



# Highlights Report

2023/24





**Together we can create a society where all disabled children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.**

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## Chair of Trustees foreword

**Times are more challenging than ever for disabled children and their families.** That is the stark reality revealed by our largest ever family and professionals engagement project, which took place throughout 2023/24. Over the course of several months we spoke to and surveyed more than 1,100 families caring for disabled children, and professionals working with disabled children, about their experiences. And the picture painted was, sadly, a bleak one.

So, in these most difficult times, our commitment to ensuring disabled children are able to access the vital support they need, when they need it, is more crucial than ever.

We have grown our fundraising activity in the year, generating 5% more income, and have ambitions to grow this further in coming years. Despite a small decline in commercial income streams we have seen an increase in our charitable spend, with £4.3m going towards funding our services in 2023/24 (£3.7m in 2022/23).

In July 2023 we welcomed Fiona Robinson to the fold as Newlife's new CEO. Fiona brings with her a wealth of experience and expertise, and has already made significant strides in taking Newlife into a new era of growth. And as we look to develop our charity's services to better support the families who turn to us in times of need, we do so with the needs of those families firmly at the forefront.

As always, we could not achieve what we do and support as many families as we do without the tireless efforts of our colleagues, partners and donors - we are truly grateful for all that you do, every day. With your help we can continue to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of disabled and terminally ill children and their families. Thank you.

**Clive Lewis - Chair of Newlife's Board of Trustees**



# Introduction

## View from the CEO

**I was delighted to join Newlife The Charity for Disabled Children as CEO in July 2023 and am incredibly proud of all the charity achieved during this year - and continues to achieve as we move forward.**

Against a backdrop of ever-increasing need coupled with the continued difficulties families with disabled children are facing as they fight to ensure their children can get the essential equipment and support they need, Newlife has been able to provide more help than ever through our services.

During 2023/24, we increased our charitable service reach by a staggering 38%, surpassing our already-ambitious target by offering more than 19,100 instances of help to disabled children and their families and committing more than £2.9 million in equipment grants and loans to ensure children receive the vital equipment they need, when they need it most.

Over the past few months Newlife has undertaken its largest stakeholder engagement project to date, reaching out to over 1,100 families and healthcare professionals to gauge opinions on Newlife's services and the state of the nation for disabled children as a whole. The response has been truly eye-opening, and is helping us to define a longer-term strategic direction for the charity to further help us deliver the best level of service and improve outcomes for disabled children.

**There is no denying that times are more challenging than ever for families with disabled children; our research revealed that just two in five families felt their child had all of the equipment they needed to live a fulfilling life.** In the face of such difficulties, it is more important than ever that Newlife is able to continue meeting the needs of disabled children across the UK.

Going forward, the results of this stakeholder engagement will also inform our 'state of the nation' campaign report called 'Fight for our Future' which will be released early in 2024/25 with the support of leading charities such as Whizz Kidz, Family Fund, British Healthcare Trade Association, Caudwell Children and the Disabled Children's Partnership along with the support of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists. **Through our campaigning we are committed to one goal; to make sure that disabled children and their families are a priority to decision makers.**

But we couldn't do any of this without the hard work and dedication of our colleagues and volunteers; our people are one of Newlife's strongest assets. We are also incredibly grateful to our Board of Trustees who generously donate their time and knowledge, and to our supporters, corporate partners and donors, without whom we could not continue our vital work.

The charity is embarking on a period of growth and transformation across the board. I'm honoured to be at the helm of that growth, and looking forward to seeing where the next financial year will take us.

**Fiona Robinson, CEO**



# All about Newlife



## Our Vision

**That every disabled and terminally ill child and their family get; the equipment they depend on, the quality of life they deserve, the caring support they need and the chance to fulfil their potential.**



## Our Mission

**Together we will make life better for disabled and terminally ill children and their families.**



## Our Values

- **Always compassionate and deserving of trust – in all we do.**
- **Making things happen – for those we serve.**
- **Leading in our field – to make things better.**
- **People at our heart – every day.**

## Our charitable activities

**Newlife exists to positively change the lives of children with disabilities and terminal illnesses. We do this by providing thousands of items of specialist equipment each year, often in urgent or crisis situations.**

We offer valuable information and support to families through a dedicated nurse service including our very popular Nurse Helpline. We campaign to give disabled children and their families a voice and we also offer fantastic opportunities for adults and young people with a disability to meet new people and learn new skills through our growing volunteer programme and employment opportunities at Newlife.

A review of how we met our objectives for the year are included in our detailed review of services to follow.

# Across Newlife

## Our year in review

## Our year in numbers

In 2023/24, we provided...



