



Impact Report 2023



PHARMACIST
SUPPORT

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Welcome

2023 has been a year of achievement at Pharmacist Support. Our website traffic and ActNow campaigns continue to grow, and we were delighted to launch our new online training offering for pharmacy leaders, 'Embracing a Workplace Wellbeing Culture'. This is an incredible and carefully thought-out piece of work that will support our current and aspiring pharmacy managers of tomorrow. Additionally, we concluded our financial assistance service review, created an impactful charity video, and continued to build best practices. It was gratifying that our service users reported 100% satisfaction with our service – with 95% stating that the help they had received had a positive impact on their wellbeing. We have extended our reach and impact throughout the year, culminating in winning the Association of Charitable Organisations (ACO) 'Small Charity of the Year' award – a significant achievement to be recognised amongst our peers from other charities. We couldn't achieve any of this without support, and we are immensely thankful to all the volunteers who support us, the number of which has grown during 2023.

Pharmacists continue to play a pivotal role in meeting the demands of a stretched health service. However, the wellbeing of our pharmacy family is fundamental to being able to deliver safe and effective clinical care to patients. Burnout within the profession remains high, as highlighted at the first roundtable event on Wellbeing that we hosted jointly with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. We have seen this mirrored in demand for our services with significant increases experienced in grants and counselling requests.

Our investment portfolio exists to fund the day-to-day operational costs of the charity and, combined with our fundraising efforts, funds the services and financial assistance we deliver. Our objective is to at least maintain the portfolio's real term value after management expenses. Although we have spent more on counselling, addiction support, and grants than we planned, the Board was pleased to continue to facilitate support where it is most needed. However, rising inflation has been a challenge and should that continue, coupled with the increased demand for our services, an increase in donations will be required. In 2023, our team relocated to a new office,

still in Manchester. Although any relocation is never easy, the new office is a much better fit and will generate significant cost savings over time. At the year-end, our overall budget and investment portfolio value was broadly where we thought it would be. We were particularly pleased that, following our divestment from fossil fuel producers, our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) credentials have improved significantly, even performing better than the benchmark. In 2024, we plan to move our banking provider to the Co-Operative Bank, whose ethical and ESG values align with those of the charity.

During the year, we said goodbye and thank you to two long-serving pharmacy trustees, Anita Cawley and Paul Johnson. Trustees can serve a maximum of three, three-year terms, and during that time Anita held several key positions including Chair and Vice Chair. Paul headed up our finance committee and drove several key initiatives during his tenure. They will be greatly missed. To bring us back to our full Board complement of 11 trustees, we will initiate a trustee recruitment drive in 2024. We regularly monitor Board skills, diversity, and effectiveness, including an annual review. Trustees remain positive about the Board's performance; however, we are not complacent and will continue to ensure that our evaluations are robust and relevant.

Looking forward, 2024 is going to be an important year. We will be defining our next 5-year strategy, launching a new financial assistance scheme, and concluding our review into potentially increasing our beneficiary pool to include Pharmacy Technicians. We also hope to establish new key partnerships that will help us meet our fundraising goals.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your interest in the charity, and we hope we can count on your continued support in the future.

Esther Sadler-Williams
Chair of Trustees
Pharmacist Support

Mark Sweeney
Vice-Chair of Trustees
Pharmacist Support

Why we exist

Pharmacist Support champions the wellbeing of our pharmacy family. Our vision is that no one in our pharmacy family will face challenging times without us by their side!

As the profession's independent, trusted charity, we exist to support health and wellbeing by providing a wide variety of support services to current and former pharmacists and their families as well as students and trainees who are working towards registration as a pharmacist. Our support aims to meet their wellbeing needs, whether those be financial, physical, psychological or social.

The charity's connection to the profession is deep. Existing as an independent charity since 2006, we were initially established by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in 1841, and thus we have spent more than 180 years supporting individuals through difficult times. We've evolved from a small benevolent fund, mainly providing financial assistance to those in the profession who had fallen on hard times, into a modern-day independent charity. Today, as well as providing financial help, we are focused on championing the wellbeing of those we support through the provision of a wide range of confidential services. We continue to be responsive and proactive, adapting to the profession's needs, and we listen carefully to individuals across the profession to ensure we understand and can empathise with the issues affecting pharmacy today.



Our legal Objects define the potential beneficiaries within 'our pharmacy family' and 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) (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.

We're proud to be able to support people from such a caring profession, and we'll never give up on what we like to call our pharmacy 'family'.

* A Trainee is defined as a person in Great Britain who has successfully completed a course accredited by the GPhC, is eligible to enter training to become a pharmacist, and intends to seek registration as a pharmacist.

** A Pharmacy Student is defined as a person undertaking a GPhC accredited course in Great Britain leading to eligibility to enter accredited foundation training and register as a pharmacist.

CASE STUDY

“Without the bursary I wouldn’t have been able to make it this far.”

Priyanka* is a final-year pharmacy student who received our student bursary. She has kindly shared her story.

