Annual Review
2024•25

cerebral palsy scotland

Welcome to our 2024/25 annual review

2024/25 was undoubtedly a challenging year. It is increasingly harder to find funding for our services, but whilst income has declined, our costs have remained stable. The increase to Employers' National Insurance Contributions, combined with increases to the Real Living Wage, left us with no option but to undertake an organisational re-design to cut costs. This process began in December 2024 and was concluded by the end of March 2025. Three members of staff were made redundant and four left to pursue roles in other organisations. Contractual redundancy payments have been shown in these accounts, and the Senior Management Team took a voluntary 10% pay cut from January 2025.

Despite these cost pressures, we have protected the delivery of services and funded projects during this time. We have remained focused on our strategic aims, working to increase awareness of cerebral palsy and how we can help, developing and delivering a new programme of training offering a range of opportunities to bring our community together, and contributing to developments in the policy landscape and wider service development. Our purpose remains to ensure lifelong access to knowledgeable, compassionate services and support for people with cerebral palsy across Scotland.

We are more than grateful to the many donors and supporters who have funded our work throughout the year. We wouldn't be here without you. We trust that the measures we have implemented during this year will better equip Cerebral Palsy Scotland to face the years ahead in a leaner, fitter way while still serving the needs of people with cerebral palsy across Scotland. On behalf of all of us, thank you for your support.

Stephanie Fraser
CEO Cerebral Palsy Scotland

Ian Johnstone
Chair of Trustees

What is cerebral palsy?

Cerebral palsy (CP) affects a person's ability to control their movement, posture and balance.

No two people experience cerebral palsy in the same way. How someone is impacted will depend on the type of cerebral palsy a person has and how much of their body is affected.

As well as affecting movement, cerebral palsy can affect other areas of function.

1 in 400
births result in a diagnosis of cerebral palsy

1 in 4
is unable to walk

1 in 4
is unable to talk and uses alternative methods of communication

3 in 4
experience pain

1 in 4
has epilepsy

1 in 2
has a learning disability

1 in 10
are blind

Cerebral palsy is a lifelong condition, but there are no specialist health services for adults with CP in Scotland.

Who we are and what we do

We're ambitious for people with cerebral palsy.

We raise awareness and campaign for lifelong access to services and support.

30+ years

For more than 30 years our therapists have worked with people with cerebral palsy, their families and carers, helping them develop practical skills which transform daily life.

Our support service offers a listening ear and advice.

Our groups services reduce isolation, bringing people with cerebral palsy and their families together.

We share our knowledge and skills through therapy, courses and conferences, always working collaboratively.

Why our work matters

Cerebral Palsy Scotland is a charity that improves the lives of children and adults with cerebral palsy through specialist therapy, support and information.

Our research shows how outside of Cerebral Palsy Scotland, support for people with cerebral palsy is limited:

91% are not able to access psychological support

81% are not able to access groups for people with cerebral palsy

45% are not able to access individual therapy

People and families who use our services told us that **'extremely important'** and **'important'** services offered by Cerebral Palsy Scotland in 2024/25 were:

- In-person therapy
- Awareness raising about cerebral palsy
- General advice and support from our Cerebral Palsy Support Coordinator
- Training and webinars for professionals that support people with cerebral palsy

Our year in numbers

1,798 We dealt with **1,798** enquiries from people with cerebral palsy seeking help and information.

345 We delivered training webinars and information sessions to **345** people.

257 We saw **257** people with CP, including **96** children and **161** adults.

218 We brought **218** delegates together for the 11th annual Cerebral Palsy Scotland Conference.

109 We delivered **109** first assessment appointments.

103 **103** people attended social events in the centre.

19 We hosted **19** therapist-led group sessions for babies/toddlers aged 0-2 years.

8 We responded to **8** Scottish Government consultations.

How we supported children and adults with cerebral palsy

Specialist physio, occupational, and speech and language therapy is key for people with cerebral palsy. It is at the heart of what we do at Cerebral Palsy Scotland.

Achieving goals set out in therapy – big or small – can unlock new opportunities for a person to thrive through building physical skills and mental wellbeing.

During the year we ran 19 **Baby Buds** sessions, our fun play and therapy group for children aged 0-2 and their families. Children benefit from specialist input, and parents can meet others in a similar situation, at a time when they often feel isolated.

Our **Better Start** programme supported children and families in Glasgow to access fully-funded therapy.

A **written report** was produced for each person who came for 1-2-1 support to summarise their progress, and outlined suggestions for maintaining progress at home.

Adults with cerebral palsy were able to access funded specialist reviews, self-management support and subsidised therapy sessions through our **Helping Hands** programme.

