

2023 Impact Report



Merlin
**Cornwall's Neuro
Therapy Centre**

Reg Charity No: 1093691



Securing Our Future

Welcome

2024 marks 15 years since the Centre opened its doors providing therapies and support to people in Cornwall affected by a neurological condition. Reflecting on our activities and achievements last year, the team can be proud of how far the charity has developed over the years to achieve its vision....

To build a strong and connected community, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of people living with neurological conditions or who have a neuro divergence in Cornwall.

Every day at Merlin we aim to support and encourage independence and confidence and inspire friendship and connectivity amongst our community. Client numbers increased by 25 per cent in 2023 compared to 2022 with 545 clients attending the Centre generally at least once a week. At the start of 2024 we had 572 clients registered.

2023 Highlights

- In January we had approval from the Charity Commission of our new name **Merlin - Cornwall's Neuro Therapy Centre** which reflects the wider community we now support.
- Thanks to a donation from **Cornwall Mark Masons**, we replaced our larger and older minibus with a smaller **accessible vehicle**, allowing more flexibility with our transport service which now operates four days a week.
- In April we launched our **Three Faces of Merlin Appeal** in which Elaine, Dave and Tiana each with a different condition/situation told how therapies and support have improved their lives.
- One of our Trustees, Sally-Jane Coode, at aged 80, completed the **London Marathon** in April and raised a total of £16,441 for the charity.
- The **Merlin's Support Group**, chaired by Trustee Mike James, held various events including their annual country fayre, and raised £16,476
- In May, Merlin's oldest fundraiser Edna Liddicoat, aged 101, officially cut the ribbon to open the **new sensory therapy garden**, which was funded from a grant by the Band Trust.
- In September we were proud to become accredited as a **Real Living Wage employer**.
- That same month we welcomed Clare to the charity as a **Service Development Co-ordinator** who has overseen the introduction of a new practice management software and improvements in the client journey.
- We also welcomed two part-time oxygen operators Katherine and Vanessa which has enabled us to increase the number of oxygen sessions we deliver.
- Our clinic lead Melissa King and Consultant OT Kath Smith attended the **International Sensory Integration Conference** in Brazil during October which featured lectures from world-leading experts in the field of Ayres Sensory Integration. Kath was a keynote speaker.
- Two of our long-standing trustees Mike Gifford, who joined the Board in 2016 and David Phyll, in 2021 sadly passed away at the end of the year. Their dedication to the charity will be greatly missed.



Tom Sneddon
Chair of Trustees



Sarah Snell
Centre Manager

Our Services and Beneficiaries

Since the Centre opened in 2009, our range of services has grown; our beneficiary numbers have increased; and the support we provide is for individuals with a far wider range of neurological conditions. Since 2021 we have also delivered therapy support for young people and children with a neurodiversity. We are Cornwall's only neuro therapy centre, and we strive to improve the lives of beneficiaries and their families in a friendly, supportive, safe, and understanding environment.

In 2023 we provided the following:

Therapy services
to 545 clients



378 Ayres Sensory
Integration
sessions/ hours



699 Individual
Hydrotherapy
Sessions



3,370 Oxygen
Therapy Sessions



1,199 Individual
Physiotherapy/
Exercise sessions



628 Group Exercise
& Hydro Sessions



Statistics refer to 2023 data

Our Services and Support

Physiotherapy / Exercise Therapy provides specialist neuro-physiotherapy and holistic, client-centred assessment and treatment programmes delivering education, advice and therapy focused on the individual's goals and needs. Our group exercise sessions are tailored to meet the needs and goals of the individual and include both seated and standing programmes, with regular circuit classes adapted for each level of physical ability. Therapy sessions are undertaken in the fully-accessible gym and exercise space which houses a range of specialist equipment including an Anti-Gravitational Treadmill and Medimotion bikes, and outside in the sensory therapy garden.

Hydrotherapy is a pool-based therapy programme specifically designed to support relaxation, reduce muscle stiffness, and improve neuromuscular skeletal function, bringing positive benefits to people with a wide range of neurological conditions and or neurodiversity. It provides clients with the freedom to move while feeling safe and supported in the water. All therapy sessions are undertaken in our fully accessible on-site hydrotherapy pool, which includes a ceiling hoist, pool dipper and gradient steps

Ayres Sensory Integration (ASI) Therapy addresses issues such as self-regulation, movement, learning and interaction with others, supporting individuals and their families to understand their sensory needs, as well as equipping them with effective strategies to better manage their condition. Therapy sessions are generally undertaken in our well-equipped, fully accessible sensory room and gym, as well as in our sensory therapy garden.

Oxygen Therapy benefits a range of neurological conditions; supporting symptom management and potentially limiting the damage that neurological conditions can cause. Improvements in quality of life through fatigue and pain management, enabling better mobility and improved well-being are all reported following oxygen therapy. The Centre is the only facility in Cornwall providing this therapy for neurological conditions and has a dedicated oxygen therapy room, with three barochambers with capacity for six, four and two clients, as well as four seats for oxygen mask therapy.



Tom

Thirty-Seven year old Tom has Cerebral Palsy and has been coming to the Centre for Hydrotherapy since 2022

"I am improving week on week, particularly my arm movement and strength as well as my ability to walk in the water.

Coming to the Centre has boosted my confidence and increased my ability to socialise. I am a much more positive person than I was five years ago and I have come further than I ever thought possible."

Married couple Steve and Cathy both attend the Centre for therapy. 63 year old Cathy was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis 17 years ago. A year ago Steve, 62 was diagnosed with Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP).

