



ICIS : information for life

Registered Charity No: 1095945
Company Registration No: 4603381

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

for the Year Ended 31st March 2009

**Supporting the health, wellbeing and independence
of people of all ages in West Sussex**

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Legal and Administrative Information

	Company Registration No	4603381
	Registered Charity No	1095945
	VAT Registered No	813 0102 00
President	Duke of Richmond and Gordon (retired November 2008)	
Directors (Trustees)	David Crowther	Chairman
	Harry Bates	Vice Chairman
	David Parker	Trustee
	Christopher North	Trustee
	Vaughan Lilley	Trustee
	Peter Ferris	Trustee
Statutory Observers	Seth Gottesman	West Sussex County Council
	Geoff Burgess	West Sussex Primary Care Trust (to 30.9.08)
	Jackie Manners	West Sussex Library Service
Company Secretary	David Parker (until 30.9.08) Kate Rhodes (from 1.10.08)	
Chief Executive Officer	Liz Hall	
Registered Office	35 Worthing Road East Preston Littlehampton West Sussex BN16 1BQ	
Bankers	Caf Bank Limited PO Box 289 West Malling Kent ME19 4TA	
	Barclays Bank Plc PO Box 54, 74-75 East Street Chichester West Sussex PO19 1HT	
	CCLA Investment Management Ltd COIF Charities Deposit Fund 80 Cheapside London EC2V 6DZ	
Independent Examiner	Spofforths LLP A2 Yeoman Gate, Yeoman Way Worthing West Sussex BN13 3QZ	
Solicitors	Bates Wells and Braithwaite 2-6 Cannon Street London EC4M 6YH	



Supporting the health, wellbeing and independence of people of all ages in West Sussex

Chairman's Report

I am very pleased to present the Annual Report for ICIS for 2008-2009.

This year has been a busy and successful one. We have seen continued development of our information resources and IT, so strengthening our capacity to maximise on the benefits of new technology to enhance access to information.

Despite added pressures from this development of our information resources and IT and from the disruption from the office refurbishment at the end of the year, ICIS has maintained a continued high level of service for which all credit should go to Liz Hall and her team.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank Capacity Builders for generously enabling us to refit our premises which should stand us in good stead with the infrastructure needed for the foreseeable future.

Our principal aims as we enter 2009-2010 are to further develop the services we provide to serve a wider community through access to information, to promote ICISdirect and to work with other agencies to develop further information resources for our clients and for the public at large.

I would like to acknowledge with thanks the continued support from West Sussex County Council, the Primary Care Trust and our voluntary sector clients and colleagues. And my personal thanks go to the staff, volunteers and my fellow Trustees for their continued commitment, hard work and enthusiasm on behalf of ICIS.

.....
David Crowther
Chairman

Date



Supporting the health, wellbeing and independence of people of all ages in West Sussex

Chief Executive Officer's Report

It has been another busy year for the staff and volunteers at ICIS. A summary of our activities is included in the following pages, but there are some aspects of our work that I would particularly like to mention.

At the beginning of the year we were delighted to be commissioned to develop the websites and groups databases for the seven POPP (Partnership for Older People Project) Neighbourhood Networks. This has been an exciting and innovative project. Working closely with the POPP teams has been a fine example of the benefits of working together in West Sussex, sharing information and knowledge to the benefit of older people and the community groups that serve them. You can find out more about this project on page 10.

ICISdirect, our 'off-the-shelf' online information product, has been viewed, demonstrated and presented at events, meetings and workshops throughout the year, and is now in use by a number of health and social care practitioners and voluntary agencies who have recognised the value of subscribing to the resource.

As information providers, keeping abreast of new technology and monitoring, updating and financing our ICT resources, is an ongoing responsibility. This year we have installed a new phone system, increased our internal networking capability, replaced our domain server and database server, and are currently upgrading our computer operating systems and office applications to ensure continued support from Microsoft.

We were thrilled to be awarded a Premises Improvement grant from Capacitybuilders. The resulting building enhancements are a credit to the Board who supported and approved the work, and to the staff who coped magnificently with the upheaval, the noise and the dust, and continued to deliver 'service as normal'. Read more about this on page 7.

There have been some staff changes during the year. Sam has returned to a career in graphic design, Debbie moved on to a post in one of the new Children's Centres, and Lorna is now pursuing a career in computer management. We have been delighted to welcome to the Team Carolyn Moore, Information and Data Assistant, and more recently, Cheryl Francis, Information Development Assistant. Gemma Orpwood is now Operations and Projects Manager, and a member of the senior management team.

