

SUPPORT NETWORK

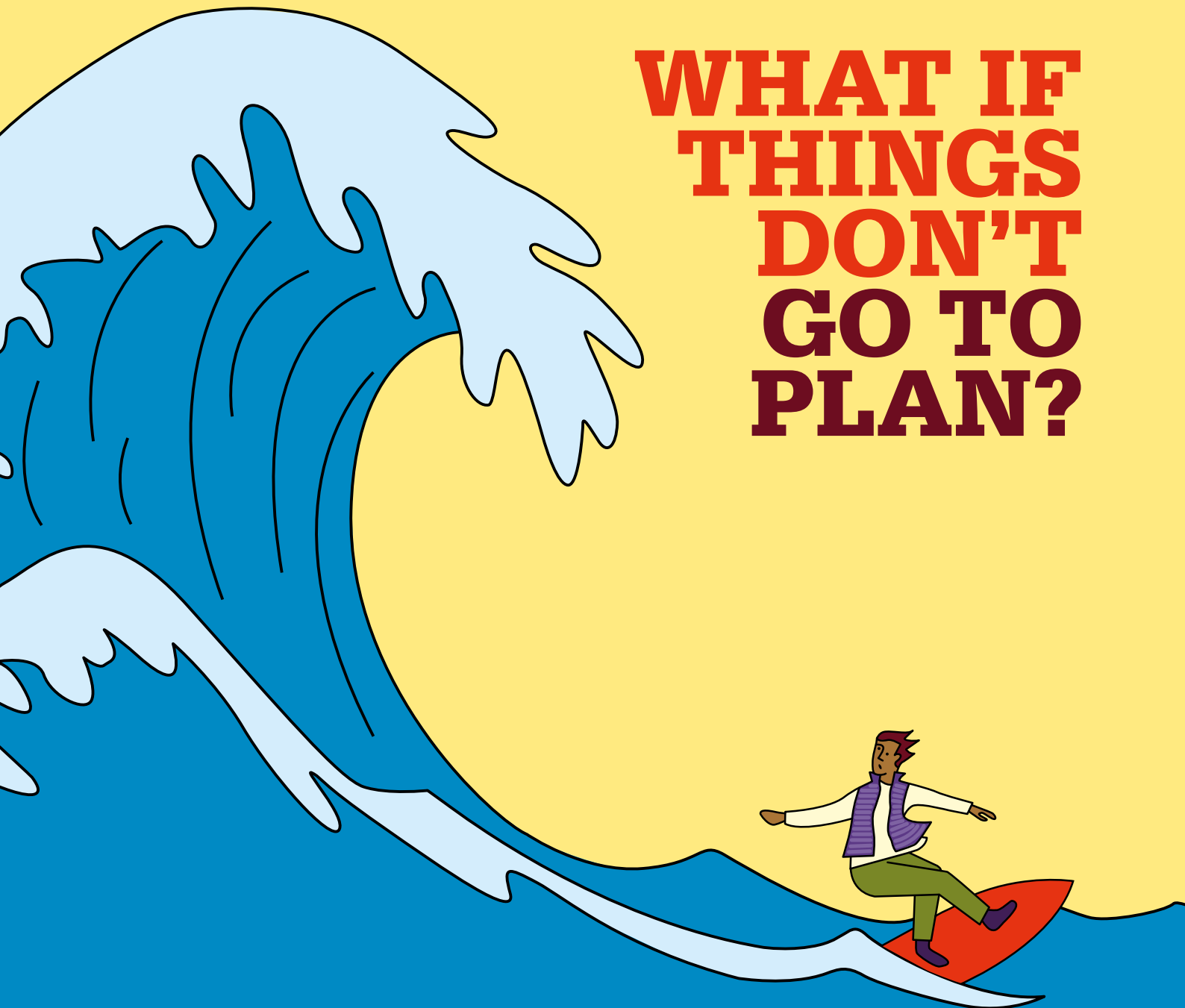
Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**

Annual Review 2025

Patron: His Majesty King Charles III

Supporting members and
STEM projects worldwide

WHAT IF THINGS DON'T GO TO PLAN?



