MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY UK | OUR MUSCLES MATTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

Together we are stronger



Our vision is a world without limits for people living with muscle wasting conditions.

Photographer: Harley Banbridge

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Front cover photographer: Chris O'Donovan





A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Welcome to this year's Annual Report. A year in which we've seen significant progress in our work to improve the lives of people living with muscle wasting conditions through research, support and campaigning for policy change.

Mike Hanna
Chair

Andy Fletcher
Chief Executive

We were delighted to launch our new ten-year strategy in September 2025, designed to create a world without limits for people living with muscle wasting conditions. Over the next decade we will focus on achieving four key aims.

We will transform diagnosis so it's faster and more accurate. We will reach every person with a muscle wasting condition to ensure no one faces their journey alone. We will accelerate new treatments and push for everyone to have access to the right support. And we will help more people live their lives to the full by increasing our support and campaigning for a more accessible world.

In 2025/26, we began work towards these aims, developing on the foundations of our previous work. We reviewed our service offer and scoped a new referral service, working closely with neuromuscular centres, which we are now piloting in autumn 2026 – this will increase both our reach and support. We advocated for improved screening for muscle wasting conditions and were pleased to see progress with newborn screening for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). And we expanded our policy and campaigning function to engage more of our community in advocating for change.

We continued to fund research into a range of muscle wasting conditions. We committed significant strategic funding to the LifeArc Centre for Rare Mitochondrial Diseases, as as well as investing £1m in Professor Mary Reilly's team at University College London to develop a new scanning method to spot small changes in Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease (CMT).

As part of our regular grant round, we funded a further 15 projects with a lifetime funding commitment of £2m. This brought the number of our live research programmes to 51, focusing on 25 different conditions. These grants, alongside our strategic research investment, show our commitment to funding innovative programmes designed to better understand and treat muscle wasting conditions for the benefit of our community.

This track record in research over more than 60 years has led to better understanding of muscle wasting conditions. This has, in turn, led to the development of exciting new treatments. We played an active part in several key treatment appraisals by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the Scottish Medicines Consortium this year, representing the voice of our community and working with regulators and industry to support the availability of new treatments.

As well as funding research to give hope for the future, we also continue to provide direct support to people with muscle wasting conditions so they can live their life fully today. This year we supported more than 3,800 people through our helpline, and provided equipment grants to 211 people living with a muscle wasting condition. Our peer-to-peer support network also continues to grow and thrive.

Our new strategy requires the charity to grow and change over the next ten years to meet the needs of people with muscle wasting conditions. While we live in uncertain times, we are absolutely committed to rising to this challenge.

We are simply not able to do what we do without the strength and support of our wonderful community. Our research partners, support services and funders, volunteers, fundraisers, staff and trustees.

Thank you for your support, your involvement, your stories, your requests and your continued commitment to creating a world without limits for people with muscle wasting conditions.



Helping Olivia gain independence

This support has made a huge difference, not just practically, but emotionally.

Like any 23-year-old, Olivia wanted to move out of the family home and live independently. But at times this seemed like a faraway dream.

"I've recently finished my degree in Sociology and work part time at a youth club. I'm taking a year out of study before I hopefully begin a postgrad in social work. I'd love to work with disabled people in the future, because I know what it's like when the system doesn't listen to you.

Feeling trapped in your own home

"The house I lived in was adapted when I was 11, and it worked then, but then it stopped me from being independent. I wanted to be able to make a cup of tea, cook my own meals, go to the bathroom when I needed to. But I couldn't.

"The lift in our house broke almost every other day. If it broke while I was upstairs, I'd be stuck in my room for hours. If it broke while I was downstairs, I couldn't get to the bathroom. When my mum was at work, I couldn't risk not being able to get to the toilet, so I had to stay in my room for the whole day.

Finding support with Muscular Dystrophy UK

"I'm financially stable — I work part time (because that's what my health allows) and my income is topped up with Universal Credit.

"We started this housing process at the beginning of last year, and it was one fight after another. One of the few bright spots in the whole process was Muscular Dystrophy UK helping us understand the housing points system and sending a letter to the Housing Executive, explaining exactly where I should be getting more points based on my situation. This support made a huge difference, not just practically, but emotionally. Knowing that someone believed I deserved better meant a lot."

With the support of Muscular Dystrophy UK Olivia now lives in her own adapted home.

Photographer: Jonathan Ryder

ABOUT US

We're the leading charity for over 110,000 people in the UK living with one of over 60 muscle wasting and weakening conditions.

We connect people living with a muscle wasting condition, and all those around them: friends and family, healthcare professionals and scientists. So that everyone can get the healthcare, support and treatments needed to feel good, both mentally and physically. We support people through every stage of their life, from the point of diagnosis to living the best life possible.

Our mission

- We share expert advice and support people to live well now.
- We fund groundbreaking research to understand the different conditions better and lead us to new treatments.
- We work with the NHS towards universal access to specialist healthcare.
- Together, we campaign for people's rights, better understanding, accessibility, and access to treatments.

We support people through every stage of their life, from the point of diagnosis to living the best life possible.

Our values

- **Stronger together**
  We believe in the power of community. That the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Because the more of us who come together, the greater the impact we'll make.
- **Forward thinking**
  We're here for everyone. Whoever you are. Wherever you're from. You are our sole focus. We set ourselves clear targets and measure our impact.
- **Here for you**
  We know support isn't one-size-fits-all. We take the time to listen to every individual, so we can tailor our support to you.
- **Never Stop**
  We've already made advances that would have been unthinkable just 10 years ago, and we are determined to go even further and faster.

Objects of Muscular Dystrophy UK for the Public Benefit

The Charity is established to promote awareness and care for those affected by muscular dystrophy and allied neuromuscular conditions.

We work to:

- Promote research
- Promote the provision of care and treatment
- Assist those who care for persons affected by the conditions
- Provide education and training to persons affected
- Raise public awareness on any matter relating to the Charity's objects

Public Benefit

The charity Trustees consider that they have complied with their duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to Public Benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission and that the benefits that the charity provides are not unreasonably restricted.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS


Photographer: Chris O'Donovan

£2m

committed to 15 new research projects, bringing our total current commitment to £9.4m


Photographer: Chris O'Donovan

£4.9m

income received from donations, gifts, grants, sponsorship, events and campaigns, up 9% from last year

OVER 3,800

people supported by our helpline


Photographer: Jo Ritchie

£2.75m

received from Gifts in Wills


Photographer: Chris O'Donovan

363

healthcare professionals attended our conferences and webinars



Photographer: Jo Ritchie

More than 2,600

pieces of media coverage, a 50 percent increase in volume year-on-year

Nearly 710,000

visits to our website, up 22 percent on the previous year

OUR FOCUS: 2025 TO 2035

Our ten-year strategy will help us realise our vision of a world without limits for people living with muscle wasting conditions. Working through partnerships and in collaboration with healthcare professionals, researchers and the muscle wasting community, by 2035 we aim to achieve the following four outcomes.

1

Transform diagnosis

We'll help speed up and improve accuracy of diagnosis so that by 2035, no one will wait longer than six months to be diagnosed.

2

No one faces their journey alone

We'll reach every person with a muscle wasting condition by 2035, so no one faces their journey alone.

3

New treatments, universal support

We'll help accelerate the development of new treatments so that by 2035 they'll be available everywhere, and everyone living with a muscle wasting condition will be able to access specialist support when and where needed.

4

Living life to the full

We'll campaign for a more equal and accessible world and directly support every person who needs it by 2035 to live independently with better physical and mental health.

This report focuses on our achievements and performance against our goals for 2025/26, year one of the first three years in our ten-year strategy.

TRANSFORMING DIAGNOSIS



Photographer: Teri Pengilley

Half of those living with a muscle wasting condition report being misdiagnosed. More than two thirds wait over a year for a diagnosis. And nearly half wait more than five years.

We will campaign for better newborn screening for relevant muscle wasting conditions

Misdiagnosis and delays to diagnosis mean people miss out on vital treatment and support and feel more alone with their condition. For some conditions, newborn screening can transform lives by providing treatment before symptoms even start.

This year has marked significant progress toward our goal of ensuring that every baby born in the UK can access newborn screening for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA).

Effective treatments exist and are most beneficial when given before symptoms appear, yet SMA is not currently part of the UK's routine newborn blood spot screening programme.

This means that too many babies are diagnosed too late. Babies like Chester, who was only diagnosed with SMA type 1 when he was nearly six months old. Despite noticing issues months earlier, it took his mum, Kasey, 23 appointments with nine different doctors to get answers.



We're grateful for every day with him. But it shouldn't have been like this. He's now one year old, but he can't crawl, can't walk, can't even sit up unaided. He has very limited movement and almost no muscle mass. He's on a ventilator when he sleeps and has an NG tube because he can't feed orally... What breaks my heart the most is knowing this could have been prevented. If Chester had been screened at birth for SMA — just a simple heel prick test — our lives would be entirely different.

Kasey, Chester's mum

Photographer: Jo Halford/Muscular Dystrophy UK



We have continued to work closely with our partners at SMA UK to raise the profile of this issue with politicians and the public. In March 2026, the Scottish government launched a pilot programme to screen all newborns in Scotland for SMA.

The advocacy efforts led by singer Jesy Nelson after her twin daughters were diagnosed with SMA have generated even more momentum. In July 2026, the then Health and Social Care Secretary for England, James Murray MP, announced that from October 2027 the remaining babies born in England will start to be screened for SMA.

We won't give up until all babies born in the UK are screened for SMA. We also want to learn from the SMA efforts to explore which other muscle wasting conditions might be included in newborn screening in the future.

I contacted the health visitor when Ezra was around 10-months-old, but we were told walking and standing weren't usually a concern until later. So we waited. That waiting was awful, my instinct was screaming that my little boy needed help...We watched Ezra get weaker while we waited for answers. I was watching pieces of his independence disappear, and I couldn't stop it. As his mum, that broke me. In August 2024, Ezra's dad and I were told he had SMA type 2. If SMA had been included in the heel prick test, Ezra's life could have looked so different.

Catherine, Ezra's mum

Only newborn babies in Scotland are currently being screened for SMA. We won't give up until all babies in the UK are screened.