A new volunteer, Sarah, joined us during the year, increasing our volunteer team to 7. We are indebted to our volunteers who have given up over 700 hours of their time during the year to help us develop and maintain our data and to support the many and varied administrative tasks involved in running an information service.

Lastly my thanks go to all the staff and to our Chairman and the Board of Trustees, whose commitment, support and hard work is invaluable to the work of ICIS, and to our ability to help improve the quality of lives of people in West Sussex.

.....
Liz Hall
Chief Executive Officer

Date

The ICIS Mission

Our Mission is to enable people of all ages to improve the quality of their lives and to better cope when life is difficult by providing easy and ready access to information for getting care, advice or other support. The information will be impartial and prompt, and be available directly to people and to service providers, with a primary focus on West Sussex.

Our Values

We believe that timely and appropriate information is essential to enable people to manage their lives through difficult and challenging circumstances, and in everyday life, particularly when a person may have an additional need for care, support or advice. We believe that people have a right to information that can support and enable them in their lives.

Our Commitments

- To providing a good quality information resource that is responsive to social change and available to people needing help
- To responding with appropriate information to the best of our ability
- To providing an impartial, confidential service for all people
- To actively supporting equal opportunity for all

Our Beneficiaries

- People of all ages in West Sussex who need help because of a disability, illness or difficulty in their lives
- People and service providers supporting a relative, friend, neighbour, client, patient or employee in West Sussex affected by a disability, illness or difficulty
- People of all ages seeking information to support and enhance personal health, wellbeing and independence

Our Aims

- To provide a high quality information service for all people in West Sussex who need help when they are experiencing difficulties in their lives
- To maintain and develop a comprehensive database of services and activities supporting people in West Sussex
- To develop, support and enable access to information

Public benefits

- Easy access to information about services for people
- Enabling people with disabilities to find sources of help
- Enabling carers to find sources of help
- Enabling people with difficulties due to poverty, ethnic background, social exclusion, isolation, bereavement and challenging circumstances to find sources of help
- Enabling people to maintain independence
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Promoting life skills and learning
- Promoting social inclusion

ICIS is an outcome-focussed organisation striving to ensure that:

- **All people will be able to find help** to support them in their daily lives
- People needing help will have **more choices**
- **Fewer people will be disadvantaged** through lack of information

Business Plan 2007-2010

The Business Plan outlines our strategic objectives to continue providing a quality service for the county, maintain effective working relationships with all sectors, to be flexible and responsive to information need and local, regional and national agendas, and to embed our organisation as a sustainable social enterprise. To do this we have set 5 key goals which are:

- Goal 1: to increase our flexibility and potential to manage and make available quality information services
- Goal 2: to continue the delivery of the quality core service for West Sussex
- Goal 3: to maximise business with existing clients
- Goal 4: to expand into new markets
- Goal 5: to review and ensure the effective use of ICIS assets and personnel

Our activities, achievements, projects and partnership working described below illustrate how we are responding to these goals.

A new look ICIS premises!



Thanks to a generous grant from Capacitybuilders under their Small Premises Improvement Programme, we were able to re-arrange, refurbish and decorate our office space in East Preston in March.

This grant has enabled us to improve the meeting space we have available for organisations to hire. We have merged two small offices to create a new meeting room, converted another office into a small interview or counselling room, re-arranged our main work area to provide additional workspace and storage, and redecorated our reception area. The refurbishment was designed and carried out by Chichester-based interior designers, GTA Interiors. As we entered 2009-2010 we were busy furnishing and kitting out the new rooms.

This work is helping us to maximise on the building's potential as an information centre and resource for all people and organisations in our area. An Open Day was held on 12th June 2009 for organisations to view the new rooms and find out more about the services we provide.



Achievements and activities

Enquiry Line

Nearly 3,000 people have been helped personally by our information assistants to find sources of support. When people ring our Enquiry Line they benefit from the full range of our information resources; our own database (ICISbase, see below) and reference library; and specialised UK databases on disability equipment, sources of funding, advice services and disability support. Combined with the experience, knowledge and research skills of our information assistants, this is a tremendous resource for people that are struggling to cope with life's challenges and don't know where to find help. Our service evaluations during the year identified that 87% of enquirers felt that ICIS made it easier for them to find help and 78% found out about services they hadn't heard of. Our online information resources have been searched nearly 30,000 times, resulting in thousands of organisation details being viewed.

Enquiry Service

"Excellent service, a great find, will use again."

"Was lost before I rang ICIS, nothing was too much trouble."

Over the past year we have recorded an increased use of Funderfinder's People in Need database to respond to enquiries about sources of funding - a reflection perhaps on the current economic climate.