...A NETWORK OF COLLEAGUES IS READY TO HELP



For Institution members and their families, we are that network of colleagues standing ready to respond. We are Support Network, the personal support and practical

assistance charity for IMechE members. While we may not be a life-saving emergency service like the RNLI, the support we provide can make a real difference when life doesn't go to plan. Much of our work is enabled through member donations and volunteer engagement – we are so grateful to those of you who support us in this way.

This review highlights some of our achievements during 2025 and our

aspirations for the current year. We will continue to give our time to every member who contacts us, and to shape our response around their unique circumstances so that it does the most good. That can mean counselling, grants or secured loans, parenting guidance, neurodiversity assessments, respite breaks for carers, financial and wellbeing advice, or help with employment and CVs – and often several of these at once. We work with each individual to find the best solution for their situation. When the waters rise, we aim to be the lifeline back to safety.

But we would like to do more.

We cannot assist unless we know that there is a need – the alarm has to be raised and heard. Often, people only speak up once they have reached crisis point, and even then, it can be difficult to ask for and receive help. That is why we act as a partner to those in need. We work alongside

them, without judgement, offering effective and timely support, so no one feels that they're stranded on their own.

Our main concern is that many are simply not aware that Support Network exists, nor that help is at hand. Raising our profile and visibility will be a priority in 2026, as we do not want those who could benefit from our services to miss out. Nobody needs to be left without a route to dry land.

Please encourage those you know to reach out to us when in difficulty – or you can contact us on their behalf. We are dedicated to IMechE members and their families, wherever they are in the world, working confidentially and compassionately. We are a small team with a big heart, and we are ready to listen and respond.

Anni Broadhead, Chief Executive Officer, Support Network

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Not only was Support Network consistently there with practical help, you were always kind to us too, and that mattered just as much, thank you.



Kathleen, 73, first contacted us when she felt she could no longer cope. She had been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which increasingly affected her breathing and energy, and she was

caring for her older partner, an IMechE member. As he grew frailer, the strain took its toll.

Knowing that Support Network helps members' families, Kathleen called us. We sent a visitor, who listened and understood, and for the first time she felt less alone. Over a series of visits, we helped Kathleen and her partner to claim disability and carer-related financial support; we encouraged them to make wills and arrange their powers of attorney. When her partner developed dementia, we provided respite care and access to specialist support. Subsequently, we assisted with the difficult move into residential care, and later, bereavement. We were there for Kathleen at every stage, and she asked us to share her story so others might reach out. If you or a loved one is in a similar position, we can help.

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Thank you for giving me hope. That I could start this new phase of my life in such a meaningful way, without debt and able to see a way forward has been immense.



Matty finally contacted us when his many efforts to secure work had failed.

After completing his engineering studies, he had travelled and worked in Australia in the oil and gas industry but had not been able to

find permanent employment on his return to the UK. With a baby on the way, he was anxious to obtain a steady income and continue his career in his chosen industry.

Support Network referred him to our employment coaching service, who helped to refresh his CV and interview style. When they identified a need for additional training, we helped him with the cost of the course. We also provided 'breathing space' grants to help with rent, bills and getting ready to become a family while he looked for work.

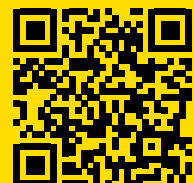
Thankfully, it all paid off: a few months after becoming a father, Matty secured offshore work with a family-friendly schedule. This is an example of how we help Newly Qualified members into the profession. We could help you or a family member in this way too.

TO FIND OUT how Support Network could help you or someone you know

email supportnetwork@imeche.org

or text/WhatsApp/call/leave a voicemail on **07552 669160**

www.imeche.org/supportnetwork



IMPROVING LIVES WORLDWIDE



Six years of international support

In 2019 we expanded our charitable objectives to be able to use more of our resources for good. We committed funds from our investment portfolio to help STEM projects worldwide, and made our first 'foundation funding' grant in 2020. Since inauguration, we have committed £981,815 to 26 projects in 13 countries.

