



The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity

CHARITY UPDATE

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2020

Furnishing industry shows overwhelming support for welfare campaign

Around 70 companies and brands have signed up in support of The Furniture Makers' Company's 'One Step at a Time' welfare campaign, taking the charity over two thirds of the way to its target of 100 companies supporting the initiative by May 2020.

The campaign, which launched in May 2019, is challenging companies in the furnishing sector to raise awareness of the organisation's occupational welfare support so every industry colleague knows where to turn in times of financial need.

A full list of companies that have signed up as One Step Champions can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Dids Macdonald OBE, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company, said: "The One Step at a Time campaign is two thirds of the way to the target, so a great big thank you to the companies who have signed up.

"With a 42% year on year increase of requests for help from industry colleagues, the word is clearly getting out about how The Furniture Makers' Company can help if times get tough."

Alistair Gough, group CEO at Ocee Design, said: "Ocee Design is delighted to be supporting the One Step at a Time campaign as it directly supports one of our core company values, 'Passion for People'. This very important initiative has enabled us to highlight the financial support available



from The Furniture Makers' Company to our employees who find themselves with unexpected expenditure and require some additional assistance. The feedback from the team has been very positive and extremely appreciative."

Karen Clarridge, group head of HR at Whitemeadow, said: "During hard times, which let's face it we all go through at some time or another during our lives, we can't have enough help and the assistance available from The Furniture Makers' Company enhances the support given by Whitemeadow Furniture to our employees."

Kevin Grix, CEO at The Furniture Ombudsman, said: "We're proud to be supporting The Furniture Makers'

Company's One Step at a Time welfare campaign. It's a vital service and can be a lifeline for those who have contributed to our sector. We need to raise the profile of this fantastic cause to ensure those who need support can access help."

To sign up as a One Step Champion today, go to www.furnituremakers.org.uk/one-step-at-a-time/



Upcoming events

19 March 2020
Northern Curry Night

26 April 2020
Ruairi Giles from Harrison Spinks runs the London Marathon

28 April 2020
Axminster Golf Day at Lyme Regis Golf Club, Dorset

30 April 2020
Northern Big Shots at The Cloudside Shooting Grounds, Congleton

10 June 2020
Big Shots at Holland & Holland, Middlesex

5 July 2020
Five-a-side Football Tournament at Coventry Powerleague

Message from Jonny Westbrooke, CEO



Since our last Charity Update in July 2019, our One Step at a Time campaign, which is focused on promoting our welfare support to industry employees, has really taken off, with around 70 companies now signed up and committed to communicating our support services to their staff.

It is very heartening and pleasing to see how much the industry has rallied behind the initiative, and I would like to thank all of the businesses that have signed up. All of our One Step Champions can be seen on the backpage of this newsletter.

The campaign has already had a huge impact as we have seen a 42% year-on-year rise in welfare applications.

Although it's not nice to think of someone being in such dire straits that they need to contact us, we're happy that they are aware of our charity and can lean on us for some support to help them get back on their feet and on with their life.

If you haven't already signed up, what are you waiting for? There is zero cost and by joining you will be giving your colleagues, some of whom may be going through a hard time, a lifeline at a dark and difficult point in their life.

If you have any questions about how we can help, please contact Sue Dean, welfare officer at The Furniture Makers' Company, on 020 7256 5558, or email welfareofficer@furnituremakers.org.uk.

How we help

Our charity was set up over 100 years ago to help people from the furnishing industry in times of hardship.

We are here to help anyone from our industry when times are tough with one-off grants, services, time and support.

Your support helps our charity and ensures we will always be here to assist people like Luke, Ian, Karen and Ben.

The first few months with a new baby are meant to be some of the most special moments in parents' lives, but when Luke's partner was placed into critical care following the birth of their daughter, he was left struggling to pay the rent due to taking leave from work to care for their new-born.

He was advised to apply for universal credit, but it was taking weeks for his benefits to be sorted out. Luke had no access to his partner's bank, and she was unable to contribute to the household finances until she was out of hospital.

Luke has worked for a bed manufacturer since 2015. He was told about The Furniture Makers' Company by his manager when he found himself in financial trouble.

Luke contacted us to ask for help to pay his rent, which was due in a couple of weeks. We agreed to cover Luke's and his partner's rent for three months to give the necessary time for housing benefit to be awarded.

Luke was very relieved to be able to concentrate on looking after his baby and helping her to spend time with her mother, while she recovered enough to return home.

Ian approached The Furniture Makers' Company at a very difficult time in his life. His doctor had told him that he had pancreatic cancer and needed major surgery in order to treat it.

He was in hospital for eight weeks and expected to be off work for many months after that in order to recover.

He was married with two young children and his wages from working at a furniture manufacturer was the family's primary source of income.

On top of all the worry and stress about Ian's illness, his wife was distressed at having to rely on a local food bank to make sure that they had enough food for the children.

The couple were falling into arrears with their household bills and couldn't afford to buy new clothes for Ian, who had lost three stone in weight since becoming ill.

We were able to step in very quickly and award an emergency grant of £1,000 to support the family while they were being assessed for benefits.

Ian was also relieved to learn that he could contact us again if he needed more help.

Karen was evicted from her house and forced into homelessness after discovering her partner had a gambling addiction and had been spending the rent on feeding his habit.

After a month of staying with different friends, she was given a loan from her employer to pay a deposit and rent for a small flat where she could rebuild her life.

She is now living on a very tight budget and has no money to pay for the basic necessities in the unfurnished property.

