



# New Beginnings *Annual Report* 2024



# Welcome to our 2024 Annual Report



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**As the CEO of New Beginnings, I am pleased to welcome you to our Annual Report for the Sept 2023-Sept 2024 period. We have had yet another impactful year this year with the families we work with in the child protection system. We have completed two cohorts (Cohort 11 and 12), and in September we started Cohort 13 as well as our new Reunification Programme.**

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We received 59 referrals for Cohort 11; 67 referrals for Cohort 12 and 78 referrals for Cohort 13. These figures demonstrate that the demand for our service continues to rise. And furthermore, the number of parents which complete the programme has also increased. The outcomes from each cohort will be discussed in more detail later in the report.

While it is still too early to discuss the impact from Cohort 13, which began in early September, we can tell that you we have recruited 33

parents: 7 men and 26 women. The women have been split into three groups which all run on a Tuesday and the men are in one group which runs on a Friday morning.

We have also received additional funding from Stockport Family to pilot a Reunification Programme for the period of a year. This area of work will focus on working intensively with parents whose children are currently in the care of Stockport Local Authority. We have 7 families on this programme.

The reason why we have been able to work with more parents is because, thanks to increased funding from Stockport and continuation funding from the National Lottery we have been able to recruit more team members. Two new social work secondees have joined us from Stockport: Danni Thomas and Eleanor King. We have also recruited 3 part time post programme support workers: Hayley Gaskell, Sarah Smith and Cheri Wilson. And in November, Torah Dee will join us as our Fundraiser Manager.

For the first time, since we began in 2018, we have our own home. Thanks to additional funding from Stockport Local Authority and ongoing funding from the National Lottery, we have been able to acquire new premises which are in Central Stockport. And furthermore, we have been able to renovate and decorate the new centre thanks to funding from the Centre for Social Justice.

This time last year we were unsure of what the future would hold for our charity. We knew we needed to reach a better position of financial security if we were to survive the economic crisis our country was facing at that time- and in fact, is still facing. We have witnessed the closure of many charities in the space of a year, and it is with great sadness that we have had to say 'goodbye' to those we have had the pleasure of collaborating with in the past.

We have been fortunate to have survived the storm because of the continued support and investment coming from Stockport Local Authority and the National Lottery. We have also been fortunate in receiving additional donations and grant funding from the Centre for Social Justice, Phoenix International, Forever Manchester, Skylight and the Awards for All Community Grant. I would like to thank all these organisations for their support and investment- we would be in an entirely different place to the one we are now if it were not for you.

Over the coming months, we will be looking to extend our reach in Greater Manchester so that we can start working with a new local authority and their families. We are fortunate to have been awarded funding from Purposeful Ventures who are going to support us to do so. We are, therefore, looking to establish new connections with neighbouring local authorities that

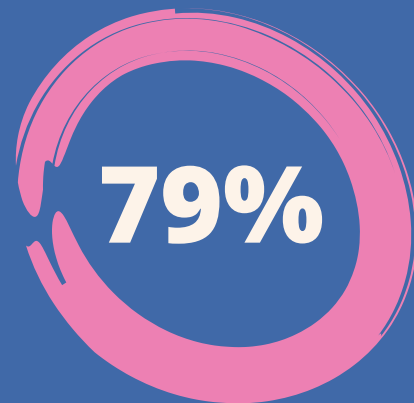
are ready to work with us, which share the same vision as we do: keeping children safe from harm and empowering parents to be the difference to their family.

Before concluding the foreword, I'd like to acknowledge and appreciate the people who help us carry out the work that we do with families. There would simply be no new Beginnings if it were not for the (com)passion and commitment from our core team, our peer mentors, our parents, our students, our sessional workers, our trustees, and the social workers, social care professionals and Senior Leadership Team at Stockport Local Authority. I extend my thanks to you all for helping the parents and children we work with become a family again.