We see this work as an integral part of what we do – expanding our assistance beyond the direct IMechE membership, and enabling tangible, engineering-focussed benefits on a worldwide basis. In this way, we can help to relieve poverty, contribute to climate change initiatives, inspire tomorrow's engineers, and support them to flourish through today's STEM initiatives.

Going forward, we will continue to work with STEM Learning in the UK

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The last bridge was washed away and three villagers died. When first crossing this new bridge I really felt that I'm in a new world now, more secure... children will not miss school even if it rains and the river flows strongly or rises, plus they'll come back home safely.
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to support teachers to better deliver STEM subjects. Outside of the UK, we will extend our ongoing bridge-building work in Rwanda into Zambia. Members based in Tanzania and Sierra Leone have helped us find engineering and education funding opportunities in these countries, and we are exploring how we can best support local engineering innovations and start-ups.

If you are interested in engaging with this work, please do get in touch. Similarly, if you know of a project or organisation that aligns with our objectives of STEM-focussed education, international development or engineering innovation, we would love to hear from you.



 **KENYA:** Providing equipment and training to recycle waste ocean plastics from the beach to create 3D printer filament, generating new income and cleaning the local environment.

 **UGANDA:** Establishing a mechanical repair shop and micro-financing scheme to help 35 young people into business.

 **RWANDA:** Building bridges to re-connect divided communities and enable safe passage to hospitals, markets and schools. We have funded four bridges, directly helping 31,000 people.

 **INDIA:** Helping women's farming co-operatives to use organic fertilisers and seeds as a route to financial independence for 30 women, and improving biodiversity in their villages.

 **UK:** Helping REMAP to scale their disability adaptation branches and start activities in new areas.

 **UK:** Enabling over 60 vulnerable and disadvantaged city children to have educational and confidence-boosting holidays in the countryside and on the coast.



We support STEM-related projects on a global basis in education, international development and engineering innovation. This is a valuable extension of our core work. We now contribute to 14 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

At Support Network we are passionate about assisting our neurodiverse community. We have helped many members obtain assessments for their children – vastly reducing waiting times and sourcing vital support in a timely way. In some circumstances, a parent then realises that they too might be neurodiverse, and we have helped them as well; a late diagnosis can be equally life-changing. We provide services in relation to autism and dyslexia, and are working to introduce ADHD services this year.

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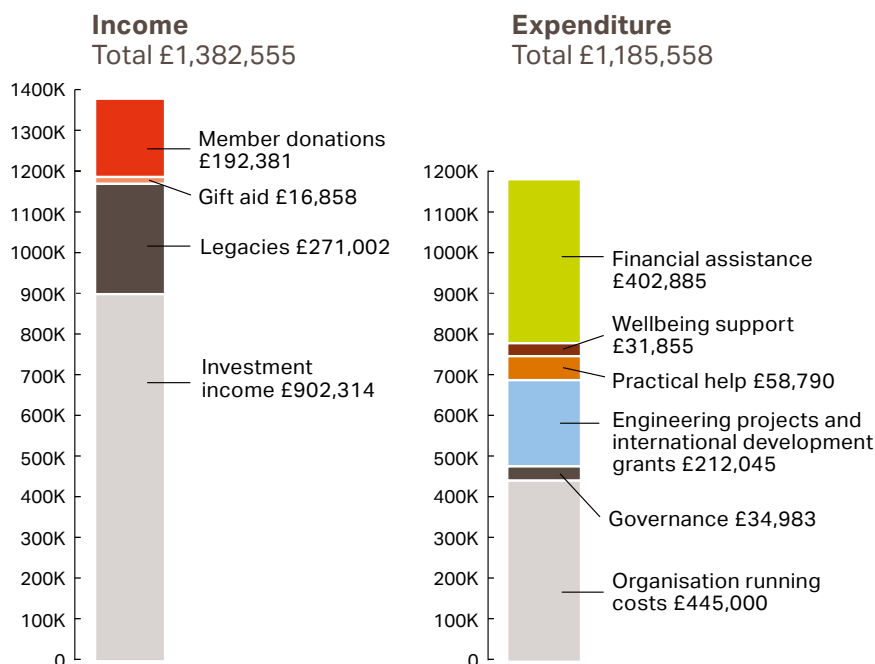
Looking back now, I realise that I've had a good year. Support Network giving me a neurodiversity assessment grant has helped me to discover more about myself and to understand my previous challenges – the doctor thinks I've got autistic traits – and perhaps I do look at things in too much detail sometimes, but I'm starting to use that differently. I gained the confidence to apply for CEng with IMechE, and to apply for a new position. I'm feeling so much brighter about the future – thank you.



