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

94 back on track with work

Breathing space & safety net
Unanticipated events such as ill health or redundancy can often stretch household finances, bringing a sense of loss of control or uncertainty about the future. We enabled members to manage during a time of short or medium term financial difficulty, helping to reduce their anxiety about meeting essential bills during a period of reduced income.

24 making ends meet

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

149 less stressed households

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

19 enabled to take a break

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

4 supported after loss or crisis

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

284 issues progressed
Chief Executive, Anni Broadhead

Joining the IMechE also brings access to Support Network - the personal support and practical help charity for members of the IMechE and their family - and yet not all members know about us, or are aware of everything that we do. We are here to respond to a range of circumstances, and can accordingly provide financial grants, loans, counselling and specialist advice and assistance. We look at each application individually and work with members to establish the most productive way forward, be that to help them, their children or even their parents.

Some of our 2018 activities are highlighted below and overleaf. During 2019 we will be launching our 'Newly Qualified' programme which will assist members in their first three years of entering the profession to financially manage the transition from education and training into employment. We welcome member feedback on our work so please do contact us.

What is Support Network?

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

231 visits by member volunteers

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

32 children supported

Student & Apprentice grants
Investing in the next generation is an important aspect of our work. We provided living costs grants to IMechE member Apprentices, Diploma, Undergraduate, Masters and PhD students, allowing them to follow their courses without unnecessary financial distraction.

35 focused on their studies

Secured loans
(e.g. for disability adaptations)
Through lending capital sums, we helped members to complete significant repairs or to undertake disability-related adaptations to their homes.

7 adaptations financed

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

35 obtained specialist support

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

383 worrying matters resolved
Sara Templey  
Trustee  
CEng FI MechE  
Operations Assurance Programme Manager

I became a Trustee for Support Network because I feel it is a valuable way of giving back to the profession. I had regularly given my annual donation to Support Network from when I joined the IMechE, and when the chance came up to become a Trustee I thought it was great opportunity to contribute in a different way.

Since then I have had a chance to see even more of what Support Network does for IMechE members and their families, and that is motivating in itself. I enjoy assisting the charity as it keeps pace with meeting the potential challenges members may face throughout, and after, their careers. I am the lead Trustee on data protection matters and am also a member of the Personnel Committee, overseeing staff and volunteer management policies.

Looking forward, I am excited to be part of the team exploring how to broaden the Support Network offer in order to reach a wider mechanical engineering community.

Kenji G. Taba Oxte  
Student  
BEng (Hons) Aerospace Engineering, University of Surrey  

As an international student who is self-funding his BEng Aerospace Engineering degree, living costs can become a source of unwanted stress. Last September, I started the final year of my undergraduate degree knowing that I would need additional funds to meet my financial commitments to be able to graduate.

Support Network offers grants to undergraduate students regardless of their home status. I contacted the Support Network early in the year and they were very kind to offer me guidance throughout the whole application process. The grant was a huge relief that has enabled me to focus on my studies as it has taken out a lot of the pressure that I was facing at the beginning of the year. Now, certain that I will be able to complete my studies, I am looking forward to applying for Engineering Graduate Programmes as I am planning to achieve CEng chartership via work in industry.

I encourage students who are in a similar situation to seek out Support Network as soon as possible. There is nothing wrong in asking for help, and young people pursuing an engineering career is what makes our community and industry thrive! So this is beneficial for everyone.

Chiranttan Shukla  
Visitor and Trustee CEng MI MechE  
Senior Project Manager, Oil, Gas & Petrochemical projects (retired)  

On retiring from over 40 years in the oil and gas industry, I decided to become a volunteer. My role as a Support Network Visitor entails visiting those who have requested help from Support Network. More often than not, they require financial help because of redundancy, ill health or financial hardship. I visit homes of the applicants and assess their financial and living circumstances. I then write a visit report and make recommendations about the nature and extent of the help to be considered by Support Network.

A Visitor needs to be able to listen, ask appropriate questions, display empathy and respect confidentiality. There is much satisfaction in helping to improve people’s lives.
Why member donations matter

Each year 100% of the donations that we receive from members are used in direct support back to other members. In that way we know that all of the money that the IMechE community provides, including Gift Aid, is used for the benefit of others. We use our investment income to meet the running costs of the organisation, and where there is a shortfall we use our reserves. We can therefore always say yes to applications where we feel that we should provide help. As we only help members of the IMechE and their family, we do not ask the wider public for donations.

Worryingly, our recent income from member donations has been declining, possibly because, at the time of subscription renewal, the potential £10 annual donation to Support Network is overlooked.

If you would like to donate to us, the most direct way is online to our account 00800147 at 60-40-05 or via cheque payable to Support Network at 3 Birdcage Walk, London, SW1H 9JJ.

We are most grateful to members who support us in this way.

Dad had to overcome many challenges during the last six years of his life which he did with dignity and courage. He so wanted to retain his independence and to remain in the home he loved, and the loan from Support Network made that possible – giving him an extra three years in his own home, and avoiding the need for him to move into a care home.

It was more than just the ability to do building work – it was the gift of enabling him to maintain some quality of life; to remain amongst friends and neighbours; and to continue with his interest in painting in an environment that was truly his home.

Both he and I were very grateful for your support – not only financially but also for the way in which Support Network kept in touch with him at this time.

I know that he would want me to say thank you...and in a way that contributes to your ability to help others in future, so I am pleased to make a donation to Support Network.

– Dr Anne Gwinnett CMath MIMA FRSA

To view the full 2018 financial statements and activities report visit www.imeche.org/support-network/governance

INCOME
Total received £613,952

EXPENDITURE & SUPPORT
Total spent £685,330

GRANTS, LOANS & SUPPORT SERVICES
£108,853 Secured loans (e.g. for disability adaptations)
£74,314 Problem solving casework
£64,537 Safe, secure and warm homes
£57,750 Breathing space & safety net
£52,432 Employment coaching
£33,104 Student & Apprentice grants
£11,340 Respite, care & personal alarms
£8,251 Legal helpline
£7,386 Social visits
£5,674 Health, disability, autism & dyslexia support
£3,536 Childcare and children’s activities
£3,080 Counselling & Bereavement support

GOVERNANCE
£36,605 Total

ORGANISATION RUNNING COSTS
£121,801 Personnel
£61,267 Office accommodation & IT resources
£35,400 Communications
£218,468 Total

£230,589 Investment income
£3,364 Fundraising donations
£27,210 Gift aid
£88,261 Legacies
£264,528 Members’ annual donations

£71,378 Deficit (taken from reserves)