**16,048**  
instances of help  
through our nurse  
service



**1,384**  
Play Therapy  
Pod loans

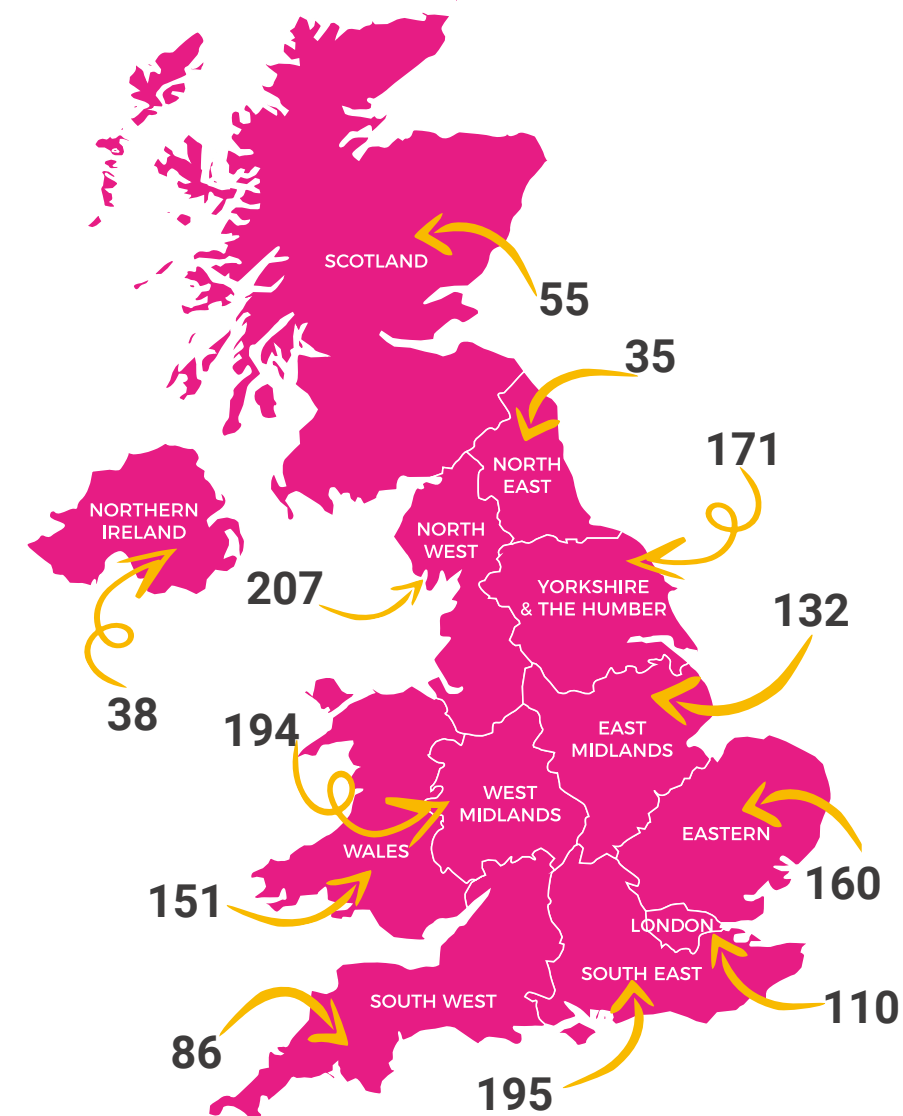


**153**  
Emergency  
Equipment  
Loans



**1,534**  
Equipment  
Grants

## Grants Provided



In 2023/24 we collected  
**1,870**  
tonnes of clothing,  
textiles, footwear  
& homeware.



**13,670**  
volunteer hours in  
2023/24 across a range  
of departments.



**£80,110**  
was donated in  
till-point round ups  
in 2023/24

# 2023/24 Objectives

## **Increase our charitable service reach by providing over 19,000 instances of help.**

Despite this being an ambitious target, we helped over 19,119 (2022/23 13,802) disabled children and their families through our charitable services in 2023/24, a 38% increase on the prior year.

## **Increase our equipment provision and provide 1,320 equipment grants.**

We provided a staggering 1,534 equipment grants in 2023/24 (2022/23 1,139), a 35% increase on the prior year.

## **Support children in emergency situations.**

We ensured that where there was an urgent need, we responded, often when no-one else could. Newlife provided 153 Emergency Equipment Loans to children in crisis situations and we 'fast-tracked' 667 equipment grant applications where there was urgent need. Our emergency support often helps children who are not safe, are in pain, have no awareness of danger or are life-limited.

## **Extend our nurse helpline service and deliver over 16,000 instances of help.**

In 2023/24 we met our target, delivering 16,048 (2022/23 10,898) contacts to our nurse service, an increase of 47% on the prior year. To meet this expected increase in demand, we successfully launched the Newlife nurse reception service in October 2023, ensuring that more calls to our helpline service were answered and vulnerable families were provided with the emotional and practical support that they needed.

## **Develop our Sensory Play Service.**

In 2023/24 we delivered 1,384 (2022/23 1,380) sensory toy pods, a small increase on the prior year, enabling disabled children to develop new skills, helping to distract from pain and providing families the chance to play and have fun.

## **To further understand the needs of disabled children and their families.**

In 2023/24 we launched our largest ever beneficiary and professional engagement project, resulting in the completion of over 1,100 surveys and multiple focus groups providing us with valuable insight into our existing services and future plans, and revealing the barriers that families currently face.

