



MISCARRIAGE  
ASSOCIATION

The knowledge to help



HELPING PEOPLE THROUGH  
*Our annual review 2016/17*



Sarah Fitzgerald,  
Miscarriage Association Chair

Welcome to the Miscarriage Association, where we've been providing information and support to people affected by miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy and molar pregnancy for 35 years.

We hope you enjoy reading about our achievements over the last year and about how our services continue to make a real difference in helping people affected by pregnancy loss.

Everything we do is only possible because of the efforts of many amazing people, including our supporters, fundraisers, professionals and volunteers.

*Helping people through, thanks to all of you.*

## Our vision:

Everyone affected by pregnancy loss receives the care, support and information that they need.

# Helping people through... together

## The experience of miscarriage, ectopic or molar pregnancy can be devastating.

While some women and their partners may move on quite quickly, for many others it is a bereavement, a time of loss and grief for their baby and the plans they had for this new life. It can be hard to know where to turn.

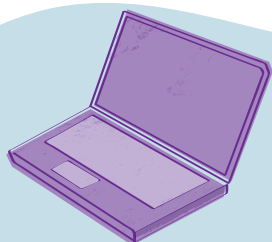
Every year, thousands of people affected by pregnancy loss seek the support and information offered by the Miscarriage Association staff and volunteers.

Of course it's not just our services that can help when people need it most.

Family members and friends, colleagues and health professionals, bloggers and broadcasters – all have an important part to play in providing support and helping people feel less alone.

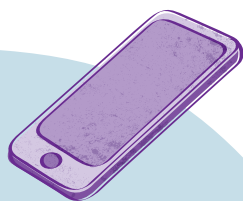
**Let's all continue working together, helping each other to help people through.**

## How we're helping, in numbers...



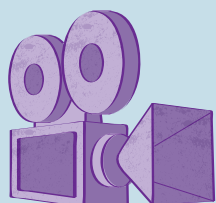
**1.38m**  
website visits

We had a record 1.38 million website visits from people seeking information and support



**5,100**  
direct contacts

Our helpline team responded to 5,100 calls, emails and messages, with 54 volunteers offering additional telephone and group support



**6**  
new films

We launched new e-learning resources for health professionals, including 6 new films



**2.1m**  
people reached

Our Wave of Light candle image marking Baby Loss Awareness Week reached over 2.1 million people, almost twice as many as last year

In 2016/17 we focused on what kind of help can be most useful. We've heard time and time again that being listened to can make all the difference.

So, we launched our #HereToListen campaign during Baby Loss Awareness Week and asked people to share our graphics on social media to say, 'If you want to talk, I'm here to listen'. This reached over 10,000 people.

We also commissioned an animation, telling the story of one couple's experience of miscarriage and how they were helped through it.

Thanks to our supporters, it has been shared more than 3,000 times and reached nearly half a million people.





Sue Talbot,  
Miscarriage Association  
Facebook Group member,  
27 weeks pregnant with  
her rainbow baby at the  
time of writing

## Finding support – and offering it too

My miscarriage journey started in January 2016. I'd had an entirely uneventful and unstressful pregnancy in 2013. So when I lost my first (January), and then a second (October) in 2016, the 'it'll never happen to me' mentality firmly kicked me up the you-know-what! It wasn't until after my second missed miscarriage that I discovered the Miscarriage Association's private Facebook group - and what a godsend it turned out to be too.

Miscarriage results in, for many of us, an incredibly deep grief, one that I never imagined previously. In those lonely early days I could openly share my feelings and thoughts, and gain support from people who truly understood. I felt my grief progress through various stages during those weeks, from using the group as a crutch just to get through the day, to supporting others. It helped me process my own experiences through those of others, which in turn showed me how far I'd come myself.

In more recent times I've increasingly drawn on the support from the sister site 'Trying Again', as I treacle-waded through a period of secondary infertility, and then coping with an anxious pregnancy after loss.