For me, pharmacy is a degree that combines everything I am interested in and ultimately enables me to provide the best patient care possible. Whilst at university, I had to leave home unexpectedly and quickly due to ongoing adversity. During this stressful time was the deadline for student finance applications. Because my mind was mainly on my problems, I ended up missing the deadline to apply for a maintenance loan for my final year of university. I appealed several times and after having been told to just wait month after month, they finally told me I wasn’t eligible. This meant I had to fund the whole of my final year tuition fees out of my own pocket. Even with working part-time and being signed up to an agency for extra work, I was often left worrying about how I was going to pay my bills or rent.

The stress kept piling on and was having a detrimental effect on my university work, wellbeing, and physical health. Having to pay such a large sum myself meant I

had to highly reduce my spending so I had enough to pay for basic necessities, which in turn meant I had to miss out on lots of university experiences all my friends got to have. Following on from this, I wasn’t giving lectures all my attention and I couldn’t focus on studying as my mind was always elsewhere. I started to barely scrape a pass and then began failing. I didn’t want to give up everything I had worked so hard for, so I persevered and never gave up.

There was a point I didn’t think I would make it through the year. I found out about the Pharmacist Support bursary from my university. I applied and had little hope that I was going to be accepted as all my other options had failed. By this point, all of my financial worries were reaching breaking point so the bursary was a final lifeline for me. When I found out that I had been granted a bursary I was so relieved, it felt like a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders. **The bursary means everything to me.**



With the support of the bursary, my worries surrounding my financial situation significantly decreased, because for the first time I knew I had extra support and a safety net surrounding me. I was able to buy what I needed to enhance my experience as a student pharmacist, for example learning materials and specific equipment. Having this safety net also meant I was able to shift my focus back to my studies which immensely paid off as I received a fantastic result in my overall degree classification. Having this higher degree classification means that there are more paths I could take during my pharmacy career. I have big dreams for where I want to go in my pharmacy career, I am hoping to do my foundation year in hospital and then go into specialising in mental health or substance misuse in the long run.

I honestly would not have been able to do anything at all without this support. I am really appreciative and grateful for being awarded this bursary. I have had very difficult personal circumstances which made me think I wouldn’t have been able to make it through the year, never mind finishing off my pharmacy degree. This experience has taught me the importance of resilience and not giving up. There were so many times when I thought I should, and I felt the light in my life disappear as I felt completely and utterly hopeless. I became a shell of myself and despite being very far from normal and despite me only just starting my journey **I feel proud of how far I’ve come.**

With the support of everyone at Pharmacist Support, I have thankfully been able to make it through and for that, I am ever grateful!

**We have used a pseudonym to protect the beneficiary's identity.*

Our values

Wellbeing is embedded into everyday activities at 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 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.



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**.

People First

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



Why our support is needed

To ensure that our support meets the needs of those we are here to help, each year we carry out an annual Workforce Wellbeing Survey, in collaboration with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. In 2023 a total of 1,188 eligible responses were received from pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, trainee pharmacists and pharmacy students.



86%

OF ALL RESPONDENTS
are at high risk of burnout



93%

OF RESPONDENTS
working in community pharmacy are at high risk of burnout



35%

OF RESPONDENTS
state that their mental health has been poor or very poor in the past year



60%

OF RESPONDENTS
have considered leaving their current role or the pharmacy profession in the past year

The top issues identified as having a negative impact on respondents' mental health and wellbeing in the past year were:

69%

Inadequate staffing

52%

Lack of work-life balance

50%

Lack of protected learning time

46%

Lack of colleague or senior support

42%

Long working hours



41%

OF RESPONDENTS

have received verbal abuse



16%

OF RESPONDENTS

have been concerned about addiction or addictive behaviours in the last year

How we help

We understand that events such as an illness, bereavement, or pressures and issues at work can have significant consequences. Our charitable support exists to help alleviate or manage any stresses or challenges those we are there to help may be facing. We offer a range of confidential services outlined below:



Information & Enquiries



Financial Assistance



Counselling & Peer Support



Specialist Advice



Wardley Wellbeing Service



Addiction Support



Addiction Support

This confidential service provides safe and easy access to support for individuals experiencing problems with alcohol, legal and illegal substances, gambling and other mood-altering and potentially addictive behaviours (including pornography, sex, shopping, eating and exercise). We also support those affected by someone else's addictive behaviour. The service includes access to an addiction counsellor, support to receive access to a residential addiction facility and ongoing peer support.

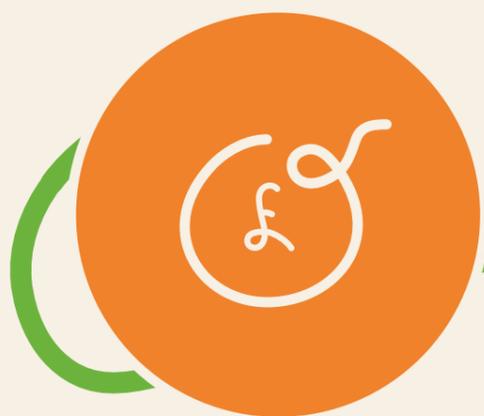
"The four weeks at Clouds House (Residential addiction facility) were fantastic. The people, staff and peers treated me so well and there was love and care. I am as prepared as I can be with the four weeks of rehab. Now begins the hard work. The provision of funding for Clouds House makes me feel so grateful and lucky as most of my peers had to fight tooth and nail for such funding. I feel it has modified my mindset and behaviours for the good. The future intention is to donate once I'm back on my feet as I am indebted to Pharmacist Support."