## **Continue to give disabled children and their families a voice.**

In 2023/24 we met with various decision makers including the shadow minister for disabilities, and worked tirelessly to analyse the current reality for disabled children and their families so that in 2024/25 we will be able to launch our state of the nation report; 'Fight For Our Future'. In 2023/24 we worked collaboratively with various like-minded charities to identify current problems and solutions, many of whom will support and endorse the campaign report.

## **Grow Volunteer Support.**

We experienced growth in corporate team participation this year, with over 800 hours contributed by corporate groups. Additionally, we are proud to have maintained a consistent number of dedicated regular volunteers. Looking forward, our efforts will focus on expanding and strengthening these engagements to achieve even greater impact in the future.

## **Continue to grow and diversify income.**

The growth in income for the year was driven by a strong performance in corporate income, an area we are actively investing in, along with an expansion in our events portfolio. Customer engagement in our stores was also a key focus, with over £80k raised through our till round-up initiative alone. Additionally, we continued to strengthen our relationships with trusts and foundations, which remain the cornerstone of our income.

## **Operate good governance.**

We continued to ensure we operated with the highest standards of governance, ensuring accountability, transparency, and ethical management of resources to achieve our mission effectively. Our governance framework supports clear decision-making, financial oversight, and compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

## **Improving employees experience.**

We want to continue to build an inclusive, engaging and enjoyable working environment where all of our people have a say in what we do and how we do it. We will continue to consult with our staff through staff surveys and listening groups as well as introduce social activities and wellbeing support. We will look at new ways to reward and recognise team and individual achievements including length of service. We will also look to roll out new performance review processes to bring greater consistency to managing our people and ensuring their work matches our organisational priorities and values.





# Equipment Grant Service

**Newlife believes that all children should have the chance to fulfil their potential and live their fullest possible lives.** Sadly this is not a reality for many children with a disability. A Newlife survey completed by over 800 families in 2023 revealed that only 2 in 5 families felt that their child has all the specialist equipment they need to live a full life.

It is harder than ever for many families to get the essential equipment they need. There are not enough professionals working within Health and Social Care, this means that there are long delays for assessments and therefore not enough is being spent through a process which takes far too long.

All this uncertainty means that many disabled children are going without.

Staggeringly, 100% of over 100 families surveyed who received equipment from Newlife told us that without Newlife, it is unlikely they would have been able to get the equipment they needed. This is both worrying, but also highlights the vital work of our equipment service.

**Equipment has the power to change lives, to reduce pain, prevent conditions from worsening, improve mobility and thus independence, enable a child to talk to their parents or friends and help the whole family have a good night's sleep.**

## What we did

Against a backdrop of families finding it increasingly difficult to get the equipment and support they need, Newlife has stepped up its Equipment Grant Service.



**1,534** equipment grants provided in 2023/24.



**44%** were 'fast-tracked' due to an urgent need.



**867** grants were provided through our 'quality of life' grant service.

## The impact

**86%**

of families surveyed felt their child was **safer** after they received their equipment.

**81%**

of families surveyed felt their child was more comfortable and **in less pain** after they received their equipment.

**75%**

of families who were provided a bed told us that they felt **their child slept better** after they received their bed from us.

These are all things that many of us take for granted and yet for a disabled child, these are the everyday things that they strive for more than anything else. We know that our equipment helps disabled children and their families to feel this way. **Equipment transforms lives**



**80%**

of families surveyed felt their child had more **independence**, and were more able to do the things and go to the places they wanted to go to after they received their equipment.

## Rudy's story

**A powered wheelchair has opened up the world for 11-year-old Rudy Cole who lives in Cardiff, allowing him much more freedom and independence to enjoy outdoor activities with his family and friends, as well as keeping him more comfortable and pain-free.**

When Rudy was born, he had multiple very rare benign tumours, called haemangioma, on his body and face which were filled with blood and fed by blood vessels. These tumours were also growing on some of his organs, his spinal cord and throughout his brain. Unfortunately, when he was just one week old the tumours in his brain bled significantly and left him fighting for his life.

Rudy thankfully pulled through, but he was left with considerable damage to his brain. Although the haemangiomas have now all gone, Rudy has weakness in the muscles on his right side, generally floppy muscles throughout his body and global delay which means he has very little speech and can't walk. He also developed drug-resistant epilepsy when he was six months old and was having countless number of seizures each day until he recently

underwent brain surgery as a 'last resort' to try and reduce his seizures – which so far seems to have worked.

Using his old NHS wheelchair was uncomfortable for Rudy and caused him pain. It would also bounce him around if it went over the slightest bump, which made it too difficult to take Rudy anywhere the terrain was anything other than smooth and flat. Rudy was also unable to self-propel his old wheelchair, so needed to be pushed everywhere, which as he grew was becoming increasingly difficult. But thanks to the help of kind-hearted donors, a powered wheelchair now means Rudy has a really comfortable wheelchair he can go many more places in.

