

Chris Westwood Charity for Children with Physical Disabilities.

Update Report - Third Quarter 2024

Background:

By the end of Q2 we had completed 48 grants totalling £65,692.43, and we looked forward to a usually quieter Q3. We then expect that to be followed by a very busy Q4 as the young people restart school and we start receiving applications for all the new equipment required for use both at home and at school.

Progress in Q3 2024:

We completed a further 14 applications totalling £15,694.94 and bringing the totals for the year to 62 grants and £81,387.37 granted, which now exceeds the total for the whole of last year.

Although grateful for some respite in activity compared to the very busy Q1 and Q2, we ended Q3 with the reserves low and one application on a Waiting List we have just had to start, so we look forward to Q4 with some trepidation. We do have funding promised from various sources including a small legacy, but payment delays and particularly with delays in obtaining Probate which is affecting the legacy, our reserves are way below where we would like them to be at this time of the year. As a result we have had to start the Waiting List, but we continue to try to minimise delays in helping cases, and we hope that the Waiting List will only be necessary for a very short time.

Our analysis of grants made this year has again shown that approximately 50% can be classified as "Small" (ie £1,000.00 or less) and is typical of the percentage we normally see, but the overall average grant size has remained significantly higher this year than in recent years, meaning that we have been unable to do as much with our funding as previously.

The grant size awarded has moved from a fairly consistent average of £1,068.18/grant over each of the last 3 years to £1,312.69/grant for 2024 to date. This has resulted in an extra average cost of £244.51/grant or £15,159.62 over the 62 grants completed so far this year. So it is perhaps not surprising that the reserves are very low at the moment despite completing a few less grants than at this time last year.

There will always be variations from year to year in the complexity of equipment proposed in the applications received, but there does appear to be a noticeable increase in costs quoted since the start of the year. We had not seen any significant price rises in equipment for several years, but the change, perhaps inevitable with the recent level of inflation, clearly has had a significant effect on our reserves position.

As also mentioned last quarter, the financial problems in two local Authorities - Birmingham and Dudley, as well as Budget indications of further funding reductions generally, are likely to place more pressure on the Charity sector as less Local Authority help is available, and we are already seeing applications for equipment that we might have expected to have been funded in previous years.

Despite these problems we aim to try to help as many young people as we can and with the help of our supporters, we will try and face the challenges ahead.

Grants Made in Q3 2024:

Age	Grant	Details
Yrs	£	
9	389.00	He has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy and uses a Kaye Walker for all of his movements. The walker is not stable on uneven ground which limits what he can do as he is growing up. The request was for the provision of Activity Wheels for the walker which will make it stable when used in variable terrain and also allow him to participate in some sports. With his NHS Trust declining to fund the additional cost, we agreed to fully fund the wheels for him..
8	1678.00	She has a diagnosis of a CASK Gene mutation (there is some evidence that this will limit life expectancy) and MICPCH Syndrome which is a form of microcephaly with pontine and cerebellar hypoplasia. These two areas of the brain affect movement, co-ordination and balance. She exhibits with development delay, learning disability, incontinence and can only walk short distances. She needed a special support activity chair, and with another charity contributing to the £3,178.00 total cost, we agreed to fund the balance required.
2.25	971.70	She was born with brain damage due to bleeding caused by a genetic condition Col4a1 small vessel disease. She has multiple disabilities, but receives regular treatment from a Paediatric Physiotherapist using a vibrating plate. This has helped to improve her head and trunk control and a unit was proposed for home use. This will have some benefit on her general development and we agreed to fully fund.
9	1174.00	He has a diagnosis of epilepsy, cerebral palsy, partial blindness and exhibits with global development delay, is non-mobile and non-verbal. He was supplied with a suitable wheelchair for school use but he needed a comfortable buggy to both give respite from the wheelchair in a more comfortable seat, and allow him to go outside more which he loves. He required extensive support and a suitable buggy was eventually sourced at a cost of £2,974.00. We agreed to co-fund a remaining balance of £1,174.00 to enable the purchase to proceed.
	378.80	He has a diagnosis of autism, a learning disability and is non-verbal. He refuses sometimes to leave the house and the family has to use a wheelchair. With lack of exercise he is unable to walk far himself and he was assessed for a special exercise trike. He immediately became very involved, was able to pedal it and was very keen to use it. A Tomcat Fizz Trike was proposed and with £1,515.20 already granted from another charity, the family hoped to raise the balance of £378.80. With recent problems we were asked if we could help instead and fund the outstanding balance, to which we agreed.
15	1775.00	She has a diagnosis of Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome which presents with seizures of varying types. After a series of frequent falls during seizures she has needed some hospital treatment and her parents were having the house modified with downstairs facilities for her. As the Disability grant available has not changed for some time they were taking out a loan, and with her school insisting that she used a wheelchair for all transfers following a risk assessment, we were asked to help with a proposal to improve her general health. Being also banned from all sport at school she was not participating in any exercise and we agreed to fund a special exercise trike to help to develop her leg muscles, general condition and co-ordination.
7	1473.50	She has a diagnosis of hypermobility, autism, ADHD, learning difficulties and low muscle tone. She exhibits with balance and core control problems and struggles to sit upright without suitable support. A special exercise trike was proposed to improve her general muscle strength and co-ordination, and she was able to pedal a trike unaided once set up for her specific needs. We agreed to fund the final purchase cost, reduced by our discount agreement with the supplier.
8	1651.70	He has a diagnosis of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy which is life limiting with a steady deterioration in mobility to become wheelchair bound. At present he can walk a few steps and the guidelines for the condition recommend the use of a special exercise trike to help to maintain some muscle mobility, provide exercise and delay further degeneration in his condition for as long as possible. With the family unable to fund the trike, we agreed to fully fund the purchase with our agreed discount from the supplier.
7	893.43	He has a diagnosis of ASD, global development delay and challenging behaviour. He releases himself from his current car seat when being transported and presents a danger to the driver, other passengers and displays challenging and distracting behaviour including banging his head against the car window. He is also residing in care under a Section 31 Protection Notice, so external help was needed for any funding. He was assessed by Windmill Special Needs and a magnet harness together with a booster seat and other safety accessories were proposed. We agreed to fund the full amount required after the discount from this supplier.
14.5	190.00	He has a diagnosis of Acardia Goutieres Syndrome which affects the brain, spinal cord and immune system. We helped him 7.5 years ago with funding towards a special bath as he needs full time care. He now required a new anti slip back rest cover for the bath, and we agreed to fully fund a replacement.
11	268.50	He has a diagnosis of Angelman Syndrome, severe global development delay and is epileptic. He needed a suitable outdoor buggy to enable him to be taken out with the family as he requires full support. Caudwell Children agreed to fund a significant part of the cost and we agreed to fund the balance required.

5	649.00	She exhibits with sensory problems, autistic traits with no sense of danger and challenging behaviour. She releases herself from her car seat when travelling and presents a serious danger to the driver of the car. She needed a secure harness to hold her so that she could be transported safely. She was assessed by Windmill Special Needs at the RDAC and we agreed to fully fund a suitable restraint harness as the family needed help.
	589.34	He has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Global development delay, a microdeletion on chromosome 2p16.3, is non verbal, exhibits with challenging behaviour and has other medical problems. He releases himself from his car seat when travelling and presents a serious danger to the driver. A secure magnet safety harness was urgently required and he was assessed at the RDAC by Windmill Special Needs. We agreed to fund the discounted price from this regular supplier.
5	3612.97	He has complex needs, his diagnosis includes Dandy Walker Syndrome, Hydrocephalus (he has already had a right side shunt fitted), epilepsy, seriously impaired vision, double incontinence, limited head control and he is non-mobile. He had been using a Ppod bean seat for respite from his wheelchair but now needed a better supportive seating system. He was assessed for a mobile Home Chair from the same company that had provided the Ppod seat, and with this being a great help to him we were asked if we could help. We agreed to fully fund the purchase.

Fundraising:

We would like to thank the various groups who have been holding collections and have transferred funds to us already this year, including Pens Meadow School, the Staff at Sunrise Medical, Clent Hills Rotary, and continuing collections from both the Ladies and Gentlemen's Captains at Stourbridge Golf Club who are both offering support during their terms of office, as well as a collection from the SGC Bridge Club, which are all very much appreciated. In addition to our regular monthly donors, whose support provides a very useful stable source of income, we have also received several Personal donations, Company donations, including another donation from BB Price Ltd., and the proceeds of our annual Gift Aid claim. We are also due to shortly receive the proceeds of a collection in memory of a supporter, which will be very helpful as we start Q4.

While they have all provided income which has been a great help with funding, may we once again ask if you could 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) 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 the current group adds (with Gift Aid) approximately £7,250.00/yr to our funds which 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 supporters have already joined us, and this is a zero cost option for the donor to help your chosen Charity.

If you would like to contact us regarding this report, please email us at 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.