Counselling & Peer Support

Through our counselling service, we provide timely access to direct psychological support. Counselling sessions can be accessed via phone, online or face-to-face and are available in several different languages including Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi. The counselling service sits alongside our well-established Listening Friends service which provides the opportunity to speak confidentially over the phone with a trained volunteer pharmacist who understands the pressures of the profession and can provide a listening ear.

"The counselling has made a positive impact on my life, and it has given me the strength to carry on when I didn't have any. My counsellor listened to all my worries and problems and gave me a hope with all the things I was struggling with."



Financial Assistance

We understand that life can be unpredictable and that financial difficulties can impact an individual's mental health and wellbeing. We offer financial support to those struggling to meet their essential daily living expenses due to unexpected financial changes or an unexpected one-off essential living cost. Additionally, each year we also open our annual bursary scheme, providing bursaries of between £3,000 and £5,000 to students in their final year of study who have shown outstanding or exceptional qualities to overcome an ongoing adversity.



Information and Enquiries

Our highly trained Information and Enquiries team can be contacted by phone or email to support with a wide variety of questions and issues. We also provide a host of information on our website covering a range of topics, including mental health and wellbeing, physical health, family and personal life, finances, work life and student and trainee experience. Each section includes guidance, resources and tips on topics such as managing stress and anxiety, help with sleep, and coping with bereavement or bullying, right through to becoming a newly qualified pharmacist, career options, revalidation and building positive workplace relationships.



Specialist Advice

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



Wardley Wellbeing Service

The Wardley Wellbeing service provides evidence-based, practical information and guidance. Our website provides a range of free resources including videos, workshops and printable posters on topics such as managing stress, anxiety and sleep, connecting with others, understanding worries and having difficult conversations around mental health.

Hamza felt the counselling had been life changing and he found pleasure in everyday activities again.

Hamza* reached out to us at a critical time when a workplace issue had escalated, triggering depression and exacerbating his existing anxiety and OCD-like behaviours. Concerned about the potential worsening of his symptoms, Hamza sought our support.

Through eight counselling sessions, Hamza underwent a transformative journey. Counselling provided him with a safe space to explore the underlying causes of his distress, reassess his expectations and values, and develop healthier coping mechanisms. Recognising the toll of his relentless work schedule, Hamza empowered himself to make pivotal changes, including prioritising his personal life and scaling back his work hours to a manageable 35 per week.

As a result of counselling, Hamza experienced a significant reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety. Embracing newfound leisure activities and reconnecting with his partner, he rediscovered joy in everyday moments. By adopting healthier work-life boundaries and engaging in self-care activities like gym workouts and outdoor pursuits, Hamza fostered resilience and found balance.

Reflecting on his journey, Hamza described counselling as life-changing, equipping him with the tools to navigate his relationship with anxiety and reclaim control over his wellbeing.

**We have used a pseudonym to protect the beneficiary's identity.*



Achievements and impact in 2023



NAMED

Small Charity of the Year

at the Association of Charitable Organisations Annual Awards

49% increase

IN VISITS TO OUR CHARITY WEBSITE

47% increase

IN WEB PAGE VIEWS COMPARED TO 2022

29% increase

in the number of people signing up to our annual ACTNow wellbeing campaigns compared to 2022

#ACTNOW

23% increase

in the number of **GRANTS AWARDED** compared to **2022**



100% OF SERVICE SURVEY RESPONDENTS stated they would come back to us again if they needed advice or support in the future



mentions of wellbeing in the pharmacy press



up 69% on 2022

49

applications received for the charity's student bursary with

£28,500

awarded to

NINE

applicants



54

PEOPLE



received support from a Listening Friend volunteer - a

74%

INCREASE

compared to

2022



INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SUPPORT CALLS

provided by our addictions counsellor compared to 2022



OF SERVICE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

stated that the support they received had a very positive / positive impact on their sense of wellbeing



“Without your advice about the first contract, I may have accepted, which could have been a disaster. Thank you so much for your time, advice and quick responses.”

Myra* sought assistance from our charity regarding employment advice as a newly qualified pharmacist. She had received an interview offer for a Pharmacy Manager position but had concerns about the terms of the contract. During the interview, Myra had explicitly stated her inability to work on Saturdays due to family commitments, which she was assured wouldn't pose an issue. However, upon receiving the job offer and contract, she discovered several clauses that raised red flags.

The contract stipulated that Myra would be required to cover all sickness absences in the first instance, potentially adding extra hours to her workload. Moreover, the contract mandated weekend work and a standard 50-hour workweek, with the request to opt out of the 48-hour limit. Concerned by the lack of training (having been advised that no training would be provided) and support for her new role, which she had no prior experience in, Myra turned to the charity for guidance.

