



MISCARRIAGE
ASSOCIATION

The knowledge to help

Supporting Each Other

Our Annual Review
2017/18



The experience of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy 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 grief and loss for their baby and for the hopes, plans and dreams they had for this new life.

The Miscarriage Association's information and support services make a real difference in helping people through. So too does the work we do to promote sensitive care in the health service and to raise public awareness of the impact of pregnancy loss, encouraging others to be supportive.

We, in our turn, are supported by those affected by pregnancy loss who provide their views and share their experiences, helping us to help others. During the last year, their help has enabled us to launch a new website and new resources, informed our work with the National Bereavement Care Pathway and Pregnancy Loss Review and supported a brand new campaign, **Simply Say**.



#SimplySay

We launched our Simply Say campaign in August 2017, in response to research that we conducted into public attitudes towards pregnancy loss. It was designed to reach as many people as possible with an informative message about what - and what not - to say to someone who has experienced pregnancy loss.

The campaign included an animation and an infographic created by Ravensbourne College students, as well as new web pages and personal stories. With its strong story behind a simple message, the campaign generated extensive national and regional media coverage, in addition to thousands of social media interactions, increased followers online and more visits to our website.



Our Vision

Everyone affected by pregnancy loss receives the care, support and information that's right for them.



How we're helping, in numbers...



925,263
website visits

We had 925,263 website visits from people seeking information and support



5,236
direct contacts

Our helpline team responded to 5,236 calls, emails and messages, with 56 volunteers offering additional telephone and group support



1m
people reached

Our Wave of Light candle image marking Baby Loss Awareness Week reached over 1 million people



2
awards

Our films for health professionals and resources for young people both received special recognition in industry awards

The scripted films in our suite of free online learning resources for health professionals were awarded 'highly commended' in the Event and Visual Communication Association Film Industry Awards in June 2017.

Our resources for young people were awarded 'runner up' at the British Medical Association (BMA) Patient Information Awards in September 2017, in the Information for Young Adults Special Award category. One of the judges noted:

"The consultation, planning, and promotional plans show excellence in producing health information. This shows through in the end products – high quality and extremely well-tailored to the audience. The insight and thought that has gone into this is commendable."

And in March 2018, our animation 'Helping people through' was selected as a finalist in the Charity Film Awards.



Resources for young people received a runner up BMA Patient Information Award



Nicola McGowan,
Website Contributor

Finding help online - and contributing to it too

If someone had said the word miscarriage to me four years ago, I could've sworn they were speaking a foreign language. Miscarriage just wasn't in my vocabulary, it wasn't something that had ever crossed my mind. That's probably why in February 2015 I found myself feeling lost and alone after losing my 12 week old baby on honeymoon.

After Googling 'miscarriage help' I came across the Miscarriage Association's website and never looked back. The information they had on the website was fantastic. Every question and worry was answered and there are stories from other women going through the same thing, which stopped me feeling so alone. It even has a section about the effects baby loss has on partners, something that's rarely discussed. The contact from everyone at this wonderful organisation always felt so personal and genuine.

In the past few years I've unfortunately lost another three babies and am now undergoing my second cycle of fertility treatment. But, in that time, I have shared my story as part of the M.A.'s new 'pregnancy after loss' resources and have also become one of their media volunteers. I've even taken part in a discussion about the National Bereavement Care Pathway, to help improve the aftercare for those going through a loss in Scotland.

I will always thank the Miscarriage Association for helping me, and for enabling me to help other women and men going through such a difficult time. By raising awareness we will hopefully stop people suffering alone and in silence.

You told us...



I've found your website extremely helpful and supportive in the difficult days. It's comforting to know that everything I'm feeling is normal and OK.



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 find and communicate with us. **Increased and improved online support and information** is one of our most important goals.

What we did in 2017/18

- We launched a new website in May 2017. The re-designed site was created with the involvement of users, and has much simpler navigation, a warmer and more inviting look and feel, and a wider range of content, including more photography and film.
- Seeking users' views also highlighted the need to improve our online forum, so we began a redesign, focusing on increasing responsiveness without compromising safety and security.
- The following on our social media channels increased by 43% over the year. This improves our ability to engage with our supporters, share stories and research news and signpost people to our website.
- We noted 925,263 visits to our website.



New website launched



Vikki Bennett,
Miscarriage Association
Support Group Volunteer

A safe space for support

We lost our daughter at 21 weeks nearly 5 years ago. We were absolutely devastated. We felt lost and we didn't know what to do.