We will invest in research to explore how we can improve diagnosis and better understand the prevalence of people with muscle wasting conditions

Investing in better diagnostic tools

One of our aims as a charity is to bring researchers, clinicians and healthcare services together to explore opportunities to invest in better diagnostic tools and testing. Work on our new strategy began part way through the financial year, which means activity in this area is at an early stage. This year has focused on laying the groundwork: starting conversations, identifying key partners and shaping our plans. This early work will set us up well to make faster progress in the year ahead.

Our first Neuromuscular Challenge Grant for a UK-wide epidemiology study

Accurate, up-to-date data is essential for driving meaningful change. At the moment, there is still very little clear national information about muscle wasting conditions in the UK. What does exist is often spread across different sources and hard to bring together. This makes it difficult to see the full picture or understand where support is most needed.

This year we launched our first Neuromuscular Challenge Grant, marking an important milestone in our commitment to improving the lives of people affected by muscle wasting conditions. We invited proposals for a UK-wide epidemiology study to estimate both the prevalence (how many people are affected) and incidence (how many new diagnoses occur each year) of these conditions.

We hope this study will help to fill the gap in up-to-date data by supporting research that can show, in a clear and simple way, how many people are affected, where they live, and how muscle wasting conditions impact their lives. Having this kind of evidence will help us plan better, speak up more effectively, and work towards real improvements in care and support.

In July 2026, the Board approved funding for a two-year research grant that will use medical records to estimate the number of people living with a muscle wasting condition in the UK. This first Neuromuscular Challenge Grant represents a significant step forward in building the evidence needed for us create lasting change.



Photographer: Teri Pengilley



One of our aims as a charity is to bring researchers, clinicians and the NHS together.

We will educate thousands of healthcare professionals responsible for identifying potential muscle wasting conditions for timely referral

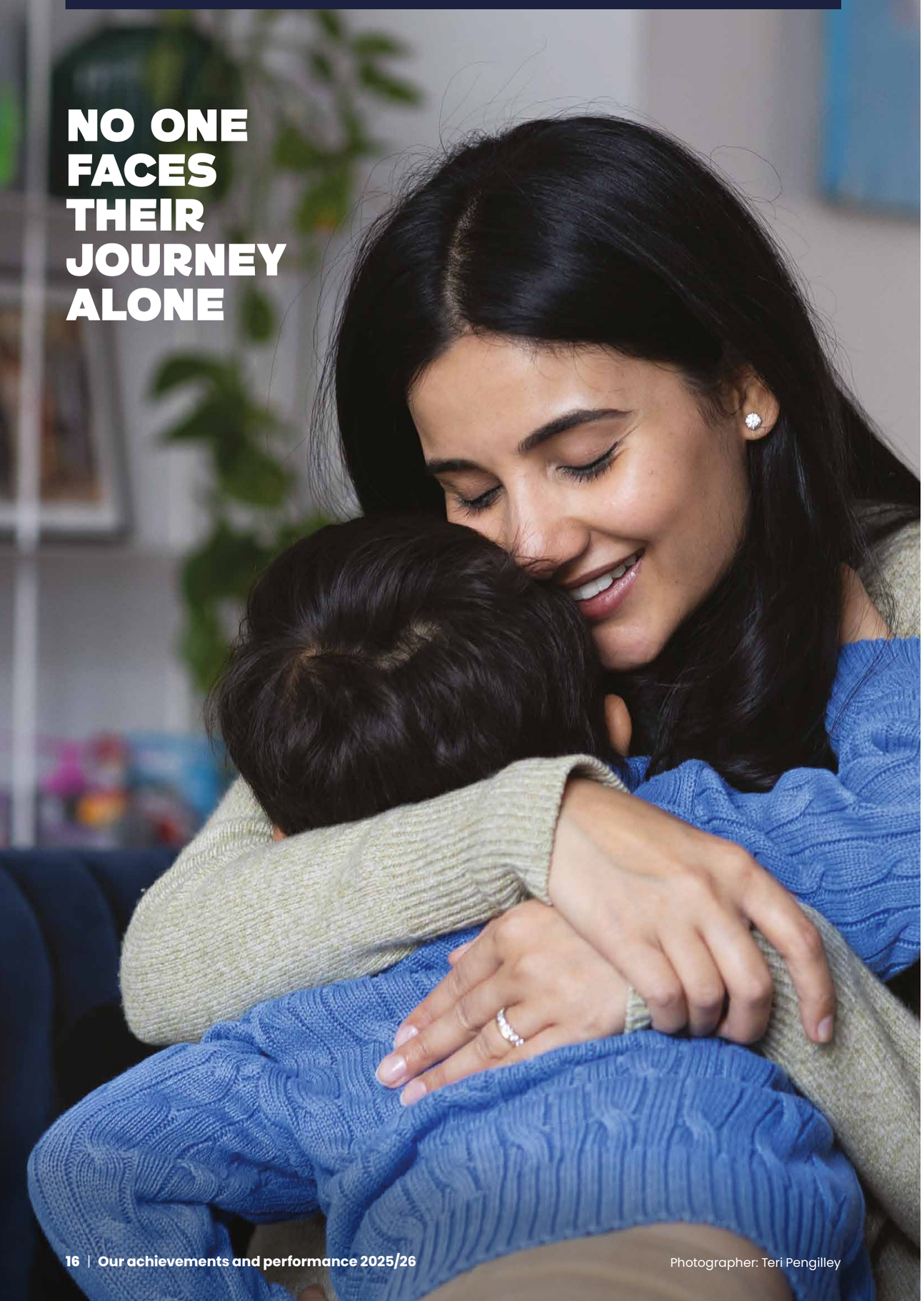
We have begun work to better understand the many ways in which diagnosis isn't working well for people with muscle wasting conditions and what would make it better. We continue to work with the Royal College of General Practitioners in running an e-learning module designed to educate GPs on muscle wasting conditions.

Our primary focus this year and next is on developing our referral service. This is also designed to help improve the connection between primary and secondary care. From 2027 onwards we will be looking at how we can best work with primary care professionals to better spot the signs and symptoms of muscle wasting conditions and speed up referrals to a specialist and an earlier and more accurate diagnosis.

Please also see page 25 for further information on educating healthcare professionals.

Photographer: Jo Ritchie

NO ONE FACES THEIR JOURNEY ALONE



Photographer: Teri Pengilley

Being diagnosed with a muscle wasting condition can be devastating. It can be frightening, lonely and isolating. Getting the right support at the point of diagnosis can be crucial in living well with a condition both physically and mentally. Yet too many people face this journey alone.

We will develop a new diagnosis referral service, with tailored support materials for people newly diagnosed with a muscle wasting condition

This year we laid down the foundations to develop a new diagnosis referral service to ensure that people newly diagnosed with a muscle wasting condition receive timely, consistent, and tailored support at a pivotal point in their journey.

A new diagnosis can be overwhelming, and early access to clear information, emotional reassurance, and practical guidance is critical in helping those with a diagnosis, and their families, understand their condition and navigate the next steps on their journey with the support they need.

Alongside this, we plan to establish a defined care pathway for people already living with a muscle wasting condition, ensuring they can also access timely, consistent, and tailored support when their needs change.

This will help address gaps in ongoing support and enable people to re-engage with services as their condition or circumstances evolve.

To establish the foundations of this new diagnosis referral service, this year we reviewed internal and external services to identify gaps, duplication, and opportunities for earlier intervention, as well as improved support for those already diagnosed. Planning has focused on defining the scope of the service, referral pathways, including re-referral routes, expected outcomes, and how the service integrates with current provision.

The service will be underpinned by tailored support and materials including accessible information about muscle wasting conditions, available services and entitlements, and how to manage both the early impact of diagnosis and the longer-term impact of living with a progressive condition. These are being designed in the 2026/27 financial year for the pilot service launch.

Engagement and consultations have been central to this development phase. We have engaged with external NHS services involved in neuromuscular care to understand referral practices, ongoing patient management, and challenges in supporting both newly diagnosed and

221
people living with muscle wasting conditions reached by our in-person Information Days

710,000
visits to our website

2,600
pieces of media coverage this year, a 50% increase in volume year-on-year



those already living with these conditions. This collaborative approach has helped us shape a service model aligned with real-world clinical pathways and responsive to needs at different stages.

Our first regional referral service pilot

Funding has been secured to deliver the first regional pilot, to launch in two children and adult services in September 2026. This allows us to test and refine the model, evaluate impact, and gather learning to inform future expansion. A dedicated Referral Service Project Manager has been recruited to lead design, delivery, and impact measurement.

Ongoing planning, monitoring, and review are embedded throughout the pilot to ensure the service remains effective, flexible, and responsive to changing needs. Regular data collection and service evaluation will be used to monitor referral numbers, waiting times, support outcomes, engagement levels, and overall service utilisation. Feedback from patients, carers, clinicians, and partner organisations will be gathered routinely to identify areas for improvement and inform service adaptations. This will help ensure the service can meet the differing needs of both newly diagnosed individuals requiring early intervention and those already living with established muscle wasting conditions who may need ongoing, fluctuating or more complex support over time.

We will develop a programme of in reach into neuromuscular centres and clinics, developing staff and volunteers to offer direct and peer support

As part of our ten-year strategy we are collaborating with NHS neuromuscular services to pilot a new referral service, see details above, rolling it out nationally to ensure we reach more of the over 110,000 people living with muscle wasting conditions and their wider families and support networks so that they receive timely, consistent, and tailored support. This will mean we reach and support people living with the over 60 muscle wasting conditions wherever and whoever they are.

Funding has been secured to deliver the first regional pilot, to launch in two children and adult services in September 2026.

We will significantly increase awareness of muscle wasting conditions and the charity so more people can access support when they need it

To increase awareness and support we continued to deliver in-person Information Days this year. We delivered four in-person Information Days across England and Scotland. Held in London, York, Birmingham and Falkirk, these events reached 221 people and families living with muscle wasting conditions. These events provided an opportunity for our community to connect with others, share stories, and hear from expert speakers to help them live well, and find out more about the advice and support we offer. Lived experience speakers and community connection consistently stood out as key strengths in the feedback we received. We will continue to provide in-person Information Days over the next twelve months across all four nations.