Through specialist advice and contract review, Myra gained clarity on what to look for in a contract and the potential ramifications of accepting the position. Realising the excessive working hours and lack of support were untenable, she made the difficult decision to decline the job offer. With this new knowledge, Myra went on to find another role more aligned with her needs—a pharmacist position with less responsibility offering manageable hours, support for her as a newly qualified pharmacist, with a similar salary and fair compensation for overtime.

Reflecting on her experience, Myra expressed gratitude for the timely advice and support provided by the charity. “Should there be anything else I am unsure with, I will make sure to contact you. You have been such a help as without your advice about the first contract, I may have accepted which could have been a disaster. Thank you so much for your time, advice and quick responses as they are deeply appreciated.”

*We have used a pseudonym to protect the beneficiary's identity.



Strategic objective 1

Raise awareness of Pharmacist Support.

Why? So that more potential beneficiaries are aware of who we are and what we do - enabling more people within our pharmacy family to seek support.

What we achieved during 2023

Thanks to the investment made in digital development over the past couple of years, we experienced a huge increase in engagement in our digital platforms during 2023. We saw increases in the number of website visits, the number of website users and the number of page views, which in turn helped us to manage demand within our enquiries service.

During 2023 we produced a new charity video showcasing the need to support the charity, which received fantastic feedback. The video was used at events across the country supporting our awareness and fundraising activities. We also produced a range of video case studies that shared real life experiences to demonstrate our impact and showcase the support we offer. These videos have augmented awareness of our services as well as supported our aim to break down barriers and reduce stigma around reaching out for help.

Our focus on developing more tailored, targeted communications, information and resources (showcased through the new 'I need help managing my' area of the website) led to increased engagement with our digital content. This included a 61% increase in visits to the area of the website that provides support with managing work-life, a 57% increase in visits to the trainee experience area of our website and a 34% increase in visits to the student experience area of the website.

Engagement from partners across the profession grew during 2023, with resultant increases in donations from more organisations. We attended and/or hosted 26 events during the year, including some of the largest gatherings in the pharmacy calendar such as the Pharmacy Show and Clinical Pharmacy Congress, as well as our own webinars. Through these events we reached over 21,000 people which was an increase of over 8,000 compared to 2022.

The impact this had:

70%

OF RESPONDENTS TO OUR ANNUAL WORKFORCE WELLBEING SURVEY

said they were aware of the charity



127 MENTIONS

of the charity across pharmacy and charity press



69% increase

in engagement from our Instagram followers



59% increase

in engagement on Facebook compared to 2022

45%

INCREASE IN VISITS OVERALL TO THE 'I NEED HELP MANAGING MY....' AREA OF OUR WEBSITE

(covering - mental health & wellbeing, physical health, finances, family & personal, work life, trainee and student experiences)

WE ATTENDED

37% more events

OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR WITH

67% more attendees

COMPARED WITH THE YEAR BEFORE



Strategic objective 2

Enable pharmacists to manage their wellbeing.

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

What we achieved during 2023

During 2023, we carried out a full review of our financial assistance service in line with the charity's mission, vision, and values. The review included identifying any barriers to support, ensuring that the service meets the needs of our beneficiaries and identifying any areas where we may be able to provide additional support. The outcome of the review was a revised grants policy and the decision to launch a new type of grants 'pot' in 2024 that we hope will improve the support we can provide and impact of the service.

Seventeen referrals were made to the specialist addictions counsellor for assessment and treatment options available through our Addiction Support service. We facilitated and supported four pharmacists to receive residential detox treatment in Clouds House, three of whom received financial support from the charity to help with treatment costs. We also supported 136 people through our counselling and peer support service.

Our wellbeing support continued to grow, with many individuals and teams benefitting from the abundance of guidance and resources available on our website. During the year, 126 individuals signed up to the Wellbeing Learning Platform and 582 individuals attended our facilitated workshops. We created new tailored pathways within the Wellbeing Learning Platform with a range of videos and content, designed to reach trainees, students, and pharmacists. Informed by our wealth of data, we developed a new online course: Embracing a Workplace Wellbeing Culture. Designed for current and aspiring pharmacy managers and leaders, the course is made up of six-modules and has been carefully designed to arm individuals with the knowledge and research-based tools needed to enhance the wellbeing of pharmacists and pharmacy teams in the workplace.

The impact this had:

 **876**

counselling sessions funded during 2023

 **140**

GRANTS AWARDED DURING 2023

 **£64,178**

secured in financial gains by our beneficiaries, through claiming benefits and successfully appealing against DWP decisions (with a further £95,236 in projected gains).

£116,666

in 'gains' were achieved for our beneficiaries as a direct result of input from our specialist employment advisor. 'Gains' included changing discrimination practices, stopping harassment or bullying and retention of salaries where dismissal was averted.