Sometimes we cannot identify a service that matches an enquirer's need, although where we can we suggest other options that might help. We report 'unmet needs' to health and social care commissioners to inform and support service development. For example, during the year we reported the following unmet needs:

- Subsidised gardening service for pensioner in Arun
- Iranian social group in Chichester
- A register of care homes approved by users and relatives
- Card that identifies a person has a disability or special need
- A pharmacist delivering to West Grinstead
- Free training for a visually impaired person on 'SupaNova' screen reader software
- Community transport in Littlehampton that carries a portable ramp
- West Sussex citizens advocacy service for people with learning difficulties

ICISbase

ICISbase is our unique West Sussex information database, designed and developed by ICIS, containing over 6,500 organisations in 26 topic areas and linked to hundreds of sub-topics. ICISbase helps us answer enquiries, generate customised data resources for service providers, develop ICISdirect, make information accessible, and promote the work of the organisations, groups and clubs listed.

During the year over 800 organisations and groups have been added, and all records have been checked for accuracy and currency. We contact organisations when their record is 11 months old and chase at least three times if they don't respond. All records over 15 months old are excluded from searches, but we don't give up trying to update them when we know the organisations exist.

ICIS

"Helps us get the message out to as many people as possible."

"Many clients have found your service very valuable."

New features and functions have been added to ICISbase to support data maintenance, expand search options and enhance the potential functionality in data resources we create for clients. This year these include postcode searching and an online updating facility. Our thanks go to TGSi, our database developers, for their continued support.

ICISdirect

Available on subscription, our online 'off-the-shelf' information product contains over 6,500 organisations. Subscribers to ICISdirect benefit from instant access to a huge range of services that could support their clients, and savings in time otherwise spent searching for and updating information. The resource is available on our website for designated staff of subscriber organisations and, as it is password-protected, includes services that cannot be published on the internet.

ICISdirect

"Improves the quality of the service we are able to offer our clients."

Subscribers in 2008-2009 included:

- Age Concern West Sussex
- Eighteen Help Points in West Sussex
- West Sussex Carers Support Services
- Western Area PCT Mental Health Services
- St Barnabas Hospice and Chestnut Tree House Childrens Hospice
- Chichester Adults Services Locality Office

Business development research project

We engaged a third-year student, Bettina Bauer, from Chichester University to undertake a business development project in January. She researched the potential, and use, of ICISdirect, investigated marketing opportunities and presented a report to the Board in March. Her recommendations have been incorporated into the marketing plan for 09/10.

ICIS website

www.icis-info4life.org.uk

Our website is a 'shop window' on the ICIS service, and provides access to our three primary areas of service; information for people needing help in their daily lives; information and support for carers; and information and support for organisations in the health, social care and welfare sectors. This year we upgraded our public online database of 'organisations that can help', combining the original ICIS online database and the 'frequently asked questions' to create an improved 'ICIS online' based on 12 key topic areas. Each topic is organised into sub-menus making it easier to eliminate organisations that are not relevant to your search. We undertook a thorough review of the site during the year, and this work is continuing into 09-10 as we firm up our long-term needs prior to implementing a new site build.

ICIS News – quarterly information publication for providers

The ICIS newsletter keeps providers informed, helps promote organisations and activities, and publicises developments within ICIS. There is now a reserved page for ICIS' use to promote specific projects and developments such as ICISdirect, online updating and meeting room hire. Approximately 380 services, organisations and community groups have been promoted in the four newsletters produced this financial year. Topics covered have included: domestic violence, visual impairment, sexual abuse, eating disorders, groups for older people, divorce, issues with sexual orientation, personal care services, parenting support, advocacy, transport and health information services.

Carers emergency alert card and Emergency respite schemes

ICIS administers the alert card scheme on behalf of West Sussex County Council, and provides support for the Emergency respite scheme by liaising with West Sussex Crossroads and processing the additional alert card applications that the Emergency respite scheme generates. There have been 412 Carer's Emergency Alert Card applications received and processed this year. Since the launch of the Emergency Respite Care scheme in May 2008, 294 Alert Card holders also have a Care Plan. We are indebted to our volunteer Frances who provides significant administrative support for these valuable services.

Working in partnership around the county

Partnership for Older People Project (POPP)



A major project for ICIS this year was the development of the seven websites and seven Groups databases for the West Sussex POPP Neighbourhood Networks. Each website contains its own local Groups database of voluntary groups for older people, and the work of gathering, verifying and inputting information into these databases is an ongoing task at ICIS. As a direct result of collaboration with POPP partners and colleagues, we have identified and added

several hundred more voluntary groups to our information resource and made them available in the Networks' Groups databases. Neighbourhood Network staff maintain the content of their websites, and ICIS will continue to maintain and develop the seven Groups databases on behalf of West Sussex County Council for 2009-2010.