Mum Amy said: "The new wheelchair is so much better and enables Rudy to do so much more. It's brilliant to use outside and it can be used on the beach, we can go to farms now because it can handle the rougher, muddier terrain, and we can go strawberry-picking as a family too and he can go and watch his cousin play rugby – which he's never been able to do before."



# Equipment Loan Service

**Simply put, this is a crisis service for children who are terminally ill, life-limited or cannot be discharged from hospital without the specialist equipment they need.** In short, they 'just can't wait' for the equipment they need. They can't afford to wait for the months and even years it can take for an assessment of their needs through local services.

That is why Newlife's emergency equipment loan service was developed. We can loan equipment that is needed to families in these circumstances within just a couple of weeks and sometimes within days. This is the only equipment emergency service that we are aware of that operates so quickly and responds to this urgent need.

## The impact



**Children can sleep safely at home** with the specialist beds they need.



**Children are no longer stuck in hospital** because they don't have the specialist equipment they need to be discharged.



**Life-limited children and their families can create memories** and enjoy precious time together with the essential equipment they need.



**153**  
**Emergency Equipment Loans provided in 2023/24**

**Our target was to continue to help children and families by providing emergency loans to families most in need.**

In 2023/24 we provided 153 Emergency Equipment Loans (2023/24 385) at a cost of £171,000. The reason that the service has provided less loans this year compared to previous years is that we have re-prioritised this service for emergency loans only for children, simply put, who cannot wait for the equipment they need.



## Esmie's story

**One-year-old Esmie Butler can leave her home in safety and comfort to attend vital medical appointments and enjoy time with her family, thanks to the loan of a specialist buggy from Newlife.**

Esmie, from Burnley in Lancashire, was diagnosed with a brain tumour at just two months old. But after enduring five major surgeries to remove as much of the tumour as possible and spending the first six months of her life in hospital, she was left waiting for an assessment date to see if she is eligible for a specialist buggy more than six months after being referred. Struggling to leave their home to even attend hospital appointments, the family turned to Newlife for help.

Esmie urgently needed a specialist buggy that could support her safely and comfortably and prevent her condition further deteriorating, which would allow the family to leave the house to go to regular hospital appointments and into the local community. Newlife was able to provide her with a specialist buggy to meet all her needs through it's Emergency Equipment Loan service, while the family waited for their local health and social care services to provide long term equipment.

Esmie's mum, Sophie Bullas, said: "Without Newlife we would have been stuck. We really struggled to get out of the house, but with the loan buggy we were easily able to go to her regular hospital check-ups and she could sit in it if we went for a family meal as high seats aren't supportive enough for her to use.

"Initially, advice we were given was just to prop her up, but that would just lead to further medical issues for her. The buggy from Newlife has extra chest straps which support her and ensure she doesn't develop a curve in her spine.

"Luckily, because I work with children who have special educational needs, and because of Esmie's Occupational Therapist, we had heard of Newlife and were able to get in touch with them to apply for the loan buggy – I don't know where we'd be without them.

"I don't know many people that could afford to just pay thousands for a buggy or wheelchair, especially as you need to keep getting new ones as they grow, and that's just one item that a disabled child might need. It's a lot of stress to constantly try to sort everything out all the time."



# Nurse Helpline

**Newlife's dedicated Nurse Helpline is there to help families when they are in the most need and they don't know where or who to turn to.**

Whether families need support understanding a recent diagnosis, need information on how and where to go to access support or ask for an assessment, or just need a friendly and caring person on the end of a phone to provide that emotional help, our nurses are there for our

families. No two families have the same needs, so the information and support is tailored to each child and family.

Many families continue to feel isolated and abandoned, unable to speak to professionals as there is a shortage of key health and social care professionals with many vacancies currently unfulfilled. This is why our professional Nurse Helpline service is trusted and is so popular.



**16,048**  
instances of help  
through our Nurse  
Helpline service

**47%**  
increase of  
instances of help  
from 10,898 in  
2022/23

In 2023/24 we have seen a significant increase in calls to the service, to the extent that we have now opened a Newlife nurse reception service that is available for longer hours, to ensure that we can answer more calls. Therefore, we were able to provide 16,048 instances of help through our nurse service compared to 10,898 in 2022/23, an increase of over 47%. But its not just about the numbers. The quality of the service is so valued as one mum said:

**"From start to finish Newlife have been amazing, even offering emotional support when needed. They provided us with a buggy at a time we needed it due to adopting another child. I can't thank the team enough."**



## Hayley's story

**The Nurse Helpline is the first contact families have with Newlife and the team are available to support families with a wide range of needs, from updates on applications to signposting to other services and providing information specific to their child's condition. But they are also there to provide emotional care and support to family members who are struggling to cope.**

Hayley Byatt initially called Newlife's Nurse Helpline a few years ago to speak about applying for a specialist bed for her 11-year-old son, Oliver, who has severe autism, is incontinent and non-verbal, apart from being able to say 'Peppa Pig'. His condition was worsening and making it difficult for him to sleep, which meant Hayley couldn't sleep either, making life feel overwhelming for the single mum who was trying to cope with everything alone.