 **1,046**

enquiries dealt with via our Information and Enquiries service

 **£193,528**

DISTRIBUTED AS GRANTS DURING 2023

 **215**

SPECIALIST ADVICE REFERRALS

made supporting people with employment, benefits, debt and immigration advice.

100% of respondents

stated that the services provided had a positive impact on their level of knowledge.

Strategic objective 3

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 we achieved during 2023

During 2023, we ran our fifth joint annual workforce wellbeing survey in collaboration with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. This, alongside our service data, has provided a wealth of information giving us a thorough understanding of the challenges faced by those studying and working in pharmacy. We've used this knowledge to continue to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues within the profession and promote the importance of investment in wellbeing sector wide.

In May 2023, the charity chaired a Workforce Wellbeing roundtable. The roundtable co-hosted by us and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, brought together a range of employers, trade unions, regulators and professional bodies to discuss staff wellbeing in the pharmacy team and its impacts on patient safety. The roundtable

offered organisations the opportunity to share insight and understanding on how the wellbeing of the pharmacy team can impact patients and to consider staff wellbeing at a system level as well as an individual level.

Following its launch in 2020, this year saw engagement with the charity's ACTNow wellbeing campaign continue to grow. The student campaign ran for the first time on University Mental Health Day – an established national awareness day focused on bringing together the higher education community to make mental health a university-wide priority. Joining forces with pharmacy schools up and down the country we encouraged pharmacy students to ACTNow on the day. Our Trainee ACTNow wellbeing campaign ran prior to the summer assessment from 22nd -26th May 2023 and focused on getting trainees mentally prepared for the assessment and transition to registered pharmacists.

The Pharmacist ACTNow campaign ran from 16th October – 4th November 2023 and aimed to foster open dialogue around workplace wellbeing by encouraging individuals to share their personal stories. Additionally, the campaign provided valuable insights into cultivating a supportive workplace culture and empowering individuals to prioritise their mental health and wellbeing. In addition, to mark Alcohol Awareness Week we developed new video resources with our Addictions Counsellor and two Addiction Support beneficiaries.

"I think I'm much better at prioritising as a direct consequence of this campaign"

The impact this had:

 **2,758** sign-ups to our

#ACTNOW

wellbeing campaigns - an increase of

29% compared to 2022

78% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

reported that the Pharmacist ACTNow campaign had supported them to prioritise their wellbeing

102% increase in trainee sign ups for the **ACTNow** campaign (compared to 2022), with **100%** of survey respondents saying a similar campaign would be useful in the future.

100% of respondents said they would recommend **Pharmacist Support's Wellbeing** resources to a colleague.

100% of respondents to our services survey stated they were **more able to manage wellbeing** as a result of accessing our **workshops and Wellbeing Learning Platform**.

Strategic objective

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 we achieved during 2023

To support us to continue to manage growing demand, the charity continued to focus on increasing income, developing and utilising our volunteers and reviewing our processes and systems to ensure that we operate as efficiently as possible.

In 2023, as we looked to effectively manage our present and future demands, we conducted a thorough review of our funding strategy. Like other similar charities, we operate at a deficit and rely on our investment portfolio to provide funds for the ongoing operational costs of the charity. Over the long term, this means that our investments must provide us the necessary returns to enable us to continue to deliver our activities annually while at least maintaining the portfolio's real term value to ensure the financial viability of the charity. The charity has been successful in doing this; however, as we continue to see an increase in demand for our services,

we recognise that we must increase income from other sources to continue to run sustainably. With this in mind, the charity developed a new fundraising strategy with a goal of raising at least £1 million over the next four years. As part of this work, the charity has carried out a review of its approach to legacies (i.e. including a donation to Pharmacist Support in your will), reviewed how we support individuals to fundraise on our behalf and continued to work with partners with a view to increasing income.

As well as fundraising, the charity continued to keep a close eye on expenditure. Over the past few years this has focused on utilising digital solutions to offer increased impact. During 2023, we had an opportunity to review the charity's office space and have relocated to smaller offices. This led to a one-off cost in 2023 related to the office move but will create significant cost savings for the future.

To support us to increase our reach, we carried out a review of our student ambassador volunteer programme and subsequently conducted a recruitment exercise. Following this activity we now have new student ambassadors across a range of universities.

In line with our commitment to environmental sustainability, several investment policy changes were implemented in 2023. This change in approach has seen the charity divest in fossil fuel producers and move to a more global approach. To improve transparency, we've increased direct investments in companies rather than investing via pooled funds. Overall, these changes have resulted in a reduction in carbon emissions of our investment portfolio and an improved score in company performance against the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The impact this had:



70% INCREASE

in the number of volunteer hours recorded in 2023



INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

performing significantly above **ESG benchmarks**



8 NEW STUDENT AMBASSADORS



recruited in 2023



Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Pharmacist Support is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and creating an inclusive environment for all who work with or access its services. We want to ensure that people are treated fairly, equitably and are offered equal access and opportunities. This applies to our beneficiaries and supporters as well as our staff, volunteers and trustees.

During 2023 we continued to implement our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

(EDI) strategy and action plan. We are committed to continually improving our practices and listening to those we are here to help. As a charity we put people at the centre of all that we do. We are particularly mindful of the diverse needs of the people we are here to support and are committed to understanding and responding to their needs.

