

ARE WE THE INSTITUTION'S BEST KEPT SECRET?



Chief Executive
Anni Broadhead

How can an organisation that offers such wide ranging help to IMechE members still be unknown to many of the people that it exists to help?

I am so grateful to have heard about Support Network

Craig Mitchell,
Graduate Engineer,
AIMechE

This is the conundrum that I have often wrestled with during my ten years in post as Chief Executive of Support Network - and hence the question posed for this year's review - for we certainly do not want to be secret at all!

Every year Support Network helps members and their families with financial, practical and/or wellbeing services to help when things just become too much to deal with alone. But that can only happen if members know we exist, understand what we do, and then take the step to contact us.

Whilst we do our best to promote ourselves, word of mouth and member to member links are still the most powerful ways in which applicants find us. Please help us to ensure that those who could benefit from our help do not miss out. **Please tell others about us, and encourage those who need support to get in touch. Your intervention could make all the difference. Thank you.**



STUDENT GRANTEE TO VOLUNTEER

"Whilst studying in Aberdeen, I worked weekends and some nights as a pool lifeguard.

Fifth year is an extremely demanding year as you are so near the finishing line after years of study at school and university. With the added pressures of working to get the best degree you can, holding down a job and still allowing time for friends and family, it can be an overwhelming stressful time. Thankfully, during that year the IMechE business development team presented on the help available to students via Support Network.

When I approached them about applying, they were supportive from the start and when I was awarded the student grant I was able to reduce my hours at the pool.

Without a doubt it was their help that assisted me greatly. As a result I achieved my Master of Mechanical Engineering with Distinction, and have secured a fantastic position as a graduate with Ethos Energy in their acclaimed International Rotation Program.

I am so grateful to have heard about Support Network, and to now be able to give something back as a volunteer, to make a difference and help fellow engineers. My motivation is simple: I hope that I will be able to help others achieve their full potential as I was helped to achieve mine."



SUPPORT NETWORK

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**

Supporting members and
their families in times of need

Members of
the IMechE
Global Business
Development
Team, left to right:
Lara Mallett,
Sandra Mulligan,
Farah Baksh

WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER POSITIVE CHANGE FOR MEMBERS

"Thanks again for all your help at the application workshop. I also wanted to thank you for talking about Support Network in your application workshop presentation. I recently found out I am being made redundant and luckily because I was informed about the services available I emailed Support Network straight away. They got back to me very quickly (which was great to know I'm not alone and gave me the boost I needed to keep positive) and now I can look forward to starting the specialist employment coaching programme and moving forward again."

This is typical of the type of feedback we receive after members learn about us from their regional or international IMechE representative. We are fortunate that Support Network is so regularly and effectively promoted by the Global Business Development Team (BDT). Whilst we use our volunteers to meet face to face with members, and to provide invaluable individual time and support, the BDT input enables us to reach so much further, including to companies and academic providers both throughout and beyond the UK. We also value the link to IMechE regions both internationally and throughout the UK.



**In 2019 we
assisted
members
and their
families
in 18
countries
around
the world**



"When I opened up to some peers at a conference that I was struggling with things in my home life that were adversely creeping into work, I had no idea that this would result in receiving such amazing help from Support Network.

I didn't ever know that they existed, let alone that they would be so flexible in being able to assist me. I'm so glad that a new contact told me and encouraged me to contact them.

Support Network understood the difficulties of living and working in one part of the country whilst trying to help with family matters in another. As I am a recent graduate I was eligible to receive help from the Newly Qualified fund which helps with short term difficulties and transitional financial pressures when moving from education or training into employment.

The combination of grants, practical help and a referral to the Business Development Team was invaluable. Talking made such a difference, as did the Support Network offer of counselling should I need it. This made me feel that I wasn't alone, and that in turn enabled me to cope, and to get back on track much more quickly."

– Ellen Simmons, Senior
Biomedical Engineer, AIMechE

WHAT NEXT?

During 2020 Support Network will be expanding the activity it can undertake by supporting projects as well as individuals.

The Charity Commission has approved this development, and we will therefore start to fund initiatives that use engineering in international development contexts; that enable engineering innovation, especially by small and emerging enterprises; and that help to diversify and increase opportunities to enter the profession by working with charities to assist secondary school students into STEM degrees at university.

This work will be in addition to our traditional core services and will be funded through the gains made on our investment portfolio. As always, 100% of the annual £10 donations and other fundraising received from members will be used to provide direct support and assistance back to members.

However, we feel that we could do more, and thus we should do more. If you would like to donate to one of our social investment themes above, or would like to know more, please do get in touch.

HELPING MEMBERS TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER.



WELLBEING SUPPORT

Problem-solving casework

It's not always easy to ask for help. When members have an issue that they cannot solve alone, we work with them to help obtain the best possible outcome for them.

385 worrying matters resolved

Social visits

Our team of volunteers undertakes social visits to maintain engineering networks and to help prevent isolation or loneliness. Members visiting other members, giving time to understand their situation, and making grant recommendations is at the heart of what we do.

264 visits by member volunteers



Life has been rough of late, but with all your help it has made things bearable

Counselling & bereavement support

Dealing with complicated problems, or losing somebody close can take its toll. Support Network was there to provide expert face-to-face counselling to those in need.