However, she soon found that the nurses she spoke to were also able to provide the sympathetic ear and support she needed.

Since then, Oliver has received another bed from Newlife as he has grown, and uses the Play Therapy Pod service which provides specialist toys

to help his development, which Hayley says he loves. She has also been receiving support through the Nurse Helpline in a wide variety of ways, including signposting to other services and mental health support for herself.

Hayley said: "Initially I was referred to them to speak about a bed for Oliver, but they went above and beyond – they couldn't do enough to support me. The nurses on the helpline are so sympathetic and supportive, they are wonderful.

"It's hard to do everything on your own, but the nurses make the service so straightforward and easy, and if I'm feeling low and can't cope, they are always happy to speak to me. They are always professional, but also friendly and supportive and I've been crying out for people like this to support me.

"They also follow up with calls to make sure I'm ok and that I'm coping - and I always feel like they really want to help me. That makes a big difference to me."



# Play Therapy Pod Service

**Newlife's Play Therapy Pod Service is a free loan service, that provides specialist toys for a 12-week period. The toys are suitable from birth through to 18 years of age and each box contains a selection of specialist toys that can teach various key skills such as cause and effect, assist with developing hand-eye co-ordination, promote understanding of balance and movement as well as helping with the development of motor skills and stimulating audio and visual senses.**

At Newlife we also understand the importance of play for building relationships. Sensory toys

help children interact with parents, carers, grandparents, siblings and friends which is, for many, a challenge. Most importantly, this service helps a lot of families have fun together! Specialist toys can be so expensive, so we have created this unique and fun loan service as a way for families to 'try before they buy'. We have heard from so many families who have told us that their child has really liked one particular toy from our pod and so they are able to confidently go out and purchase that toy knowing that their child will enjoy it. The impact from this service has been truly astounding.

## The impact

**We asked our families who received our Play Therapy Pods to complete a short survey. It is clear that the impact of these short loans is profound for both the child and the whole family.**

**73%**

of families agreed that their child enjoyed playing more after using our play service.

**79%**

of families agreed that they now have a better understanding of their child's needs and play preferences following the service.



**1,384**

**Play Therapy Pods provided in 2023/24**

**"Sensory toys are extremely expensive and because our child can't communicate it's impossible to know whether or not he would like a toy. Newlife Play Therapy Pods have changed our lives because we can borrow these amazing toys to figure out what's needed. We use the toys to improve attention span, to tickle curiosity and to increase awareness. They are marvellous."**



## Amelia's story

**Two-year-old Amelia Pepper is looking forward to being able to play with her new baby brother - thanks to the loan of specialist sensory toys from Newlife.**

Described by her mum, Sian, as 'a true miracle', Amelia's unique genetic sequence means she faces an uncertain future. As a result of her condition, she needs to be tube-fed as she's at high risk of breathing fluid into her lungs, is partially sighted and decreased muscle tone means she can't sit up on her own, walk or crawl.

But her head control is developing and despite doctors believing she would never speak, she now says a few words, including mum, dad and hello.

Mum Sian said Amelia's favourite time is when she's in her sensory room in their Nottingham home - which was fundraised through family and friends - playing with toys from Newlife's Play Therapy Pods.

She said: "The sensory toys on loan from Newlife are great additions to the room and really help her development - it's lovely to see her interact, play and learn. The toys always arrive quickly and it's a lovely surprise to see what's in the box - there are so many kinds of pods and toys to explore!"

Amelia's favourite toy so far from the Play Therapy Pods is an elephant with switch buttons attached which she can tap with her fingers and toes to make it sing songs and wiggle its ears. She also enjoys colourful toys with music and lights which help incorporate play in her day-to-day development. This has helped her be able to track things with her fingers as well as her sight and develop her hand and eye coordination and head control.

Sian added: "There are so many toys we just wouldn't have known about without the loans from Newlife. They help us discover what really appeals to Amelia, which can sometimes be a real surprise, and there have been several which have made it on to her Christmas and birthday lists as we know she gets a lot out of them, which with the current cost of living is better than buying things we don't know for sure she will enjoy.

"Newlife's sensory toys are also a great distraction when she's in pain or we are waiting for appointments, especially little toys which encourage her to use her hands."

With a new baby brother for Amelia, the sensory toys also mean Sian and dad, Callum, can look forward to seeing their children play together, helping them to interact and build their own bond.



# Summer's Story

Summer from Newcastle-Under-Lyme has a genetic condition so rare the seven-year-old is the only person in the UK to have it, leaving her abnormally tall for her age and unable to walk or communicate. Despite this, she has been waiting for a suitable wheelchair from her local wheelchair services for almost two years.

A buggy or wheelchair is vital for Summer to leave her home with mum Larissa, but despite being referred to their local wheelchair services in September 2022, they still haven't been provided with a suitable wheelchair.