Our EDI strategy has three objectives:

Objective one:

To develop and deliver services that are inclusive, accessible and free from discrimination and bias.

Objective two:

To develop organisational policies and practices that encourage diversity, equality, and inclusion and which proactively help tackle discrimination.

Objective three:

To attract and retain a diverse group of staff, trustees and volunteers who reflect the beneficiaries we serve and put them at the centre of our decision-making processes.

Our progress

During 2023, the charity signed up to the Disability Confident employer scheme and received level one Disability Confident Committed status.

To achieve this status, we ensure that:

- Our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- We communicate and promote vacancies to ensure that they are widely accessible

- We offer interviews to disabled people who meet the criteria for the role
- We anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments as required
- We support any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition to enable them to stay in work

In addition, during 2023 we continued to build our relationships with other pharmacy organisations to allow us to better understand barriers to service users and reach more potential beneficiaries. Having identified gaps in data collection we built a new framework to collect EDI data and mapped this data against registrant data published by the GPhC. We also embedded new flexible working and hybrid working policies for our staff.

We will continue this journey over the coming years and are committed to ensuring all voices are heard and to the continuous improvement and development of our services to meet our beneficiaries' diverse needs.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability

Pharmacist Support exists to support our pharmacy family now and into the future. We recognise that the climate crisis is a global threat, impacting the health of our pharmacy family and the whole of humanity. Tackling this threat will require significant change and we believe we have a duty to do all we can to support the global effort that is required. As a charity, we believe we have a responsibility to act on climate change and are committed to considering environmental sustainability across our work. Our commitment includes:

Strategy

We formally acknowledge there is a climate crisis and have committed to considering the impact of the decisions we make on the climate in line with Pharmacist Support's charitable objectives.

Investments

We are conscious of the impact our investment portfolio can have and we have put in place measures to achieve a more socially and environmentally responsible investment portfolio. We continue to work with our investment managers to measure the impact of our investments against several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that their environmental, social and governance investment policies align with our values and commitment. We do not invest in fossil fuel producers.

Working practices

We recognise that as well as our investments, other aspects of how we operate (such as our offices, IT, meetings and events) affect the environment. We have committed to reviewing our internal processes and have produced an environmental policy which will seek to reduce our environmental impact. The implementation of the policy will embed the consideration of sustainability within our working practices and operational decisions.

We can't do it alone.....

Volunteers

Volunteers play a crucial role at Pharmacist Support and help us to increase our reach and impact. Our volunteers are based across the country and are supported by our staff. Regular updates and learning and development opportunities are delivered to all volunteers 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.

Our main groups of volunteers are Trustees, Listening Friends and Ambassadors.

Trustees are accountable for ensuring that the charity continues to thrive and are governed through the requirements of the Charity Commission. Pharmacist Support currently has nine trustees, as we said farewell to two long standing trustees during the year, Anita Cawley and Paul Johnson. Trustees are appointed for terms lasting three years, and they may only serve a maximum of nine years consecutively, which provides an opportunity for fresh perspectives, skills and experience to be included on a regular basis. The board is currently made up of six pharmacy trustees and three lay trustees. Our lay trustees bring a viewpoint from outside the profession.



Listening Friends are current or retired pharmacists, and because of this shared professional background, they are uniquely able to understand the specific pressures affecting pharmacists and their families, as well as pharmacy students and trainees. The Listening Friends peer support has been running for 26 years.

Charity Ambassadors champion our work within their local pharmacy communities, such as at their place of work/study, local networks and organisations. This role is vital to Pharmacist Support's work and helps ensure that people who are eligible for support are aware of our charity and how to access our services. Another key part of the role is to help raise valuable funds so that the charity's support continues long into the future.

Pharmacist Support's Financial Assistance saved me from being homeless.

Barbara* is a community pharmacist who was made homeless due to a relationship breakdown and the death of her parents. We were able to support her to get back on her feet with our Financial Assistance. She has kindly shared her story to show that there is support out there and it can get better.

"I was a carer to both of my parents and was living with them in a private rented property so I could cater to their medical needs as well as working my full-time community pharmacy job. I have since sadly lost both of my parents and have been struggling through bereavement.

After my parents passed, I was still renting their property. However, I could no longer afford the rent as around the same time as my parents passing, I was going through the breakdown of my long-term relationship. This meant I had to cover all rent and bills alone. Eventually I was evicted and had nowhere else to go, so was rendered homeless.

I spent over 6 months sofa-surfing and sleeping rough.

Due to the cost of my parents' medical bills, I was in debt and had to take out multiple loans to cover this. In addition, because of some rent arrears from my parents' property, I couldn't get a reference which made the process of finding a new flat extremely difficult. I reached out to my local council for support, but they weren't able to help me.

I was really struggling and didn't know where else to turn.