Our **Aberdeenshire funding** enabled us to support children and adults in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Case Study

Matthew and Lisa Marie

My son Matthew is three and I've been taking him to Cerebral Palsy Scotland for a year and a half now. I couldn't imagine where we would be as a family without the charity.

I first heard about Cerebral Palsy Scotland through Matthew's community paediatrician. After I got in touch, Matthew and I started going to the group for babies and toddlers, Baby Buds. Baby Buds was the first place that we got to know more about cerebral palsy, because I knew nothing before I had Matthew.

Matthew can't sit yet or crawl, and he struggles to play. He wants to play with his two brothers and sister, but his hands don't work the way he wants them to. It's hard going for him.

Coming to Baby Buds taught us so much about bringing therapy into play. It was so much fun – Matthew absolutely loved it. I got so many tips on how to position Matthew, and how to play with him in different ways and with different toys, so that he wasn't just sitting in his special chair.

I was alone before I came to Cerebral Palsy Scotland.
I knew no one with any disabled children, and it was very, very lonely. Coming to Baby Buds and meeting other parents in the same situation was a way to empower myself and to give me the confidence that I could do it, and deal with what was coming.

After Baby Buds, we came to Cerebral Palsy Scotland for individual therapy sessions. We worked on two main goals: building Matthew's core strength to help with sitting, and working on his communication before he goes to nursery.

Cerebral Palsy Scotland's Speech and Language Therapist, Claire, started working with sheets with picture symbols and words. Matthew would point at all the symbols and Claire would tell Matthew what they meant.

Matthew had never seen anything like that before, and he took to it like a duck to water. Now he can point to blocks if he wants to play with that toy. **It's giving him that voice that he hasn't got otherwise.**

Matthew and his younger brother Thomas

We also learnt about how to improve Matthew's core strength to help with his sitting, and how we can play with different toys to get him to work on different movements.

His doctors can't believe how much he has improved. **Matthew would not be anywhere near where he is without the charity's help.** Personally, I don't think I would have been able to deal with the past couple of years without the knowledge, help, and confidence I gained from coming to Cerebral Palsy Scotland. It's a scary thought to think about what life would be like if I hadn't found you.

Supporting mental health

We see and recognise how cerebral palsy can impact mental health as well as physical health. We have therefore developed a psychologically informed approach to all of our work and offer direct psychological support through our Consultant Clinical Psychologist.

This year we also offered an online mindfulness course which was attended by 22 parents to support families' wellbeing.

Kirstie Rees,
our Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Campaigning and awareness raising

We work hard to ensure we are campaigning for the issues that matter to our community. In 2024/25 we conducted regular surveys which continue to illustrate the struggles people with CP have in accessing condition-specific support outside of Cerebral Palsy Scotland services. There were calls for greater awareness amongst statutory service providers, greater public education about CP and improved access to specialist services.

During Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month 2025, we worked with 14 volunteer content creators who shared their perspectives around the theme *'What do you want people to know about CP?'*. Their blogs, videos, and social media posts resonated strongly with our community. We also hosted an online webinar with Dr. Kirstie Colquhoun on 'Ageing with cerebral palsy' on Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day.

We used our understanding of what matters to people with CP to input into **eight Scottish Government consultations** covering topics such as assisted dying, palliative care, the disability commissioner, and the National Care Service Bill.

Annual conference

We were delighted to host our 11th Cerebral Palsy Scotland conference at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow on 6 October 2024. The event, which was free to attend, attracted 218 delegates and featured a full and diverse programme of 19 speakers over 13 different sessions.

The exhibition area enabled delegates to learn more about services and organisations that support people with cerebral palsy and their families.

Generously supported by Digby Brown LLP, and planned to coincide with World Cerebral Palsy Day, the conference is a unique event that brings together people with CP, their families, carers and health, education and social care professionals.

Our 12th annual conference will be held on Wednesday 8 October 2025.

Case Study

Rachel

I'm 20 years old now, and I started coming to Cerebral Palsy Scotland when I was two and a half.

All the therapy sessions that I had growing up, it didn't just have an impact on me, it had an impact on my whole family. It made us all realise that I could do lots of things that, at first, we thought I couldn't do.

I was the only person in my primary school and secondary school that had cerebral palsy. Coming to Cerebral Palsy Scotland and meeting other people who were the same, it made me see I wasn't the only one that was dealing with this.