Eventually I found out about a local Miscarriage Association Support Group. Speaking face to face with others who had been through a similar experience was really powerful - it helped me through the most difficult time of my life.

By sharing our stories it helped me realise that I wasn't going crazy feeling the way I did and that I actually had lots of the same feelings as other people.

As supportive as close friends and family can be, I sometimes felt like I could only talk about my loss once or twice. That's why the group is such an important space – somewhere where you can talk as much as you need to, working through your emotions in your own time, with others who understand. It's been a huge part of my healing process.

When the support volunteer who organised the group left, I felt enough time had passed since my loss and I was really keen to give something back by taking on this role.

I find that some people will come just once or twice, while others come several times. And something that's really nice to see is that some group members swap numbers and have a connection outside of the meetings.

It was so terrible to lose my baby, but I feel happy knowing that I'm able to help others.

You told us...



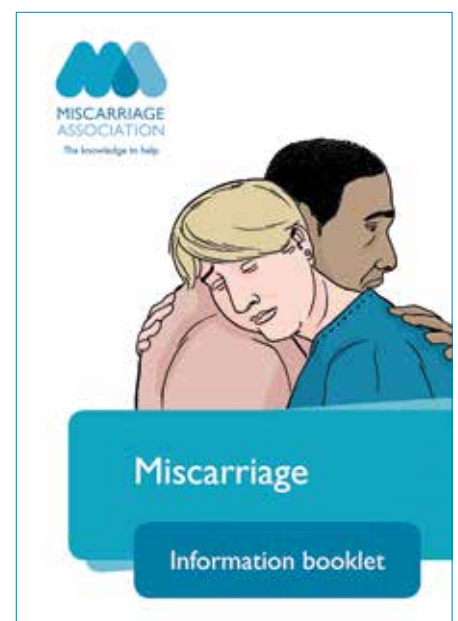
It has taken me 5 years to ask for help - I am so thankful I was told about your helpline and support groups.



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 2017/18

- Responded to 5,236 helpline calls, emails and direct messages asking for support and information
- Provided further telephone and face to face support, thanks to our network of 56 support volunteers, all with personal experience of pregnancy loss, and 19 support groups. An additional 13 volunteers contributed to our online support.
- Launched new specialist resources for people who are pregnant after loss – a web page, personal stories, a leaflet, a short film, and a new private Facebook group.
- Launched a new illustrated, easy-read leaflet about miscarriage, for people with learning disabilities. The leaflet is also useful for those with reading difficulties or limited English.



New illustrated, easy-read leaflet



Erica Charlton, Erin Sharkey & Kirsty Irvine, Miscarriage Association Support Volunteers.

Supporting health professionals to provide sensitive care

The Early Pregnancy Loss and Bereavement Study Days at St Thomas' Hospital in London are attended by staff in varying roles, including midwives, nurses from the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit, gynaecology ward and Emergency Department, sonographers and students.

Our role is to share our personal experience of miscarriage and the care we received, as well as issues about care raised by people during M.A. support group meetings.

Our training sessions include small group discussions based around different scenarios. We encourage the group to think about the emotional support given to people going through - or worried about - pregnancy loss. We discuss how to take cues from the patients themselves to help find the best words to use to talk to them sensitively.

We talk about the importance of recognising the range of emotions people may be feeling, including

grief, denial, shock, confusion and sadness. And we tell attendees to never under-estimate the impact their care and words can have, and that even in a busy role they can make a positive difference – sometimes just by saying 'sorry' for what that person is going through.

Even though these NHS staff are under such pressure we feel that during these sessions, when they are given space to reflect upon what they can do better for their patients, they are genuinely receptive to making changes. They are also more enthusiastic about the M.A. having met us and leave being able to confidently talk to patients about what the M.A. can offer.



Kirsty, Erin and Erica's input highlights how it is the little gestures here and kind words there that make all the difference and can have a lasting impact.



Jenny Chrimes,
Gynaecology Nurse, St Thomas' Hospital, London

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 2017/18

• Contributed to study days and workshops for those who care for patients with pregnancy loss, sharing our suite of free online learning resources and good practice guides. We also started a project to align these resources with criteria for professional revalidation and continuing professional development, to increase their value.