When the too-small buggy they had been using broke completely in half, Summer was unable to leave her home, until her mum, Larissa, turned to Newlife and we were able to provide her with a suitable buggy through our Emergency Loan Service. Emergency loans of equipment from Newlife are usually for six months, but Summer's loan has now been extended twice – and they are still no closer to having permanent provision from their local wheelchair service.

Larissa said: "Having a wheelchair is the biggest thing for us, so I don't know what we would have done without Newlife helping us. Without this buggy Summer couldn't go to school, medical appointments or leave the house for anything.

**"A wheelchair from statutory services is the bare minimum Summer is entitled to. It's not fair that it's been such a battle to get something that's suitable for her needs. It's just not good enough that she's still waiting – we're now back to having an assessment because it's been so long."**





# Campaigning Giving a voice to disabled children and their families

**It has never been more important to represent the voices of disabled children and their families, many of whom are extremely vulnerable and in desperate need of support, as we have highlighted in this report.** It is also true that many families are struggling now more than ever to get this essential support that they need from their local health, social care and education services. This is why Newlife remains committed to campaigning for change.

## In 2023/24 we have:

- **Continued to meet many MPs and Ministers** to grow support to promote the interests of young people with disabilities.
- **Chaired a working group meeting** of like-minded charities to identify the problems faced by families of disabled children and to identify potential solutions.
- **Submitted various Freedom of Information requests** to all health and social care authorities on assessment waiting times and equipment spend. We then analysed the data to identify key themes.
- **Started work on our 'state of the nation' report called 'Fight for our Future'** which will be released early in 2024/25 with the support of leading charities such as Whizz Kidz, Family Fund, British Healthcare Trade Association, Caudwell Children and the Disabled Children's Partnership along with the support of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.



We've surveyed and interviewed over  
**1,100**  
families and professionals working within health and social care to reveal the true picture, and to find out what needs to change.

**"My son now has scoliosis because we spent nine months waiting for a new wheelchair to support his posture. By the time they did it, his spine had gone. Now he's in a back brace 20 hours a day and he's possibly going to have spinal surgery when he is 12 because he did not get the postural care we needed in time."**  
– Parent surveyed

**"There is a major lack of funding for children with additional needs. We rely on charities for equipment when this should be provided by the local council."**  
– Family surveyed

**In the election year we are committed to one goal; to make sure that disabled children and their families are a priority to decision makers.** We understand that the number one priority of all parents is to ensure that their child's needs are met, allowing them to grow and flourish, to enable them to reach their potential.

It sounds simple, but parents and carers have, for too long, been trying to meet this priority within a system that is doing all it can to undermine them, that is preventing them from meeting their child's most basic needs, that does not in the eye of too many families, see their child as a priority. This is the lived experience of too many disabled children and their families, and it is simply not acceptable.

This is why Newlife has been working tirelessly to better understand the scale of the problem, the systems that have been failing disabled children and their families and to identify what solutions are needed to bring about the change that is needed.

## Looking forward

**In 2024/25** we will produce and release our campaign report **'Fight for our Future'** and work with charities and decision makers to highlight the problems as seen by disabled children, their families and the professionals that work within health and social care and the solutions that we believe can bring about the change that is needed.





# Volunteering

**Volunteering at Newlife is an exciting and fulfilling opportunity. Not only can volunteers gain new skills, confidence and experiences throughout their volunteering journey, but our volunteers also make a huge difference to the lives of disabled children and their families across the UK.**

A large proportion of our volunteers (over 50%) have been with Newlife for more than five years. We were delighted to recognise five volunteers who reached their ten-year milestone this year.



**13,670**

Overall volunteer hours in 2023/24 across a range of departments including the Opportunity Centre, retail stores and warehousing.



**148**

Overall number of volunteers.

## Skills and integration for disabled adults

We believe it is crucial to give disabled young people and adults, who can easily be excluded from society on grounds of their disability the support, training and workplace experience they need. Our volunteering programme helps volunteers to develop new skills, meet new people and create new opportunities as well as ensure more people can benefit from the gift of volunteering.

**5,300**

hours were given by adults with additional needs



## Corporate volunteering

In 2023/24 we have seen a large increase in the number of Corporate Volunteering enquiries and participation. This has mainly been driven by our Charity of the Year partnerships with Paragon Bank and Platform Housing Group, who have both contributed with regular volunteers, coupled with our popular offsite events.

Our largest contributions came in October and November when we welcomed volunteers to assist with our Black Friday preparations and our School Uniform initiative. Newlife supported 108 schools across the UK by providing free school uniforms donated by our retail partners. Volunteers were instrumental in processing the stock and fulfilling uniform requests. We extend a special thank you to everyone who contributed, including HomeServe, JLR, OSB Group, QBE, Unity Bank, Irwin Mitchell, CL Medilaw, Veolia, and Lloyds Bank.