**Dr Jadwiga Leigh**  
CEO and Founder of New Beginnings Foundation CIO

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of children were stepped down from child protection

194 new referrals in total for cohorts 11,12 & 13

54 Families supported post programme

# Our Impact in Numbers...



of children had no social care intervention

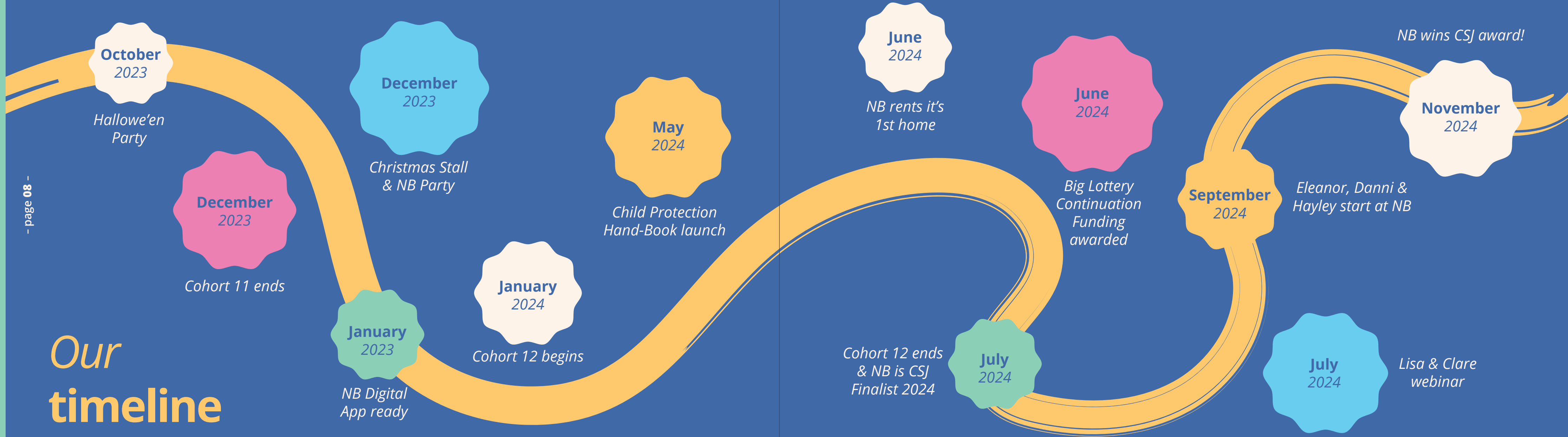
We have carried out 42 QbChecks

87 new families were welcomed to our service



We have worked with 16 fathers since 2018

# Our timeline





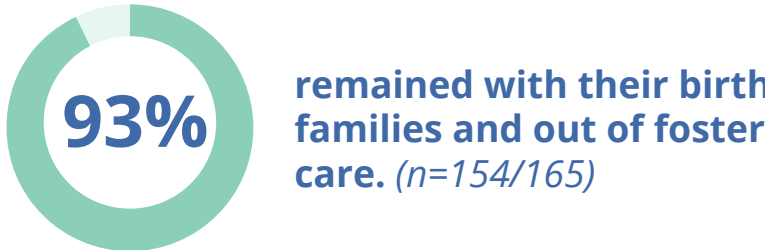
# Cohort News

This year we have completed two Cohorts: 11 and 12. And in September, we began working with Cohort 13 as well as families who form part of the Reunification Unit. The diagram below shows the impact we have had on all the families we have worked with to date since we began work in 2018. The data refers to families who have completed the programme.

All parents who completed the NB programme said their mental health has improved significantly



To date, 96 parents have completed the NB Core Programme. Collectively they have had 165 children.



## Cohort 11

In December 23, Cohort 11 concluded. We received in total 54 referrals. 22 parents joined the programme, and 16 completed. The 16 parents had collectively 29 children between them.



88% of families were stepped down

83% of children were no longer subjected to child protection plans

30% of families had no social work involvement

## Cohort 12

In January 24, we began Cohort 12. We received 62 referrals. We had 31 parents join us. 16 parents completed and collectively they had 23 children between them.



88% of families were stepped down

74% of children were no longer subjected to child protection plans

75% of families had no social work involvement



## Cohort 13

In September 24, we began Cohort 13. We received 78 referrals and have had 34 parents join us who have collectively 83 children between them. We are on week 10, and surprisingly 33 parents are still engaged with the programme.