28 supported after loss or crisis



Respite care

Carers often find it difficult to take time out for themselves, or to arrange a trip away to enjoy a change of scene with the person they care for. Having extra support to encourage them to do this, plus helping with some of the costs, can make all the difference to them and their loved ones.

20 enabled to take a break



PRACTICAL HELP

Employment coaching

Through working in partnership with our career and CV specialists, we improved the employment prospects of members or their dependants, including finding them new or improved positions.

88 back on track with work

Health, disability, autism & dyslexia support

We helped with essential health and disability related costs. We also purchased memberships to the National Autistic Society and British Dyslexia Association for members and/or their children.

35 obtained specialist support



Tony Frater, CEng, MIMechE,
Support Network Trustee

IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH DIFFERENCE YOU CAN MAKE

"I started volunteering with the IMechE back in 2012, becoming a STEM ambassador to try and give young people the experience of what it is to be an engineer. I joined the Young Members Board to contribute to the strategy and development of the Institution, but I never realised that through this route I would discover the care given by Support Network across the membership.

Support Network has assisted with so many issues for so many individuals and I knew that I must be part of this remarkable charity.

Today I am the Young Member Trustee and am proud to see the work currently undertaken to help members and their families in such a variety of ways, throughout life from higher education through to retirement and the outcomes this achieves.

During my time as a Trustee I hope to help to alleviate the pressures on those newly qualifying and to guide recent graduates and apprentices into successful careers.

Additionally I am excited to help Support Network to become a Foundation grant giver and thus invest in our profession in a wider sense through making our first grants to use engineering and technical solutions to reduce poverty and global inequality.

It would be so amazing if we could combine these two approaches to help a current young person to become not only a qualified engineer and IMechE member, but also a participant on one of our international programmes to reduce inequality and thus inspire others to do the same."



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Secured loans

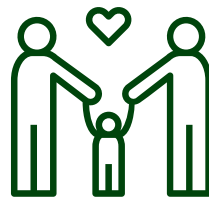
Through lending capital sums, we helped members to complete significant repairs or to undertake disability-related adaptations to their homes.

12 adaptations financed

Childcare and children's activities

We ensured that meeting the costs of childcare didn't prevent members from returning to work, and that children could still undertake sports and arts activities during times of changed circumstances for their parent(s).

30 children supported



Breathing space

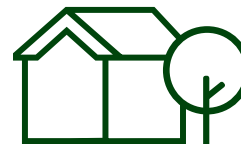
Unanticipated events such as ill health or redundancy can often stretch household finances, bringing a sense of loss of control or uncertainty about the future. We enabled members to manage during a time of financial difficulty, helping to reduce their anxiety about meeting essential bills.

28 making ends meet

Safe, secure, and warm homes

Many of our older members, including widows of former members, are reliant on pensions and savings, and needed our Winter Warmth help to feel confident that they could pay their increased fuel costs.

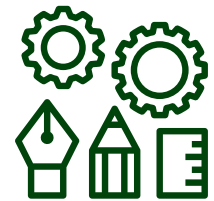
130 less stressed households



Student & Apprentice grants

Investing in the next generation is an important aspect of our work. We provided living costs grants to IMechE member Apprentices, Diploma, Undergraduate, Masters and PhD students, allowing them to focus more time on their studies.

48 achieved their potential



Legal helpline

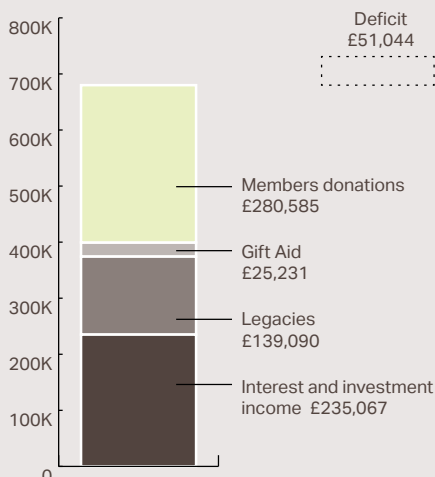
Through Support Network, members have access to specialist, free legal advice seven days a week. Last year members received guidance on their rights and options regarding employment, tax, probate, family and housing matters and disputes. Downloadable fact sheets on these, and a range of other subjects, are available from our website pages.

196 issues progressed



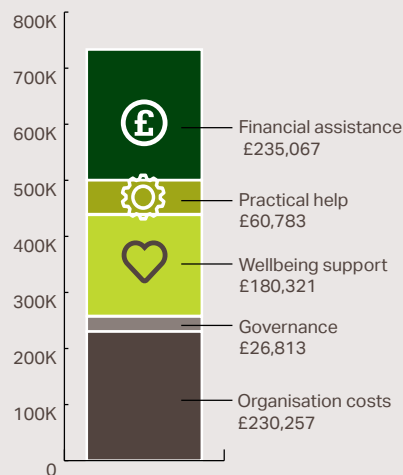
Income

Total £679,973



Expenditure & support

Total £731,017



IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE...

To enquire about volunteering, donating, applying for grants or our services, please email supportnetwork@imeche.org or call us on **020 7304 6931**

www.imeche.org/supportnetwork

To view the full 2019 financial statements and activities report visit www.imeche.org/support-network/governance