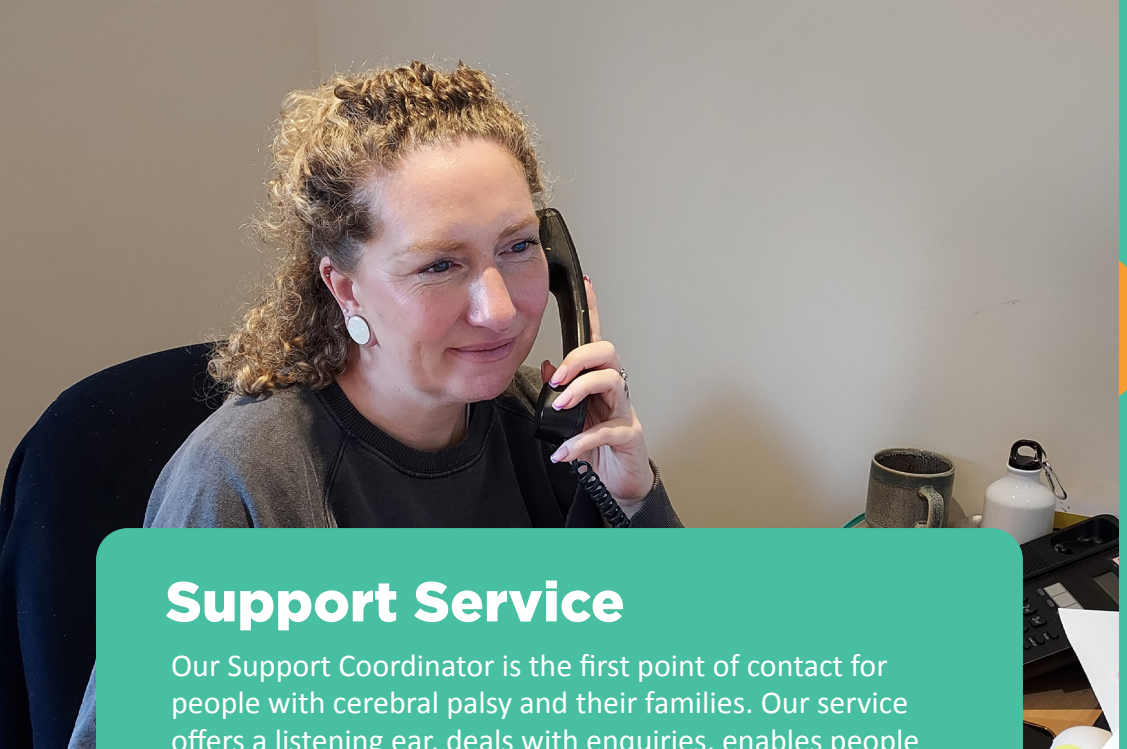
Last year I did some volunteering at Cerebral Palsy Scotland and I went to the annual conference. I chatted to one of the therapists who suggested I apply for a Specialist Review. It made me think that I hadn't been for therapy in quite a while. The support for adults with cerebral palsy feels non-existent. **You go from having lots of support as a child to just nothing when you turn 18.**

My goals for the Specialist Review sessions were to be more confident and independent in the kitchen, and to see if I could go to a gym. I'm currently studying Business Management at university, and people my age, they all go to the gym. I felt I wasn't doing anywhere near the level of physical exercise that I should be doing.

Lesley, the physiotherapist, found a gym that was local to me and then we went together for a session. I'm really thankful to Lesley that she came with me and showed me how I can access the gym, because I don't think I would have had the confidence to do that on my own. Now I can work on keeping fit myself.

Doing the kitchen work was also really helpful. My cerebral palsy affects my hands and I get tired more easily than others. So we looked at different aids – things like specialised knives and cutlery. The therapists' attitude was very much, "You can do this", and that gave me the confidence to realise that I could.

I think my life would be totally different if Cerebral Palsy Scotland didn't exist. I don't think I would have the ability to do almost all the stuff that I can do independently. I don't think that I would even have gone to university because I don't think I would have had the confidence to go. Honestly my life would not be as positive as it is today. Cerebral Palsy Scotland has been a massive part of my life.



Support Service

Our Support Coordinator is the first point of contact for people with cerebral palsy and their families. Our service offers a listening ear, deals with enquiries, enables people to access therapy and signposts to other organisations, in person, via phone or email.

Last year we dealt with **1,798** direct enquiries covering a wide range of issues, from families wanting advice on accessible holidays, to adults in their 40s, 50s and 60s who have never received a formal diagnosis of cerebral palsy until late adulthood, and who are relieved to have found an organisation they can trust. Sometimes we support people into accessing therapy, but we also respond to queries looking for information and advice.

> **Cerebral Palsy Scotland was a lifeline for us when we interacted with the service after months of despair**
>
> Support Service user

> **A typical day at the centre often includes making a cup of coffee and having a chat with people with cerebral palsy and their families or carers.**

Often we listen as people talk through their everyday struggles - the biggest complaint is the lack of support that people get from their local services.