We acknowledge with thanks the work of StrawberrySoup of Chichester who designed and built the POPP websites, and of TGSi, our database developers, who supported the online integration of the POPP databases.

Customised information resources and products

Over the year we have developed and maintained a number of customised resources for clients in West Sussex. These range from large online databases to small monthly bulletins, and they represent nearly 25,000 pieces of information being maintained, shared and made available by ICIS via these resources alone. Current contracts include:

- **West Sussex County Council:** A resource developed for West Sussex Adults and Children's Services, and made available via the West Sussex County Council intranet.
- **Families and Schools Support Service:** A resource developed for West Sussex County Council to reflect the Department of Health information framework and support the work of West Sussex practitioners in social care, health and education.
- **West Sussex County Voluntary Youth Service:** A password-protected extranet resource supporting the Service's developmental work.
- **West Sussex Association for Disabled People:** A password-protected customised version of ICISdirect supporting the Association's outreach work.
- **Wellspring:** A password-protected extranet resource to support Wellspring's work with disabled children, young people and their families, and the production of Wellspring's Resource Booklet.
- **Carers Online website and database, www.westsussexcarers.org.uk:** A publicly available online resource for all carers in West Sussex, developed and maintained by ICIS on behalf of West Sussex County Council.
- **Social Enterprise e-bulletin:** a monthly e-bulletin of news for new and established social enterprises, produced by ICIS for West Sussex County Council. The e-bulletin can be downloaded from the West Sussex Social Enterprise Network website.
- **West Sussex Social Enterprise Network website, www.wssen.org.uk:** a website for new and established social enterprises, maintained by ICIS on behalf of West Sussex County Council.

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Participation in groups, forums and events

ICIS is a member of, or has attended, the following groups and forums during the year.

- ChangeUp Infrastructure Sustainability Group
- Self-Directed Support Communications Group
- West Sussex Social Enterprise Network
- West Sussex Public Partnership Forum
- Voluntary and Community Sector Forum
- South East Disability Information Network
- Sustainable Communities Strategy Workshops
- Suicide Prevention Strategy Group
- PCT Rural Symposia
- Arun LSP Conference
- Health commissioning workshops

Staff resources permitting we attend events and workshops, manning exhibition stands and giving presentations and providing information. During this year we have attended:

- Life is for Living, Horsham
- Outreach 3 Way workshops, Crawley
- Carers information event
- Extended Schools event
- Connexions workshop, Chichester
- Burgess Hill Resource Hub launch
- Selsey Children and Family Centre event
- Launch of The Big Bridge website
- Rural Health Group meeting
- PCT Rural access workshop
- LINKs information event
- Enspiral health information event

We also welcome to ICIS visitors who are new in post in the health and social care sectors, and demonstrate how we can support their work and facilitate information provision.

Monitoring, review and quality assurance

During the year we developed a framework and set of procedures to help us more effectively monitor the outcomes of our service – how we make a difference to people in West Sussex. The process was not fully implemented until the end of the year so we have limited data at present. However from data gathered so far we know that an average of:

- 87% of people said ICIS made it easier for them to find help
- 95% of people said ICIS helped them find support
- 78% of people learnt about or used services they hadn't known about

ICIS is a holder of an **Investors in People** award recognising our efforts in developing our staff and volunteers. We also have a **Positive About Disability award**, recognising our commitment to people with disabilities.

As a member of the **Telephone Helplines Association**, we are guided by their codes of good practice in the provision of the Enquiry Service.

Membership of **NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action)** provides opportunities for networking with other voluntary services and specialist network groups, and access to advice, information and support relating to the management and running of voluntary organisations.

Looking forward to 2009-2010

An Open Day was held in June 2009 to enable organisations to view the new meeting rooms for hire at ICIS, and to help promote ICISdirect and our information service. Several visitors were interested in hiring the rooms and we hope that during the year we will be able to support a number of groups and organisations needing an accessible room for occasional or regular meetings.

Later on in the year we plan to hold a county information-sharing event. Full details will be advertised in our newsletter and on our website nearer the time.

We look forward to helping more organisations from all sectors with their information needs, and welcome opportunities to discuss the development of information resources to facilitate access to information for the people most in need.

We will continue to develop and promote ICISdirect to the voluntary, statutory and independent sectors. With its potential to add value to work with clients and save time and resources in managing information, ICISdirect is a major resource for organisations.

