

2024 Impact Report



Merlin
**Cornwall's Neuro
Therapy Centre**

Reg Charity No: 1093691



Staying Resilient

Welcome

We can be proud of our achievements as a charity – last year (2024) marked 15 years since the Centre opened its doors and started delivering services and support. The number of sessions and people who have benefited from our charity has grown significantly over these years.

2024 was another busy and successful year!

- We increased sessions in both oxygen and hydrotherapy to meet demand.
- We introduced a new practice management software system called Cliniko to improve our processes for recording client appointments and case notes.
- We said goodbye to three valued Trustees, including Sally-Jane Coode, who as our longest standing Trustee, served the charity for over 24 years both on the Board and as a successful fundraiser.
- We appointed three new Trustees all of whom have lived experience or a close family member with a neurological condition. These personal experiences are vital in keeping the Trustees focused on our community needs.
- We received restricted funding from a Trust to grow our Income Generation and Marketing team to strengthen our public presence and secure new funding streams.
- We invested some funds from a legacy gift to enhance our therapy provision by investing in an occupational therapist to support our specialist clinic for children and young people and an additional role within the oxygen therapy department to grow the service and maximise capacity.
- We linked with other organisations to enhance support including Home Group which provided a monthly in-person drop-in advice clinic, and signposted clients to Disability Cornwall's DIAL service for telephone and online support and administering of Household Support Grants.
- We launched a campaign to raise funds to replace our anti-gravity treadmill and invest in two new Thera-trainer bikes. (We were delighted that through donations, grant fundraising and other support this £54,000 appeal reached its target in April 2025).

We are incredibly grateful to all the groups and individuals that raise funds for our charity – far too many to mention. However special thanks should be paid to our oldest fundraiser 102-year-old Edna Liddicoat, who with her team of knitters has raised more than £100,000 for the charity. Also, the Merlin Support Group which dedicates all its fundraising activities to our charity and to the many grant funders which have enhanced both indoor and outdoor therapy space by funding more specialist therapy equipment.

While we proudly celebrate our individual achievements as a charity, we know that 2025 will bring with it many challenges. The sector is facing unprecedented demands with increases in costs, levels of income going down and some fundraising sources under intense competition.

Expected changes to welfare benefits announced in the Governments Spring Statement is also of concern and could impact on our community and ultimately increase the need for more support from the charity sector.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in its publication “The Road Ahead 2025” reports that the “UK charity sector stands at a crossroads....facing an evolving landscape shaped by economic pressures, policy changes and shifting public expectations.”



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 provided 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 2024 we provided the following:

520 clients
accessed therapy
services



326 Ayres Sensory
Integration
sessions/ hours



810 Individual
Hydrotherapy
Sessions



4531 Oxygen
Therapy Sessions



1130 Individual
Physiotherapy/
Exercise sessions



629 Group Exercise
& Hydro Sessions



Statistics refer to 2024 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 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.



Barry

51 year old Kickboxing Champion Barry, has been a regular at the Centre since 2017 following an MS diagnosis in 2016. In 2019 Barry suffered a heart attack, spending two weeks in hospital and undergoing a procedure to put three stents in his heart. His cardiac team supported a slow and steady recovery with the Centre playing a crucial role in his rehabilitation and return to kickboxing at competition level.

"I am training and competing now because of the therapy I have at the Centre. It has helped me improve my sense of self, my confidence, flexibility, and strength. I know I would be in a completely different place without it."

Eight year old Elijah loves being outside. He has been using attending Ayres Sensory Integration sessions at the Centre for two years.

His mum Rachel says, "The team have provided as much support for both Elijah and our family. Before coming to the Centre I would read things online, but without a formal diagnosis it's hard to put things in to practice or know how to really help Elijah. We went through a bit of a rough patch when he started in year One at school but the practical tools we have been given have had a huge impact. Things don't seem so daunting anymore."



Elijah

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 2024 annual service user survey, beneficiaries reported many positive impacts in their lives, as a result of accessing services. The following four impacts accounted for 59% of total responses from 108 respondents

Positive impact on mental health



Excellent One to One support.

More active and physically independent



Better management of health condition



This is a superb service and I have undoubtedly improved since attending these sessions.

