

Charity registration number: 102447

**LITTLE HEROES
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Little Heroes
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**Little Heroes
Reference and Administrative Details
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024**

Trustees

Mr. Ivan Martin
Dr. Mark Reid
Mrs. Jennifer McKinstry
Mrs. Barbara Reid
Mrs. Susan Baker
Dr. Sharon Christie
Dr. Paul Jackson
Professor Michael Shields
Mrs. Barbara Moneypenny
Mrs. Hester Jackson
Dr. Alastair Reid
Mr. Claran Bradley

Charity Number

102447

Principal Address

Royal Belfast Hospital For Sick Children
180 Falls Road
Belfast
Antrim
BT12 6BE

Independent Examiner

Tony Clake
Clarke&Co. Accountant's
53 Andersonstown Road
Belfast
Antrim
BT11 9AG

Solicitors

Elliott Duffy Garrett
Royston House
34 Upper Queens Street
Belfast
BT1 6FD

Little Heroes
Trustees' Report For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Objectives and Activities

Aims and Objectives

The stated aims and objectives of the charity are –

- o Provision of equipment and the maintenance of the estate at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children
- o Furthering Education & Research into the diagnosis and treatment of childhood illness
- o Provision of associated health services not available on the NHS (as directed by clinicians)
- o Championing wellbeing initiatives for the Paediatric team at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children
- o Supporting sick children as well as their parents, siblings, and those who love and care for them

Little Heroes has assisted in the continued provision of new medical equipment and provision of items to enhance and improve the patient and parental experience. The charity is also committed to continuing to assist in the provision of much needed equipment in various departments.

The charity will continue to support or fund staff to attend courses to enhance their ability to improve the care of patients and their families.

Public Benefit

Little Heroes is an independent Charity which operates through a board of trustees and fundraises exclusively for "The Children's Hospital.

Increasing pressures on the National Health Service make it essential to find additional sources of revenue to provide equipment, fund innovative research and ongoing education for our paediatric clinicians and support the immediate needs of children and their parents and carers.

At Little Heroes, our work is guided by a commitment to improving the experience of local sick children and families who are cared for at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, as well as enhancing the wellbeing of the staff who dedicate themselves to their care.

Our activities are designed to deliver a clear and measurable public benefit by:

- Enhancing hospital environments to create brighter, more comforting spaces for children receiving treatment.
- Providing essential items, support and resources that help paediatricians to diagnose and care for our sick children and ease the burden on families during challenging times.
- Delivering wellbeing initiatives that nurture and sustain the Paediatric team, recognising the vital role they play in caring for sick children.
- Engaging the wider community through fundraising events and partnerships that foster a spirit of compassion and collective support.

These initiatives ensure that every action we take contributes directly to improving care, comfort, and wellbeing at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. We remain fully aligned with the principles of public benefit as outlined by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, ensuring our resources and efforts are dedicated to making a meaningful difference to children, families, and healthcare professionals across Northern Ireland.

As the only charity dedicated to supporting the entire Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children which is Northern Ireland's sole specialist paediatric hospital. Our work directly touches the lives of thousands of children every year, from every community and county across Northern Ireland.

Through our initiatives, Little Heroes strengthens the capacity of the hospital to deliver world-class care and creates a more compassionate, child-centred environment for all who pass through its doors.

Every project we deliver is developed in close partnership with clinicians and hospital leadership to ensure that funding and resources address the most immediate and impactful needs.

Our commitment is clear: to create a brighter, more hopeful future for sick children in Northern Ireland. By supporting Little Heroes, donors can be confident that their generosity will directly improve outcomes, enhance care, and help sustain a vital institution that sits at the heart of paediatric healthcare for sick children from throughout Northern Ireland.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Achievements and Performance

Main Achievements

2024 was a year of significant change and strategic growth for Little Heroes, during which the charity delivered over £334K in vital services to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. These contributions helped enhance patient care and the hospital environment, including the provision of a safe space bed; a substantial resource allocation for the Play Specialist Team; support for the hospital's Bereavement Service; covering the licence for the EOLAS medical app to improve internal communication; and colourful mural decorations in the ENT department to create a more child-friendly space. The charity also enabled staff to attend essential medical and specialist training and supplied specialist equipment to support diagnosis and treatment, such as two Simeox airway clearance devices and two high-frequency chest wall oscillators. Together, these initiatives made a meaningful difference to the care and experience of local sick children and their families.

