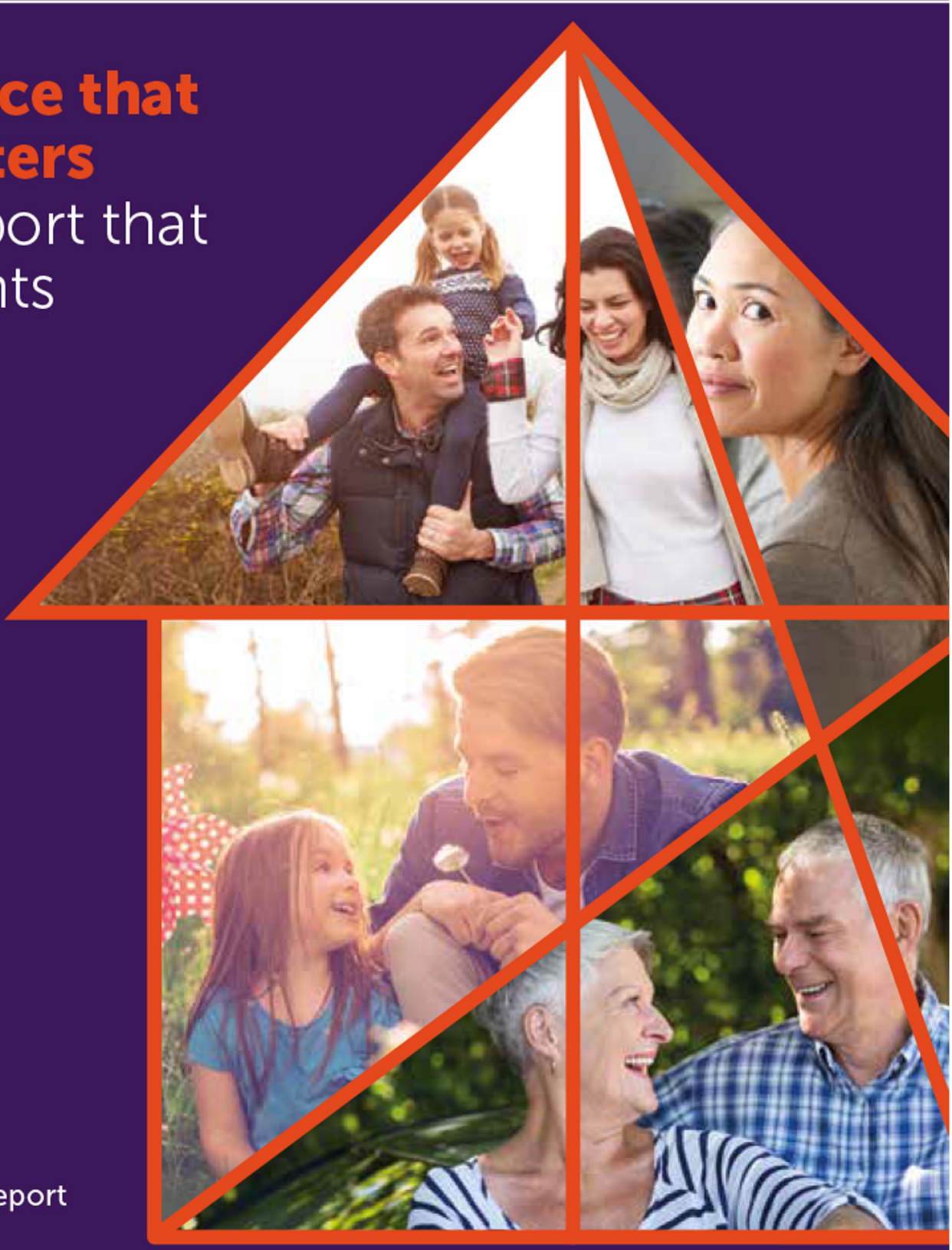
LionHeart

Supporting RICS professionals and their families

Advice that matters

Support that counts



Impact Report
2017

Message from Davina Goodchild, CEO of LionHeart

It's been a very big year for all of us at LionHeart, and we're proud to report that we've been able to support more people than ever before. During the financial year 2016-17, the number of new people we supported rose by 26%.

Our professional counselling service also had its busiest ever year, with the number of clients up by around a quarter. The service is now being accessed by almost 1 in 4 of those we help, and we are pleased to still be in a position to offer fast access to this free, expert support. As demand has grown for counselling, we have recruited another part-time counsellor to the team so that we can still honour this 'no-wait' commitment.

