

# IMPACT REPORT 2023/24

## About Cerebral Palsy Plus

Cerebral Palsy Plus is the sole charity dedicated to providing specific support to people of all ages with Cerebral palsy, and their families, in Bristol and surrounding areas. Our aim is to enhance the quality of life of those with Cerebral palsy to enable them to live as independently as possible. We also provide companionship for isolated disabled people, as well as providing support for families to alleviate the pressures of caring for a family member.

## Why we exist

Cerebral palsy is a lifelong condition that presents both physical and emotional challenges, often alongside coexisting conditions such as learning disabilities, speech impairments, and joint pain. Many of our members rely on mobility aids and communication devices, and sadly, they often face social exclusion and loneliness. We exist to support them by offering opportunities for connection, fun, and personal development. Currently, we support over 400 members – more than ever before.



## How we support our members

We are a user-led organisation and always strive to be guided by our members. We pride ourselves on taking a personalised approach, which has allowed us to build strong relationships with the local Cerebral palsy community. Our services include:

### Friendship Club

Our weekly social club for adults has been thriving for over 50 years. Members enjoy a variety of activities such as Boccia, card games and Bingo, with the program being shaped by their interests. We also facilitate frequent outings to destinations like bowling, the sea-side and the Pantomime. Around 25 members attend this club regularly, and for those unable to join in person, we provide weekly Zoom sessions which are open to everyone.

The Friendship Club is often described as a **'lifeline'** and a **'second family'**. Many members, like Angel, have experienced profound loneliness and isolation. Angel, who joined two years ago, recalls feeling extremely secluded with little to do each day. Now, she says her diary is full, and the Club has **'changed her life'**.





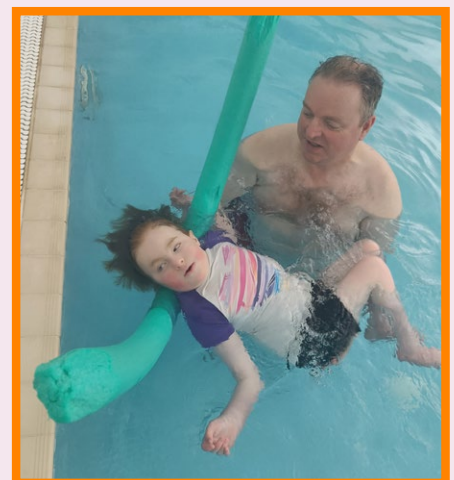


## Children's Swimming Club

Every Saturday morning, we hold swimming sessions for children with Cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Alongside the physical benefits, these sessions provide vital social opportunities for children, siblings, and parents. With 21 registered families, the club offers more than just exercise – it is a rare chance for families to enjoy the water together. A paediatric physiotherapist supports the sessions, helping children build strength and confidence in the water.

“ I cannot stress what a difference being able to go swimming weekly has made to us as a family. Swimming is one of the very few activities that we can do as a family, but we can only do it in a hydrotherapy pool, as our disabled daughter cannot regulate her temperature in colder water. Our daughter is very profoundly affected by her condition and cannot walk or sit independently, she absolutely loves the water and the freedom it gives her. She often smiles and sings all the way through the hour or so we spend there. But it's not just being in water that makes her so happy, it's also the fact that I can cuddle her and take her weight, something I cannot easily do outside of the pool, as she has become too big for me to lift. We both get so much out of our swimming cuddles. ”

Jemima, mum to Cali





## Young Adults Club

Many young people with Cerebral palsy face social isolation and loneliness. Our Young Adults Club addresses this by providing a welcoming space for connection and friendship. Since its launch in 2022, the club has grown in popularity, with an average of 8 young adults now attending each session. Activities are guided by the members and in 2023/24, have included meals out, cinema trips, bowling, and an outdoor pop-up screening of *The Greatest Showman*.



## Frame Running Club



Our Frame Running Club continues to grow in popularity. Participants range from as young as 3 years old to adults, and each session is busy, with families and carers actively involved in all the fun. Participants recently told us what they enjoy most:

- opportunity to build confidence
- achieving personal goals (like completing four laps without stopping)
- participate in an accessible activity in a welcoming environment.

“

*It's great to see the friends I've made and to try an activity I'd never done before. The frame gives me freedom to move safely, and my confidence grows each week.*

Helen T.

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## Social, leisure and sporting activities

Each year we deliver several inclusive activities that bring the community together. Our activities give people the opportunity to try new things in a safe and supportive way. Some recent highlights include:

### Talent Show

Our 1<sup>st</sup> ever Talent Show gave the Cerebral palsy community a platform to showcase their unique talents. Over 100 people attended, with 25 live performances from our members. Joe Bird led the event with an inspirational talk about the power of a positive attitude. Joe is a 30-year-old man living with Cerebral palsy who has overcome many challenges and built a successful career in the fitness industry. Joe's talk was followed by performances from our members, which showcased their unique, funny, intelligent, and creative personalities.





## Sailing Day

More than 80 members, along with their families and carers, enjoyed an unforgettable day at Bristol Harbour, experiencing a range of watersports such as sailing, powerboat rides, and paddling. Continuing our partnership with All-Aboard Watersports, we ensure these activities are fully inclusive, enabling individuals with Cerebral palsy to discover new activities they might have previously thought inaccessible.



## Family Fun Day

On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023, our annual Family Fun Day took place at Woodhouse Park Activity Centre. The day offered more than fun; it provided a supportive space for families to socialise and try new experiences such as archery and axe throwing! Our members, and their families, also enjoyed a magic show and live music.



## Other special events held in 2023/24 included:

**AGM & Christmas Party, trips to Gympanzees and Ignite Bristol Multi-Sport Days**





## Accessibility

We are passionate about ensuring the accessibility of our events, making sure everyone who wishes to can attend, no matter the complexity of their needs. One of the ways we do this is by hiring the RevoLOOtion, a fully accessible mobile toilet facility which includes a changing table and hoist. Nikita, mum to 8-year-old Anna, tells us how the RevoLOOtion makes it so much easier for her to attend activities:

“ The RevoLOOtion gives me great peace of mind when I’m at an event, knowing that I don’t need to worry about changing Anna without adequate facilities for her needs. Having access to a hoist gives her more dignity to be able to have the time and space to hoist her onto a good-sized changing bed.

Nikita



## Transport assistance

According to the Bristol Quality of Life Survey 2024, 26% of disabled people say that transport issues stop them from accessing their community. This is significantly

worse than the City average of 13%. We combat this for our members by providing accessible transport and travel assistance to those who need it.



“ I really enjoy being on the bus along with the friends I have made at Club and the travel assistants who we have all become very close with. We have such a laugh, and the journey to Club is almost as fun as the Club itself, we have even lovingly nicknamed it the ‘Fun Bus!’.

Without the bus, I would be less inclined to venture out in the evenings to Club, especially over the cold winter months. It also makes a huge difference to me financially, as I don’t need to worry about the cost of getting myself to and from the Club.

I feel very lucky to have transport like this provided, it helps me access the Club which is so precious to me, as I have gained so much support and made so many good friends.

Helen

## Lived experience:



Over half of our staff and trustees have personal or caregiving experience with Cerebral palsy, providing valuable insight into the challenges faced by our community. Our dedicated team has many years of experience delivering successful projects and building strong relationships with members, ensuring a deep understanding of their preferences and needs.

One of our Trustees Robyn, who has Cerebral palsy herself shares:

“

*Cerebral Palsy Plus provides life-changing opportunities to those living with and families affected by Cerebral palsy. Having grown up with CP, I know what it's like being told over and over again what you can't do. But CPP focuses on the endless things people with CP can do and celebrates their differences. I'm so honoured to be a trustee for a charity that makes a positive impact on people's lives on a daily basis.*

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## Financial Support

### Small Grants Scheme

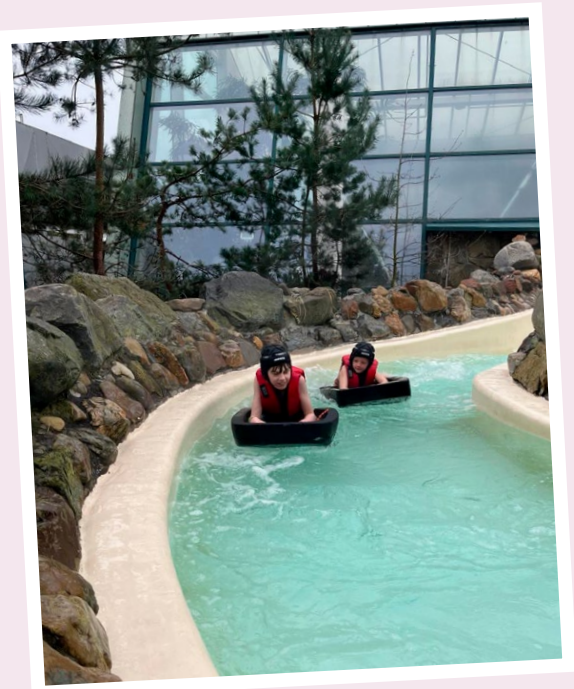
In 2023/24 over £30,000 was given to 30 members through our Small Grants Scheme. This Scheme helps our members with a payment of up to £1100 towards the cost of anything that will enhance their quality of life. This is often a piece of equipment, such as an

electric wheelchair and other life-changing items which are often unavailable through the NHS. We can also provide funding towards much-needed holidays and short breaks.

### Family Story

“When our son was in Year 5, his year group had the chance to go camping. He was so excited, but when the list of activities came out – hiking up mountains, bike riding, and assault courses – he realised none of them were accessible for him. He was heartbroken. It was the first time his Cerebral palsy had such a direct, negative impact on his life.

Then we received a Cerebral Palsy Plus news bulletin, which offered a grant for a holiday. There was no way we could have afforded to make his dream come true, but thanks to Cerebral Palsy Plus, we did! Instead of staying behind in a younger class while his friends were off doing activities he couldn't participate in, we were able to take him out of school at the same time as the camp and head to Center Parcs. It was a dream come true! To this day, he jokes that having Cerebral palsy gave him an even better experience, especially when he thinks of his friends being cold and wet in tents!



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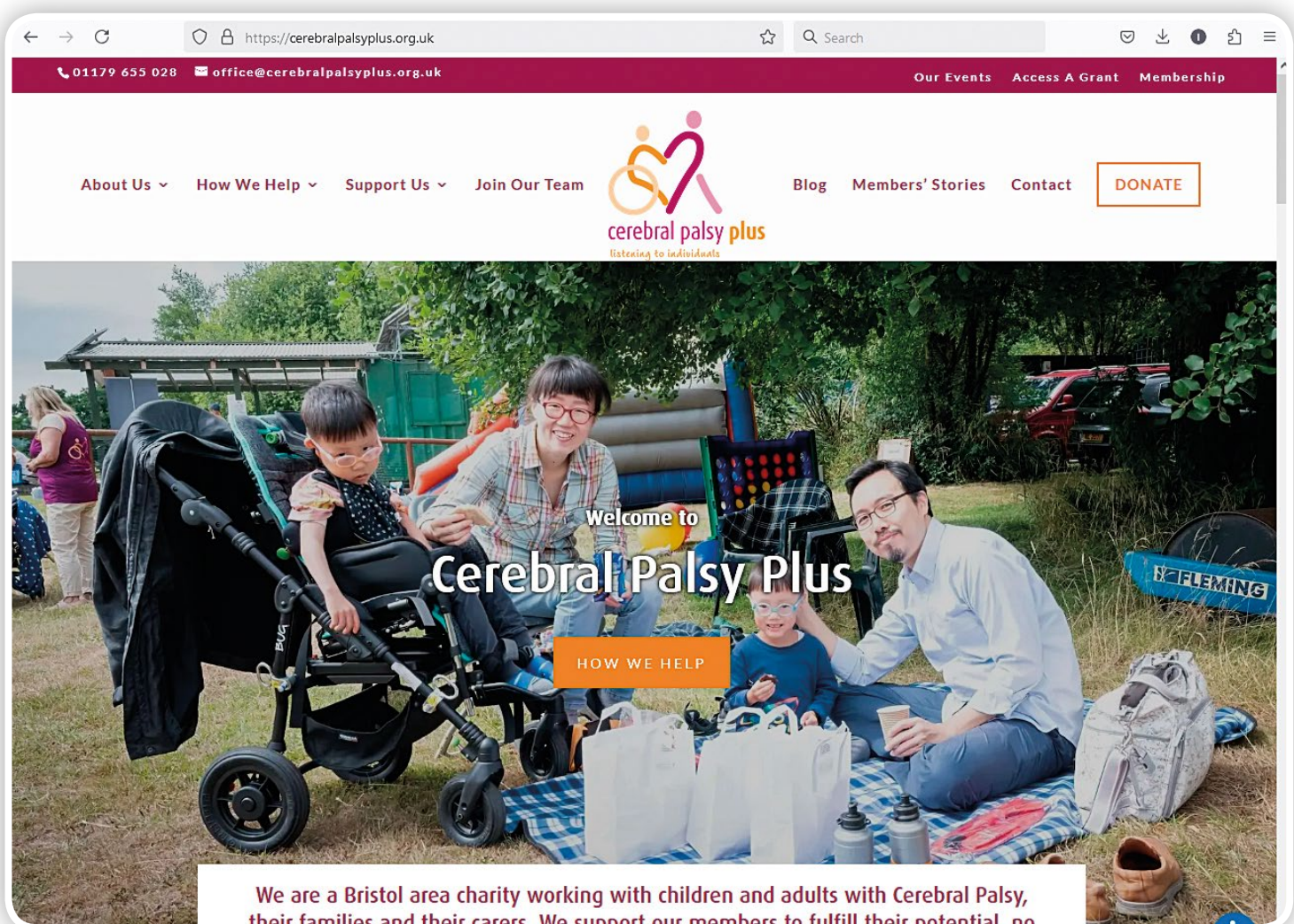


## Cost of living Support Fund

We understand that life costs more if you are disabled and that the extra costs faced by disabled households can be a huge worry for many of our members. Recent research carried out by Scope highlights that disabled households require an additional £1010 per month to

achieve the same standard of living as non-disabled households. In response, we launched a dedicated fund to help our members who are struggling financially. In 2023/24 we helped 13 families with supermarket vouchers totalling £3250.

## New Website and Video Resources



This year, we were thrilled to secure funding from Global's Make Some Noise to develop a new website and create our first ever promotional video. These resources have already proven invaluable in raising awareness of our work, with an increase in new member requests since their launch.

Our website and video resources have also made us more accessible, especially for members who find video content more engaging than written text.

Additionally, the videographer provided training to our staff team, equipping us to capture and create videos at our events. This has significantly boosted our social media presence, helping us share our work and impact more effectively.

These tools mark an exciting step forward in how we connect with our community and showcase the difference we make.

## A look to the Future

Our vision for the future is focused on continuing to break down barriers and creating new opportunities for our members. We are committed to enhancing accessibility by providing transport, ensuring everyone can participate in activities that enrich their lives. To strengthen our vital volunteer team, we have recently recruited a Project Coordinator to provide support and develop more inclusive opportunities for people with Cerebral palsy. Promoting employment is another key focus, and we plan to explore dedicated schemes while working toward becoming a Disability Confident

Employer. As our membership grows, we aim to expand our activities, including launching new clubs and events in North Somerset to reach a wider community. Finally, through our grants and Cost of Living Fund, we will continue to provide essential financial support, helping members and their families thrive despite ongoing challenges. These priorities reflect our unwavering commitment to continue building an inclusive and thriving community.

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS  
AND PARTNERS, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE  
FOR US TO BE THERE FOR OUR MEMBERS  
WITHOUT YOU!**

If you would like to donate to help people with Cerebral palsy and their families visit:

[www.cerebralpalsyplus.org.uk / support-us / donate](http://www.cerebralpalsyplus.org.uk/support-us/donate)



### **Cerebral Palsy Plus**

The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue  
Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2QQ.

**tel:** 0117 9655028

**email:** [office@cerebralpalsyplus.org.uk](mailto:office@cerebralpalsyplus.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 1070079