Following a period of review by a group of West Sussex Voluntary Sector Liaison and Development Officers, we look forward to enhancing and developing the information resource we provide for Adults and Children's Services. We have had discussions with West Sussex Childrens Services regarding the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme, and look forward to supporting the information development aspect of the programme.

We will be working with Action in rural Sussex (AirS) on the development of Village Information Points, as part of the pan-Sussex Rural Access to Services Project.

We plan to review and rebuild the ICIS website, to further enhance access to information.

And we look forward to ongoing discussions and identifying new ways of working with Adults and Children's Services and the Primary Care Trust, to support joint health and social care agendas for West Sussex.

Acknowledgements and thanks

The Board of Trustees and staff of ICIS acknowledge with thanks the help of our volunteers, Susan, Maria, Frances, Tom, David, Alan and Sarah, some of whom have been with us for many years. Whilst ICIS benefits hugely from the time they give, the volunteers themselves appreciate and value the social contact and opportunities provided by volunteering at ICIS.

Our thanks this year also go to:

Capacitybuilders for their grant for premises improvement
GTA Interiors (www.gtainterior.com) for designing and refurbishing the ICIS rooms
TGSI (www.tgsi.net) for supporting and developing the ICIS database and website
Guildcare IT Support Services for IT networking, hardware and software support
StrawberrySoup (www.strawberrysoup.co.uk) for website development and support
Spofforths (www.spofforths.co.uk) for accounting and payroll services
Bettina Bauer for her business development report
Rob and Jackie Streater for looking after our garden and premises

Volunteering at ICIS

"makes me feel needed"

"a lifeline for me"

"gain useful experience"

*"I get satisfaction from seeing the
outcome of my work"*

*"learning more about information
technology"*

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2009

The Trustees, who are also Directors of the charity for the purposes of company law, are pleased to present their annual report together with the accounts for the year ended March 2009. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" revised 2005 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the entity. The financial statements also comply with current statutory requirements and the requirements of the charity's governing regulations.

Name of Charity

The name of the charity is *ICIS : information for life*. The charity is a Company limited by Guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £1. The Company was incorporated on 28th November 2002, and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 18th November 2002.

The Board

The charity is administered by the "Board" of six Trustee Directors at the date of this report, which meets bi-monthly. Two statutory observers attend meetings at the invitation of Trustees and are non-voting representatives. Two of the present Trustees were appointed from the previous Management Committee where members had been elected. The present constitution allows for membership via introduction as appropriate to the requirements of the charity.

Objects and Activities

The objects of the charity are to enable people of all ages to improve the quality of their lives and to cope better when life is difficult by providing impartial and timely information directly to individuals and service providers with a primary focus on West Sussex. The charity helps people of all ages who are in need, including people who are homeless or may be socially excluded.

Activities are carried out to support and enable people in need and others, both individuals and service providers, who help them. The activities are concerned with collecting and maintaining information; providing methods of communication and access to information; detecting gaps in service provision and involvement in other related projects. Our activities are shown in the Chief Executive Officer's Report.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We review our objectives and activities each year to identify the success of each activity and to ensure the outcomes are focused on our stated purpose. When reviewing and planning activities we refer to the guidance in the Charity Commission's 'General guidance on public benefit', and consider how the planned activities will contribute to the charity's aims.

Financial Position and Results

For the year to 31 March 2009, we achieved a surplus of £32,047 on revenues and other income of £268,476 which compares with a surplus of £10,314 and income of £203,530 for the prior year. These results were close to budget and are considered satisfactory overall. This surplus took reserves at the year end to £104,197; included in this figure are designated funds of £10,000 for IT development.

Reserves Policy

At the end of year, the charity's unrestricted reserves stood at £104,197. Total expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2009 was £236,429, and at this level of expenditure the level of reserves represents approximately 23 weeks' expenditure. Given that the charity's work is

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supported by a range of income sources with few long term commitments, the Trustees would wish to build reserves equivalent to a minimum of six months' expenditure on grounds of prudence and in line with Charity Commission recommendations.

Reserves are required for the sustainability and continued development of the service and the charity's infrastructure, and in the coming year the Trustees will be seeking to continue to increase the reserves towards achieving these aims. Reserves are also essential for working capital to finance the business of the charity and the developing social enterprise.

Risk Management

The Trustees have carried out a review of the charity's activities and considered the risks to which the charity is exposed. As part of this process, the Trustees have implemented a risk management strategy that comprises:

- An annual review of the risks that the charity may face;
- The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks; and
- The implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should any of those risks materialise.

Trustees' Responsibilities

Company and charity law applicable in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing those accounts, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining proper records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence take reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Preparation of the Report

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

By:

David Crowther
Chairman

Date.....