Considerable progress was also made to secure the long-term future of the charity, and to elevate our profile and impact across Northern Ireland. This work, supported by the Trustees and Management involved a range of foundational activities including:

Leadership Transition

- During the year, the charity saw the retirement of our longstanding Charity Manager and undertook a comprehensive recruitment process to appoint a new Chief Executive Officer.
- The appointment of our new CEO marked the beginning of a refreshed leadership era, with renewed energy and focus on growth, governance, and stakeholder engagement.

Rebrand & Relaunch

- In November 2024, the charity formally relaunched under the new name Little Heroes, replacing the former name (Helping Hand) to better reflect our mission of celebrating the resilience and courage of children cared for at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.
- The rebrand included a launch event held on 21 November at St Mary's University College, Belfast, attended by parents, hospital staff, and supporters.
- A new website refreshed communications strategy (including social-media channels) and updated brand assets were introduced to support improved outreach, engagement, and fundraising effectiveness.

Infrastructure & Systems Strengthening

- Recognising that a growth step-change would require robust foundations, the charity invested in internal infrastructure during the transition period. These included:
 - New IT systems for fund-accounting, donor management, and reporting
 - Implementation of upgraded processes and governance frameworks to ensure transparency, scalability, and regulatory compliance
 - Training and capacity-building of the team to embed new working practices

Because of the transition in leadership and the necessary infrastructure work that was a priority in advance of the relaunch, the charity's income in the year was affected. While fundraising levels did not yet reflect the desired growth trajectory, these foundational investments were deliberate and necessary to support sustainable future performance.

Fundraising & Engagement Activity

Throughout all the internal changes within the charity during 2024, donations continued to be given to the charity thanks to the extraordinary generosity, creativity, and commitment of individuals, families, and businesses across Northern Ireland and beyond. While it is impossible to name every supporter, the following are just a few examples that illustrate the incredible efforts made to support Little Heroes (and Helping Hand) and the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children:

- The patrons from the Devenish Complex continued their popular Bonus Ball competition, raising £3,750.
- The Royal Belfast Golf Club Lady Captains' Charity contributed £6,200, demonstrating the strength of local sports club support and partnership.
- Natasha Mann undertook a challenging 12-day trek to Everest Base Camp, raising £1,152 through her inspiring personal challenge.
- The Patton family's annual table quiz in memory of their daughter Olivia raised £2,082.63.
- Richie Kelleher, with Gemma and their son Brogan, organised a spectacular Drift event in the Titanic Quarter, raising £8,435 from car enthusiasts across Ireland.
- Katie McGreavy, supported by her family, contributed £4,100 through a series of dedicated fundraising events.
- Swatragh Livestock Market donated £1,433 through a special charity auction.

These examples represent just a fraction of the tireless efforts, creativity, and community spirit that made 2024 such a landmark year for fundraising. Each event, challenge, and donation, large or small, has played a vital role in helping Little Heroes continue to support the children and families at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. The collective generosity shown this year is a testament to the extraordinary commitment of our supporters and the difference we can achieve together.

Throughout 2024, Little Heroes engaged with the community, hospital staff, families, and supporters to ensure the charity remained visible and active despite the internal transition. For example:

- Through our "Community Fundraising" platform we encouraged schools, workplaces, and sports clubs to host coffee mornings, runs, quiz nights and other grassroots activities, emphasising that every effort contributes to our aims of state-of-the-art equipment, comfort items, and family support.
- We continued to engage directly within the hospital community to bring moments of joy to children, parents, and siblings. These included supporting play-therapy, toys, bedside TVs, and family comfort services, reinforcing our objective of supporting children and families beyond medical care.

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Main Achievements - continued

Additional Note

Trustee Strategy & Future Outlook

- The Trustees reaffirmed their intention to grow and develop the profile of Little Heroes, with a specific aim to elevate future income so that we can make a sustainable contribution to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children well into the future.
- Strategic priorities now include:
 1. Building major-donor, corporate as well as philanthropic trust and foundation partnerships to complement community fundraising
 2. Leveraging the rebrand and improved communications to raise awareness, donor engagement, and supporter acquisition
 3. Ensuring operational resilience through robust governance, effective systems, and measured performance tracking
 4. Demonstrating impact clearly and transparently so that funders, stakeholders, and the public understand exactly how funds are used to benefit children, families, and the paediatric team

While 2024 has been a transitional year, the investments made in infrastructure, leadership, brand, and systems position Little Heroes for accelerated growth in 2025 and beyond.

Designation of Reserves

During the year, the trustees designated funds to support specific strategic initiatives aligned with the charity's objectives. These designations reflect the trustees' commitment to ensuring resources are allocated effectively to meet future needs and enhance long-term impact. The trustees agreed to designate the following funds: £250K to represent six months of operating reserves, £450K to support the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children's reliance on charitable funds to pay for a range of projects for a further period of 2 years, and £350K in anticipation of requirements to pay for a range of projects and initiatives linked to the establishment of the new children's hospital.

Summary

In short, 2024 has been a year of transformation for Little Heroes. The combination of leadership change, re-branding, systems upgrades, and community engagement represents a deliberate and strategic reset. Our income for the year may not yet reflect the full potential of the charity, but that is a direct consequence of the transition phase. With foundations now firmly in place, the Trustees and team are confident that Little Heroes is well placed to enter a new era, one in which we expand our reach, amplify our impact, and ensure that every child treated at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children receives the very best support, now and for the future.

Looking Ahead

While 2024 represented a period of transition, it also laid strong foundations for future success. The Trustees are now focused on:

- Growing income sustainably through diverse and strategic fundraising streams.
- Strengthening partnerships with local businesses, trusts, and foundations.
- Expanding volunteer and ambassador networks to extend community reach; and
- Ensuring every pound raised delivers tangible benefit to children, families, and staff within Northern Ireland's only specialist children's hospital.

Little Heroes enters 2025 with renewed purpose, robust systems, and a clear vision - to ensure every child treated at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children has access to the very best care, comfort, and support.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at anytime the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**Little Heroes
Trustees' Report (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024**

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The trustees' report was approved by the board of trustees and signed on its behalf by:

Dr. Paul Jackson
Trustee

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

27 October 2025

Little Heroes
Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Little Heroes
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Little Heroes for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the charity trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It was also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to you attention.



Tony Clarke

27 October 2025

53 Andersonstown Road
Belfast
Antrim
BT11 9AG

Little Heroes
Statement of Financial Activities
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024 Unrestricted funds £	2023 Unrestricted funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:			
Donations and legacies	3	174,584	236,497
Investments	4	1,912	2,405
		<u>176,496</u>	<u>238,902</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:			
Raising funds	6	(71,833)	(54,523)
Charitable activities:	6		
Establishment Purchases		(54,690)	(6,932)
Charitable Activity		(334,442)	(165,084)
		<u>(460,965)</u>	<u>(226,539)</u>
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME BEFORE INVESTMENT (LOSSES)/GAINS		(284,469)	12,363
Net gains on investments		75,399	5,000
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME		<u>(209,070)</u>	<u>17,363</u>
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(209,070)	17,363
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:			
Total funds brought forward		1,265,292	1,247,928
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	14	<u>1,056,222</u>	<u>1,265,291</u>

The notes on pages 9 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

**Little Heroes
Statement of Financial Position
As At 31 December 2024**

	Notes	2024 Unrestricted funds £	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	11	2,101	-
Investments	12	386,533	312,426
		388,634	312,426
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at bank and in hand		668,788	954,142
		668,788	954,142
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year	13	(1,200)	(1,277)
NET CURRENT ASSETS (LIABILITIES)		667,588	952,865
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,056,222	1,265,291
NET ASSETS		1,056,222	1,265,291
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Unrestricted Funds		6,222	1,265,291
Designated Funds		1,050,000	-
TOTAL FUNDS	14	1,056,222	1,265,291
On behalf of the board			



Dr Paul Jackson
Trustee

27 October 2025

The notes on pages 9 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

Little Heroes
Notes to the Financial Statements
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

1. General Information

Little Heroes is an unincorporated charity registered with the Charity Commission, registered charity number 102447. The principal address is Royal Belfast Hospital For Sick Children, 180 Falls Road, Belfast, Antrim, BT12 6BE.

2. Accounting Policies

2.1. Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)", Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Charities Act 2011.

The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

2.2. Incoming Resources

Income is recognised when the Charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

2.3. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of the fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Computer Equipment	5-year straight-line
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2.4. Investments

2.5. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents are basic financial assets and include cash in hand and deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and are readily convertible to a known amount of cash with insignificant risk of change in value, and bank overdrafts.