A trusted source of information

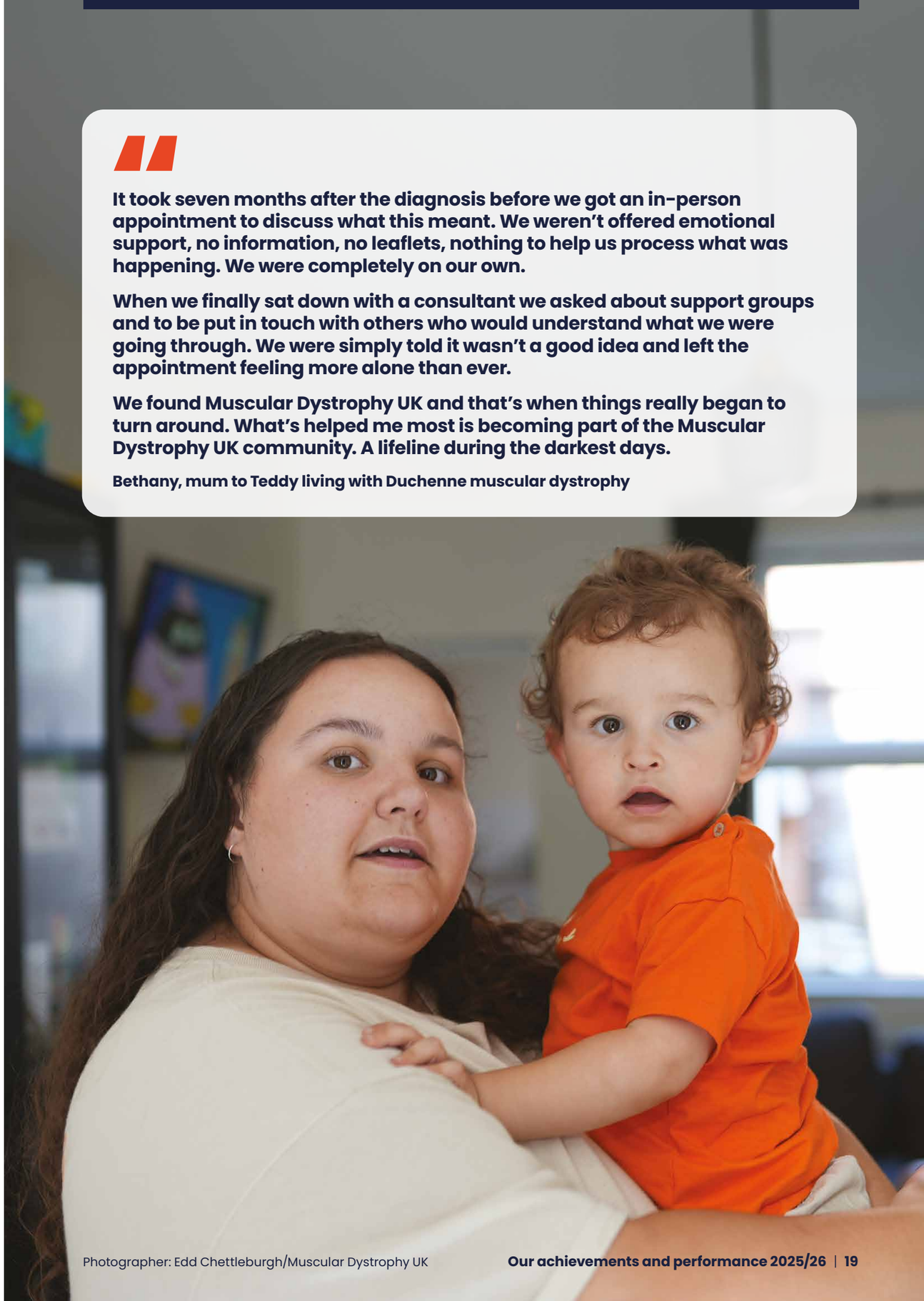
Reaching people living with muscle wasting conditions, their families and wider network with trusted information both digitally and in print is vital, and we have worked hard to ensure our information is up-to-date, evidence based and accessible. Following our third assessment with the Patient Information Forum (PIF), we're proud to have

"It took seven months after the diagnosis before we got an in-person appointment to discuss what this meant. We weren't offered emotional support, no information, no leaflets, nothing to help us process what was happening. We were completely on our own.

When we finally sat down with a consultant we asked about support groups and to be put in touch with others who would understand what we were going through. We were simply told it wasn't a good idea and left the appointment feeling more alone than ever.

We found Muscular Dystrophy UK and that's when things really began to turn around. What's helped me most is becoming part of the Muscular Dystrophy UK community. A lifeline during the darkest days.

Bethany, mum to Teddy living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy



Photographer: Edd Chettleburgh/Muscular Dystrophy UK

been successfully recertified under the PIF TICK Quality Mark for Health Information as a producer of trusted information for the third consecutive year. The PIF TICK logo is included on all health information that has been through our information production process, providing assurance that our content is evidence-based, accessible, and produced to the best possible standard.

Increasing awareness through our communication channels

We continue to raise awareness of the charity across a range of different communication channels and have seen significant growth this year. We achieved over 2,600 pieces of media coverage, a 50 percent increase in volume year-on-year and we had 710,000 visits to our website, up 22 percent on the previous year. We also continued to produce monthly episodes of our Muscles Matter podcast covering topics from employment to mental health and accessible travel to the latest developments in research and treatments. Sharing stories from our community remains hugely popular on our website as well as across our social media channels giving people affected by muscle wasting conditions a voice, helping people to feel less alone and raising awareness of the many different conditions we support.

Insights project to increase reach

We have commissioned a project to develop a coordinated, insight-led understanding of where our community is, how they engage and how we should reach them. This project will deliver transformational change by embedding an audience-first, insight-driven approach to how we reach our community — ensuring we meet people where they are, rather than expecting them to come to us. We particularly want to better understand marginalised and underrepresented groups.

To increase awareness and support we continued to deliver in-person Information Days this year.



Photographer: Jo Ritchie

NEW TREATMENTS, UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

Photographer: Teri Pengilley

For the first time there are new treatments being developed which can slow the progression or reduce the impact of some conditions.

We will fund groundbreaking research into new treatments and better understanding of muscle wasting conditions

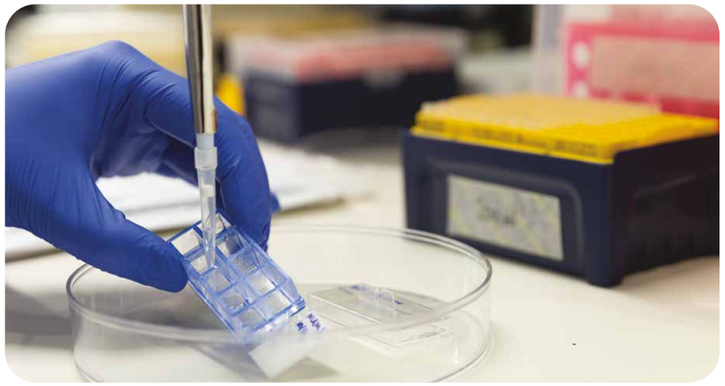
Our research funding/grants this year

This year we invested a further £2m into research, supporting 15 new pioneering projects and bringing our total current research commitment to £9.4m. We now support 51 active projects across more than 25 conditions that aim to deepen understanding, explore new treatments, improve care and make a meaningful difference to the lives of those living with a muscle wasting condition. We also launched our grant round for 2026, through which we have encouraged proposals from early career researchers – decisions on these grants are made in the 2026/27 financial year.

Investing in the next generation of scientists

We took a big step forward this year in supporting more scientists from the outset of their careers, doubling the current number of PhD students we fund. Showcasing our commitment to training the next generation of researchers who will help drive progress in treatments and care.

Supporting new researchers isn't just about funding their projects. It's about equipping them with the tools they need to succeed. Many of the essential skills for a research career, like communicating with the public, writing funding applications, or building networks, aren't always covered in university programmes. That's why events like our PhD Network Day are so important.



£2m
invested into research this year

15
new pioneering projects supported

£9.4m
current research commitment

51
active projects supported

363
healthcare professionals attended our conferences and webinars this year

2
treatments made permanently available to people in our community in Scotland



A day of learning, sharing and inspiration

We hosted our first ever PhD Network Day in June 2025. The day was packed with practical skills and powerful conversations. Highlights included learning how to explain complex research to non-scientific audiences; designing hands on, engaging activities to showcase research; receiving advice on crafting strong funding applications and building meaningful connections with fellow researchers.

The students also had the chance to hear directly from someone living with a muscle wasting condition. Tahira shared her story about living with GNE myopathy, which brought a powerful perspective to the day – reminding everyone in the room why their research matters, and who it's for. Her honesty, strength, and encouragement left a lasting impression on the students, helping them connect their lab work to the real lives they hope to impact.

We will campaign and influence the NHS across the UK to end the postcode lottery and ensure there is capacity in the system to treat and support those who need it

Access to services

This year we sought to increase our influence within healthcare services across the UK so that more people living with a muscle wasting condition can access high quality services and support regardless of where they live.

We joined several coalitions to help us increase our voice and influence on issues affecting our community, such as the respective Neurological Alliances for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and National Voices. We worked with SMA UK and Pathfinders Neuromuscular Alliance to inform the Northern Ireland government's review of neurology services. The final report identified key areas for improvement, including increasing the workforce capacity, addressing gaps

Photographer: Teri Pengilley

in current services, and developing more person-centred services – all issues identified by members of our Northern Ireland community.

In Scotland we continued to push the recommendations we made in our 2024 report *Missing people. Missing support* to ensure the Scottish government and health services see that people living with a muscle wasting condition are both identified in NHS data and have access to high quality services.

Access to treatments

This year we saw further development with two treatments becoming available for use in the NHS in Scotland.

- **Givinostat (Duvyzat).** Givinostat is a newly available treatment for people with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) aged six and over, who can walk when they start treatment. It aims to reduce inflammation and the build-up of scar tissues, and ultimately slow progression of the condition.
- **Nusinersen (Spinraza).** Nusinersen has now been made permanently available as a treatment for people with type 2 or type 3 spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). Nusinersen supports the production of a protein which is essential for the health of nerve cells which help to control muscles.

We have also been involved in numerous ongoing assessments of potential treatments, working with other charities on submissions to decision-makers - namely the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in England (whose decisions are followed in Wales and Northern Ireland) and the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) in Scotland. This includes evaluating treatments for DMD, SMA, myasthenia gravis, and thymidine kinase 2 deficiency (a form of mitochondrial disease).

We continue to build relationships and gather knowledge to advocate for a fairer system better equipped for rare diseases, ensuring timely and equitable access. Our goal is that everyone in the UK living with a muscle wasting condition can access the best treatment as quickly as possible.