- Continued our involvement in the National Bereavement Care Pathway. Launched in October 2017, the Pathway sets out the care that should be provided to any woman or couple who loses a baby in pregnancy, at or soon after birth or in infancy.
- Joined the Department of Health and Social Care's new Advisory Panel for the Pregnancy Loss Review, tasked with making a report and recommendations on the possible registration of pre-24 week pregnancy loss.
- Continued to serve on the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology Early Pregnancy Guidelines Development Group, which published important new guidance for professionals on testing in recurrent miscarriage.



Simon Webb,
Miscarriage Association
Media Volunteer

Helping others to talk openly about pregnancy loss

My wife and I had three miscarriages, it was a terrible time for both of us. I suffered with depression from the experience, but found sport to be a fantastic relief. So, I decided to run the London Marathon and found the Miscarriage Association to sign up with - and have never looked back.

I found out that someone else in the M.A. marathon team, Gareth, lived just one minute away. We began training together and became friends. It was so good to talk to someone else who had been through miscarriage. Gareth's support made me feel comfortable talking about things more openly and we discussed becoming media volunteers for the M.A..

So far I've been on Radio 1's Newsbeat, BBC 2's Victoria Derbyshire show and interviewed by the Huffington Post.

The TV appearance brought me in contact with some other amazing M.A. media volunteers, including Al who runs TheDadsNet, which is a brilliant group to be part of.

I hope that by speaking publicly about my experiences, people are more aware of what support is available. I want people to see pregnancy loss discussed openly and feel more able to talk to their friends, relatives and peers. For me, it's about giving people the confidence to address issues and protect their mental wellbeing.

After my media interviews so many people I know suddenly told me, 'I've been through something similar'. Communication is so important – talk to people, you never know what they have been, or are, going through.

You told us...



To openly talk about losing a baby is so healing.



Many people find it hard to talk about pregnancy loss or worry about how to support someone they know. That's why **more public discussion, awareness and media coverage of pregnancy loss** is one of our goals.

What we did in 2017/18

- Launched our 'Simply Say' campaign, which included an animation, infographic, web pages and personal stories, and received extensive national and regional media coverage, including BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour, BBC 5Live, BBC Scotland, The Huffington Post and Stylist magazine.
- Our Simply Say campaign also generated thousands of social media interactions, with the launch post on Facebook achieving a reach of almost 200,000.
- Shared a new animation during Baby Loss Awareness Week, which generated more than 10,000 reactions, comments and shares on Facebook, nearly twice as many as the animation we shared the previous year.
- With the help of our 71 Media Volunteers, we responded to over 70 media requests ranging from local press through to journalists in the US.



M.A. Trustee Natasha Necati features in a Stylist film about miscarriage

Abridged Financial Statements

1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018

	General funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
INCOME FROM:				
Donations and legacies	290,361	-	11,874	302,235
Other trading activities (fundraising & merchandise)	98,157	-	-	98,157
Charitable activities (leaflet sales)	14,894	-	-	14,894
Investment income	5,419	-	-	5,419
Other income	1,000	-	-	1,000
Total income	409,831	-	11,874	421,705
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Raising funds	38,982	-	450	39,432
Charitable activities	267,608	18,618	7,337	293,563
Total expenditure	306,590	18,618	7,787	332,995
Net income / (expenditure)	103,241	(18,618)	4,087	88,710
BALANCE SHEET				
Fixed assets				2,535
Current assets				516,479
Total liabilities				(13,007)
Net assets				506,007
Represented by:				
Brought forward from 2016/17	327,546	82,148	7,603	417,297
Net income / (expenditure) 2017/18	103,241	(18,618)	4,087	88,710
Transfer between funds	(32,570)	32,570	-	-
Balance carried forward	398,217	96,100	11,690	506,007

These abridged financial statements have been extracted from the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018. The full financial statements were prepared in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice 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 WF1 3QW or from the Charity Commissioner's website.

The full financial statements were approved on 2 December 2018 and have been submitted to the Charity Commission, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and Companies House.

Signed: 
P. Kerry (Hon Treasurer)

Independent Examiner
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Cooperative Bank, Providence
Street, Wakefield WF1 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 were well above expenditure so that we have been able to sustain high quality services and to invest in further development of our work.

General income for the Miscarriage Association increased by 21% on the previous year. This reflected a substantial increase in donations, including a donation of £50,000 from the QBE Foundation. This gift is funding several new projects over a two year period, from increasing public awareness of pregnancy loss and the M.A. to developing miscarriage information and support for people with special needs and circumstances.