Improved sense of well-being



The ASI service is incredible. We've learned so much and continue to do so.

I find this the most beneficial and fun exercise class I currently do.

Looking To The Future

Building on the progress already made, we identified and delivered our 2024 priorities of our three-year key strategic aims (2024 to 2026)

Strategic Aims

**Involve our
core
community at
strategic level**

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

**Work
collaboratively
with external
partners**

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

**To ensure
continued
financial
stability**

Our Progress

- Increased Board diversity through the appointment of three new trustees with lived experiences.
- Engaged a facilitator to involve clients, volunteers and staff in a Social Value Impact Report.
- Regularly asked for feedback from our clients on service ideas and development.
- Set up client and volunteer Focus Groups.

- Used some funds from a legacy gift to appoint an Occupational Therapist to grow our ASI service.
- Recruited an additional role in our oxygen therapy department to offer more flexible sessions.
- Engaged with advice services to support clients and to help administer household grants.

- As a member of Cornwall Disability Alliance represented our community's voice at local and national level.
- Regularly attended the NHS Neuro Oversight Group to advocate for clients.
- Attended Voluntary Sector Forum events to influence decision-making in the health and well-being sector in Cornwall.

- Introduced energy efficiencies as recommended in a energy and environment consultant's report including;
 - Rainwater capture project
 - More efficient hand dryers
 - LED lighting
- Secured funding for other sustainable projects.

- Achieved grant funding to invest in Income generation to improve our engagement and financial resilience.
- Reviewed and negotiated new contracts for key services to reduce expenditure.
- Undertook a Full Cost Recovery exercise to evaluate the costs of delivering each therapy service and running the charity.

Supporting our Future



Merlin

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Help Make A Difference



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

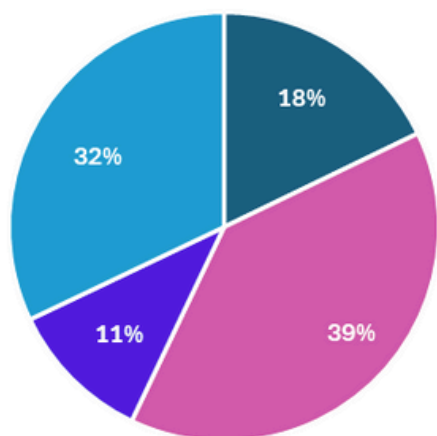
Merlin Neuro Therapy Centre, Bradbury House, Hewas Water, PL26 7JF

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Financial Information

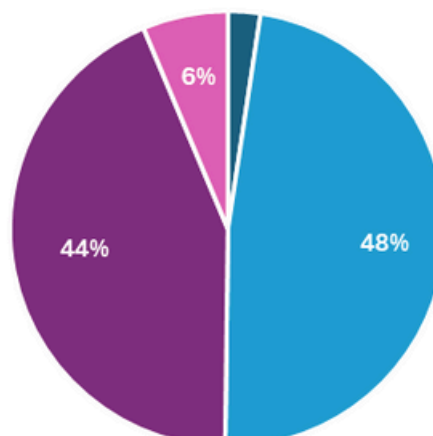
Income

£725,323



Expenditure

£709,152



■ Trading ■ Fundraising ■ Other Income ■ Therapies ■ Trading ■ Services and Support ■ Centre running costs ■ Fundraising

Numbers included have been taken from 2024 unaudited management accounts

In 2024, 57% of our total income came from donations, grants café sales, room and pool hire, fundraising and legacies.

Other Income includes investments, interest and social activities

To support our community, we currently subsidise the cost of our therapies up to 75% of the actual cost to our charity.

Our largest expenditure in 2024 was delivering therapy services to our clients and supporting our community

Centre running costs include water, gas and electricity bills, insurance, training and building maintenance.

The full set of Annual Accounts can be accessed at <https://shorturl.at/F9MDj> or on request. Our most recent accounts are for the 2023 reporting period. The 2024 annual accounts are expected to be published by September 2025.



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UK Charity Number 1093691

We care about the environment. We recycle any unused paper and cardboard and make ethical choices with our buying power. While we have made the decision to make this a digital document, we can print hard copies on request for those who would prefer that format.

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