This year we saw further development in Scotland with two treatments becoming available for use on the NHS in Scotland.

We will support the growth of neuromuscular services and workforce through education and quality improvement

Bringing healthcare professionals together

We continued to support our healthcare professional community this year, organising conferences for professionals involved in the care and support of people living with muscle wasting conditions, providing them with the opportunity to build skills and expertise, share best practice, and network.

In October 2025, our Allied Health Professional Conference brought together 145 allied health professionals. The conference focused on sharing the latest advances and best practice in muscle wasting conditions and care, bringing together physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and speech and language therapists amongst others. Topics covered included rehabilitation management, mental health and rare conditions, housing adaptations, and how to support women who are genetic carriers of certain conditions.

Upskilling healthcare professionals

We provided CPD accredited upskilling webinars to 218 healthcare professionals, including specialist professionals as well as professionals in non-specialist roles. Topics included bone health, mouthpiece ventilation, and GLP1 weight loss medications.

In January 2026, we launched a new e-learning hub for allied health professionals designed to improve healthcare professionals' knowledge and confidence and enable them to provide the best possible support to our community. Developed in collaboration with POD-NMD and TREAT NMD Alliance, the hub features 15 modules covering issues such as chewing and swallowing, fatigue, exercise, nutrition and self-management.

Supporting regional clinical network meetings

We helped support seven different regional clinical network meetings over the course of the year. Each regional clinical network brings together healthcare commissioners, people living with a muscle wasting condition and their families, expert clinicians, and allied health professionals. That regional expertise is then pooled together to ensure that specialist and community neuromuscular services are strengthened in local areas and across the UK.

Our Allied Health Professional Conference brought together 145 allied health professionals.



Photographer: Jo Ritchie

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL



Photographer: Chris O'Donovan

Living with a muscle wasting condition affects every part of a person's life — and the impact goes far beyond the physical. It can be exhausting, isolating, and overwhelming, taking a serious toll on both mental and physical health.

We will significantly grow our direct services and review our existing model of support to reach more people with practical and emotional support

Reviewing our service delivery

So that we can reach more people with practical and emotional support as part of our ten-year organisational strategy, this year we carried out an extensive review of our service provision. We plan to use the review recommendations to enhance our service provision to create a clearer, simpler, and more purposeful model of delivery.

The review provided us with valuable insights to be able to plan how we scale our services going forwards to successfully reach even more people living with a muscle wasting condition. Working to ensure our support is accessible and equitable, with the understanding that every person's experience is different, and that there is the need for tailored support throughout someone's journey living with a condition.

Extending our helpline hours

In 2026, we extended our helpline hours, so that more people living with a condition, their families and carers, can reach our helpline team for support. In the past year our helpline and regional team have responded to over 3,800 requests for support, providing tailored information and emotional and practical support. Delivering advice and support by phone, email, face-to-face, or through a referral from NHS neuromuscular clinics, so no one faces their journey alone.

3,800
requests for support responded to

15
WhatsApp groups run across different conditions, interests and age groups

658
people participated in our WhatsApp groups

211
people received equipment grants

WhatsApp support groups

Other forms of support that have flourished over the past year are our WhatsApp groups. We currently run 15 groups across different conditions, interests and ages, including young adults aged 18 to 30, adults aged 30 to 65, and people aged 65 and over, as well as condition-specific groups including Duchenne muscular dystrophy, Charcot-Marie-Tooth, Becker muscular dystrophy, limb girdle muscular dystrophy, facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy, Ullrich congenital muscular dystrophy and oculopharyngeal muscular dystrophy. We also facilitate groups for the South Asian Neuromuscular Network, mums and dads of children with a condition, parents living with a condition themselves, the Women's Health Group, and a Welsh Language Group. Two hundred and eighty two new people joined these groups over the past year, bringing the total number of people who access and benefit from our WhatsApp groups to 658 people.

This is a significant growth which now forms a core part of our support services. Moderated by staff and volunteers, our WhatsApp groups help people to not feel so alone by connecting them with other people going through similar experiences as themselves. Sharing tips, advice and support with one another in managing their condition.

Equipment grants

In 2025/26, we provided equipment grants to 211 people living with a muscle wasting condition, helping them access essential powered mobility equipment such as wheelchairs. These grants – administered through our Joseph Patrick Trust funding arm – are designed to empower people with a condition to live more independently improving their quality of life.

We also continued to work in partnership with organisations like SMArt Moves this year to jointly fund power wheelchairs, ensuring that more people benefited from this vital support. The equipment grants programme is a key part of our commitment to enabling people with muscle wasting conditions to overcome barriers to mobility and participate more fully in daily life. By offering practical assistance tailored to individual needs, we support recipients to maintain their independence.

Following the year end, a new grants programme was developed for launch in 2026/27 to provide funding for small items of equipment for people living with a muscle wasting condition, including items such as hoists, ramps, profiling beds and smaller kitchen aids. A new tariff list was developed during the post year-end period, informed by engagement with people living with muscle wasting conditions to ensure the programme reflects their needs and priorities. Progress on the programme will be reported in next year's annual report and accounts.



The average wheelchair the NHS now offer is far from suitable, and it doesn't allow me to live an active or inclusive life in any way really. I love being in the great outdoors with my seven-year-old daughter, Georgia. I used to work for the Wildlife Trust and go on country 'walks' as much as possible. I grow my own fruit and vegetables. Everything I enjoy doing is made easier by having a specialist electric wheelchair, so the grant from Muscular Dystrophy UK and SMA UK has improved my quality of life immeasurably.

Sam, living with spinal muscular atrophy

Photographer: Chris O'Donovan

We will grow our community of people affected by muscle wasting conditions to improve self-advocacy and peer support

Our one-to-one peer support service continues to offer connection and companionship through trained volunteers with lived experience of muscle wasting conditions. Over the past year, volunteers have provided both short-and long-term support, helping people feel less alone, share openly with someone who truly understands, and in finding new ways to navigate change and challenges.

In March 2026, 12 new volunteers completed training, adding to the diversity of experience across the team. Representing eight conditions and three nations, this new cohort are helping us to increase our reach to more newly diagnosed families of younger children, parents living with a condition, and increasing connections available for people in their twenties.

Sixty seven peer support volunteers currently make up our network of peer support volunteers across activities. Following a review of our services and needs, we're planning targeted recruitment in the summer and autumn to continue strengthening support for a wide variety of groups and activities.

I've been a peer support volunteer for six years. Often my support is just a coffee or regular phone call; but sometimes it grows into real friendship. What matters is having someone who understands the frustration, the reality of slowly getting worse, and how much your mindset has to shift to cope with this. Offering support to others is incredibly rewarding.

Anthony, Peer Support Volunteer

We will campaign for a more just and inclusive society with accessible services and state support to live a full life

Much of our campaigning and influencing work this year has focused on financial insecurity and the current cost of living crisis, building on our previous report on this subject in 2024. In 2025, we campaigned with many other disability, health and poverty organisations to oppose the UK government's proposed plans to reform Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – a benefit available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland which helps with the extra costs of living with a disability or a long-term physical or mental health condition. As a result of this collective campaigning and pressure from politicians the UK government dropped its plans for this reform, although it did go ahead with changes which restricted access to the health elements of Universal Credit.

As a result of the campaigning against its original PIP plans, the UK government launched a review into PIP in November 2025. This is known as the Timms Review and is led by Sir Stephen Timms MP, the Minister for Social Security and Disability. The Review is being co-produced with disabled people and is expected by the end of 2026. We will be engaging with this review in the coming year.

We also made sure that the experiences of people living with muscle wasting conditions were considered by UK parliament and politicians by responding to parliamentary committee inquiries into the access to work scheme (designed to support disabled people in the workplace) and broader employment support for disabled people.

Work has started on building our campaigning infrastructure, so we are able to offer the community more and better ways to get involved in our campaigning work. This will be tested and rolled out in the coming year.

Sixty seven peer support volunteers currently make up our peer support network.

OUR WORK IN SCOTLAND

Over the past year, our presence in Scotland has continued to grow and strengthen, enabling us to provide even more equitable, accessible and responsive support to people living with muscle wasting conditions, and their families.

Reaching more people

We have three members of staff from our Information and Support team based in Scotland. One role focuses on leading regional support across the devolved nations, while the other two focus on advocacy and community support delivering direct, on-the-ground support across the whole of Scotland. This team has enabled us to reach more people responding effectively to local need, including in rural and remote communities.

Over the past year, we responded to 466 requests for support from people living with a condition, their families and carers. These include helpline, clinic and advocacy cases. Our staff have provided tailored information, emotional support, practical guidance, and advocacy, helping people navigate health, social care, benefits, and daily living challenges linked to muscle wasting conditions.

Information and support events

Alongside individual support, we have delivered local, tailored information and support events. These events create valuable opportunities for people living with a condition and their families, to connect with each other, learn from professionals, and access condition-specific information closer to home. We also delivered a larger Information Day in Falkirk, attended by 59 people. The event brought together people affected by muscle wasting conditions, healthcare professionals, speakers with lived experience, and national partners.

Upskilling community-based health and social care professionals

In addition to events for people living with a condition and their families, we have continued to invest in upskilling community-based health and social care professionals. These sessions raise awareness of muscle wasting conditions, highlight the importance of informed social care, and ensure professionals understand how to refer directly into our services. This work is vital in improving long-term outcomes and enabling people to live well within their communities across Scotland.

Our research

We continued to support research in Scotland this year. Our funding supported improving bone density scanning with Dr Jarod Wong at the University of Glasgow and a PhD student working on motor neurons in the laboratory of Dr Lyndsay Murray. Research into further understanding XL-SMA with Professor Tom Gillingwater at the University of Edinburgh has been completed.

An incredible

£14,553

raised through Kiltwalks across four Scottish cities

£78,132

total funds raised in Scotland

466

requests for support responded to over the past year

Diagnosis and treatments

In March 2026, the Scottish government launched a pilot programme to screen all newborn babies in Scotland for SMA. This year also saw further development with two treatments becoming available for use in the NHS in Scotland. These are Duvyzat (givinostat), a newly available treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) for people aged six and over, who can walk when they start treatment, and Spinraza (nusinersen), which has now been made permanently available as a treatment for people with SMA types 2 and 3. See page 20 for more details about these treatments.



Fundraising

New Family Fund Jackman DMD

Nuala and Joe launched their Family Fund this year in support of their son Jack, who lives with DMD. After years of hospital visits and unanswered questions, Jack was diagnosed in 2019. To raise vital funds and awareness, Jack's family are taking on numerous challenges including the London Marathon in support of Jack, helping their Family Fund continue to grow and make a difference for families affected by DMD.

Community fundraising activities

Our fundraising total in Scotland has come from a variety of activities this year including bake sales, music events and taking part in challenge events across the country. Supporters also took part in bucket collections, raising a brilliant £1,403. These collections not only bring in funds but also help raise awareness.

We have seen fantastic support for our Scotland events this year, including the Kiltwalk, where 63 participants took part across the four cities, raising an incredible £14,553. Supporters used these events to raise both vital funds and awareness of muscle wasting conditions. Among them were a family of six who took on the Aberdeen Kiltwalk in honour of Ashleigh and her daughter Harper, who both live with myotonic dystrophy type 1.

In March 2026, the Scottish government launched a pilot programme to screen all newborn babies in Scotland for SMA.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Thanks to your amazing generosity, income from donations, gifts, grants, sponsorship, events and campaigns totalled £4.9m this year, up 9% from last year. These funds enable us to carry out the work we do.



Photographer: Chris O'Donovan

Highlights of this year's fundraising

Running events go from strength to strength

From local 5k runs to some of the most sought-after marathons in the world, 10,716 participants came together across 63 events in 2025/26 to raise a remarkable £1.19m for the charity.

Our Bidwells Town and Gown 10k series

Our Bidwells Town and Gown 10k series, closed road races, held in both Oxford and Cambridge, saw 10,000 runners across the two events raising £471,500. Record-breaking registrations ensured both events were a sell-out, attracting elite runners competing for a personal best as well groups of friends, corporate teams, people in fancy dress, and those with a personal link to the cause.

London Marathon 2025

We had 170 runners in the TCS London Marathon, raising an incredible £523,000 for the charity.

Our corporate partnerships

We were delighted to have the support of a number of corporate partners this year who chose to not only fundraise but also help amplify awareness and provide us with access to new audiences.

Activities and organisations who collaborated with us included Blue Diamond Garden Centres who created an exclusive charity Rose called Stronger Together which launched at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2025. We were chosen as the benefiting charity at the 2025 Resi Awards, an evening celebrating the individuals and projects transforming the residential property sector, which resulted in nearly £20,000 raised on the night. In October, supported by our ambassador comedian Jon Richardson, Cloudwater Brewery launched the charity ale 'Max Matters'. Ten percent of every 'Max Matters' sold will be donated to us in memory of Max Bode, who lived with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. And in January, CEX introduced round-up donations at all till points – a first for the charity.

The BioIndustry Association (BIA) partnership

We were absolutely delighted to be chosen as BIA's charity of the year for 2026, and their Gala Dinner in January provided us with the opportunity to tell BIA members more about our work. Thanks to Louisa Hill, who spoke so powerfully about how Duchenne muscular dystrophy has affected her family, and the generosity in the room, we raised over £50,000.

£2.75m
received from Gifts in Wills

£544k
A record breaking sum raised at the Microscope Ball

£100k
raised through our Double your Donation campaign

£49,000
raised at the BGC Charity Day

Eric Wright Partnership

This year, we were honoured to be selected as Eric Wright Partnerships' Charity of the Year, following a heartfelt nomination from John Wigham in memory of his close friend, Jack Milner, who was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy as a child but never allowed his condition to define him.

"This partnership is about more than fundraising – it's about shining a spotlight on the urgent need for innovation and collaboration to improve the lives of those affected by muscle wasting conditions.

Jane Wall, Managing Director of the BIA

In his memory, the team at Eric Wright Partnerships has shown extraordinary dedication in their fundraising efforts. Alongside a generous £25,000 donation, which will help to pilot our new referral service in the North West of England, colleagues took on a wide range of incredible challenges, including the Welsh 3000s and the Great North Run. They also organised office bake sales and wreath-making workshops, raising an additional £10,000. The funds raised by Eric Wright Partnerships will support an accessible and inclusive family weekend at the Barnstondale Centre in Wirral.

Trusts and Foundations

Nearly 80 Trusts and Foundations supported our work this year, helping drive forward our four strategic goals and bringing us one step closer to a world with better care, treatments and support for everyone living with muscle wasting conditions.

Our Special Events

We continue to drive fundraising through a successful calendar of committee led special events from clay pigeon shooting to our flagship Microscope Ball. Thanks to all those who have played a part in organising these.

Celebrity Sports Quiz

The charity's annual Celebrity Sports Quiz at Lord's Cricket Ground brought together supporters, partners and sporting talent for an engaging evening of fundraising. Hosted by our President Gabby Logan and Kirsty Gallacher, guests enjoyed a three-course dinner and quiz alongside 22 sporting celebrities, including Clare Balding, Eilish McColgan and Bethany England. The event raised £93,000 including £13,300 generated in just five minutes following a powerful pledge speech from Jed Thirkettle who lives with Ulrich muscular dystrophy.



Celebrity Sports Quiz raised £93,000



Photographer for both: Ikin Yum

Supporters fundraising their own way

People across our community have shown extraordinary creativity and generosity this year, finding their own way to make a difference with passion and purpose. Highlights of their inspirational fundraising include:



'The 13' Challenge

On her 60th birthday, supporter Clair Harris took on 'The 13' challenge: swimming 71km across all 13 publicly accessible lakes in the Lake District and cycling the 185km between them. She completed this in just 84 hours, becoming the first woman and first non-wetsuit swimmer to officially finish the challenge. Clair undertook this feat in support of her friend of 10 years, Nausheen Ahmed, who lives with GNE myopathy, raising £6,244 and raising awareness through extensive media coverage.

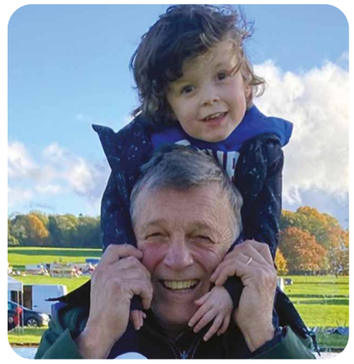
Lunching for the Charity

Kerry Spink, from Family Fund Oscar and Seb: Fighting FHSD, organised a luxury Ladies Day at Cottons Hotel & Spa near Knutsford, where a total of 160 guests raised over £20,000 to support people living with a muscle wasting condition. The day included a two-course lunch, boutique shopping and entertainment.

For the last five years, Maureen Smith, 86, from Nottingham has organised biannual charity lunches in her local community inspired by her granddaughter Jade Gill, 31, who lives with Facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy (FSHD). Sadly Maureen passed away recently, but Jade will continue to fundraise in her memory.

Cycle challenges

Grandad Ian completed a 170-mile ride in intense heat for his grandson Eben who lives with Ullrich congenital muscular dystrophy, raising over £2,600 for Eben's Family Fund, A Wish for Eben, while Team Turnditch tackled a tough 50-mile route through the Derbyshire Dales for their friend Mike, surpassing £2,700.



Charity challenges

Up and down the country people came together to push themselves and take on extreme challenges, from tackling the three peaks, climbing Snowdon, to the Lake District Ultra Challenge, in support of friends and family affected by a muscle wasting condition. Gareth McBurney fundraised in memory of his father-in-law Paul, who lived with FSHD, running multiple events, including the Tour of Merseyside 2025 - a week-long series of six races in seven days. Harry O'Callaghan took on an extraordinary ultra marathon challenge for his friend and Muscular Dystrophy UK Ambassador Jason Croucher who lives with limb girdle



Photographer (image directly above): Andrew Collier





muscular dystrophy, running 95km from Cambridge United to the Emirates Stadium, raising over £3,000.

Making music for the Charity

Our supporters also used music to fundraise for our work this year, with the seventh and final Decibels for Dystrophy rock concert in Hull honouring Christian Deehan, and Croft Fest, an alt-punk-metal festival created by Scott Cooper in memory of Ben Croft. Both events bring communities together through live music to raise vital funds.

Jacob's Jumbo Jet Lift

In July 2025, Colin Morgan and his 'Dumbbell Dozen' team took on a unique challenge: lifting 1,000 tonnes— the combined weight of a Boeing 747 and Airbus A380—over a month. The 'Jacob's Jumbo Jet Lift' was in support of 10-year-old Jacob Ackerman, who lives with limb girdle muscular dystrophy. Jacob launched the challenge and celebrated its completion, which raised £8,592 and attracted local media and community leaders, boosting awareness of the charity.

Big Fundraiser Day's Out

We held a series of fundraiser days out at venues across the country, from Parallel Windsor's Festival of Inclusivity to the National Space Centre in Leicester, to build stronger relationships and inspire future fundraising.

Arch 2 Arc triumph

In August Sam Weale became only the 63rd person to complete the Enduroman Arch 2 Arc challenge, raising more than £21,000 in support of Will Taylor who lives with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Swimming, running and cycling the 290 miles, (466km) from Marble Arch in London to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris over three days.

Iron Will 2025

Over three very rainy days in August Will's 30 strong team completed the IRON WILL, a long-distance three-day triathlon which included a 12km stand up paddle, an 80km mountain bike, finishing with a gruelling trail marathon! The team have been fundraising for Duchenne research for 10 years and hit £300,000 having raised a phenomenal £50,000 from this latest challenge.



Photographer: Teri Pengilley

OUR FIRST LONDON MARATHON WHEELCHAIR PARTICIPANTS

This year, for the first time, we were excited to include two people taking part as assisted wheelchair participants following our funding of two assisted race wheelchairs. These race wheelchairs will now be available at a range of events throughout the year.



"It meant the world to me to be able to take part in the London Marathon. I live with a rare muscle weakening condition, GNE myopathy, and before I started getting symptoms in my early 20s I really enjoyed running. It's so important for these events to be as inclusive as possible and I feel very lucky to have been able to take part.

Simone, 37, from Essex, lives with GNE myopathy

"I never thought I would be running/ wheeling in a marathon, but I could not be happier that I had this experience. The charity has supported me in so many ways; I wanted to be able to say thank you and raise money to support people with similar conditions to mine.

Konstantina, 25, from Oxfordshire, lives with Ulrich muscular dystrophy



Photographer for both: Chris O'Donovan

OUR FINANCES

How we raised our funds

For every £1 we spent:

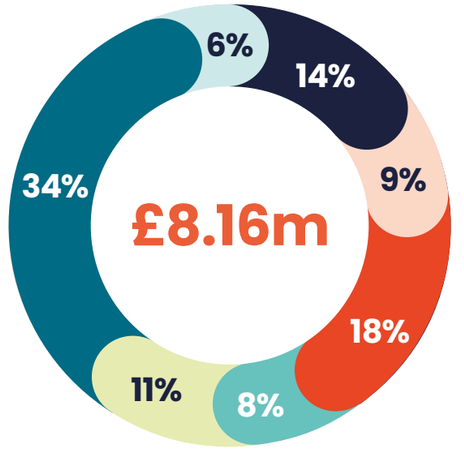


38p is invested in fundraising to ensure we maintain a diverse portfolio to support our community

62p is spent on our charitable activities

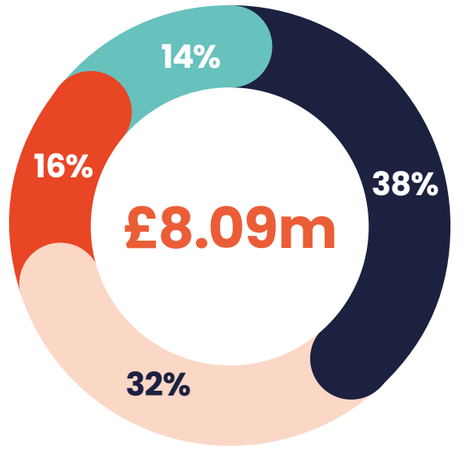
For every £1 we invested in fundraising we raised £2.63
(total income / fundraising costs)





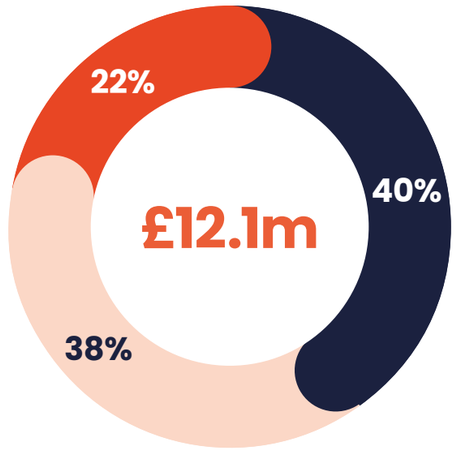
Total income

- **Events and promotions** (£1,195k)
- **Direct marketing** (£765k)
- **Major donors and corporates** (£1,451k)
- **Trusts** (£636k)
- **Community fundraising** (£884k)
- **Legacy** (£2,754k)
- **Other income** (£476k)



Total expenditure

- **Fundraising** (£3,103k)
- **Medical research** (£2,572k)
- **Access to specialist care and support** (£1,267k)
- **Independent living** (£1,150k)



Total funds

- **Designated** (£4,864k)
- **General** (£4,479k)
- **Restricted** (£2,752k)

OUR FUTURE PLANS

The year ahead represents an important step in delivering our long-term vision of a world without limits for people living with muscle wasting conditions.

Following the launch of our new ten-year strategy in 2025/26, the coming year will focus on further laying the foundations for long-term growth in our impact and income.

We'll prioritise investment in people, services, research, and fundraising capability to build sustainable growth and ensure delivery across our four strategic goals.



GOAL 1

Transforming diagnosis

To take forward our work to improve the speed and accuracy of diagnosis. Over the next year, we will:

- Begin delivery of a **national epidemiology study**, improving understanding of prevalence and need.
- Establish an expert group and progress work on **diagnostic pathways and primary care support**.
- Deliver **training and engagement with healthcare professionals** to improve earlier identification and referral.

These steps will help reduce delays in diagnosis and ensure that more people can access treatment and support earlier.



GOAL 2

No one faces their journey alone

Ensuring people receive the right support at the right time remains a core priority. Over the next year, we will:

- Develop and pilot a **new referral service** for people newly diagnosed, working with NHS partners.
- Launch a **welcome pack and tailored support pathway** for newly diagnosed individuals.
- Begin delivery of a **new volunteer and peer support model**, increasing capacity and reach.
- **Expand our outreach to reach more people,** particularly those from underserved communities.

This work will enable us to support more individuals and families earlier in their journey and more consistently across the UK.

We'll prioritise investment in people, services, research, and fundraising capability to build sustainable growth and ensure delivery across our four strategic goals.



GOAL 3

New treatments and universal support

We will continue to accelerate research and improve access to treatment and specialist care. Over the next year, we will:

- Deliver our **research grant programmes**, including funding for early career researchers.
- Strengthen our **influencing work with NHS bodies and policymakers** to improve access to treatments.
- Undertake a **community survey and publish a 'state of services' report** to highlight gaps in provision.
- Progress work to **improve neuromuscular service capacity** and workforce.

These actions will support progress towards more equitable access to treatments and specialist care across the UK.



GOAL 4

Living life to the full

We will expand our work to support independent living, wellbeing, and participation in society. Over the next year, we will:

- Implement the outcomes of our **services and welfare grants review**, improving reach and effectiveness.
- Launch a **new digital campaigning platform** and influence the Timms Review independent review of Personal Independence payment (PIP).
- Deliver our **Improving Quality of Life research** programme.
- Develop a **new resource hub** providing accessible, high-quality information.
- Expand **peer support networks and community engagement activity**.

Together, these initiatives will help more people live independently and with better physical and mental health.

Building a stronger organisation

To deliver our strategy, we will continue to invest in our organisational capacity. Key priorities for 2026/27 include:

- Embedding a **cross-organisational, donor-focused fundraising culture** to support long-term income growth.
- Expanding and **diversifying income streams**.
- Strengthening our **data and digital infrastructure**, including further development of Microsoft Dynamics and data dashboards.
- Increasing awareness of the charity and muscle wasting conditions through **targeted marketing and communications activity**.
- Implementing our **People Strategy**, with a focus on recruitment, development, inclusion, and wellbeing.

These investments will enable us to scale our activities, improve decision-making, and strengthen our long-term sustainability.

THANK YOU

Our President
- Gabby Logan OBE

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- Chloe Docker
- Ian Gordon (term ended October 2025)
- Joseph Gordon
- Jennifer Howells (elected October 2025)
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- Charles Scott (term ended October 2025)
- Professor Simon Ray
- Lord John Sharkey
- Tom Sara (co-opted December 2025)
- Brigid Sutcliffe

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- Wojtek B Trzcinski, Chief Operating Officer
- Dr Kate Adcock, Director of Research and Innovation
- Neeru Naik, Director of Services and Support
- Vicki Nash, Director of Policy and Campaigns (from June 2025)
- Emma Jones-Parry, Director of Fundraising
- Leanne Thorndyke, Director of Marketing and Communications

With special thanks
- Frances Carey
- Jeremy and Mary Champion
- The Elizabeth Hardie Ferguson Charitable Trust Fund
- Charles and Nicola Manby
- Mayo Marriott
- The McAlister Family
- Peter and Frances Meyer
- The Countess of Lindsay
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- Tony and Monica Moorwood
- MAP Nemaline
- The Q Trust
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- John Watson and Janis Higgie
- Sally Whittet and Professor Michael Joy OBE

Corporate Support
- AirNow Technology
- BIA
- Bidwells
- BGC Charity Day
- Barratt East London
- CeX
- Chimera
- Cloudwater brewery
- DC Merrett
- Diligencia Group
- Eskmuir Properties
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- Mail Metro Media
- Malcolm Group
- Marchmont Investment Management
- Orbis
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- Project Giving Back
- Property Week
- Rosethorn Capital Partners
- Scottish Power
- Siren
- Tennants Consolidated
- Ula Maria Studio

Trusts and Foundations
- Anonymous donors
- The Barbour Foundation
- The Berqvist Foundation
- The Cranbury Foundation
- Department of Health Northern Ireland
- The Elizabeth Hardie Ferguson Charitable Trust Fund
- The Grace Trust
- The Inman Charity
- The James Tudor Foundation
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- Rob Driver
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- Charles Scott (term ended October 2025)
- Lord John Sharkey
- Brigid Sutcliffe

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- Dr Niranjanan Nirmalananthan
- Professor Ros Quinlivan BSc (hons) MBBS, DCH, FRCPCH, FRCP, MD
- Lloyd Tingley
- Tanvi Vyas

Northern Ireland Council

- Claire O'Hanlon, Chair
- Janet Bailie
- Claire Boylan
- Suzanne Glover
- Bethany Jackson
- Laura Jackson
- Jim McKeogh
- Maggi McKeogh
- Stephen Myall
- Catherine Taggart
- Aaron Thompson
- Julie Thompson

Scottish Council

- Dr Sheonad Macfarlane BSc Med Sci, MB ChB, Chair
- Dave Gale
- Catherine Gillies
- Vanessa Jamieson
- Elizabeth McHugh
- Gerry McMenemy
- Joe Moan
- Allyson Townhill
- Jon Watkins
- Bernie Woods
- Michelle Young



Photographer: Chris O'Donovan

OUR POLICIES

Fundraising statement

Our supporters are key to changing the future of muscle wasting conditions, and in observing and promoting a consistently high standard of fundraising. We regularly monitor our practices to identify training requirements and set policy priorities for our fundraising. We work to ensure a culture of honesty, integrity and respect with the public, as well as transparency of process to our donors about our cause and the way that their donation will be used. We also recognise how important it is to manage our supporters' data compliantly, with both care and integrity. Our statement of fundraising best practice underlies our commitment to the following personal information practices:

- To deliver best practice rather than solely compliance
- To adhere to the guidelines of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
- To never seek to sell supporter data
- To always inform individuals if we are conducting research that impinges on their privacy; to apply the principle of data minimisation and only capture in our research the minimum amount of personal data required
- To enable our audiences to choose which communications they receive and how

These actions enable us to protect vulnerable people and all other members of the public from any behaviour that could be deemed:

- An unreasonable intrusion into a person's privacy
- Unreasonably persistent
- Placing undue pressure on a person to give.

We offer many different opportunities for our fundraisers and donors to engage with us to allow us to fulfil our charitable objectives. These include special and challenge events; corporate partnerships; trusts and foundations; community based fundraising (including cash collections), including Family Funds; fundraising groups, branches and events; individual giving, which includes regular giving, major gifts, appeals, raffles and a weekly lottery, membership scheme and also donations through payroll; Christmas cards and online shop sales; legacy and in-memory programmes.

We conduct the following through commercial participation agreements: payroll giving, our gaming programme, legacy administration, the shop fulfilment, print and mailing houses for external mailings, and most of our regional and national challenge events. We monitor our third-party providers and operate due diligence checks to ensure best practice. We also carry out internal analysis to ensure the work delivered by these agencies provides best value to the charity, its supporters and users.

We are paid-up members of the Fundraising Regulator and subscribe to the Fundraising Codes of Practice. We have ensured staff remain up to date in all areas of fundraising, governance and training through mandatory online training as well as seminars and events by relevant providers.

We received 10 complaints in total in 2025/26. These are included in the following:

0 complaints from 9,896 mailings about our lottery and raffle to warm supporters;
1 complaint from 1,317 guests at our series of special events;
0 complaints from 457 participants at our National Third Party Challenge Events;
9 complaints from 9,136 participants at our own running events (Bidwells Town and Gown and Pedal, Paddle, Peak), 0 from 383 volunteer fundraising events; 0 from 47,509 pieces of direct mail sent out; 0 complaints from 4,014 pieces of mail sent out about gifts in Wills. We have worked together with the individuals who made the complaints mentioned to ensure we will learn from our mistakes for the future.

Financial review and policies

Thanks to the continued generosity of our supporters, our total income for 2025/26 was £8.2m, compared to £7.9m in 2024/25. This increase reflects a strong and resilient income base, with additional support coming from new government funding alongside slightly higher legacy gifts.

Income from donations, fundraising activities, and grants remained stable at around £4.4m (2024/25: £4.5m), demonstrating the continued commitment of our community of supporters.

Legacy income totalled £2.8m (2024/25: £2.6m). While this type of income can vary year to year, it remains a vital source of funding that helps us plan for the long term. This figure includes an estimate of future receipts from confirmed estates.

Other income, including investments and trading activities, was £0.6m (2024/25: £820k). Government funding increased to £0.4m (2024/25: £15k), representing a grant from Department of Health and Social Care's Medical Research Charity Support Fund.

We spent £5.0m on charitable activities during the year (2024/25: £6.9m). The reduction reflects the completion of Changing Places programme in the previous year, allowing us to refocus resources on our ongoing priorities and new strategic ambitions.

How we invested your support:

- 52% in Medical Research (2024/25: 34%)
- 25% in Access to Specialist NHS Care and Support (2024/25: 19%)
- 23% in Independent Living (2024/25: 47%)

This shift reflects a growing emphasis on accelerating progress towards treatments and cures, while continuing to support people living with muscle-wasting conditions today.

Overall, the charity recorded a surplus of £0.3m (2024/25: deficit of £2.1m), including £278k gains on investments (2024/25: £109k).

Importantly, this stronger financial position provides a solid foundation for the new organisational strategy launched during the year. It enables us to invest with confidence in the changes needed to deliver greater impact. Looking ahead, we have set an ambitious goal: to double our income over the next 10 years, so that we can significantly expand the support, research, and services we provide to our community. The progress made this year gives us confidence that, together with our supporters, we can achieve this ambition.

Reserves policy

Free reserves are defined as unrestricted funds excluding designated funds, restricted funds and tangible fixed assets. The Trustees consider it essential to maintain an appropriate level of free reserves to provide financial resilience, to cover core operating costs, and to meet future unrestricted commitments in the event of an unexpected reduction in income.

The level of free reserves is reviewed regularly by the Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team as part of the budget-setting and financial planning process, taking into account the risks facing the charity and its planned level of expenditure.

As part of the development of the new organisational strategy and the operational plan approved in October 2025, the Trustees undertook a detailed review of the reserves policy and associated financial model. This confirmed a target level of free reserves equivalent to approximately six months of operating costs. Based on current budgets, this remains set at £4.0m.

The rationale for maintaining this level of reserves reflects:

- Planned investment in strategic growth, including increased expenditure on services, research and organisational capacity ahead of income growth.
- The inherent volatility of legacy income, which represented approximately 34% of total income in 2025/26 and includes significant amounts recognised in the accounts but not yet received in cash.
- The need to ensure financial resilience in the context of uncertain income streams and external economic conditions.

During the year, and as part of the wider review of the charity's financial structure, the Trustees obtained the agreement of the Charity Commission under section 282 of the Charities Act 2011 to release the permanent endowment restriction on the Orchid Ball Endowment Fund. The fund has therefore been reclassified as a restricted fund, allowing both income and capital to be applied in furtherance of the charity's objectives, particularly to support activities in Scotland. This change enables the charity to make more effective use of the fund to deliver greater impact for beneficiaries, while continuing to respect the original charitable intent.

At 31 March 2026, total unrestricted funds were £9.3m, of which:

£4.9m is designated or represented by fixed assets and therefore not available for general use, including:

- Strategic Investment Fund (£2.8m) – established to support the early years of the charity's 10-year strategy and to fund planned deficits as activity scales ahead of income growth.

- Strategic Research commitments (£1.8m) – designated to support multi-year research grants.
- Data, IT investment and fixed assets (£0.3m)

Free reserves of approximately £4.5m, representing the portion of unrestricted funds available to support the ongoing operations of the charity.

The Trustees consider that this level of free reserves is consistent with the reserves policy and provides an appropriate balance between financial resilience and the planned use of funds to deliver the charity's strategy.

The Trustees recognise that the financial model underpinning the strategy involves the planned use of reserves over the medium term to invest in growth, with a return to a break-even position expected in the early 2030s. This approach is supported by regular financial monitoring and six-monthly reforecasting, enabling the charity to respond flexibly to changes in income or expenditure.

Having reviewed the financial position, associated risks and future plans, the Trustees are satisfied that the charity holds adequate reserves and continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Investment policy

The overall investment objectives are to generate sufficient income and capital growth to enable the charity to fulfil its purposes consistently year by year, while maintaining and—where possible—enhancing the real value of the invested funds over time. Both capital and income may be used at any time to support the charity's work.

The charity's investment expectations are aligned with the investment mandate and the objectives of the underlying Rathbones-managed funds:

- Long-term invested portfolio (main fund)

The portfolio is expected to achieve a long-term return of CPI + 4% per annum (after fees), measured over rolling 10-year periods, in line with the investment objective of the Rathbones Charity Growth & Income Fund.

- Short-term, low-risk portfolio

The short-term liquidity-focused portfolio is expected to achieve a return broadly in line with the ICE BofA 1–5 Year Sterling Non-Gilt Index, reflecting its cautious risk profile and fixed income dominated mandate.

These return expectations are reviewed regularly and are understood to be long-term targets rather than guarantees.

The objectives are to be achieved by investing prudently in a diversified range of asset classes including fixed interest securities, equities, and authorised collective investment schemes such as Unit Trusts and OEICs. Investments are selected from recognised investment exchanges or authorised markets appropriate to the charity's risk profile. The portfolio is managed with a balanced risk approach, seeking moderate growth while maintaining appropriate liquidity and limiting excessive volatility.

The charity permits its investment managers to use derivatives and structured products where these are employed solely for efficient portfolio management, including:

- Reducing volatility
- Managing currency or market risk
- Improving liquidity
- Enhancing operational efficiency of the fund

The Rathbones Charity Funds may use derivatives for Efficient Portfolio Management and hedging purposes and not for speculative investment unless unitholders are first given 60 days' notice. (Note: Accordingly, the previous blanket prohibition on derivatives, futures, options, contracts for differences, commodities, and structured products is removed). The charity does not directly engage in speculative derivative transactions.

Ethical restrictions

In accordance with the charity's mandate, no direct investment is permitted in any company deriving 20% or more of its revenue from tobacco. Indirect exposure through pooled funds may occur where fund-wide screens differ and will be monitored.

Governance and Oversight

The portfolio is managed by Rathbones' Charity Multi Asset Team. The Finance Committee:

- Reviews performance quarterly
- Reviews investment manager performance annually
- Monitors alignment with the charity's strategic objectives and risk appetite

This policy is reviewed and updated annually or more frequently as required.

Remuneration policy

Salaries for the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are set by the Board's Appointments and Remuneration Committee. In doing so, the Committee carefully considers the overall performance of the charity, external market benchmarks, and the long-term needs and sustainability of the organisation.

We are committed to paying our staff fairly. All roles are paid at or above the London Living Wage, reflecting our values as an employer and our commitment to supporting the people who deliver our work.

We aim to attract and recruit talented and diverse individuals. Vacancies are advertised on our website and external platforms, with applications welcomed from both internal and external candidates. Where appropriate, roles may be advertised internally first to provide development opportunities for existing staff. Recruitment agencies are used selectively when roles are particularly specialist or difficult to fill.

No member of the SLT receives a car allowance or vehicle from the charity. All staff and Trustees are expected to travel using standard fares when undertaking charity business. Trustees receive no remuneration or additional benefits for their role, and details of any expenses reimbursed are provided in Note 18.

During 2025/26, we undertook a comprehensive benchmarking review of all staff salaries to ensure they remain competitive and fair. The recommendations from this review were implemented in June 2026. This work supports our ambition to attract and retain the talent we need to deliver our strategy and grow our impact over the coming years.

Risk management

The Trustees continue to support formal risk management procedures to assess business risks and implement strategies to mitigate them. Risks are identified and classified based on their potential impact and likelihood, with enhanced scoring methodologies introduced during the year to ensure a more consistent and forward-looking assessment of risk across the organisation.

During 2025/26, the charity undertook a comprehensive review of its risk framework to align with the new organisational strategy launched in October 2025. This included refining risk categories, updating scoring criteria, and strengthening the link between strategic objectives and risk management. This work ensures that risks are not only well controlled but also actively inform decision-making as the charity pursues its long-term ambitions.

The charity operates a comprehensive risk management strategy underpinned by a detailed risk register, which is regularly reviewed and updated. The risk register is reviewed monthly by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), quarterly by the Finance Committee and the Board, and undergoes an extensive review each March as part of the budget approval process. Risks are assessed against the charity's strategic objectives, with existing controls evaluated and action plans developed to minimise or manage exposure.

The following risks have been identified as the most significant to the charity's financial and operational sustainability in 2025/26:

a. Maintaining and growing income: Delivering the new strategy requires sustained and increased income. The charity continues to closely monitor its voluntary income streams through robust forecasting, diversified fundraising activity, and regular performance reviews. This risk is central to our long-term ambition to grow income and expand impact.

b. Maintaining sufficient unrestricted reserves: Adequate reserves are essential to manage uncertainty, respond to emerging opportunities, and invest in strategic growth. The revised reserves policy, updated in October 2025, continues to support this by aligning reserve levels with the scale of the organisation's ambitions.

c. Investment market volatility: Fluctuations in financial markets may affect the value of the charity's investment portfolio. This risk is mitigated through a long-term investment strategy, professional advice, and maintaining sufficient liquidity. Investments remain a significant component of the charity's financial strength.

d. Data protection and cybersecurity: With increasing reliance on digital systems and external threats, maintaining strong data protection and cybersecurity controls remains a priority. The charity continues to invest in secure systems, staff training, and external expertise, supported by regular oversight from the Finance Committee.

e. Effective communication and engagement: Delivering impact depends on maintaining trust and engagement with the community. The charity continues to invest in accessible, accurate, and relevant communications, supported by ongoing review of content, digital platforms, and health information.

f. Staff recruitment, retention and organisational capacity: Delivering the new strategy requires the right skills and capacity across the organisation. The charity continues to focus on attracting and retaining talent through fair pay, flexible working, and a strong commitment to wellbeing, diversity, and inclusion.

The Trustees regularly review the charity's risk management framework to ensure it remains proportionate, dynamic, and aligned with the organisation's strategy. The enhancements made during the year provide greater assurance that risks are well understood and actively managed as the charity works towards its long-term ambition to grow income and increase the support it provides to the community.

Grant-making policies

The charity awards grants in furtherance of its charitable objectives, primarily to support medical research and to provide direct assistance to individuals.

Research grants are awarded through formal grant programmes designed to attract high-quality applications. All applications are subject to a rigorous external expert review process and are assessed by the Medical Research Committee, supported by members of the Lay Research Panel. Recommendations are then made to the Board of Trustees, which retains overall responsibility for the approval of all new grant awards, with exception of Improving Quality of Life research programme grants delegated to the Executive team.

Once approved, research grants are subject to ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure that funds are used in accordance with agreed objectives and that progress is made against expected outcomes.

Welfare grants for equipment are administered through the charity's subsidiary, the Joseph Patrick Trust (JPT). Applications are considered by the JPT Grants Panel against established eligibility criteria and approved in accordance with delegated authority.

In line with the charity's strategic development, a comprehensive review of the welfare grants programme is underway to ensure that it remains effective, equitable and responsive to the evolving needs of the community. Any grants that are not claimed within the agreed period, or are not claimed in full, are reviewed and the unclaimed funds are returned to charitable funds. These returned amounts are reflected in the grants cancellation line within Note 5.

Reference and administrative details

Muscular Dystrophy UK (the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) is a company limited by guarantee (company registration number 705357) and a registered charity in England and Wales (registration number 205395) and in Scotland (registration number SC039445).

The group includes a wholly owned trading subsidiary, Muscular Dystrophy Group (Trading) Limited (company registration number 893086), and an unincorporated charitable subsidiary, the Joseph Patrick Trust (charity registration number 294475).

The registered office of the charitable company is 32 Ufford Street, London SE1 8QD.

The principal bankers of the charity are HSBC, 28 Borough High Street, London SE1 1YB, and the Royal Bank of Scotland, 40 Islington Road, London N1 8XJ. The charity's investment managers are Rathbones, 30 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7QN.

The auditors of the charitable company are Moore Kingston Smith LLP, 9 Appold Street, London EC2A 2AP.

Details of the President, Patrons, Honorary Life Presidents, Vice Presidents, Trustees, Committees, Senior Leadership Team and advisers are provided on pages 42 to 44.

GOVERNANCE, STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Muscular Dystrophy UK (the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) is a charitable company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 2 September 1961, as amended on 12 October 2019 to reflect current governance arrangements and charity law best practice. The charitable company is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales and with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Membership is open to individuals aged 18 or over who support the objectives of the charity, excluding current employees.

The charity also has a wholly owned trading subsidiary, Muscular Dystrophy Group (Trading) Limited, and an unincorporated charitable subsidiary, the Joseph Patrick Trust.

Appointment of Trustees

The Trustees, who are also directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law, are responsible for the overall governance, strategic direction and stewardship of the charity. The number, appointment, retirement and responsibilities of Trustees are governed by the Articles of Association.

The Board seeks to maintain an appropriate balance of skills, experience, diversity, independence and lived experience relevant to the charity's work. During 2025/26, the Board undertook a Trustee skills audit to support succession planning, identify future recruitment priorities and ensure that the Board continues to possess the capabilities required to oversee delivery of the charity's new ten-year strategy.

Trustees are recruited through a formal process led by the Appointments and Remuneration Committee and approved by the Board. Under the charity's Articles of Association, members are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and may nominate candidates for election as Trustees. Where valid member nominations are received, a ballot is held.

At the October 2025 AGM, Brigid Sutcliffe completed her first term of office and was re-elected for a second term. Joe Gordon completed his second term and, following recommendation from the Board, was re-elected for a third term to provide continuity and retain valuable skills and experience within the Board.

During the year, Martin Cardoe stepped down on completion of his second term of office, Charles Scott retired on completion of his third term, and Ian Gordon stepped down after serving an extended term. The Board would like to record its sincere thanks to all three Trustees for their commitment and contribution to the charity during their years of service.

Jennifer Howells was co-opted to the Board in September 2025 and was nominated by the Trustees for election to a first term at the 2025 AGM. During the year, the Board also made a number of co-option appointments to strengthen its collective skills and support succession planning. The co-opted new Trustees will stand for election by the membership at the 2026 AGM. Professor Michael Hanna was co-opted for a further term as Chair of the Board, subject to endorsement by members at the 2026 AGM.

Trustee induction and training

All new Trustees participate in a structured induction programme designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the charity, its governance arrangements and their legal responsibilities as charity trustees and company directors. This includes meetings with members of the Senior Leadership Team, briefings on strategy, finance, risk management and safeguarding, and access to key governance documents, policies and operational plans.

Trustees are supported through ongoing development and training throughout their term of office. During the year, Trustees received governance and strategic briefings and completed mandatory training in areas including safeguarding and data protection. Trustees are also encouraged to participate in external learning and development opportunities relevant to their role.

The Board held its annual strategic Away Day during the

year, providing an opportunity to review progress against strategic objectives, consider future priorities and strengthen Board effectiveness.

Organisation structure

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for governance, strategy, performance, risk management and financial stewardship. During 2025/26, the Board met formally four times and also held an annual strategic Away Day.

The Board and Executives are supported by several committees with delegated authority, where appropriate, and defined terms of reference.

These include:

- Finance Committee
- Appointments and Remuneration Committee
- Medical Research Committee
- Advisory Committee for Policy and Practice

These committees support the Board and Executives by providing detailed scrutiny, assurance and oversight across key areas of the charity's activities and report regularly to the Board or Executives on matters within their remit.

The Chief Executive is appointed by the Trustees and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the charity and implementation of the strategy and operational plans approved by the Board. The Senior Leadership Team supports the Chief Executive in delivering the charity's objectives and managing operational performance.

Members

The charitable company has a membership body comprising individuals who support the charity's objectives, including people living with muscle wasting conditions, family members, clinicians, researchers, volunteers and supporters. Members play an important role in the governance of the charity through their rights under company law and the Articles of Association, including the election of Trustees at the Annual General Meeting.

Volunteers

The charity could not achieve its objectives without the dedication, expertise and commitment of its volunteers. Volunteers contribute across many aspects of the organisation, including peer support, fundraising, governance, campaigning, research involvement, events and community engagement.

Their lived experience, insight and generosity help extend the charity's reach, strengthen support to people living with muscle wasting conditions and their families, and enhance the effectiveness of the charity's work. The Trustees are grateful for the invaluable contribution made by all volunteers throughout the year.

Charity Governance Code

The Trustees have due regard to the Charity Governance Code as a framework for maintaining high standards of governance and organisational effectiveness. During the year, the Board started to review its governance arrangements against the updated Charity Governance Code, considering Board composition, committee effectiveness, decision-making processes, culture, diversity and succession planning.

This review was completed in June 2026 and confirmed that the charity continues to demonstrate strong governance practice while identifying opportunities for further development. Actions arising from the review have been incorporated into the Board's ongoing governance improvement programme, including work relating to Board skills, succession planning and trustee development.

During the year, the Board continued to strengthen its oversight of organisational performance, risk management, financial sustainability and delivery of the charity's new ten-year strategy.

Related parties

The consolidated financial statements include the results of the Joseph Patrick Trust (JPT), an unincorporated charity of which Muscular Dystrophy UK is the sole corporate Trustee, and Muscular Dystrophy Group (Trading) Limited, the charity's wholly owned trading subsidiary, in accordance with the requirements of the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The Joseph Patrick Trust provides welfare grants to individuals and families living with muscle wasting conditions across the UK, helping people to access equipment and support that improves independence and quality of life.

The charity also works closely with a range of partner organisations in furtherance of its charitable objectives, including research institutions, healthcare organisations, patient groups and other charities supporting people living with rare and neuromuscular conditions.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees, who are also directors of the charitable company, are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and the group and the profit or loss of the group for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and group, enabling them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Provision of information to auditors

So far as each of the directors is aware at the time the report is approved, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware; and the directors have taken all steps they ought to have to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information. This report, incorporating the Strategic Report, is approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:



Professor Michael Hanna
Chair, 16 October 2026

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2026 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account), the Group and Parent Charitable Company Balance Sheets, the Statement of Group Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charitable company's affairs as of 31 March 2026 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended.
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained in the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report (which includes the strategic report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- trustees' annual report (which includes the strategic report) has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report (which includes the strategic report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 or the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report to you in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group and parent charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or parent charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended), regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Charity SORP, and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 44(1) (c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and trustees those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report addressed to them and for no other purpose.To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company's members as a body, and the charity's trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Moore Kingston Smith LLP

Andrew Stickland
Senior Statutory Auditor

for and on behalf of
Moore Kingston Smith LLP,
Statutory Auditor

9 Appold Street,
London EC2A 2AP

Moore Kingston Smith LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Date: October 2026

Together we can make a difference.

Photographer: Martin Shields

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