A conversation can start with looking at holiday snaps and pictures of pets as a person waits for their session to start. But out of these discussions can often come the opportunity to signpost elsewhere. For example, hearing that someone would love to ride a bike but don't feel they can, and then signposting them to the Bike Shed at IncludeMe2. Or speaking to a young man who really loves music and wishes he can go to a live gig to see his favourite band, and signposting him to Gig Buddies.

It's all about making connections and learning more about the people that use our services. For example, through speaking to adults with cerebral palsy, we started organising adult lunch events. They told us that they like to socialise, but don't necessarily feel confident going out to a restaurant. But they really enjoy meeting like-minded people here in a safe environment where there is no judgement.

Milly, Cerebral Palsy Scotland Centre Manager

Fundraising

Cerebral Palsy Scotland is wholly reliant on the generosity of our supporters, trusts and corporate organisations to enable us to offer support for people with CP and their families. Without your commitment, it would not be possible to ensure that the lifeline of comprehensive support and vital information is accessible to every person with CP in Scotland who needs it.

We are deeply grateful to the Friends of Cerebral Palsy Scotland who support us with regular gifts. These are a lifeline for us when other forms of income generation are challenging.

Over 70% of our funding during 2024/25 came from charitable trusts and foundations. **We would like to thank all the funders, trustees and grant making staff who continued to support us and share our vision.** We are extremely grateful to all organisations who have provided strategic grants over the last year including the players of the National Lottery and The National Lottery Community Fund, The Scottish Government's Children and Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund, Glasgow City Council Glasgow Communities Fund, The RS Macdonald Charitable Trust, and The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland amongst others.

We were fortunate during the year to receive an endowment gift from the Edward Gostling Fund. This expendable endowment has given us the flexibility to take some of the challenging decisions to undertake restructuring and to pilot new ways of working.

The Big Give

We participated in the Big Give Christmas Challenge and were delighted to exceed our fundraising target of **£40,000**. From individual donations during the campaign, we were able to raise an incredible **£25,235** and then with match funding of **£20,000,** this was doubled to an amazing **£45,235.** We were able to use this immediately to support children's therapy.

2024/25 was a busy year for fundraising events, from our 21st Dragon Boat race day, sponsored by Allied Mobility, to Walk n' Roll, our fully accessible fundraising challenge.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has taken part in one of our events or who has completed the Kiltwalk, a marathon, the Great Scottish Run, or any other challenge event on our behalf. Every single donation has truly made a difference.

Thank you!

Financial review

During this year we have seen a drop in income, from total income in 2023/24 of £844,447 to total income for this year of £783,327. This has been particularly noticeable from reductions in funding from Scottish Government and trusts and foundations narrowing their criteria, closing their applications or awarding smaller grants. Our accounts this year will also show one-off redundancy costs, and we are therefore reporting an overall deficit for the year of £130,691.

In order to make changes to our operating model we have had to use some of our reserves. It is the longer-term aim of the trustees that we should work to build up our level of reserves and they are committed to monitoring this throughout the year.

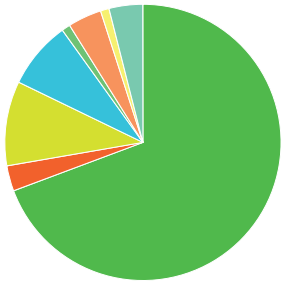
We hope this year's deficit will be seen in the context of the previous two years of surplus accounts, and that we have taken measures to protect our services and beneficiaries through re-assessment of our organisational structure. The majority of our costs are fixed and it would not be possible to implement further cuts without ceasing to offer vital services.

Cerebral Palsy Scotland are committed to working towards diversifying our income base. We are not dependent on any single funder and we aim to maintain a portfolio of support that varies in contribution level and grant length. We remain extremely grateful to all our supporters who enable us to build unrestricted funds. We prioritise service development and supporting the condition-specific knowledge of our staff for the benefit of people in Scotland with cerebral palsy.

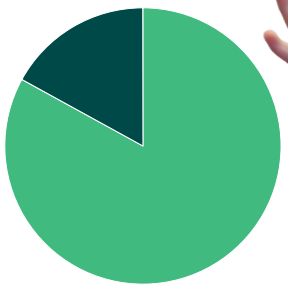
Income	£	%
Trusts and grants	£549,474	70%
Charitable activities	£22,220	3%
Individual supporters	£78,157	10%
Community Fundraising	£59,132	8%
Legacies	£5,000	1%
Events and merchandise	£32,929	4%
Corporate fundraising	£6,778	1%
Other income (rents/bank interest)	£29,637	4%

Expenditure	£	%
Charitable activities	443,825	83%
Raising funds	153,535	17%

Income



Expenditure



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Allison Mathews

Janette McPhail Resigned 04.02.2025

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Front cover image:
Our Royal Patron, HRH The Duchess of Gloucester visiting the Cerebral Palsy Scotland centre.

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