These groups are managed to a very high standard, and the contributors are protected well. The membership themselves are a marvel, always there with a virtual hug, support, information, or whatever's needed. The thought of navigating this voyage without these online support groups seems very bleak.

Online access to our support and resources is essential in enabling us to reach out to people affected by pregnancy loss, particularly as it's the way most people now find and communicate with us.

**Increased and improved online support and information** is one of our most important goals.

### WHAT WE DID IN 2016/17

- Conducted a review of the website, incorporating user feedback which confirmed the need to keep existing content but to improve the design and navigation
- Increased followers on social media by 48%, improving our ability to engage with our supporters, share stories and research news and signpost people to the information on our website
- Noted a record number of website visits totalling 1.38 million
- Maintained a safe and secure online forum for sharing experiences and support

Your website  
has lessened  
my anxiety  
and feelings of  
isolation and given  
me lots of  
very helpful  
information.





Michelle Every,  
Miscarriage Association  
Support Volunteer

## Offering a safe space for sharing stories of loss

In 2002 I was supported by a wonderful couple who volunteered for the Miscarriage Association. They sat in my home offering their time, care and attention to me and my husband. We had discovered a missed miscarriage at my 20 week scan. My baby had died.

This couple's positive support left a lasting impression on me. When I felt ready, I offered to volunteer for the M.A.. I wanted to be able to help others in the way I had been helped. Over the years of volunteering I have chosen to offer unhurried listening time and to be available in the crisis moments. I offer support through telephone contact and a support group.

It is a privilege to create a safe space for those suffering to enable them to share their own story and to be assured that grief is a natural process after loss. Support is offered to anyone and at any stage of their grief journey.

I hope that this support validates individuals' feelings and experiences and that they are assured that their loss matters.

This woman's reflection shows the benefit of the support the M.A. offers:

*"I thought I was going out of my mind or suffering depression but the group taught me sadness is different. I was told it's normal to not be able to 'just get over it'. Even many months later. These groups validated my guilt, anger and sadness in a way which made me feel much less lonely in my grief."*

While online services are vital, we offer support in other ways too, so people can access our help in the way that is right for them. That's why **appropriate direct personal support and information** is another of our goals.

### WHAT WE DID IN 2016/17

- Responded to 5,100 helpline calls, emails and direct messages asking for support and information
- Provided further telephone and face to face support, thanks to our network of 54 support volunteers, all with personal experience of pregnancy loss
- 16 volunteers contributed to our online support
- Ensured that our wide range of leaflets, which are available online and in print, are all up to date



Your email  
has helped me  
to make sense  
of my feelings  
and to make me  
feel I am entitled  
to grieve.



Naomi Page,  
Obstetrics & Gynaecology  
Senior Registrar

## Understanding each patient's needs

In my work I am involved in various aspects of pregnancy loss, including ultrasound scanning to make a diagnosis and breaking bad news. I discuss management options and provide support, as well as offer advice on where to get further support.

Last year I was able to assist the M.A. with their development of short films, in particular 'Management of Miscarriage', which act as good practice guides for health professionals. The M.A. recognises that health professionals are often very good at managing physical needs, but sometimes find it difficult to manage the emotional needs of the patient. So, these resources give a very important insight into the patient's experience of pregnancy loss, and for us as health professionals, having this knowledge helps us to provide better care.

The resources are also valuable in helping health professionals, both in the community and hospital, understand different aspects of the patients' care that they may not necessarily be directly involved in.

The M.A. plays a vital role in the direct support of patients experiencing pregnancy loss, helping people connect with others who have gone through a similar experience. I have referred many of my patients to their services.

Often the impact of pregnancy loss is underestimated. Acknowledging that every patient has a different response and catering for those needs is a vital part of my work.

The care you receive from a health professional – whether it's your GP, hospital doctor, sonographer, nurse or midwife – can make all the difference to your experience of pregnancy loss. Having **more health professionals able to provide good and sensitive care** is our goal.