Our support officers also continue to help RICS professionals and their family members facing all kinds of difficult circumstances, from people struggling with serious physical and mental ill health to those who have lost their jobs or suffered a family bereavement or break-up – the kind of thing that, sadly, any one of us could face at any time in our lives.

We pride ourselves on the expert and friendly support we offer, so that we can be a hand to hold through those most testing of times and hopefully help ensure that those challenges in life don't become a crisis.

We're particularly pleased to have reached more people than ever this year as it shows awareness of the support that LionHeart can offer is growing. In particular, those people who have used our counselling service tell us how life changing it can be, but we've also had several lovely messages from people we've helped get back into work who are now looking forward to a brighter future for them and their loved ones.

We want every person who comes to us for help to walk away feeling better than they did when they first got in touch, and your support in helping us continue to do this is absolutely crucial.

"Words cannot express my gratitude and appreciation to the LionHeart team for the care and support you gave to me when I needed it most."

The John O'Halloran Initiative

Towards the end of 2016, we became involved in a big mental health project aimed at improving awareness of health and wellbeing issues in the property industry, and helping employers provide better support for staff. The John O'Halloran Initiative takes its name from a retired company MD, father and grandfather who tragically took his own life after secretly struggling with depression for most of his life.

John O'Halloran FRICS died in March 2015 at the age of 63. His death came as a huge shock to former friends and colleagues, who had no idea of John's mental health issues. Together with John's son Rob, a few of them organised the inaugural John O'Halloran Symposium for property professionals in London in May 2016 to raise awareness of mental health and encourage people to talk about it.

They later asked if LionHeart would take over the running of a longer-term project in John's name, remaining involved as a steering committee.

In May 2017, LionHeart ran three symposium events in London, Manchester and Bristol. Around 200 people heard from industry and business speakers, mental health campaigners and RICS professionals with first-hand experience of mental health issues who bravely shared their stories.

As part of the wider project, LionHeart is also offering a number of mental health awareness and wellbeing workshops, and working with firms to sign up to the Time To Change Pledge. We hope that all these things will help tackle the stigma attached to mental health issues, especially in the workplace, so more people feel able to seek support if they need it.

How we've helped at a glance

Last year we were able to help hundreds of people get through some of those unexpected challenges that life can throw up. Here's a snapshot of how we have offered support, and some of the main reasons they got in touch:

Unemployment, redundancy and other work-related advice **21%**

Serious health problems or disability: **14%**

Mental ill health, stress or anxiety **12.5%**

(Double the number of people compared to the previous year)

Family bereavement **6%**

25%
were referred for **legal advice**

23%
received counselling from our in-house BACP-registered team

39%
received a **financial grant**

41%
received ongoing support from our **support services officers**, including home visits where necessary

"Without you I may have attempted to take my life but the succour you gave to me was what kept me going."

Your stories

Our support officers often say that no two days are ever the same, and we pride ourselves on the tailored support we offer depending on each person's situation. Here are just two of those stories:

"I was at my lowest ebb: I lost my job, my wife filed for divorce and I became homeless."

Mike felt like his life was over when he found himself jobless and homeless in his late 50s after a family break-up.

An application for emergency financial assistance was approved, allowing him to move into new rented accommodation. A support officer was in regular contact, offering advice on picking up his career and emotional support as he adapted to his new family circumstances.

Some months later, Mike was back on track after securing a contract as a quantity surveyor.

He says: "Without the counsel of LionHeart I don't know how I would have coped. The financial help and useful advice and contacts got me back on my feet."

"I am overwhelmed by the generosity of LionHeart, without which we may have been homeless."

Tom was working full-time in surveying and driving a taxi by night to make ends meet when he contacted LionHeart.

He and his wife had found themselves in considerable financial debt after she had a career break to care for their small children and later developed severe depression. After juggling credit cards to pay bills, the couple ended up taking out an IVA to avoid bankruptcy.

The situation left them under huge stress. We offered Tom counselling, which he found a great support, and agreed some financial help for the remaining 12 months of the IVA, to alleviate the immediate pressure.

He adds: "The support officer was so understanding and did not make me feel I was to blame for our situation."

www.lionheart.org.uk

Helpline 0845 603 9057

LionHeart RICS

@LionHeartRICS

LionHeartCharity

"I had nothing left and nowhere to turn. The support you offered literally saved my life."

Support our work

Your support is crucial

Please **consider donating to LionHeart** when you renew your RICS subscription. Your donation will help us continue to provide expert support to your fellow colleagues and their families when they need it most.

Alternatively you can donate online at **www.lionheart.org.uk**

Thank you for your help.