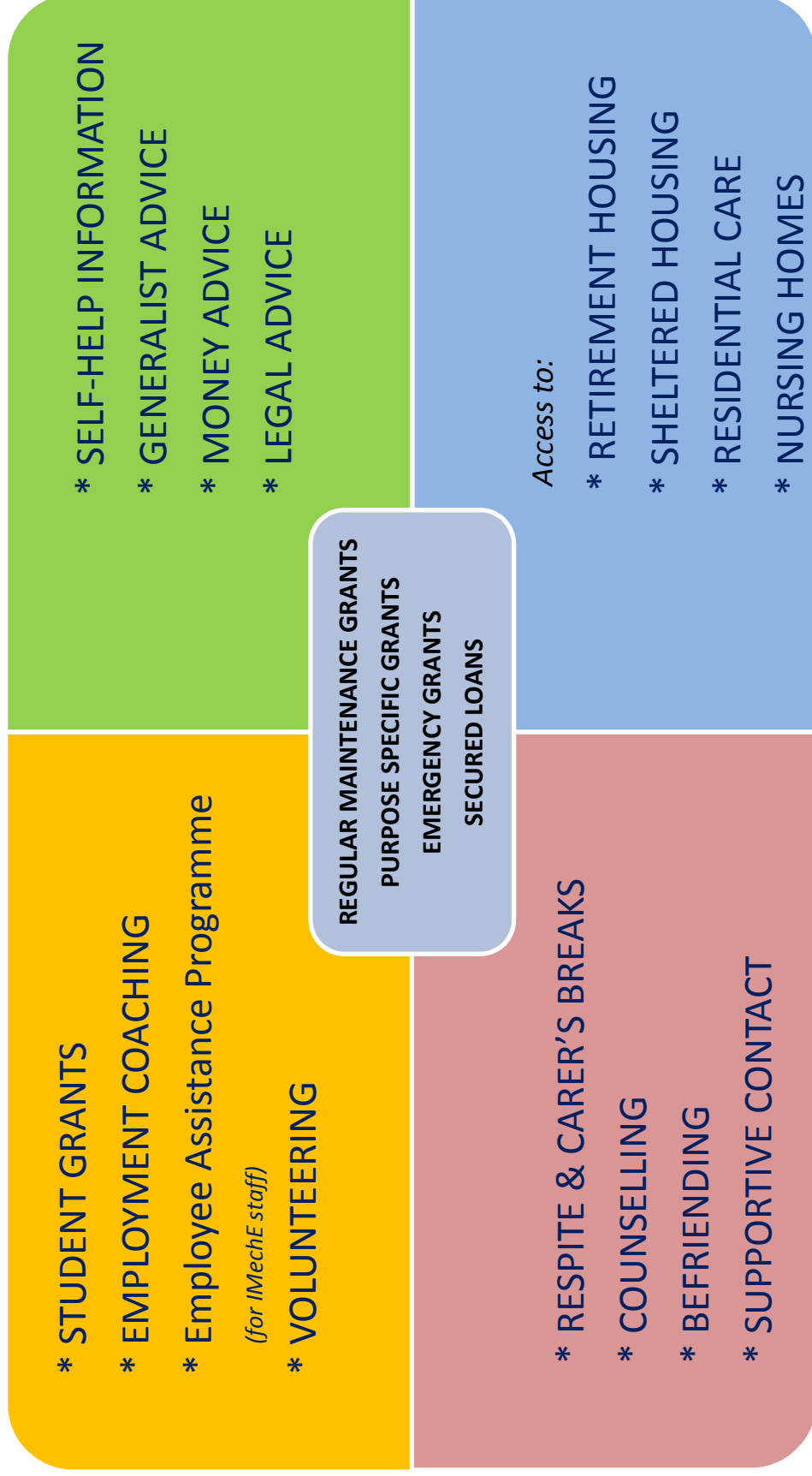


SUPPORT NETWORK

(The Benevolent Fund of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers)

CURRENT SERVICES 2010



SUPPORT NETWORK – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ‘Support Network’ is the working title of The Benevolent Fund of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, a registered charity founded almost 100 years ago to provide financial and/or other assistance to members (and former members) of the Institution, and their dependants, who are in need. The Institution is the leading body for professional mechanical engineers with over 90,000 members, including 11,000 overseas.
- Support Network is based in the Institution’s offices at Birdcage Walk, Westminster. In addition to being a charity established for ‘the prevention and relief of poverty’, Support Network is a company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a Trustee Board of 13 members, who are all currently members of the Institution, and volunteer visitors for the benevolent fund.

Charitable activities

- Support Network is a unique charity in that it provides assistance to members, of all ages, of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, who are in need. Support is provided to professional mechanical engineers from their student days, throughout their working lives (when a crisis such as an accident or illness can have a devastating impact) and also in later life, with the challenges that face older people.
- For many years Support Network has provided, and continues to provide, means-tested cash grants and interest-free loans to individuals in need in order to help lift them out of poverty.
- In recent years Support Network has also introduced a wide range of new services aimed at preventing people falling into poverty, including:
 - Grants for disabled and disadvantaged students
 - An employment coaching and mentoring service for those seeking to become employed
 - Legal advice: web and telephone based
 - Money Advice: web and telephone based
 - A 24-hr, 365 day information, generalist advice and counselling helpline
 - Befriending: telephone based support
 - Access to supported housing
- It is likely that the future direction of the charity will be in expanding and developing these preventative services, although there will always be a need for cash grants in a crisis or for short-term assistance.
- All specialist advice lines are outsourced, complementing the advice and referrals undertaken by the Support Network team in enabling beneficiaries to access the same. We do not provide housing per se, and do not manage properties, but do have a facilitated access route for eligible beneficiaries.
- Support Network currently has three employees: the Chief Executive Officer, the Support & Casework Officer, and the Finance & Administration officer. Face-to-face contact with beneficiaries is usually carried out by volunteers, of whom there are currently around 55 in the UK and up to a dozen in countries overseas where the Institution has a significant membership.

Finances

- Support Network has an investment portfolio valued at around £12M, with an annual income of c£1M, comprising of donations from Institution members, and dividends from investments. Charitable grants of over £½M are made to beneficiaries each year, plus contract payments to the various specialist service providers. Income exceeds expenditure in most years.
- Further details about Support Network and its activities can be found on its website www.supportnetwork.org.uk