### WHAT WE DID IN 2016/17

- Launched new online learning materials for those who care for patients with pregnancy loss in hospital and in the community
- Joined the multi-organisation Bereavement Care Network, initiated by the Royal College of Midwives and Sands, supporting health professionals working in bereavement in pregnancy and at birth
- Became core members of a group of charities working to develop a National Bereavement Care Pathway for pregnancy and baby loss, launched by members of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss
- Were actively involved in research, including five clinical trials, the 'Death before Birth' project, with the Universities of Birmingham and Bristol and the Miscarriage Priority Setting Partnership; and served on the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) Early Pregnancy Guideline Development Group for Recurrent Pregnancy Loss



New online learning materials



Keyan Milanian,  
Miscarriage Association  
Supporter and Fundraiser

## Talking openly to tackle the taboo

We had five miscarriages in all. After the third, having kept them a secret from all but our closest friends and family, going half mad in the process, we decided to 'go public'. Both being journalists, we wrote about our experiences and it felt natural and cathartic.

Being in the industry, we knew how powerful discussing a 'taboo', publicly, could be. Still, the response we received to our various articles, from those we knew and those we did not, blew us away. In particular, we drew strength from knowing we were by no means alone in our situation.

Male friends at work would tell me how they had read the articles and shared the same feeling of powerlessness I'd experienced. Later, I ran the London Marathon for the Miscarriage Association and, inspired by our experience, my (brilliant, and bonkers) father-in-law did the same a year later.

In November of 2016 I was invited to speak at the AEPU (Association of Early Pregnancy Units) conference in Cardiff for the M.A. and talk about miscarriage from a partner's perspective. Nervous as I was, standing up in front of 200 people, my voice shaking, was one of the best things I've ever done.

We've seen first-hand how important and powerful it is to talk openly about miscarriage and the pain it causes and that's exactly why we plan to continue to support the M.A..

Many people still find it hard to talk about pregnancy loss and worry about others' reactions. That's why we've made **more public discussion, awareness and media coverage of pregnancy loss** one of our goals.

### WHAT WE DID IN 2016/17

- Launched the #HereToListen campaign during Baby Loss Awareness Week, with an animation which has been viewed more than 200,000 times; our Wave of Light graphic was shared over 18,000 times, reaching 2.1 million people – almost twice as many as the previous year
- Commissioned a YouGov survey to investigate public attitudes towards pregnancy loss and used the results to help start planning a new awareness campaign
- Involved in increased public discussion and a surge in media requests when chef Gordon Ramsay and his wife suffered a late miscarriage, when Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon talked about her miscarriage and again during a Coronation Street storyline
- Continued as the 'go-to' charity for media and others seeking miscarriage expertise, comment and case studies – and with the help of our 76 Media Volunteers, we responded to almost 100 media requests