Normally by this week we tend to see some people disengage. Whilst it is still too early to report on whether this is an anomaly or what the outcomes for these families will be, we do wonder whether they higher rate of retention relates to us having our own base in the centre of Stockport for the first time and/ or moving groups back from to being online to face to face.



our mum and baby group is open to all NB parents

# Reunification *Unit*

Earlier this year, Stockport made further investment in New Beginnings; one which would lead to us trialling for the period of one year, a pilot reunification programme. This kind of work is not unusual for us to engage in. We have in the past worked to reunify children that were in foster care back to their birth families.

We have looked through the data to see if there are notes which suggest the following:

- 1 Parents have addressed the some of the previous issues that led to their children being removed from their care
- 2 Parents want their children to be returned to their care
- 3 Children want to move home

However, what is different about this project is that with the senior leadership team in Stockport we have identified the families that might be ready to live with one another again. In the past, we have received referrals from social workers who have felt there may be potential for success.

Nationally, the rising number of children entering care, and staying in care, has risen exponentially. Local authorities are trying to grapple with the reasons why there has been a significant shift and why the numbers continue to rise. The cost of children living in external placements can range from £ 4,500 to £13,500 per week. This cost would be financially viable if children were thriving in care, however, research shows that outcomes for children are not always better.

In order to support reunification, we have identified 4 families on Cohort 13 who currently have children in foster care. They have collectively 6 children between them. We have identified a further 3 families who are ready to work towards having their children returned to their care. They have 4 children between them.

We anticipate that more families will be referred to us in the near future and we have therefore kept the referral window open for this programme and will work with families as and when we need to do so.





## NB Digital App

Thanks to funding from the Winston Churchill Activate Fund, we were able to create a digital app that could accompany the NB workbook. All parents who join the programme, are encouraged to attend weekly groups, do 1:1 key work sessions and complete the workbook.

We learned from feedback we received from parents that many were unable to engage with the workbook meaningfully. This was either because some parents struggled with literacy, were reminded of being at school or simply because they wanted a tool that was interesting. The digital app was created to meet these needs and has now been completed. It is full of videos, films and short interviews with parents who have travelled before them. It was ready for parents to use from January and the feedback is that is a much better resource.

What could we have  
done differently?

What did you enjoy?

I really enjoyed my time on New Beginnings. And still do. Very supportive. Feels like a little family. You guys were amazing.

JB, mum of 3, Cohort 12

My mental health has improved by Lisa's incredible support and her willingness to help at any time was a great relief to me. I felt strong in her care. I recovered from my trauma and felt empowered.

YPR, mum of 1, Cohort 12

It would have been good if you had a 1 to 1 drug and alcohol worker.

JB, mum of 3, Cohort 12

More insight into parental alienation and more strategic insight to tackle this issue.

YPR, mum of 1, Cohort 12

## Funding News

This time last year we were unsure of what the future would hold for our charity. We knew we needed to reach a better position of financial security if we were to survive the economic crisis our country was facing at that time- and in fact, is still facing. We have witnessed the closure of many charities in the space of a year, and it is with great sadness that we have had to say 'goodbye' to those we have had the pleasure of collaborating with in the past.

We have been fortunate to have survived the storm because of the continued support and investment coming from Stockport Local Authority and the National Lottery. We have also been fortunate in receiving additional donations and grant funding from the Centre for Social Justice, Phoenix International, Forever Manchester, Skylight and the Awards for All Community Grant.



In January 2024, Stockport agreed to pay New Beginnings a service delivery fee for each secondee that we have working for us. This boost to our income has provided us with a sustainable revenue. It means that could acquire our own building, and we can afford to train our team so that they all become accredited in Video Interaction Guidance and Dynamic Maturational Model of Attachment. It also means we can employ more post programme support staff so that our families can continue to receive ongoing support when they finish the core programme. We have also been able to employ a Fundraising Manager whose role will be to apply for funding and tenders that will help us continue to grow and do good work around Greater Manchester.