**854**

hours were donated in the year by corporate volunteers

## Partnerships we have built

- **Hednesford Valley High School** a SEN school in Cannock, who were able to place four students during term time for weekly sessions in our Opportunity Centre.
- **Queen Alexandra College Birmingham** offered opportunities for students to work in our Yardley retail store. We have three active volunteers at the Yardley store who regularly give their time.
- **Shaw Trust** have helped to promote volunteering in the Cannock area. This has led to many new referrals and Shaw Trust providing an offer of employability workshops for our existing volunteers.
- **Job Centre** career events have enabled us to spread awareness of Newlife and the volunteer opportunities we have available that can support people back into paid employment.



**We recognise that working with our volunteers enhances our effectiveness, and we strive to ensure that volunteers gain the most from their experiences.** In 2024/25, we will be developing our future strategy to support growth and to identify new ways we can build on our current programme, ensuring volunteering is inclusive, meaningful, and impactful.





# Fundraising

## Our approach to fundraising

In order to respond to the changing landscape of fundraising and to meet future demand and growth of services, we continue to build on our existing relationships as well as maximise income from three key areas: corporate, charitable trusts and community. All fundraising activity is carried out by skilled, professional, paid in-house fundraisers.

We operate in a transparent and open manner as well as to protect members of our community and supporters who may be vulnerable. To support this, the following fundraising policies are in place and regularly reviewed with key policies also published on our website:

- Gift Acceptance and Refusal
- Partnering with alcohol companies
- Protecting vulnerable people while fundraising
- Dealing with fundraising complaints

## Events Portfolio Expansion

As part of diversifying our income this year, we focused on growing our events portfolio, securing places in the London Landmarks Half Marathon and being the nominated charity for the Cannock Chase Running Festival. Additionally, we successfully rolled out the second year of our national fundraising day, Sparkle Day.



Fundraising income  
for 2023/24 achieved

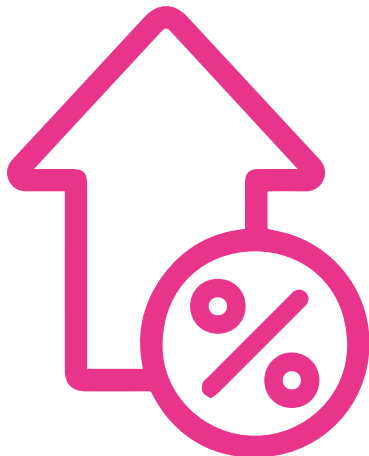
£2,178,895

## Corporate Partnerships

Corporate income saw an **increase of 90%** compared to the previous year. We secured charity partnerships with Paragon Bank, Platform Housing Group, and several other organisations. Corporate volunteering hours also grew in **2023/24, totaling over 850 hours.**

## Trusts and Foundations

Income from trust and foundations grew in the year and we secured income from 24 new charitable trusts this year. Notably, we received over £25,000 from three of these new donors: The Jane Hodge Foundation, The Matchroom Charitable Foundation, and St James's Place Charitable Foundation.



## Motability Foundation Funding

The year 2023/24 marked our second year of funding from the Motability Foundation. This funding has enabled Newlife to provide equipment and advice and deliver 85 specialist buggies or wheelchairs to children aged 18 months to 18 years across the UK. The range of life-changing equipment provided includes:

- A **powered wheelchair** with an up-down riser for an 11-year-old, enabling access to various heights at secondary school and fostering independence.
- A **twin buggy** for a parent with two disabled children, facilitating school walks and outings.
- A **lightweight chair** for a five-year-old with a muscle-wasting condition, allowing her to wheel herself around and maintain muscle strength.

The impact of this equipment is significant, and this transformational partnership helps us support children and young people across the UK.





# Retail

**The main source of income in the year relates to the commercial activities of the charity from the recycling of donated products sold through the charity's network of retail locations.**

Joining forces with well-known high street brands has allowed Newlife to do something unique: sell brand new clothes at a fraction of the original price.

Brands play their part by donating surplus stock, increasing its lifespan and preventing it from ending up in landfill. Stock is then processed and sold in Newlife's portfolio of stores across the UK, and online through the Newlife Online and eBay stores.

And every purchase made in Newlife stores or online makes a difference, with 100% of our profits going to help disabled children and their families access much-needed specialist equipment.



Till point round-up donations in  
**2023/24 totalled**

**£80,110**



## Retail Highlights

- There were anniversaries across the portfolio as our **High Wycombe store celebrated one year of trading** on 28 July 2023, while our **Moreton store turned five** on 31 July 2023.
- Newlife's school uniform initiative saw **12,000 items** of clothing and shoes processed and **donated to more than 100 schools in need**. The initiative saw a combined effort from the retail, volunteering, and communications and marketing teams to ensure delivery.
- **Newlife Online** received an overhaul in order to improve the customer experience, and had its **most successful Black Friday week ever**.
- A **Newlife 'pop up' shop** opened in Stoke-on-Trent in the Potteries Shopping Centre for a six-week period receiving PR coverage on local BBC radio and in the regional newspaper.
- Bridal sales events in June and October 2023, and January and March 2024 proved successful.