We noted a 34% drop in income from charitable activities themselves, notably from the sale of leaflets – an understandable result of constrained hospital budgets. This was balanced, however, by an increase in income from fundraising events, especially the London Marathon, and from sales of merchandise. Restricted fund income is branch income alone, funding support group meetings and local needs.

General expenditure increased by just six percent on the previous year. We increased spending on our core charitable activities, largely by adding to our helpline team, but spent less on raising funds.

Designated fund expenditure dropped by 56% compared with 2016/17, reflecting the timing of spending on certain multi-year projects. Restricted fund expenditure largely reflects spending of branch funds.

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 charitable support relatively low. Gifts in kind, including film production, payroll services and £72,569 worth of Google Ads, also combined 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.

Our thanks to the companies and charitable trusts that supported us during 2017/18

Donations

Experian Ltd

Macquarie Group Foundation

Ian Mactaggart Trust

QBE Foundation

Robinson Way Ltd

Gifts in kind

Film production from Flashlight TV, Matt Holt and Simon Elsbury

Google for Nonprofits

Landau Morley LLP

Thank you to our supporters...

We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the work of the Miscarriage Association during the year.

We are very grateful to our telephone support volunteers, support group leaders and helpers and to their mentors; and to those volunteers who administered and moderated our online support platforms. All people with personal experience of pregnancy loss, they helped to provide comfort and support to others going through difficult times.

We greatly appreciate all our media volunteers and others who shared their stories in the media and online, helping others to feel less alone. We make special mention of comedian Steve McNeil and his wife Tina, whose filmed interviews helped to launch our new website.

We are deeply grateful to all those who contributed to our funds. Their support might have been the result of a fundraising event, or a donation in memory or in celebration; an anonymous online donation or an online raffle; support through payroll giving or an annual membership fee; or a donation from a company or charitable trust.



Steve and Tina McNeil in new film content on the new website

Every donation is a gift that helps us make a difference. Every gift helps not only to fund our work but also to raise awareness of pregnancy loss and of the M.A. as a source of help. And during this year as every year, at least some of those supporting our fundraisers found that they too could finally talk about their own experiences of pregnancy loss. Support bringing its own support.



The M.A. team

Patron

Nigel Martyn

Ambassadors

Matthew Burton

Julia Hartley-Brewer

Professional advisers

Mr Roy Farquharson

Ms Diana Hamilton-Fairley

Dr Marjory MacLean

Prof Lesley Regan

Prof James Walker

Trustees: at 31 March 2018

Sarah Fitzgerald, Chair

Barbara Hepworth-Jones, Vice-chair

Laura Norris, Vice-chair

Penny Kerry, Hon Treasurer

Jan Birrell

Meera Craston

Beena Lad

Lynne Murray

Natasha Necati

Nicola O'Loughlin

Newsletter editor

Peta Harrison

Staff: at 31 March 2018

Ruth Bender Atik, National Director

Lisa Bruce, Senior Support Worker

Helen Berry, Support Worker

Juanita Charles, Support Worker

Ann Collier, Support Worker

Alice Weeden, Communications Manager

Freelance staff

Imelda Barry

Clare Foster

Natasha Judd

Webmaster

Nigel Wood



Trustees (left to right): Beena Lad, Meera Craston, Penny Kerry, Laura Norris, Natasha Necati, Sarah Fitzgerald, Barbara Hepworth-Jones, Nicola O'Loughlin. Missing: Jan Birrell, Lynne Murray.

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 2018/19 we'll be:

- Launching a new online forum – a safe and secure space for sharing experiences and support
- Rolling out a new online chat service
- Developing new resources to help people look after their mental health after pregnancy loss
- Further developing our online learning resources for health professionals
- Contributing our expertise and user views to the English and Scottish government reviews into registering pre-24 week loss
- Launching a new initiative to challenge stigma relating to pregnancy loss and to raise awareness of our support services



I had a miscarriage in August. It was difficult to speak to anyone about how I was feeling and it was a very isolating time in my life.

I recently rang the helpline and the lady I spoke to was just amazing. She let me speak, I offloaded all the things I needed to say, I cried... I vented and was able to just be honest... I just felt so comfortable speaking to her. I came off the call feeling a bit lighter and that it is ok to feel how I am feeling and ok to grieve.

I can't recommend picking up to the phone to these amazing people enough.



MISCARRIAGE
ASSOCIATION

The knowledge to help

CONTACT US:

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01924 200795 (Admin)

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VISIT US:

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

FOLLOW US:

