



Charity number 1089965

Annual Report Apr 2015 – Mar 16

Web Site: www.chsn.org.uk

Email: admin@chsn.org.uk

Phone admin: 01555 705099

Helpline: 0800 9545 099 (choose option 1)

Email: help@chsn.org.uk

Prayerline: 0800 9545 099 (choose option 2)

WHO WE ARE

The Christadelphian Support Network was the name given in January 2009 to what had originally been formed as the Christadelphian Care Group in 1982.

We are a charity registered with the Charity Commission and everything we do is for charitable purposes and available for public good.

In addition to this document, please also see our published accounts.

Our Objectives and Activities are to

- provide a confidential and caring service for anyone with a difficult personal problem by offering “a listening ear” and the opportunity to receive skilled support.
- aid the spiritual well-being of those who are facing life’s difficulties.
- encourage prayer for and with each other.
- provide specialist support for elders, youth leaders and pastoral care teams who may not have access to particular areas of expertise.
- provide a forum for the discussion of issues and difficulties with a view to raising awareness and encouraging compassionate care in our community and the population at large.
- develop an open access resource library covering pastoral care issues.
- provide support for those experiencing, and the carers of those experiencing, loneliness, long term illness or disability by linking members who seek and/or offer support and practical help.
- provide for other practical needs as they may arise.
- treat everyone with equality irrespective of age, beliefs, disability, gender, race or relationship.

The focus of our activities remains:

- a) the support of individuals, both members of our community, their families and the general public, who are experiencing life problems. This is primarily through the Helpline and Prayerline and links to professionals and individuals with life experiences.
- b) to encourage awareness of and the acceptance of the existence of issues affecting individuals within the Christadelphian community.

HOW WE ARE ORGANISED

The Committee

An executive committee, made up of members selected from the membership and the trustees, is responsible for the day to day running of the charity and overseeing the organisation of the services it offers and the events it organises. The Coordinator acts as spokesperson to the membership on behalf of the executive committee.

The trustees are accountable for ensuring best practice in all activities of the charity through ensuring sound governance as per guidance given by the Charity Commission.

All executive committee members and trustees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

Committee membership is subject to being in ecclesial fellowship.

Each committee member listed below has an area of specific responsibility to project manage, as indicated in brackets.

Bro Colin Briley*	(Treasurer)
Bro Andrew Collinge *	(Website, Publications, Seminars and Training)
Sis Sue Collinge *	(Sisters Days, Seminars and Training)
Bro Phil Cox*	(Coordinator)
Sis Karen Cox*	(Coordinator support)
Bro Roy Dean*	(Praise & Fellowship events)
Sis Liz Downs*	(Awareness Days and Shallowford Weekend)
Sis Hilary Knight*	(Helpline and Prayerline)
Sis Janet Priest *	(Mailings)
Sis Mary Proctor	(Database management)
Sis Rachel Rayner	(Social Media)

*Denotes is a trustee

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The committee met four times during the year and there were additional subcommittee meetings.

	No of trustees attending (out of 9)
Attended 4 meetings	2
Attended 3 meetings	6
Attended 2 meetings	1

WHAT WE DO

Our Mission Statement:

Underpinned by the faith we share, the CSN aims to:

✚ Offer loving support and guidance at difficult times of life

✚ Raise awareness of problems we face in life and encourage compassionate care in our community

We have been richly blessed with the dedication and support of so many brothers and sisters and this has meant we have been able to progress our aims of helping the hurting and encouraging awareness in many UK ecclesias and further afield.

In particular, we thank those volunteers who day in and day out cover the Helpline and Prayerline rotas. Without their valuable contribution of time, energy and expertise we would not have been able to achieve nearly so much.

We are very grateful for the increased financial donations from ecclesia's which enable us to fund this work.

We are pleased that the work of the CSN is being increasingly accepted and used by individuals and ecclesias as a source of support and help. We are able to direct them to skilled brothers and sisters and website resources which include guidelines and templates on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

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We are increasingly involved with confidential mediation particularly in areas of relationship breakdown, and couple counselling.

Members

Currently we have 266 members across 38% of UK ecclesias. A “member” is someone who has offered their help to CSN and completed a confidentiality statement. The experience they bring can come from their professional activities (eg doctor or solicitor) or from personal life experience (eg living through an illness or having a child with special needs). There are 52 bro and sis offering their professional experience and a further 92 with life experience. Revalidating the database to ensure completeness and accuracy of the data is a significant and periodic task for Mary as our database manager.

Our mailing list reaches 522 brothers and sisters who wish us to keep them informed of our activities. Our Facebook page is a resource which is increasingly used to communicate our services and activities and has a growing list of followers.

Following our Risk Review and privacy arrangements, all information about our contacts is now held on our secure database managed by Mary Proctor. It is password protected and backed up off site.

Help Line

Our aim is to complement the work of ecclesial welfare by providing expertise, confidential support and information.

Our ten First Contact volunteers work a rota and receive calls made to our Helpline number which are redirected to their dedicated CSN mobile phone. They each have a supervisor for support. Email requests to the Help email address are managed in a similar way. We are very appreciative of this team whose work at times can be emotionally draining, even stressful. We always welcome hearing from further brothers and sisters who would be interested to volunteer for this work.

First Contacts are highly dedicated and cover the Helpline for long hours, but we stress that this cannot be a 24/7 service. Where callers are answered with a voicemail, a message and call return number can be left and the call

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will be returned as soon as possible. This year, a recorded answering message also informs callers of our confidentiality policy and also what to do if their call cannot get straight through to the First Contact.

Annual training is now being provided to First Contacts with their supervisors and possible new First Contacts also encouraged to attend.

Most frequently our first contacts comment that "the caller just needed someone to talk to in confidence," "just the sharing of the problem is a help", and "knowing there is someone there."

First time call numbers by year and split by category are shown below:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
Number of first time calls/emails received	57	70	87	103
Marriage and relationships	18%	18%	18%	15%
Families and children	7%	24%	17%	24%
Health and mental illness	7%	13%	9%	7%
Depression and Loneliness	11%	7%	16%	7%
Financial and Debt	4%	6%	10%	7%
Bereavement	7%	4%	4%	1%
Addiction	18%	3%	1%	8%
Ecclesial Relationships	9%	3%	10%	12%
Admin, Legal problems , employment, misc	21%	21%	15%	19%

In addition to these new calls, there are the repeat, follow up and ongoing calls.

This service is entirely confidential with the caller's details only being known by the first contact. Cases are not discussed by the committee whose role is to oversee the activities of the CSN and not to consider individual callers.

In matters of individuals with financial problems we have continued to work with the Christadelphian Benevolent Fund and we appreciate their support.

Prayer Line

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Prayer requests are received by email and phone voicemail. Four volunteers cover a rota to check for messages at least every 24 hours. These are passed to the appropriate section leader who passes the message on to the group of brothers and sisters in their prayer team.

This year, we have made Prayerline available on the same 0800 9545 099 number used for the Helpline by callers pressing 1 for Helpline or 2 for Prayerline. The previous Prayerline number is being kept active during a transition period and anyone using the previous number will be informed of the change when we acknowledge receipt of their message.

Awareness Days

Two awareness days were held during the year. In November 2015 at West Birmingham we looked at 'Sexuality', considering a sensitive subject and the difficulties that diversity can present. At Ashby in March 2016 the subject was 'Loneliness' which considered various aspects of loneliness and was followed by a meal which was enjoyed by all. Both awareness days took into consideration how we can help within the ecclesia to deal with caring needs of its members in differing circumstances.

We are building up the resources available on the CSN website by providing as downloads materials and slide sets used at Awareness Days.

We welcome invitations from ecclesias to host Awareness Days and feedback from ecclesias who have worked with us is that the events have been informative and enjoyable, providing the opportunity of good fellowship and discussion both for their own members and visitors.

Praise & Fellowship Day

So many had said they wanted something "upbeat, uplifting and lots of singing" that in 2013 we put in place our first Praise & Fellowship Day, held at Arden School. The event in 2015 was again held at Arden School and was well attended, the theme being "Faith & Doubt" with the main session being led by Anthony Whitehorn.. In the afternoon, Helen Garner, Ruth Fryer, Richard Tarrant and Roy Dean each gave thoughts from their own life experiences and the effect these had on their faith. There was also an update of what's new at CSN.

Sisters' Days

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Our annual Sisters' Day was held on 11 May 2016 at Solihull ecclesial hall. This was our 10th Sisters' Day and we chose the theme "Celebrate God, all day, every day" in thanks to our Heavenly Father for His love and guidance over the past 10 years. We were well blessed with 107 attendees - sisters and friends - and a wide range of ages was represented from teenagers to those well into their 90s.

We had a varied programme including talks, readings, poetry, a creative activity, praise and worship and a Meal-a-Day presentation. Many sisters contributed to the day in many different ways and we thank them all for their valuable contributions in making the day special.

It was an enjoyable and uplifting time together around God's Word. The day was well received with positive comments such as "A wonderful, wonderful day. Thank you."

Beatin' the Blues

Knowing that other help organisations experience seasonal trends in their call numbers and that late January is a time for higher incidence of depressive states of mind, we ran our first Beatin' the Blues event in 2014; so popular was it that we repeated the format in 2015 and again in 2016, all at Leicester Westleigh. It also provides a platform for raising awareness of CSN whilst aiming to lift the spirits with an afternoon of fellowship, praise, short thoughts & videos... and chocolate! We thank Ben Adams for facilitating the day for us and the brothers & sisters at Westleigh for their hospitality.

Fellowship Weekends

These are arranged to support brothers and sisters who may be struggling with their faith or life problems, or who just want to benefit from rich fellowship together. Financial subsidies are available to ensure that lack of funds is not a reason for not being able to attend.

The 'CSN South West Fellowship Weekend Committee' organised a weekend at Abbey House, Glastonbury, on the theme "Finding Renewal & Reflection through the Psalms".

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Shallowford House near Stafford is the venue for our two regular weekends and a Fellowship Holiday week.

In the coming year we will increase the website presence and awareness of the weekends to broaden knowledge of them and the availability of their support to those in need across our community.

The committee is very appreciative of the hard work and commitment of all the brothers and sisters involved in this work.

Publications

We published a new booklet in June 2015 'Supporting the Elderly' with a mailing to Ecclesias of a sample booklet and order form. A new leaflet entitled 'Keeping your Computer Safe' is also now available.

It has been decided to no longer make a charge for our booklets or postage but offer the opportunity for voluntary donations.

Following the change to our phone number to an 0800 Freephone, we are reprinting bookmarks and leaflets and updating booklets with stickers

A special thank you to Janet Priest and her team who have managed the printing and distribution of materials and mailings for many years. Hilary Knight has taken on the role of managing booklet orders. Postal mailings and associated printing are now contracted out, but the bulk of our mailing which is by email is organised by Mary Proctor.

Our Website at www.chsn.org.uk is receiving an average of 375 visits a month, down some 15% on last year. 26% came via a smartphone. New visits accounted for 72%.

We are continuing to build a resource library comprising articles, publications and internet links relative to care and support which is all available on our website.

We acknowledge with gratitude the support of the *The Christadelphian Magazine*, the *Way Ahead* magazine and Simon Hodgson's E-announce for publicising our activities.

We make newly baptised brothers and sisters aware of all of our services by sending an information pack to them. Thanks to Hilary Knight for this work.

WHEN WE DON'T DELIVER

There may be times when brothers and sisters who use the CSN will feel unhappy or dissatisfied with the service we offer. We have updated our website with more clear information of how to make a complaint and details of the process.

We promise to investigate and respond to all complaints within 30 days and that our response will be: written; answer all points of concern; be factually correct; be signed by the person responsible for the reply and contain details of the respondent.

OUR PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR

In everything referred to previously and in this section we acknowledge that whatever we hope to do, it will happen only with the grace, blessing and will of our Father.

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| 26 Nov 2016 | Awareness Day, Safeguarding at Birmingham West |
| 28 Jan 2017 | Beatin' the Blues, at Leicester Westleigh |
| 25 Feb 2017 | Awareness Day, Dementia at Solihull |
| 25 Mar 2017 | Training course for 1st contacts |
| 13 May 2017 | Sisters Day, at Solihull |
| 19-21 May 17 | South-West Fellowship Weekend at Glastonbury |
| 26-28 May 17 | Shallowford Fellowship Weekend |
| 2-8 Sept 17 | Shallowford Fellowship Holiday |
| 27-30 Oct 17 | South-West Fellowship Weekend at Glastonbury |
| 3 Oct 2015 | Praise & Fellowship Day at Arden School, Solihull |

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In addition to holding the above events, governance and training will continue to be major areas of focus for the committee over the next 12 months.

First contact volunteers will continue to receive training to provide the knowledge and skills to deliver a consistent quality of service to callers, backed by the regular support of their supervisors in a mentoring and coaching role.

We will continue to improve and update the data held on our 2nd contacts, particularly those offering their services as a professional in a given field so that when a 1st contact hands over a caller there is sufficient detail to know that the chosen 2nd contact has the necessary skills and credentials.

We will ensure consistency in our telephone call handling to aid caller awareness of our services and confidentiality policy.

We will move to making every committee member a trustee of the charity by the end of our next reporting year to align those being responsible for the strategy with accountability for the governance and delivery.

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

There are many different aspects to the work of the CSN and we are always glad to receive offers of help. You may be involved in 'being there' for those in need, helping to organise activities, or supporting the work of the CSN in various ways. Your suggestions and ideas, offers of help, attendance and feedback on CSN days are all invaluable to us. We are greatly encouraged by all your contributions. Nothing is too small to be of value to the Lord. Our contact details are on the front cover of this report.

AND FINALLY...

On behalf of the committee and all those who have benefited so greatly from such willing support – thank you so much.

We also praise and thank our Heavenly Father for his grace in providing the people, strength and resources to make our work possible and through that

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to be able to reach out to help his sons and daughters. We are privileged to be part of the CSN. May God continue to guide and bless the work of the CSN until the time when He shall wipe away all tears, and sorrow and pain shall be no more.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

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The CSN Committee