market research in 2019).

133 PIECES OF NEWS

coverage achieved across the pharmacy and charity press.

23,214 FOLLOWERS

across our social media channels

19,217 SOCIAL MEDIA interactions

2

Strategic objective two:

Enable pharmacists to manage their wellbeing

Why?

So that pharmacists are empowered to improve their wellbeing, creating a more resilient pharmacy workforce.

What did we do in 2020?

To enable pharmacists to better manage their wellbeing, we focused on developing and expanding our wellbeing offer. We wanted to improve access to proactive support and therefore developed a brand new Wardley wellbeing hub. Within the hub we developed a range of new resources including learning modules, factsheets, videos and printable posters. These resources focused on topics we know affect our pharmacy family including stress, anxiety, sleep and provided useful tools to support assertiveness, resilience and time management, amongst many others.

Due to the pandemic, we were forced to halt all face-to-face wellbeing workshops. We used this opportunity to review all workshop content and in response to the situation, established a new online workshop offering. In 2020 we reached 877 people through our workshops, which included a mixture of pre-recorded and live online sessions that were delivered and facilitated in collaboration with partner organisations.

"I just wanted to say thank you so much for such a fabulous workshop this afternoon. Exactly what we needed and a great finish to our morning session. I think the whole team got so much out of it and it was good to get us to press pause even if only for a short time."

Workshop attendee

What we achieved during 2020

10,107 ACTS OF SUPPORT

provided over an eight month period through our new **Wardley wellbeing hub**

92 GRANTS PROVIDED
Totalling **£76,715**

that supported : **50 pharmacists** **11 trainees**
28 students **3 retired pharmacists**

£4,600 IN GRANT FUNDING

provided to support an individual through residential addiction treatment

1225 ENQUIRIES RESPONDED TO

covering a range of issues
(the rest being other/unknown)
615 from pharmacists
317 from trainees
155 from students

100% OF PEOPLE

using our Information and Enquiry service were satisfied with the service

17 PEOPLE SUPPORTED
with an addiction issue

and referred on for an assessment with the charity's specialist addiction counsellor

221 SPECIALIST ADVICE REFERRALS

made supporting individuals with employment, benefits and debt issues

107 employment **38 immigration**
39 welfare benefits **34 debt** **3 housing**

This resulted in significant gains for our beneficiaries, including
£94,240 IN GAINS related to **employment advice**

93% OF PEOPLE

receiving a grant said it had a positive or very positive impact on wellbeing

8 final year MPharm students supported through our **bursary scheme**, through awards totalling **£34,000**

"Very much satisfied, keep up the good work you guys are doing to support Pharmacists and Pharmacy, especially in such difficult times when Pharmacy services are more vital than ever."

3

Strategic objective three:

Increase awareness of the issues impacting the pharmacy family's wellbeing

Why?

To see our sector is actively working together to improve the wellbeing of our pharmacy family.

What did we do in 2020?

In May 2020 we launched the charity's first ever wellbeing campaign – ACTNow. Through ACTNow we encouraged those across the profession to Allow time for wellbeing, to Consider the needs of colleagues and to Take action. Through the campaign we sought and shared stories of individuals from various stages in their career and sectors of the profession, keen to open up about their experiences, learnings and to share tips from a particularly stressful number of months.

The campaign ran from May through till the end of August, with 671 individuals signing up to the campaign. Everyone who signed up received weekly campaign emails focused on various wellbeing related themes. Fourteen weekly emails were circulated in total, covering topics around the importance of self-care, managing worry and reducing anxiety, relaxation and switching off and positive thinking and motivation, amongst others. Through the campaign we developed 66 new pieces of online content including 24 factsheets, 10 self-learning modules, 15 printable posters and resources and 15 'Your Story' blog posts.

In addition, working with our partner the Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) we developed two wellbeing focused campaign videos targeting students and pharmacists, highlighting the mental health and wellbeing issues raised in our market research and encouraging them to prioritise their wellbeing. These videos were viewed 650 times.

Working with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) we ran a second annual workforce wellbeing survey, releasing the results to the press and hosting a webinar for their members to discuss the findings. A total of 959 responses were received with findings suggesting that the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce is at best adequate, with existing pressures exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We worked closely with the RPS and the PDA to raise specific issues impacting pharmacists during the pandemic. In particular, we focused on ensuring pharmacists across the profession had equal access to support. This included NHS emotional support and additional support through initiatives such as early hours/priority access to supermarkets.

We continued to work with partners to address possible barriers to accessing our service. We met with the Black Pharmacist Collective to gain insight and the group worked with us to deliver elements of the ACTNow campaign. We also worked closely with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee to reach community pharmacists who may feel isolated. We delivered a specific workshop to all 69 Local Pharmaceutical Committees on resilience.

The charity continues to liaise with the GPhC to highlight issues and build on communications, in particular around the trainee assessment that was impacted and delayed due to the pandemic. We have also contributed to the GPhC's consultation on how they manage Fitness to Practise concerns.