In July 2024, we learned that we had been successful in securing continuation funding from Reaching Communities, funding from the National Lottery. This funding covers the salaries of our CEO and Senior Post Programme Support Worker, as well as the overall running costs of the project. This additional funding means that not only have we been able to rent a building of our own for the first time, but we will also be able to focus on growing and scaling our service around Greater Manchester. digital app was created to meet these needs

and has now been completed. It is full of videos, films and short interviews with parents who have travelled before them. It was ready for parents to use from January and the feedback is that is a much better resource.

Thank you to  
Dunelm, Alex Dodd  
and Debi Warner for  
making Christmas  
special for our  
families.



We have also received smaller grants from:

**The National Lottery, Awards for All**  
grant which will be used to pay for sessional workers to run workshops for our families.

**Skylight Community Fund**  
to cover food and refreshments for the running of the centre.

**Forever Manchester**  
to pay for the running of My Home Group, for parents who struggle to maintain home conditions.

We have also received philanthropic donations from:

**Wings, Phoenix Towers International**  
which we used to run workshops for the Christmas Fair as well as host family fun days such as our Hallowe'en and Christmas parties.

**Centre for Social Justice**  
which we used to renovate and decorate our new home.

# What's New?

## New Staff

The reason why we have been able to work with more parents is because, thanks to increased funding from Stockport and continuation funding from the National Lottery we have been able to recruit more team members.

Two new social work secondees have joined us from Stockport: Danni Thomas and Eleanor King. We have also recruited 3 part time post programme support workers: Hayley Gaskell, Sarah Smith and Cheri Wilson. And in November, Torah Dee will join us as our Fundraiser Manager.

Clare Western has also been promoted to be our Senior Post Programme Support Worker and Lisa is currently acting as our Interim Project Lead. The Project Lead post will be advertised in January.



## New Building

For the first time, since we began in 2018, we have our own home. Thanks to additional funding from Stockport Local Authority and ongoing funding from the National Lottery, we have been able to acquire new premises which are in Central Stockport. And furthermore, we have been able to renovate and decorate the new centre thanks to funding from the Centre for Social Justice.



In 2024, NB planted its roots in the centre of Stockport.

## Internal Review

Following a safeguarding incident that occurred in July, we have carried out an internal review of our post programme support offer and our peer mentoring training programme. This has led to us making the below changes to our practices. We look forward to feeding back on how these actions have changed the way we work, and support our peer mentors moving forwards.

1.

Revise and refresh and our peer mentoring training programme. This will be run in January and all old peer mentors, and potential new peer mentors have been asked to apply to go onto the course. In the past, anyone who took the course would pass. However, this will not be the case this time. Anyone who needs time to develop their peer mentoring skills will be provided with a plan that identifies their strengths and areas to improve on. They will be provided with a training plan that will help them work on the areas that require improvement.

2.

All peer mentors will be provided with individual support plans that will be reviewed annually. The support plans will be tailored to support the peer mentor with any known needs and these may also include home visits.

3.

We will hold bi-annual training courses for peer mentors so that they can top up their skills and/ or work to improve on skills that they are struggling to put into practice.

4.

We used to provide peer mentors with vouchers for any store of their choice. This has now been changed to: only food stores or clothing stores.



# Family Events

## Hallowe'en Party 2023

It has now become a tradition for us to have a Hallowe'en Party at New Beginnings. The children love to dress up, the parents love to get creative, and the team love to see their families getting together and having fun. And as the photos demonstrate, this Hallowe'en Party was another hit with both parents and their children!



## Christmas Stall

**We have many creative parents and children on New Beginnings who all love to take part in the art and craft workshops that we run at New Beginnings. We therefore decided that this year we would put their talent to good use and make products that we could sell at Stockport Christmas Fayre. The location was Stockport Town Hall, which is ideally suited for us because it is right next to Stopford House where many of the social workers who refer families into us work from.**

During the month of November, we ran a different workshop each week. The first was our candle making workshop; then macrame which led to us making plant holders; the third we made Christmas wreaths and in the final week we made bath salts.

The Christmas Stall was run by our parents and peer mentors. It was amazing watching some of our normally shy parents come alive as they took pride in telling customers what they had made and how important New Beginnings was to them. It was also powerful and emotional to see social workers come down to visit parents they were working with, or had worked with in the past, to see how well they were doing now and to remind them how proud they were of them.

Although the run up to the event involved a lot of hard work and organisation, it was definitely

worth the effort. We managed to sell everything, apart from the bath salts, and came away with a profit of £400. In addition, we were proud to have been able to establish a presence within the Stockport community.



Thanks to a great effort we came away with £400 profit.



## Christmas *Party*

To finish off the year we held our annual Christmas Party at Crescent Road. Although the kitchen is small at this location, we still managed to make it special with a hot and cold buffet, games for the children and of course, karaoke for the parents.

Christmas is always seen as being a special time of year for families, but we are mindful that many of the families we work with on New Beginnings find this particular time of year painful due to either having children in care or having had previous children removed from their care. Whilst we try to enjoy the moments we have together, we also make sure that we remember those who cannot be there to celebrate with us for whatever reason that may be.

Thanks to Abbie  
for teaching us  
how to make  
Xmas Wreaths.



## Other *News*

### Child Protection *Handbook*

In May, Clare and Jadwiga travelled to Nottingham University to help launch the Child Protection Handbook. In the book, Clare and Jadwiga have written a chapter on Humane Practice which documents how we try to work with families on New Beginnings and how that impacts on parents, and their children.



### Relational Activism *webinar*

In July, Clare and Lisa were invited to speak about their experiences of working with New Beginnings as part of the Relational Activism Webinar series. The webinar is now on YouTube and is called: Innovations in Helping Parents in Child Protection.

Scan  
here!





## Labour Conference

In September, Jadwiga was invited to the Centre for Social Justice panel at the Labour Conference where Josh MacAllister was speaking about what changes need to occur to the social care system



## Centre for Social Justice Charity of the Year Competition

In June, we learned that we had been shortlisted to one of 12 charities who had been selected as charity of the year. The judges came to visit our team and families in July, and we were due to find out if we have been successful at the awards ceremony which was held on Tuesday 19th of November. We were fortunate to be one of four winners of the CSJ award!! This award has been transformational for us as an organisation in terms of the recognition it has provided us with and the people it has introduced us to. We are incredibly grateful to the CSJ and the support they have, and continue to, offer us.



This year we were able to welcome new visitors to our NB centre.





# 2024 Reflections

**I began this year's annual report stating that this time last year we were unsure of what the future would hold for our charity. I did not expect then that I would be sat here writing this report now from an entirely different place. We have grown within the space of a year in Stockport and we are on the cusp of further growth as we look to extend our reach to other areas of Greater Manchester.**

However, I am aware that things can change quickly. The investment we have received has secured our position in Stockport for a further three years. In the meantime, we have a lot of work to do if we are to survive in the long term. Our vision is to scale our service so that we can reach more families who need our support.

We know that we do good work and that the relationship we have developed with Stockport has provided us with a good foundation from which we can branch out. The challenge we now have is identifying a new local authority that we can partner with.

There are currently **400,000** children in England in the social care system and 84,000 of these

children are actually in care. These figures are the highest that have ever been recorded and sadly, the numbers continue to rise.

All local authorities in the Greater Manchester area are struggling financially. They also have higher numbers of children in care than ever before. There is most certainly a need for our service. We need to be able to use this year to connect to different local authorities across our region to see which organisation has the same value base as we do; which wants to work 'with' families to achieve the best outcomes for their children.

I hope that this time next year, I will be talking to you about a new partnership we have established with one of the GMCA local authorities.