£493,632

is the total grant support to members in 2025 (approximately £78,000 more than in 2024), of which £72,659 (15%) supported international members

Extract from 2025 Financial Performance



To view the full 2025 financial accounts and activities report visit www.imeche.org/support-network/governance

Financial assistance included:

- 6** Newly Qualified grants to help with first steps in STEM careers
- 181** Student and Apprentice grants, awarded to international and UK-based mechanical engineering students (134 in 2024)
- 151** 'Breathing space' grants to help members pay essential bills in times of transition or unanticipated circumstances
- 135** Fuel and extra Winter Warmth grants given to those on fixed incomes or households with disabled and/or vulnerable members.

Wellbeing support included:

- 18** parenting support advice and/or respite breaks for carers
- 204** counselling grants to help manage mental health difficulties or work through past traumas (121 in 2024)
- 120** in-person and online social visits, calls and online contact made by our volunteers and team.

Practical help included:

- 75** neurodiversity specialist support grants/programmes and/or initial diagnoses of autism, dyslexia or ADHD (47 in 2024)
- 15** sleep support programmes to tackle the underlying causes of poor sleep
- 61** employment coaching and CV specialist referrals to help members get back into or start work (34 in 2024)
- 158** callers used the legal helpline and factsheets for advice on tax, probate and housing matters (125 in 2024).

International project grants included:

- 2** bridges built in Rwanda to connect isolated communities and support local livelihoods via Fika (previously Bridges to Prosperity)
- 260** schoolchildren in Uganda to benefit from improved sanitation and classrooms via the Mondo Foundation
- 500** residents in Juba, South Sudan to engage in a plastic bottle waste recycling project in partnership with Tearfund.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

You can help shape our future

Thank you for reading our Annual Review and your interest in Support Network. We really value your opinion on our services, grant range and foundation funding activities. Our mission is to help Members of the IMechE and their families, and to broaden our good work into new projects. We want to hear from you: what else could we be doing? Is there a place for more direct engagement with the Young Member or Diversity networks? Could you help us at Board level, or as a volunteer or country representative? Do you have feedback on your application experience with us? Whatever your thoughts, we would be happy to hear them – and it is our intention to further this during 2026. Please scan the QR code to get in touch.



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We want to express our sincere gratitude to Support Network for IMechE for finding some of our students worthy to be beneficiaries of the Student Hardship Grant. The grant has gone a long way in alleviating their school charges and accommodations, and helps them to study without worry. We will forever be grateful for this kind gesture.

Engr. Dr. Raymond Ana, Head of Department,
Mechanical Engineering, UNICAL
(University of Calabar), Nigeria
[International Student Grants Programme]

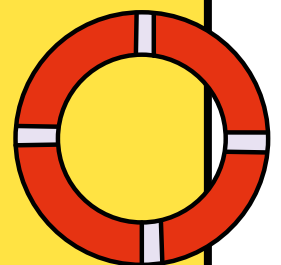
Even during the cost-of-living crisis and uncertain times, people can find it difficult to ask for help. You can assist by encouraging IMechE members to reach out. Many are under pressure, overstretched, or coping with health challenges – their own or their family's. Nobody needs to face these problems alone, and we are here to help.

Your intervention could be the vital connection and make all the difference.

TO DISCUSS HOW WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP

Please email supportnetwork@imeche.org
or text/call/leave a message for the team on **07552 669160**

For more information about us:
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