After months of searching, I managed to find a landlord who would rent their property to me. However, I needed to pay the full deposit and one month's rent upfront. Altogether this was upwards of £4,000 – money I did not have. After spending some time looking online trying to find an option to help me, I came across a social media post about

Pharmacist Support's Financial Assistance. Initially I didn't apply and continued to try to find a different option. I also used an online benefit checker which gave options relating to any charities or benefits I could be entitled to. Pharmacist Support came up here too, so I decided to apply as I desperately needed help. The application process was straight forward and the forms I needed to complete were available on the website. Pharmacist Support also signposted me to debt support through their Specialist Advice. I was kept up to date throughout the application and the process was much quicker than expected. I then heard back from the charity with the great news I was going to receive financial help.

Pharmacist Support was able to cover the deposit and first month's rent so I could move into a new flat.

I was able to slowly start to piece together my life again thanks to the Financial Assistance I received.

I would like to say a huge thank you to Pharmacist Support as without their support I would probably still be homeless and may have had to stop working."

*We have used a pseudonym to protect the beneficiary's identity.

Fundraising and partnerships

As the profession's charity, we recognise that collaboration across the sector is key to supporting our pharmacy family to ensure it is well-equipped to face any challenges people may have. Our charity partnerships enable us to deliver much-needed support to our pharmacy family. Our partners help us to raise awareness of the charity and our support services, champion the importance of wellbeing in pharmacy, deliver our support services and meet our strategic objectives and raise valuable income.

Our high-level partners during 2023



We have been working in partnership with the Pharmacists' Defence Association since 2017. The PDA now has more than 37,000

members and donates £1 a year for each of those members to the charity. In addition, they encourage their members to donate when joining or renewing their membership.

As well as this financial support, the PDA helps us raise charity awareness through their vast network. Without their continued partnership, we would not be able to provide as much vital support. Since launching this partnership, the PDA has provided more than £250,000 in donations.

"The PDA and our members donate more than £35,000 per year to Pharmacist Support to help fund activities that support pharmacists when they need it. We are delighted to be able to help the charity to help pharmacists improve and maintain their wellbeing."



We started working with Teva UK in 2020, when they committed to sponsoring our first ever ACTNow campaign. In 2023, Teva UK joined us as a corporate partner and were involved in numerous charity activities, including the Pharmacist ACTNow campaign, live wellbeing workshops, development of exclusive wellbeing resources and collaboration at key sector events.

"Teva UK is proud to partner with Pharmacist Support. It's important to us to endorse the great work the charity does in supporting the pharmacy community, particularly around mental health and wellbeing, which are more invaluable now than ever"

Other 2023 partnerships



In 2023, Boots sponsored our Trainee ACTNow campaign, helping us to reach and support more trainees across our pharmacy family.

LOCATE A LOCUM

Locate a Locum also joined us as campaign sponsors for our Trainee ACTNow campaign, supporting trainees to get mentally prepared for their assessment and transition to being a registered pharmacist.



The CPC supported our work by providing free stand space at their London and Manchester events and donating £1 per UK-registered pharmacist who attends CPC to our charity.



The Pharmacy Show supported our work by helping us to raise awareness of our charity at their event and encouraging attendees to donate to our much-needed fundraising drive.

We would also like to recognise and thank the following organisations for their support across the year:



Donations from organisations

Hull Pharmacists' Association

In June 2023 we received a donation of £18,762 from the Hull Pharmacists' Association: Andrew Hersom, President & Past Secretary, and Elizabeth Lyle, Treasurer of the association, said:

"After many years of proudly championing our local pharmacy community, we're pleased to be able to continue the legacy of Hull Pharmacists' Association through donating our remaining financial assets to our profession's charity. Our members were keen for the money to be used to benefit fellow pharmacists and their families as we all know people who have had mental health and physical problems during their professional lives. We believe, through the great work of Pharmacist Support, the donation will really help to make a difference."

Manchester Pharmaceutical Association

Manchester Pharmaceutical Association took the decision to wrap up the organisation and donate their remaining financial assets - £3,424 to Pharmacist Support. Dr Geoff Benson, Vice President of the MPA said:

"In deciding the fate of the remaining financial assets, continuing to support the profession, particularly individual pharmacists was considered a high priority and a final fulfilment of the objects of MPA. Hence the decision to donate the final monies to Pharmacist Support."

Community Pharmacy North East London

Community Pharmacy North East London (CP NEL) donated £1 per pharmacy to Pharmacist Support on behalf of the 375 contracts that are represented in northeast London. Shilpa Shah, CEO, and the CP NEL committee members said of the donation:

"We recognise when speaking to pharmacy owners and pharmacists that it's getting tougher and tougher out there in Community Pharmacy and often whilst speaking to people, we find that they are offloading their worries and stress at the same time. As a team at the LPC, we support where we can and if appropriate, with practical advice, but it suddenly occurred to us that we want people to be able to offload in a safe environment and that Pharmacist Support would be a good organisation to signpost to. We decided to donate a £1 per pharmacy and to share Pharmacist Support's details with all our pharmacists"

PG Mutual

In 2022 PG Mutual made an initial donation when the company first launched its Annual Charity Awards, where they encouraged their members and the general public to vote on the charities they wished the organisation to support. During 2023 we received a further £1,000 donation. They said:

"PG Mutual are very pleased to be able to support your charity again with a donation (of £1,000) in support of the great work you do throughout the year."