"Neither of us regret our conditions, it has taught us that life is what you make it, we have gained a sense of appreciation for what we do have. Having the right people around us is important and we find that here among people who really understand and care."



Steve & Cathy

Our Services and Support

Community Transport Our volunteer run community transport service provides access to to the Centre for those most disabled by their condition, who live in rurally isolated areas - combating social isolation and loneliness. In addition, it relieves some of the burden that carers experience.

Advocacy & Information We produce information about benefits, individual grants and provide contacts and information on other support in the community.

Café and Retail Area Both our café and retail area are run by dedicated volunteer teams. The café offers a selection of nutritious and affordable food to all Centre visitors. For people who may struggle to get to the high street, our retail area provides a place to buy gifts or homeware. Surplus income from the café and retail space goes towards the running of the charity.

Clinical Space The location of the Centre, just off the main A390 in mid-Cornwall, has good road, rail and bus routes. It is therefore ideally suited as a geographically central health hub for the wider community beyond our own beneficiary group. There are six well equipped clinic/therapy rooms which we hire out for external services to operate from. These include a GP & nursing practice; podiatry and orthotic clinics; continence nurse; private audiology clinic; counselling and health and wellbeing therapies.

In addition, the Charity provides significant volunteer and paid opportunities for the local community.

Our Impact

Following our 2023 annual service user and carers survey, beneficiaries reported many positive impacts in their lives, as a result of accessing services. The top five were:

Improved mental health



Service-users overall
experience of
accessing services

4.8 / 5



More active and
physically
independent



Better management
of their condition



Improved sense of
well-being



Improvement in their
quality of life



93%

Satisfied or very
satisfied with
Physiotherapy

82%

Satisfied or very
satisfied with Exercise
Sessions

89%

Satisfied or very
satisfied with
Hydrotherapy

100%

Very satisfied with
Ayres Sensory
Integration Therapy

91%

Satisfied or very
satisfied with Oxygen
Therapy

98%

Satisfied or very
satisfied with the
Merlin Café

Looking To The Future

In 2023 we set out our four strategic aims as follows:

**Involve our
core
community at
strategic level**

Some key actions to date

- Appointed three new trustees including two with lived experiences
- Undertook client/carers survey to share ideas for improvement and new services

**Develop
services and
facilities to
expand our
reach to
beneficiaries**

- Achieved funding for a pilot activities programme to extend the therapeutic support we provide to clients and carers
- Increased the number of oxygen 'times slots' by 25%
- Continued partnership with consultant Occupational Therapist/ASI expert
- Client transport service now 4 days per week

**Work
collaboratively
with external
partners**

- Been an active member of Cornwall Disability Alliance developing partnership strategy, joint funding bids and Disability Manifesto for the County
- Regularly attended the NHS Neuro Oversight Group to advocate for clients

**Invest in
environmentally
sustainable and
digital innovation
projects**

- Established a working group, including clients, to implement recommendations from a detailed energy consultant report.
- Introduced an online client appointment and clinical notes system to improve efficiency
- Replaced older minibus with an accessible vehicle

**To ensure
continued
financial
stability**

- Agreed to expand the Marketing and Income Generation Team to improve financial resilience over the next three years

Supporting our Future



Merlin

Cornwall's Neuro Therapy Centre
Reg Charity No: 1093691

Help Make A Difference



Volunteering



Leave a gift in your will



Take a challenge



Donate a gift of time or money



Holding an event in your community



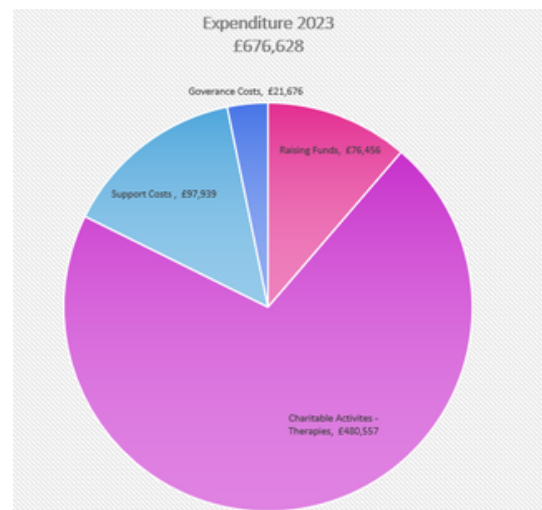
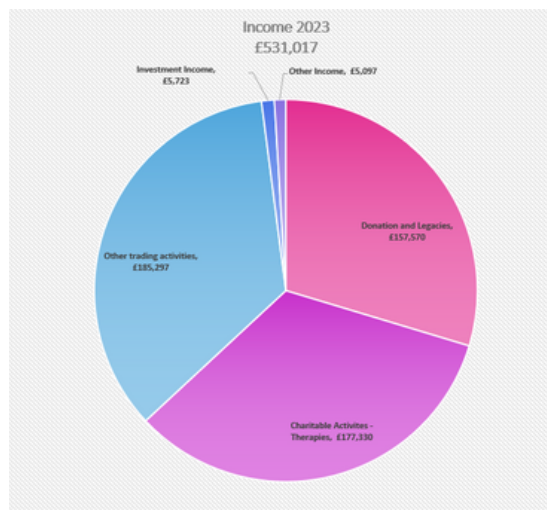
Choose us as your Charity of the Year



Together we can:
support independence - encourage confidence - inspire friendship

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Financial Information



The full set of Annual Accounts can be found on our website <https://shorturl.at/grfHC>



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UK Charity Number 1093691

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Please email hello@merlincentre.org.uk and we will be happy to assist.

