

## **Stephen Lloyd Awards**

**Organisation:** Held In Our Hearts

**Project Name:** Heart to Heart – A new way to provide person-centred, flexible and accessible baby loss support and ensure no one in Scotland is alone when their baby dies.

**Theme/Nature of Project:** Mental Health

### **Project Proposal**

**Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)\***

**What is the main aim of your project?**

To ensure that no one is alone after the loss of their precious baby. Specifically, to address those who find themselves on waiting lists or family members, employers or friends who may seek support or advice on supporting a bereaved loved one.

**Situation (250 words)**

**What is the current situation? Tell us what the problem is and describe what you already know. Where are we now in resolving the issue? Highlight the problem you are addressing – the reality of the current situation, facts and any statistics.**

The lives of half of UK adults have been affected by pregnancy or baby loss. Every day across Scotland, 14 families face the devastation of baby loss - with one in four pregnancies ending in loss, and four babies stillborn each week. The grief that follows is profound, isolating, and traumatic.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland, 2024, also reported a significant increase in neonatal mortality in Scotland in 2021/22, compared to the previous four years, with provisional data from January to September 2023 suggesting a return to higher neonatal mortality rates in 2023.

Held In Our Hearts had 534 referrals in 2024 and supported families through 3,349 sessions. However, services are stretched, placing increasing demand on our support and resulting in a waiting list. In response, we are restructuring our counselling service to appoint a Lead Counsellor. This role will help triage referrals, prioritise families in greatest need, and aim to reduce waiting times.

However, this necessary step means that others, such as those affected by early pregnancy loss or relatives of bereaved parents, may face a wait to access support. The introduction of the *Scottish Government's Miscarriage Care Framework*, which sets out the aim for every woman experiencing miscarriage to have access to follow-up care,

may also increase the number of people seeking emotional support, particularly via telephone, as awareness of available services grows.

### **Complication (250 words)\***

**Describe the issue. What is the underlying problem? What is the reason why this issue requires action? What has changed and what is the impact? Who does it affect and why hasn't someone solved it yet? You must clearly highlight the complication and provide information on the opportunity.**

Early intervention delivers the best outcomes for mental health. For those on waiting lists, being seen sooner increases the likelihood of improved wellbeing. The pandemic, cost-of-living crisis, and rising neonatal mortality rates have further intensified mental health challenges for bereaved parents.

Our peer support team is currently inundated - not only by bereaved parents, but also by relatives, employers, and friends seeking advice on how to support them. At the same time, we've seen a drop in appointment attendance, as more people manage chaotic lives, multiple jobs, and struggle to keep scheduled commitments.

While telephone support is available for those affected by baby loss, changing communication habits are creating new barriers. One in four people (23%) aged 18–34 never answer phone calls, and nearly 70% prefer texts. Many now favour voice notes, which feel less pressured than real-time conversations (Uswitch, 2024).

NHS Digital (2021) also reported a rise in digital service use for urgent mental health support, as these can feel more accessible and less intimidating—especially during periods of high anxiety.

Our own data highlights why some individuals may prefer helplines or text-based support over in-person appointments. So far this year:

- 16.7% have experienced gender-based violence
- 29.2% live with a long-term health condition
- 11.1% have a disability
- 16.7% do not speak English as a first language

These barriers make flexible, accessible services essential. We must continue developing digital and asynchronous support to ensure no one is left behind in their grief.

### **Solution (250 words)\***

**How are you going to solve the problem? This will be your proposal for how to resolve the complication. This will be the substance of your main point. This is**

**where you explain what you need to do, or have done already, and what needs to be done to address the complication.**

Similar to [Stephen Lloyd](#) himself who helped to modernise the charity sector, Held In Our Hearts will modernise the way baby loss support is available.

*Heart to Heart* will lead the way with voice note, text and phone support options for those affected by baby loss with the aim of breaking down any barriers that could prevent contact. This will reduce the fear for those aged 18-34 and still offer the option of dedicated phone call times for those who still prefer to talk on the phone.

Having dedicated times throughout the day and the evening every week will provide the opportunity for those struggling to make appointment times to seek support. Text and voice note options will also allow them to get in touch at a time that's convenient for them and allow them to fit support around their busy schedules.

To enable this, we would need a trained peer support worker to be available to manage this service throughout a dedicated day and evening each week. This member of staff would need supervision, and we would also need to set up a dedicated phone number, a new laptop, CRM database and to publicise this service appropriately.

By developing this person-centred, flexible and accessible *Heart to Heart* line, we are not replacing human connection - we are enhancing it.

## **Wider Support**

**A key part of the value of being shortlisted for, or winning, an award is the network of partners that becomes available to help you. With that in mind, how would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)**

We would really appreciate the advice of Amanda Wells, specialist PTSD and Trauma psychotherapist on our service and wider support at Held In Our Hearts.

The opportunity to connect with the Caroline Mason at the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Peter Lewis, Chief Executive of the Institute of Fundraising, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Tudor Trust, the Ashden Trust and Social Investment Business would be invaluable to us regarding our fundraising strategy and potential future funding opportunities for Held In Our Hearts.

In terms of our publicity campaign, we would be grateful for support from Michael Norton, Director and Trustee of the Centre for Innovation in Voluntary Action and Founder of DSC, The Media Trust, who give marginalised groups and young people a stronger voice, and Matter and Co, for their expertise in powerful marketing and communications.

## **Financial Justification**

**How do you propose to spend the winning funds of £25,000 (50 words max). Please provide a general idea.**

The winning funds of £25,000 would be spent on:

£14,631 for a peer support worker (15 hours – one day and one evening)

£2,500 for training

£2,000 for publicity

£1,869 for IT equipment (phone, laptop, database subscriptions)

£2,000 supervision

£2,000 management costs/room hire/set up costs

= £25,000

**We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)\***

Our CEO, Nicola Welsh, has compassionately led Held In Our Hearts for 10 years starting as a volunteer, following the tragic loss of her son Theo who spent 3 weeks in the ICU fighting for his life. Coming home with no one to speak to about this traumatic experience, and being avoided in the street, her vision for the charity has always been to ensure no one in Scotland is alone when their baby dies.

## **YouTube Video, if you'd like to add one**

**Do you have a short YouTube video, or similar presentation, which enhances your idea for us? This is not mandatory, but if you do wish to submit a video, please enter the URL hyperlink or email the video to [info@stephenlloydawards.org](mailto:info@stephenlloydawards.org), clearly referencing your charity/project name in the subject of your email):**

We don't have a video about this idea specifically, but we do have a video from our CEO Nicola about her story and subsequent 10 years of compassionate leadership of Held In Our Hearts: <https://vimeo.com/1084210797>

**Additional References: You are welcome to provide a list of up to 5 links with any relevant supporting material or visuals, as further reference:**

Diane received support through Held In Our Hearts following the death of her daughter Jessie. Here, she speaks about how incredibly important this was to her:

<https://vimeo.com/1067407524>

The first minister launched the Scottish Baby Loss Memorial Book at Held In Our Hearts. This was a significant milestone for those who have lost their babies prior to 24 weeks and until now there was nothing to show that they ever existed. Through collaboration and working with families Held In Our Hearts helped to make this possible:

[https://youtu.be/n5jmuarxEjY?si=JC0qQ1rn8lx\\_RwZ1](https://youtu.be/n5jmuarxEjY?si=JC0qQ1rn8lx_RwZ1)

This is a video created for Baby Loss Awareness Week sharing the parent voice to demonstrate the importance of our work and how we are often the light in the darkness for so many:

<https://vimeo.com/1075270944/12b85661e1>