# Sustainability impact

**We divert thousands of unrequired commercial products from landfill and incineration.** We work with hundreds of well-known and well-respected high street stores, designer labels and supermarkets to help them reduce their surplus waste, to find ways to re-use this product, honouring the energy resources that went into its creation and recycle it, when it cannot be reasonably re-used, recycling as much of the raw materials as possible.

In 2016, as Newlife became a CIO, Newlife added a new object to its constitution to protect and preserve the environment for the public benefit through waste reduction, reuse, reclamation and recycling.

## How do we do this?

We take stock such as clothing, bags, shoes, accessories, soft furnishings, electrical items and homewares that are no longer wanted/required by UK and European retailers. We organise to pick it up from location if required. We then assess the stock through our warehouse operation, to see if it can be reused, if so then we will take out the labels in line with the donors' wishes and make it ready to be sold in our retail stores across the West Midlands, East Midlands, North West and the South West.



Any items that cannot be resold, we recycle using qualified and trusted partners to recycle as much as possible of the raw materials, often to create new products.

The recycle and re-use of this product sits within Newlife's commercial division. All profits from the commercial division are spent on our charitable aims, helping to change the lives of disabled and terminally ill children.

- In **2023/24** we collected over **1,870 tonnes of stock**.
- **All stock** was sold, donated to good causes or families in need or recycled **saving the product from landfill**.
- We worked with **113 brand partners**.



In 2023/24 we collected

**1,870**

tonnes of clothing,  
textiles, footwear and  
homeware





# Looking ahead

## Objectives for 2024/25

**In 2023/24 we provided help or assistance on 19,119 occasions – we remain focused on supporting those most in need of our services and plan to reach as many disabled children and families as possible in the next financial year.**

### Help 20% more children and their families

Overall we are **targeting to help 20% more families or children**, whether it be with a much-needed grant of equipment, equipment loaned in emergency situations, a dedicated professional to speak to on our Nurse Helpline or through the provision of toys to help children develop and learn. This equates to a target of more than **22,900 occasions of help**. We commit to staying agile to ensure we meet the needs of our families in the most appropriate way.

### Continue to listen

During the current year we have undertaken our largest beneficiaries and professionals stakeholder engagement project to date. In 2024/25 we will take what we have learnt and develop our services in ways that families really want and need. We are going to launch a new Family Champions board to ensure we remain close to our families, listening to people with real experience of the issues being felt and ensuring their thoughts are considered as part of future decisions we make on services and provision.

### Launch the 'Fight For Our Future' campaign

All children deserve the right to live a life free from pain and the ability to fulfil their full potential. **Yet too many of the 1.6 million disabled children in the UK are being routinely let down as they lack access to crucial support and specialist equipment such as wheelchairs, buggies and beds.** These children are left to suffer in pain, with their safety compromised and isolated from the world. For many, they are denied the opportunities we all take for granted, including the chance to go to school, develop skills and independence for the future or to even leave the house safely. To highlight these issues, we are going to launch our new campaign, **Fight for our Future** – calling on the Government to implement a series of cost-effective reforms which will break down these barriers and build a better future for disabled children.

### Grow and diversify income

In order to achieve our charitable aims we will continue to grow and diversify income by finding new ways to reach more customers. Following the successful trial of the pop-up model, we will seek to expand this way of selling by taking Newlife on the road.

### Train and grow our team

As we grow as a charity, we will renew our commitment to the training and development of our staff through the introduction of apprenticeship schemes and other training resources **to help our staff grow with us.**



# Trustee Thank you

The Trustees are grateful to the hundreds of donors who choose to support Newlife. Through generous donations, Newlife can respond to the thousands of requests for emergency and quality of life equipment, as well as specialist play therapy toys, each year. We are particularly grateful to:

**The Bernard Lewis Family Charitable Trust** who continue to provide vital support to Newlife.

**The Motability Foundation** for provision of specialist wheelchairs and buggies to help us bring freedom and independence to children, young people and their families.

**The Marian Elizabeth Trust** for their ongoing generous support for our Play Therapy Pods, enabling children and families to experience the joy of play.

**The Jane Hodge Foundation** for their grant towards providing specialist equipment to improve the lives of disabled children in Wales.

**The Matchroom Charitable Foundation, The David Family Foundation and The Edward Gostling Foundation** for their grants towards specialist equipment to improve the lives of disabled children across the UK.

**The Maureen Boal Charitable Trust** for continuing to support specialist equipment in Northern Ireland, to improve the quality of life for disabled children and families.

**St. James's Place Foundation** for their grant over the next two years to support specialist equipment to improve the quality of life for children across the UK.

**The Pilkington Charities Fund** for supporting equipment for children in Merseyside.

**The Bruce Wake Charitable Trust** for their grant towards the provision of specialist wheelchairs.

**River Island** who continue to generously support us through the carrier bag charge scheme with a donation made to Newlife for every plastic bag sold in store.

**The February Foundation** for their generous contributions towards our work over the past 14 years.

**The Hugh Fraser Foundation** who have supported our work for 10 years, helping us to reach children and families in Scotland.

**The Barcapel Foundation** for their two generous grants this year towards specialist equipment for children in Scotland.