Baby Loss Awareness Week animation

# Abridged Financial Statements

1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017

|   | General funds<br>£ | Designated funds<br>£ | Restricted funds<br>£ | Total<br>£     |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| <b>INCOME FROM:</b>                                     |                    |                       |                       |                |
| Donations and legacies                                  | 223,433            | -                     | 3,269                 | 226,702        |
| Other trading activities<br>(fundraising & merchandise) | 87,187             | -                     | -                     | 87,187         |
| Charitable activities (leaflet sales)                   | 22,541             | -                     | -                     | 22,541         |
| Investment income                                       | 3,804              | -                     | -                     | 3,804          |
| Other income  | 1,000              | -                     | -                     | 1,000          |
| <b>Total income</b>                                     | <b>337,965</b>     | <b>-</b>              | <b>3,269</b>          | <b>341,234</b> |
| <b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>                                  |                    |                       |                       |                |
| Raising funds   | 40,032             | -                     | -                     | 40,032         |
| Charitable activities                                   | 248,055            | 42,074                | 4,436                 | 294,565        |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                | <b>288,087</b>     | <b>42,074</b>         | <b>4,436</b>          | <b>334,597</b> |
| Net income / (expenditure)                              | 49,878             | (42,074)              | (1,167)               | 6,637          |
| <b>BALANCE SHEET</b>                                    |                    |                       |                       |                |
| Fixed assets  |                    |                       |                       | 604            |
| Current assets  |                    |                       |                       | 424,643        |
| Total liabilities                                       |                    |                       |                       | (7,950)        |
| <b>Net assets</b>                                       |                    |                       |                       | <b>417,297</b> |
| <b>Represented by:</b>                                  |                    |                       |                       |                |
| Brought forward from 2015/16                            | 353,990            | 47,900                | 8,770                 | 410,660        |
| Net income / (expenditure) 2016/17                      | 49,878             | (42,074)              | (1,167)               | 6,637          |
| Transfer between funds                                  | (76,322)           | 76,322                | -                     | -              |
| <b>Balance carried forward</b>                          | <b>327,546</b>     | <b>82,148</b>         | <b>7,603</b>          | <b>417,297</b> |

These abridged financial statements have been extracted from the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017. The full financial statements were prepared in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and receive an independent examination report from Mazars LLP.

These abridged financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information, the full financial statements, the independent examiner's report on those financial statements and the Trustees' annual report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained free of charge from the Miscarriage Association, 17 Wentworth Terrace, Wakefield WFI 3QW or from the Charity Commissioner's website.

The full financial statements were approved on 25 November 2017 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and Companies House.

Signed:   
P. Kerry (Hon Treasurer from 9.9.17)

**Independent Examiner**  
Mazars LLP, Mazars House  
Gelderd Road, Leeds LS27 7JN

**Principal Bankers,**  
Cooperative Bank, Providence Street,  
Wakefield WFI 3BG



# Reviewing our finances...

The Miscarriage Association has had another sound financial year. Trustees and staff continued to manage the M.A.'s resources, and the public money donated to us, with great care and with commitment to best financial principles. We succeeded in raising funds that exceeded expenditure during the year so that we have been able to continue providing high quality services and also to invest in further development of our work.

Total income for 2016/17 was very similar to that for the previous year, though there were some differences in the detail. Income from donations rose by 13%, greatly helped by a Google Nonprofit gift in kind, valued at £82,590. This gift, allowing free online advertising of our services, is recorded in cash terms in both income and expenditure, to highlight its value to the M.A.. We noted a small drop in generated funds, notably from the London Marathon, although this reflected the timing of monies received rather than our runners' fundraising achievements. Restricted income was branch income only, less than in 2015/16 when we also received grants for specific projects.

Overall expenditure increased by 21% compared with the previous year. This includes the reported spend of the gift in kind mentioned above. We increased spending on staffing with two new appointments and there were increases in some fundraising costs. Most significantly, we increased spending on three development projects: developing online learning resources for health professionals, awareness and publicity work, and website development.

It is important to note the costs which were saved. The generously donated services of volunteers enable the M.A. to keep the costs of providing direct support services relatively low. Gifts in kind, including payroll services, also combine to save funds. All these gifts are greatly appreciated, along with the financial and moral support provided by donors, members, supporters and friends.

The M.A. ended the year with a healthy fund balance. This enables us to maintain a reserves fund of six months' operational costs, while investing further in progressing our five-year mission: improving the support, information and care provided to people affected by pregnancy loss; reducing the taboo associated with pregnancy loss; and developing the organisation to sustain that mission.