She was sleeping on an inflatable bed, taking washing to friends and buying food on a day-to-day basis because she had no fridge.

Karen heard about The Furniture Makers' Company from a colleague.

She applied to us and we were able to

supply her with the essentials of a bed, fridge freezer and washing machine.

Karen, who has split from her partner, is now able to start putting her life back together after the most stressful time.

Ben was referred to us by his employer, a furniture manufacturer, who told us what a highly skilled employee he was.

He had worked as a craftsman since 1997 but was currently unable to work due to depression and anxiety.

He was struggling with his illness which was majorly impacting on his self-esteem and day-to-day life.

Ben needed a period of time off work followed by a gradual return.

Ben contacted us to see whether we could help him to meet his essential outgoings, as the pressure and worry about his finances was compounding the issue, causing him extra anxiety and distress.

We were pleased to award Ben a grant to cover his mortgage payments for three months while he took time off to seek help.

Ben's father got in touch to let us know that Ben was really grateful for the support.

If you know anyone who works or has worked in any sector of the furnishing industry who could benefit from our support, please contact Sue Dean by emailing welfareofficer@furnituremakers.org.uk.

Harrison Spinks commercial director to run marathon for charity

Ruairi Giles, commercial director of bed manufacturer Harrison Spinks, is putting his best foot forward for The Furniture Makers' Company by taking part in the 2020 London Marathon.

The event will take place on Sunday 26 April and will see around 40,000 people run 26.2 miles around the nation's capital.

The route starts south of the Thames at Blackheath before crossing Tower Bridge around mile 12. After taking a not-so brief detour through Canary Wharf and the City of London, the race draws to a close outside Buckingham Palace.

Ruairi said: "I'll be starting my training first week of January and hope to reach the finishing line at St James's Park 16 weeks

later. As an active member of the furnishing industry, I plan on involving my colleagues, customers and suppliers to help raise as much as possible."

Ruairi is hoping to raise £5,000 for our charity and would welcome donations and support from industry friends and colleagues.

Ruairi added: "The Furniture Makers' Company is there for everyone in our industry and as awareness of the charity increases so does the need to raise more funds. I'm proud to be running the marathon to help continue the excellent work that the charity does."

You can support Ruairi by donating via the Virgin Money Giving page: [Virginmoneygiving.com/fund/furnituremakerscompany](https://www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/furnituremakerscompany).



The London Marathon

Industry meets the future of design at Young Furniture Makers exhibition

Around 1,000 people came out to meet the future of design at the 2019 Young Furniture Makers exhibition last October, in what proved to be the event's most successful edition to date.

The Young Furniture Makers exhibition was set up by The Furniture Makers' Company more than 10 years ago for school children, students and graduates to showcase their work to the design community and connect with potential employers.

Around 150 of the UK's freshest designers exhibited cutting edge furniture and lighting for one day only on 9 October (12.00pm - 9.00pm) at Furniture Makers' Hall and the Dutch Church in Austin Friars, London.

The event was sponsored by Axminster

Tools & Machinery and supported by Anti Copying in Design, Blum, Celtheath Contract Furniture, the January Furniture Show and The Furniture Ombudsman.

The exhibition concluded with the annual Young Furniture Makers Awards ceremony, with special guest furniture designer-maker Sebastian Cox presenting the Bespoke, Design and Innovation Awards and Blum Best in Show Prize.

Paul von der Heyde, chairman at exhibition sponsor Axminster Tools & Machinery, said: "The enormous attendance and energy at the awards session was inspirational. It was a thrill to be associated with such a vibrant and inspiring event."

Ten outstanding pieces were also selected to

be included in a special room set feature at the January Furniture Show (19-22 January, NEC Birmingham).

January Furniture Show event director Cleere Scamell said: "It was clear at the Young Furniture Makers exhibition awards ceremony in October that there is both real talent and genuine enthusiasm among young designers to use and re-use materials carefully. They not only showed imagination but created furniture with artistry and precision.

"We are privileged to have some of those designs at JFS in 2020 and I have no doubt that the feature at the entrance to Hall 1 will be a conversation piece in itself."

Inspire the next generation with a School Design Prize

We are appealing for companies to inspire the next generation of designers and furniture makers by supporting our 2020 School Design Prize campaign.

Launched in 2014, the School Design Prize raises awareness of the furnishing industry among school children by rewarding them for their design & technology course work.

Every year The Furniture Makers' Company asks companies and individuals to sponsor copies of a design textbook which are then posted to schools around the country for design & technology teachers to present to their most outstanding student.

For 2020, the prize will once again be a copy of 'Design of the 20th Century' by Charlotte and Peter Fiell, published by Taschen, and a certificate featuring the logo of the sponsoring companies.

Jonny Westbrooke, CEO of The Furniture Makers' Company, said: "The UK furnishing industry has an ageing workforce. The long



Millie Harper, a 2019 School Design Prize winner

term prosperity of the industry depends on us attracting young people to pursue a career in this creative, vibrant sector.

"As the furnishing industry's charity, we have put in place an extensive education programme to help create a powerful workforce for the future.

"You can help safeguard the future of the industry by sponsoring a School Design Prize."

The deadline for donations is 2 March 2020. A set of two books costs £54 (inc VAT) and donors can recommend the schools that receive the awards.

All of the winners of the School Design Prize are then put forward to exhibit at our annual Young Furniture Makers exhibition in October.

For more information, contact Laura Garnett, head of fundraising and development, at **020 7256 5558** or email laura@furnituremakers.org.uk.

Thank you to our One Step Champions



Parker Knoll