What we achieved during 2020

6,865 ACTS OF SUPPORT

provided to over 4,800 individuals through our ACTNow website across the wellbeing campaign period

POSITIVE FEEDBACK



to our new campaign activity with

57%

of respondents to the campaign survey saying that the campaign had supported them to prioritise and manage their wellbeing.

81%

saying that a similar campaign and hub would be beneficial to their wellbeing in the future.

SUPPORTED PHARMACISTS



by campaigning for access for all pharmacists to NHS emotional support and ensuring their full inclusion in the Bluelight card scheme



INCREASED CORPORATE SUPPORT

for the delivery of our wellbeing work

Feedback from the campaign included:

"I gained insight into methods that genuinely helped promote my wellbeing especially during this pandemic."

"Helped me to put my health as a higher priority."

"It has improved my awareness of how my wellbeing was affected and steps I can take to prioritise and manage that. It felt reassuring to have this feeling of being burnt out validated so I could move on."

4

Strategic objective four:

Manage the charity effectively to ensure we meet current and future demand

Why?

So that we increase our impact as a charity whilst ensuring long term financial sustainability.

What did we do in 2020?

In 2020 we reviewed our funding strategy and refocused resource from community and individual giving to partner and corporate donations. We carried out a fundraising digital review to help us understand how we may better utilise digital to increase donations whilst decreasing the staff resource required to do so. The pandemic did impact our fundraising, but despite this we managed to increase the number of corporate donations and launch our new TEAMGreen initiative. Now a year-round fundraising campaign, we encouraged people to join TEAMGreen and fundraise for us throughout the pandemic through national initiatives such as the #TwoPointSixChallenge which was established by the organisers of the London Marathon. Our fundraisers also got creative in their fundraising efforts, encouraging the donating of money that would have been spent on haircuts (£800), crafting facemasks and one pharmacist donated £1,000 to the charity, from money given to him by a pharmacy he had been volunteering for through the pandemic. Despite the huge disruption to fundraising caused by the pandemic we managed to raise a similar amount to that raised in 2019.

We are very grateful to the Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA), Teva UK, Well and Alphega for their financial support, enabling us to deliver the ACTNow campaign. Through their donations we were able to help thousands of students, trainees and pharmacists through some difficult months.

We centralised our volunteer approach in 2020 and created a new centralised volunteer role. This has enabled the charity to develop a new volunteer strategy and streamline its volunteer management processes.

Trustees carried out a full skills audit and are due to embark on a trustee recruitment exercise in 2021. In addition, trustees reviewed the Charity's investment policy and made a number of changes including giving greater consideration to Environmental, Social and Governance issues (Ethical investments).

What we achieved during 2020

Development and continuation of our well-established partnership with the **Pharmacists' Defence Association**.

Through this partnership, formed in September of 2017, the **PDA pledged to donate**

£1

PER MEMBER TO THE CHARITY

to support our valuable wellbeing work.

By 31st December 2020

The **PDA** and its members had **donated over**

**£110,000
TO PHARMACIST SUPPORT**

"Great support provided by Pharmacist Support and I really think it made a huge impact on my life. Couldn't be more grateful"

Implementation of a **new staff structure** which included successfully recruiting

4



NEW STAFF MEMBERS

to assist in the delivery of our new strategy **this included:**

- ★ **NEW CENTRAL VOLUNTEER ROLE**
- ★ **CENTRALISED ADMINISTRATION**

Addition of **two new members** of the **marketing and communications team**



★ **this has increased our ability to meet our goals.**

A REDUCTION in the charity's overall expenditure

compared to 2019, whilst delivering on our goals to develop a range of new support products and increase awareness and impact.



Looking ahead

As we move into year two of our five- year strategy, we recognise that there is a still great deal of work to do to meet the changing needs of the profession.

By working collaboratively and continuing to listen we will continue to ensure that we provide an independent safe space for those in our pharmacy family to share their worries and access support.

It is essential for the Charity to continue to work in partnership with organisations across the sector to raise awareness of our support, as well as raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing. After a successful campaign this year, the Charity will again be running a wellbeing awareness campaign in 2021. In addition, we will continue to expand our wellbeing service, and develop our proactive support through wellbeing events, training programmes, and resources. Thanks to a grant from the COVID-19 Healthcare Support Appeal (CHSA) in 2021 we will be able to provide direct psychological support for those who are experiencing mental health issues through a new counselling provision.

We also have a number of key organisational developments planned to assist us in delivering an efficient service to a growing number of beneficiaries and increase our impact. Development areas include

implementation of new systems and processes including a new website and CRM as well as a new impact measurement framework.

In 2020, we have spent time looking at our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and have identified areas for development resulting in the creation of a short-term plan for implementation in 2021. 2021 will be a special year for the Charity as we celebrate 180 years of support and 25 years of our peer-support service, Listening Friends. In line with our volunteer plan, we are set to launch a number of new opportunities to volunteer in 2021.

Get in touch.

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PHARMACIST
SUPPORT



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