## ...and thanking our supporters

The Miscarriage Association would like to express our thanks to all those who have contributed to our funds this year. Grants, donations or the proceeds of fundraising events – every contribution, large or small, is greatly appreciated. While we don't have space to list all our fundraisers and donors here, we would like to express special thanks to the following supporters who helped us maintain and develop our services in 2016/17:

### Individuals & groups

- G Boyle
- Dr Roy G Farquharson
- D Houghton & friends
- Sarah Gratton and Paul Sweet
- J and S Milanian
- S Orton
- Romy and Dean Rawlings & friends
- A Ruddle
- Scottish Ladies Circle and Tangent members
- D and S Vickers
- All our online donors, many of whom choose to remain anonymous

### Companies & charitable trusts

- Arriva London
- Debt Support Centre
- Duncan Norman Charitable Trust
- Incisive Media
- Ian McTaggart Trust
- Orr Mackintosh Foundation
- TK Maxx
- QA Learning
- Roche Products Ltd

### Gifts in kind

- Google for Nonprofits
- Landau Morley LLP
- Northern Contrast Ltd

# Thank you

A big thank you to all those who have been involved in providing or supporting our services during the year.

We are very grateful to our volunteer telephone contacts and support group organisers and helpers. As women and men with personal experience of pregnancy loss, they help to provide comfort and support to others in a similar situation.

Our thanks also go to the people who help to select and support volunteers; those who help administer and moderate our online support platforms; our media volunteers; and all those who have informed and contributed to our e-learning resources.

Our advisors and other volunteers who provide specialist advice and help are also indispensable. They help us answer medical queries, update our leaflets, develop our reach and plan for the future.

Their contribution is strengthened by the support and commitment of the Trustees and our staff team.

Last but by no means least, we would like to thank everyone involved in raising the funds that mean we can provide these services – we couldn't do it without you.

## **We would like to make a special mention of the following people for generously sharing their time and skills:**

Our patron and ambassadors

Our Professional Advisory Board

Peta Harrison, editor of our members' newsletter

Nigel Wood, webmaster

## **Patron:**

Nigel Martyn

## **Ambassadors:**

Matthew Burton

Julia Hartley-Brewer

## **Professional advisors:**

Mr Roy Farquharson

Ms Diana Hamilton-Fairley

Dr Marjory MacLean

Prof Lesley Regan

Prof James Walker

## **Trustees: at 31 March 2017**

Sarah Fitzgerald, Chair

Lisa Dixon, Vice-chair

Barbara Hepworth-Jones, Vice-chair

Sarah Dunnett, Hon Treasurer

Jan Birrell

Penny Kerry

Lynne Murray

Laura Norris

Nicola O'Loughlin

## **Staff: at 31 March 2017**

Ruth Bender Atik, National Director

Lisa Bruce, Senior Support Worker

Juanita Charles, Support Worker

Ann Collier, Support Worker

Alice Weeden, Communications Manager

## **Freelance staff:**

Mel Barry

Clare Foster

Natasha Judd



## Plans for the future

**We will continue working to our goals, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2015-2020:**

- Increased online support and information
- Appropriate direct personal support and information
- More health professionals able to provide good and sensitive care
- More public discussion, awareness and media coverage of pregnancy loss
- Increased organisational capacity and skills

**In 2017/18 we'll be...**

- Launching a new improved website
- Creating new online resources focusing on support during pregnancy after loss
- Developing a new web chat service
- Promoting our online learning resources for health professionals
- Using the results of research into public attitudes towards miscarriage to run an awareness campaign about how best to support someone experiencing pregnancy loss



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"I just wanted to thank you for the great resources on your website. I had a miscarriage yesterday, and I'm sitting in bed wondering how I can even get up and carry on with my life.

I found your website, and the materials and anecdotes you share make me feel "normal" and I don't feel so alone. I'm still devastated and in tears, but I feel like I have permission to feel the way that I do. And I understand that while the worst \*should\* be over by now, the emotional stuff will take longer to heal and that that's ok.

I'm not sure how often you get told this, so here it is from me - thank you and keep up the good work."



MISCARRIAGE  
ASSOCIATION

The knowledge to help

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CONTACT US:

01924 200799 (Helpline)

01924 200795 (Admin)

[info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk](mailto:info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

17 Wentworth Terrace, Wakefield,  
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VISIT US:

[www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

FOLLOW US:

