

# Chris Westwood Charity for Children with Physical Disabilities.

## Update Report - First Quarter 2025

### Background:

Last year, activity in Q1 2024 picked up sharply from the quiet end to 2023 and we then continued to be busy throughout 2024. With the demands on our reserves, we had to start a Waiting List on a number of occasions, but we did, thankfully, manage to clear the List each time in just a few weeks.

We ended 2024 having completed 81 Grants at a total cost of £105,229.03. As the year end approached we had built up a Waiting List of 10 grants we wished to approve, and with funding coming in from various sources in mid-December, we managed to clear the Waiting List before the year end. This did, however, leave us with Reserves of only £4,354.23 to carry forward to 2025.

### Progress in Q1 2025:

With some funding coming in at the start of the year, we have been able to complete 18 Grants totalling £27,220.94, and although our actual cash reserves are now very low, we have approval from a Charitable Foundation to spend up to £9,000.00 on the purchase of mobility/sensory/vision equipment and then submit the paid invoices for reimbursement. We can also do this in several applications to assist with our cash flow, so with other funding coming in we are just about keeping up with demand at the moment.

One thing we did comment on in our Annual Progress Report, was that after around 5 years of fairly stable prices, we saw increases in 2024 which had a significant effect on the average Grant cost, and we estimated that the total effect in 2024 was that the equipment purchased cost us approx. £18,600.00 more than it would have done in 2023. In Q1 we have seen a higher proportion of larger grant requests (greater than £1,000.00) so that the overall level of small grants has dropped from the usual 50% of grants made to 39%. This has resulted in the average grant size rising from the already raised level of £1,299.12 in 2024 to £1,512.28 over the 18 grants in 2025 to date. Variations often occur (and this early in the year we are dealing with small numbers), so we would expect to see more smaller grants arising in the next few quarters, but there is no doubt that even with the discounts we can negotiate, costs of equipment are rising noticeably. With recent levels of inflation and further pressure coming from increasing employment costs, we are aware of some pending price increases by suppliers, so funding increasing demand in the current environment becomes an ever greater challenge.

### Grants Made in Q1 2025:

Age Yrs	Grant £	Details
13	553.35	He has a diagnosis of complex disabilities including Autism, Learning Disability, and Challenging behaviour which has recently deteriorated. He now needs a more secure heavy duty bed having recently overturned his existing bed. With the family unable to help with funding due to poor health and the high level of care needs he requires, we agreed to fully fund the purchase.
4	1611.00	He has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy quadriplegia and presents with Ataxia (limited control of muscle movement, balance and speech). He needed a suitable special support seat system for attendance at his nursery and we agreed to fund a suitable chair for him.
2.8	2013.40	She was born prematurely at 25 weeks and after a tracheostomy becoming blocked she suffered a catastrophic brain injury following cardiac arrest. We helped her a year ago with funding for a special very supportive car seat, and with the family now expanding with a new baby, a special fully supportive tandem buggy was required with additional space for the medical equipment that is needed to be carried at all times. Another charity agreed to fund £3,000.00 and we agreed to fund the balance required for the purchase to proceed.

14.25	332.50	He has a diagnosis of Nystagmus which can not be corrected with glasses. He needs a laptop with suitable magnifying software so that he can read and complete all his homework. Dudley VI Service have identified suitable equipment which we have pledged to fund so that they can purchase at the best price and then Dudley MBC will invoice the Charity net of VAT.
	1246.00	Awaiting confirmation of the voucher amounts promised that Wheelchair Services will contribute to two buggies. Funding "ring fenced" ready to support the application, but we are unable to proceed at the moment due to delays in final confirmation of the amount to be granted, and supply of the voucher.
7	1482.00	She has a diagnosis of cerebral palsy and exhibits with both mobility and dexterity problems. She is unable to feed herself and has to be spoon fed. The proposal was to fund a feeding system so that she could be helped to feed herself and gain some independence and control over how she eats. We helped the family before in mid 2023 with a special Hernik car seat, and they contributed towards the cost. They have again raised some funding and we agreed to fund the balance required, as we have funded these units before.
4	980.38	She has a diagnosis of speech and language problems and development delay. She is hyperactive and is awaiting an autism assessment. She has no sense of danger and releases herself from her car seat when travelling, presenting a hazard to the driver. A secure seating system with a 5 point harness was proposed and she was assessed by Windmill Special Needs at the RDAC. We agreed to fully fund the car seat system with the cost reduced by our agreed discount structure..
14	1749.80	He has a diagnosis of Downs Syndrome, learning disability, hyper mobility, low muscle tone and an eye condition which may relate to other medical problems. He can walk but tires easily and can only cover short distances. He has a wheelchair, but minimal use is made of it to try and improve his muscle strength, overall physical condition and general mobility. He was assessed for a Therapy trike and a detailed quotation was prepared. With the family needing help, we agreed to cover the total cost, which was reduced by VAT exemption and our discount agreement with the supplier.
19	550.00	Leber's congenital amaurosis and other sight problems. She currently uses her college facilities to produce embossed braille documents but will lose that facility when she leaves shortly and moves on to University. The family already has an embosser but needs the special translation software to enable the documents she will need to be produced. We have helped previously with equipment and again agreed to help with the funding required.
4	2974.00	Funding was requested from a rural school for a young person, who had just started school, with a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder. He will have lifelong difficulties in understanding and using spoken language. To help to develop his communication his Speech and Language Therapist had recommended a Smartbox Talk pad system, but with budget constraints the school was struggling to fund the equipment. We agreed to fully fund and help him to develop and integrate with other young people.
7	1661.70	He has a diagnosis of a rare genetic condition LMNA Muscular Dystrophy, which is lifelong and degenerative. The proposal from his Physiotherapy team was to fund a special exercise trike to help to exercise his leg muscles and improve co-ordination. Degeneration and muscle wasting will occur but exercise will help him to retain some mobility for as long as possible.
5.5	3241.50	He has a diagnosis of complex arthrogyrosis which affects the movement of his joints and he has hip dislocation problems. He is unable to stand or walk unaided so Wheelchair Services would supply a chair for him but it was found to be unsuitable (which we find happens) being heavy and difficult to handle. They agreed to provide a voucher for £1,830.00 (the cost of a manual chair) so the family required a balance of £3,241.50 to meet the cost of a powered chair – an Esprit Action Junior lightweight folding power chair (£5,071.50), and we agreed to fund the balance.
17.75	761.50	She has a right sided Choanal Atresia and other medical problems. We have helped her on a number of occasions and we funded a UrZone sleeper in 2017. This now needs an update and refurbishment of one part and we agreed to fund the cost to enable many more years of use.
18.0	285.00	He has a diagnosis of cerebral palsy and severe learning difficulties. He requires adult assistance for all of his daily needs and we have helped before with a number of items. Five years ago we funded a contoured tray for his wheelchair and he is now being provided with a new chair, but again the tray he needs is not supplied. We agreed to fund the purchase cost of the tray he now needs.
6.0	2500.00	He has a diagnosis of a severe movement disorder requiring the use of a wheelchair with special support seating due to other problems. Wheelchair Services will only supply a standard wheelchair but they will provide an equivalent value voucher to put towards the final chair selected. With a voucher for £2,560.32, and the family having raised £375.68, a final balance of £2,500.00 was required, and we agreed to fund the cost.
5.0	1658.20	He has a diagnosis of Megdel Syndrome which is a rare inherited gene disorder, affecting the brain. His physiotherapist proposed a special exercise trike to improve his mobility and walking and with the Charity discount agreement with the supplier chosen by the Physiotherapist, the final cost was reduced in addition to VAT exemption. We agreed to fund the full cost.
4.75	737.61	He suffered neonatal hypoxic ischaemic encephalopathy at birth (birth asphyxia) and has a diagnosis of cerebral palsy and other medical problems. He needs careful management of his postural support and needs to use a Ppod seat which we funded some years ago, for long periods. He had outgrown this and urgently needed a larger replacement which we agreed to fund.
13	2883.00	He has a diagnosis of a mitochondrial disorder, global development delay, other medical problems, and needs oxygen support. He uses a standing frame but has limited mobility with tight leg muscles. His Paediatric Physiotherapist proposed a special trike to help to stretch his muscles, improve co-ordination and help with his mobility. We agreed to fully fund.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£27,220.94</b>	

## **Fundraising:**

A Quiz in January started the Fundraising event year with a very helpful £711.50 raised, and was sold out. We have been encouraged by a small increase in numbers regularly contributing every month to the Charity, and with Gift Aid (where applicable) this will now raise £9,030.00/year which is a very useful and important source of funding for us.

A local Primary School has a group of young Rotarians, and we have been selected as the Charity they will collect for this year. At a recent meeting with them at School, they showed great interest, asking many questions, and we hope that their fundraising events are successful during the summer.

Elsewhere, personal donations, collection boxes and Bank interest on funds “ring fenced” for use in paying the invoices for grants approved but not yet submitted, all made useful contributions. Several Charitable Foundations also supported us, and this has enabled us to just keep up with the demand in Q1. With more limited funding potentially available in Q2, the challenge of meeting demand will be much greater.

While they have all provided income which has been a great help with funding, may we once again ask if you can encourage anyone who might be interested in supporting us to consider a small regular monthly donation. These can be made from just £2/month upwards, by Standing Order (form on our website – [www.chriswestwoodcharity.co.uk](http://www.chriswestwoodcharity.co.uk)) or by setting up a Direct Debit from your bank account (our Bank details are on the *Donations* page of our website). We are always keen to add new members and this helps to provide some stable income.

We are also promoting the use of the Easyfundraising online purchase commission portal on our Facebook page (details are also on the *Donation* page of our website under option 6. *Easyfundraising*). Some of you kindly supported us through Amazon Smile, where, once registered, your online purchases resulted in a 0.5% donation from Amazon at no cost to you. Sadly Amazon decided to end the scheme early last year and just donate a fixed amount to their selected charities, but Easyfundraising currently has various promotions for commission payments to your nominated Charity when you register with this online portal and make one online purchase from a selected retailer (there are over 8,000 retailers participating in the scheme including most of the major retailers). The donation percentages are usually much larger than the 0.5% we used to receive from Amazon Smile.

A few supporters have already joined us recently and further additions would be a useful source of new funding.

If you would like to contact us regarding this report, please email us at [chriswestwoodcharity@outlook.com](mailto:chriswestwoodcharity@outlook.com).

Thank you to all our supporters for their continued help, and we will do as much as we can to respond as quickly as we can to new applications, hopefully without the need for a pause in our work.

Chris Westwood.