How can you help?

As demands upon the profession increase, the demand for our assistance continues to grow. As an independent, non-membership organisation, we rely on the support of individuals and organisations to continue our important work. If you are an organisation, there are lots of ways to support our work. Opportunities range from raising money

on behalf of the charity, making a donation on behalf of your organisation to campaign sponsorship, and high level mutually beneficial partnerships. If you are an organisation keen to support the profession's independent charity, please get in touch with us via our website.

If you are an individual there are a number of ways you can help us support more people in need:

- **make a one off or regular donation**
- **hold a fundraising event**
- **leave a gift in your Will (legacy)**
- **give through your work, using Payroll Giving**
- **even when you eat out or shop online, or by donating your used stamps!**

Whichever route you choose and no matter how large or small your donation, it will make a real difference to the lives of our pharmacy family in their times of need.

Your legacy will be a lifeline for those following in your footsteps

Our vision is that no one in our pharmacy family will face challenging times without us by their side. As a charity we aspire to grow our financial sustainability to give our beneficiaries the resilience to thrive throughout their career (and beyond into retirement). By leaving a gift in your Will, you will be helping to ensure that

future generations of pharmacists continue to get all the support they need. Every gift in every Will – regardless of size – will have a lasting impact on our future strength and ability to respond to the personal needs of our pharmacy family across Great Britain.

Did you know:

- You can allocate as little as 1% of your estate to Pharmacist Support, ensuring your loved ones inherit the remainder.
- A charitable gift of £10,000 could potentially save £4,000 in inheritance tax. However, professional advice is recommended.
- Without a Will, there is a possibility that your surviving spouse may not inherit everything.

Want to ensure your wishes are honoured and your assets are allocated as you desire? A Will provides the clarity and assurance needed to fulfil your intentions.

Please visit pharmacistsupport.org/support-our-work/gifts-in-wills/ or scan the QR code to find out how your legacy would help pharmacists following in your footsteps and pledge a gift in your Will.



What's next?

2024 marks the last year of the charity's current five-year strategy, therefore, during 2024 we will carry out a strategic review, and create our new strategy.

It remains our purpose to support our pharmacy family in perpetuity, as well as continue to evolve to remain relevant. We have been increasingly asked to consider supporting pharmacy technicians and, as part of our strategic review cycle, we believe that this is the right time to consider options around pharmacy technicians potentially becoming part of our beneficiary pool in the future.

Building on our work last year, 2024 will see us relaunch our financial assistance scheme. As part of the strategic review and in line with our EDI plan, we will take the opportunity to review the rest of our service offering to ensure that it is in line with beneficiary needs, is accessible, impactful and cost effective.

Building on our recent developments and best practice within the sector, we plan to develop a transformational digital strategy to help modernise delivery of our services and support us to efficiently meet demand.

We will continue to increase awareness of the issues impacting the pharmacy family's wellbeing via the ACTNow campaign, carrying out the workforce wellbeing survey and hosting another roundtable on wellbeing. Also, we will continue to promote our new training course for managers and leaders which focuses on how to build a culture which supports positive mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Nurturing new and existing partnerships will remain a priority for the charity, to support us to increase income, impact and our reach. We will work hard to deliver our new fundraising strategy, with a target of raising at least £1million in the next four years.



What our beneficiaries say...



"It has made a positive impact on my life and it has given me the strength to carry on when I didn't have any. It gave me a direction to achieve my goal. My counsellor listened to all my worries and problems and gave me a hope with all the things I was struggling with."

"I am more conscious of incorporating the activities I do to unwind and improving upon the ones that I know I should or could be doing."



"I was in a desperate situation. I was highly stressed and anxious. Plus it triggered other issues in my life that I had dealt with successfully. I honestly think the counselling service and information webinars helped me to recover and find a place of wellbeing safety with tools to help when things got very stressed. Thank you!"



"Pharmacist Support has been an excellent resource during an exceedingly challenging time for me, due to an unexpected and protracted episode of ill health. The support is broad, effective and delivered with care. I am so glad that I decided to connect with their services and am grateful for their input on my journey back towards good health. Thank you Pharmacist Support."



"The counselling allowed me to explore various coping mechanisms for my difficulties and have a safe space to speak about my worries without feeling judged."



"Thank you for providing help to me at a critical time in my life. Things haven't gone according to plan and I am very grateful for the help that the charity provided."



"A safe and caring space to share complex thoughts, work through problems, develop new perspectives, challenge thinking patterns and implement coping techniques to specific challenges that I was facing or due to face."



"Pharmacist Support provided me with support in a compassionate and respectful manner at a time when I was struggling financially, their help has made a huge difference to my situation both financially and emotionally. Thank you!"



Get in touch.

Visit: pharmacistsupport.org
Email: info@pharmacistsupport.org
Call: **0808 168 2233**
Connect: 



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