

# WIDOWED AND YOUNG?



**The Way Foundation**, a national charity which supports people who are 'Widowed and Young' has been growing rapidly and now has around 1,800 members across the UK (who were widowed before their 51<sup>st</sup> birthday).

Bereavement can be a uniquely debilitating experience and its impact long lasting. We chose our logo, a swan, because it is calm and peaceful above the water but underneath it is paddling desperately to stay afloat. We felt that this was symbolic of how our members had expressed their feelings – to many of those they come into contact with, they appear to be 'coping well' or 'getting over it' but the truth is often starkly different.

When a young person loses their partner they also lose the future they had planned together. They see friends and family continue with their lives – changing jobs, moving house, having children – while their own lives seem to have lost any purpose and there is no longer any sense of security about the future. If they have children they will worry about the effect the loss of a parent will have on them and feel a responsibility to handle things 'the right way' to make sure their children do not suffer long term emotional damage. If they did not have children they may grieve for the lost opportunity to have a lasting reminder of the partner they have lost. Suddenly choices and decisions that were shared are now solely their responsibility.

The WAY Foundation enables members to make contact with others who have shared the same experience of losing a partner at a young age, so that they can speak more freely about their bereavement. We also have newsletters, holidays, a book loan service, a residential AGM and an internet message board.

Many of our members hear about us from those they see soon after their partner's death – coroners, registrars, GPs and counsellors. Do please pass on information about WAY to anyone you feel might like to know about us - sadly there are many more people out there who could benefit from the vital network that we provide. More details are on our website at:

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

Or write to us:

The WAY Foundation  
Suite 35, St Loyes House  
20 St Loyes St, Bedford  
MK40 1ZL

Or telephone our national helpline in the UK: 0870 011 3450

If you would like some WAY leaflets please e-mail us at: [info@wayfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@wayfoundation.org.uk)