**Dr Jadwiga Leigh**  
*CEO and Founder of New Beginnings Foundation CIO*

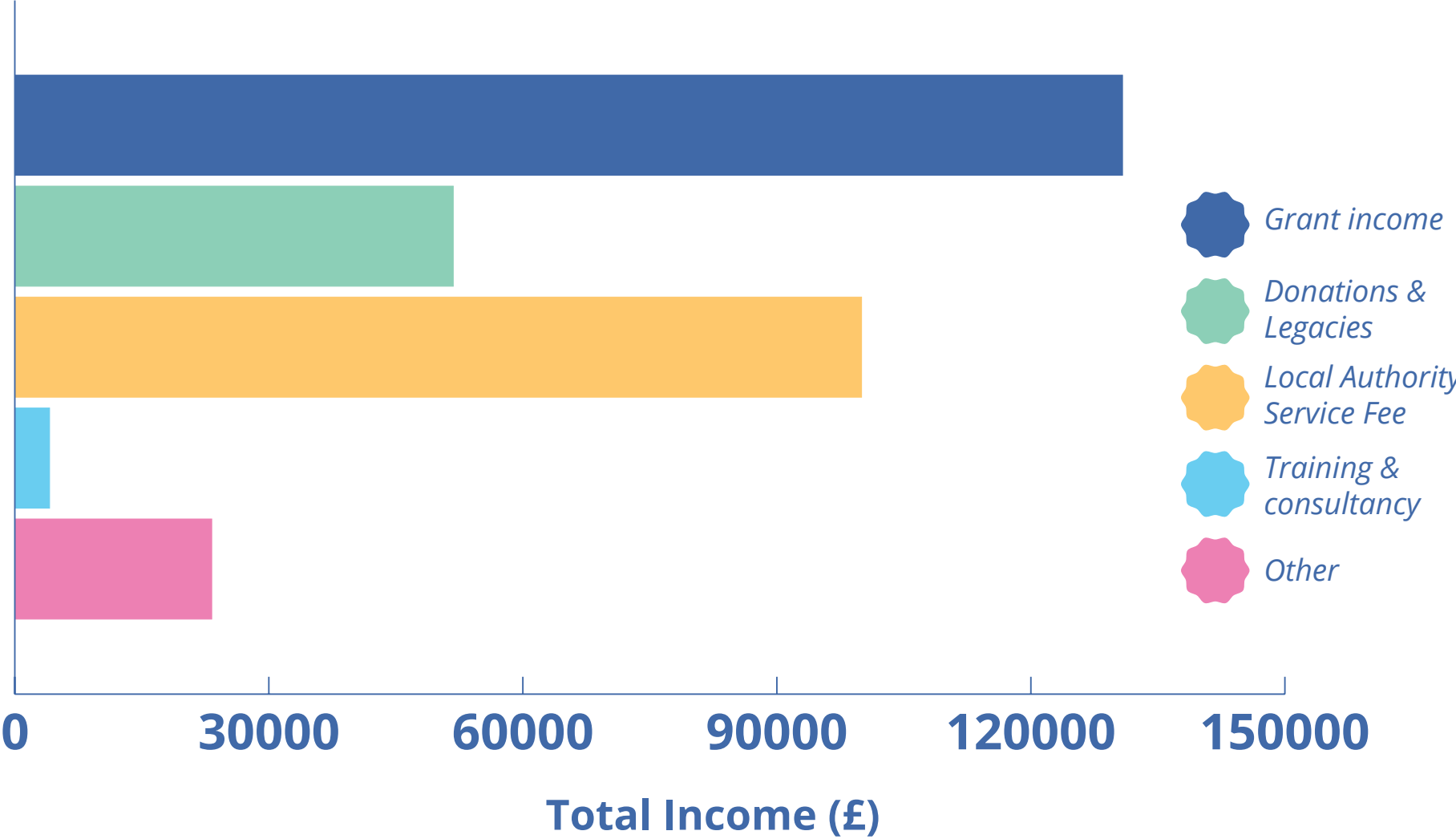


*Making bath salts for our Christmas Stall.*

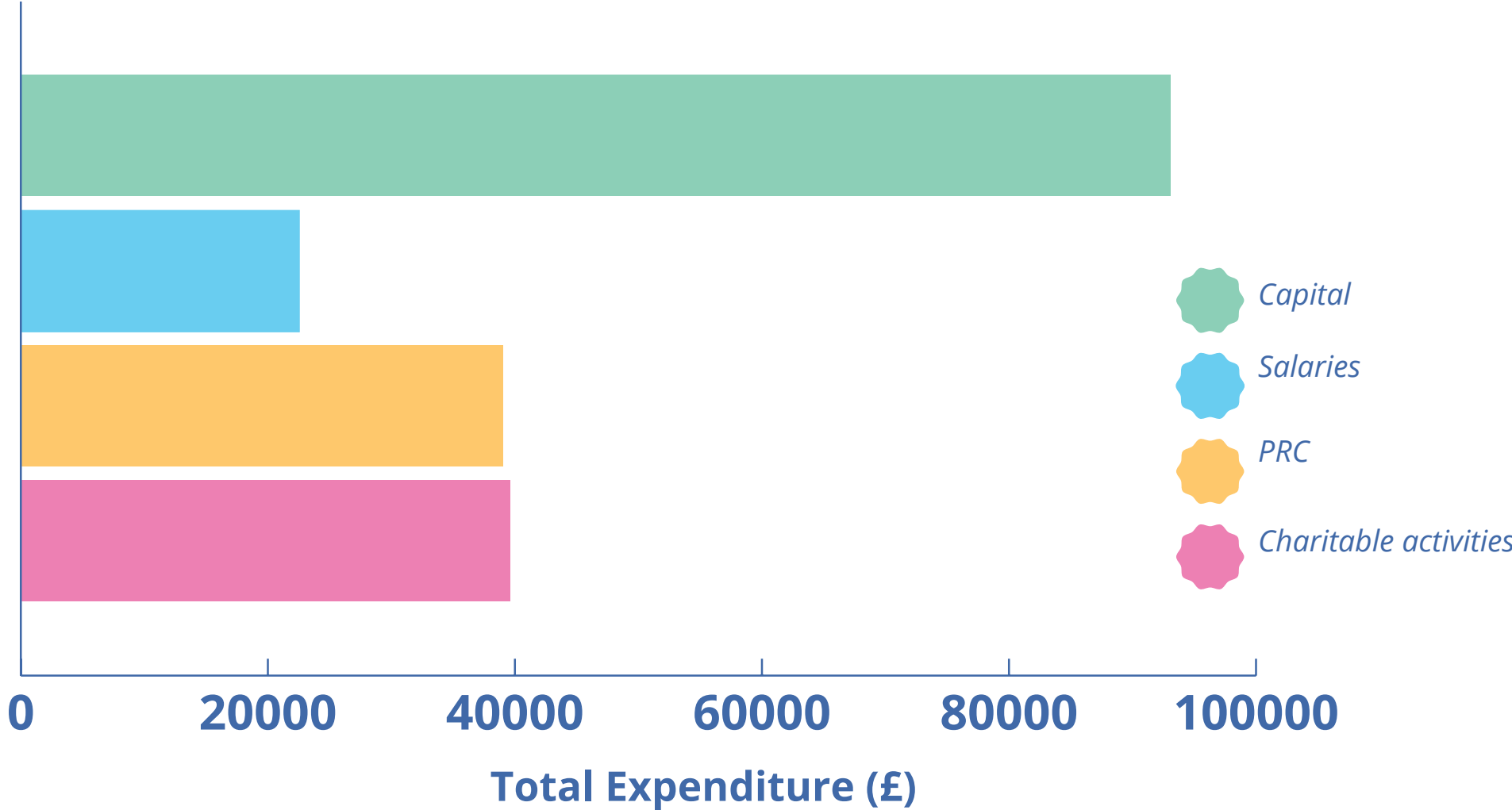


# Financial *Support*

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During the financial period of 1st of Jan 24 until 31st of Dec 24, it is reported that the total income was £309,866 and the total expenditure was £159,890. An illustrated breakdown of income and expenditure is shown below:



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**A huge thanks to all the trusts, companies and individuals who supported us in 2024:**

- *Stockport Local Authority*
- *The National Lottery*
- *Awards for All*
- *Forever Manchester*
- *SkyLight Community Fund*
- *Centre for Social Justice*
- *Richard McKay*
- *Jeff Shears*
- *Phoenix International: Wings Foundation*
- *Easy Fundraising*
- *Lancaster University*
- *Manchester University*
- *Wrexham Local Authority*
- *Bath and North East Somerset Local Authority*
- *Nottingham University*
- *Lord Rahul Moodgal*
- *Damian Mitchelmore*