3. Income from Donations and Legacies

	2024	2023
	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	£	£
Donations and gifts	168,172	228,438
Gift aid	6,412	8,059
	<u>174,584</u>	<u>236,497</u>

4. Investment Income

	2024	2023
	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	£	£
Bank interest receivable	1,912	2,405
	<u>1,912</u>	<u>2,405</u>

Little Heroes
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

5. Net Income/(Expenditure)

The net (expenditure)/income is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2024	2023
	£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets - owned	150	-

6. Analysis of Expenditure

	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs (see note 7)	2024
	£	£	Total
			£
Raising funds	8,143	63,690	71,833
Establishment Purchases	20,045	34,645	54,690
Charitable Activity	333,627	815	334,442
	361,815	99,150	460,965
			2023
	£	£	£
Raising funds	1,944	52,579	54,523
Establishment Purchases	-	6,932	6,932
Charitable Activity	163,084	2,000	165,084
	165,028	61,511	226,539

7. Support Costs

	Raising funds	Establishment Purchases	Charitable Activity	2024
	£	£	£	Total
				£
Employee costs:				
Wages and salaries	63,690	18,106	-	81,796
General administration:				
Computer and IT repairs and maintenance	-	8,555	-	8,555
Stationery	-	610	-	610
Catering	-	326	-	326
Equipment expensed	-	-	815	815
Telecommunications	-	2,530	-	2,530
Independent examiner's fees	-	1,200	-	1,200
Accountancy fees	-	1,465	-	1,465
Bank charges	-	135	-	135
Sundry expenses	-	1,568	-	1,568
Depreciation:				
Depreciation	-	150	-	150
	63,690	34,645	815	99,150

Little Heroes
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

	Raising funds	Establishment Purchases	Charitable Activity	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Employee costs:				
Wages and salaries	52,579	-	-	52,579
Travel expenses	-	1,113	-	1,113
General administration:				
Computer and IT repairs and maintenance	-	866	-	866
Insurance	-	1,322	-	1,322
Stationery	-	539	-	539
Catering	-	155	-	155
Equipment expensed	-	-	2,000	2,000
Telecommunications	-	1,151	-	1,151
Accountancy fees	-	1,584	-	1,584
Bank charges	-	109	-	109
Sundry expenses	-	93	-	93
	<u>52,579</u>	<u>6,932</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>61,511</u>

8. Independent Examiner's Remuneration

	2024	2023
	£	£
Independent examination of the financial statements	1,200	-
	<u>1,200</u>	<u>-</u>

9. Staff Costs

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	81,796	52,579
	<u>81,796</u>	<u>52,579</u>

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period of more than £60,000.

10. Average Number of Employees

Average number of employees during the year was: 2 (2023:2)

Little Heroes
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

11. Tangible Assets

	Computer Equipment £
Cost	
As at 1 January 2024	-
Additions	2,251
As at 31 December 2024	<u>2,251</u>
Depreciation	
As at 1 January 2024	-
Provided during the period	150
As at 31 December 2024	<u>150</u>
Net Book Value	
As at 31 December 2024	<u>2,101</u>
As at 1 January 2024	<u>-</u>

12. Investments

	Cash & Cash Equivalents £
Cost or Valuation	
As at 1 January 2024	312,426
Fair value adjustments	74,107
As at 31 December 2024	<u>386,533</u>
Provision	
As at 1 January 2024	-
As at 31 December 2024	<u>-</u>
Net Book Value	
As at 31 December 2024	<u>386,533</u>
As at 1 January 2024	<u>312,426</u>

13. Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals and deferred income	1,200	1,277
	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,277</u>

Little Heroes
Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
For The Year Ended 31 December 2024

14. Movement in Funds

	As at 1 January 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	As at 31 December 2024 £
Unrestricted funds				
General:				
General unrestricted fund	1,265,292	176,496	(385,566)	6,222
Designated fund	-	-	-	1,050,222
Total funds	<u>1,265,292</u>	<u>176,496</u>	<u>(385,566)</u>	<u>1,056,222</u>
	As at 1 January 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	As at 31 December 2023 £
Unrestricted funds				
General:				
General unrestricted fund	1,247,928	238,902	(221,539)	1,265,291
Total funds	<u>1,247,928</u>	<u>238,902</u>	<u>(221,539)</u>	<u>1,265,291</u>

15. Transactions with Trustees

During the year the expenses reimbursed to the trustees or paid directly to third parties were as follows:

2024 £	2023 £
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

16. Related Party Disclosures

There were no transactions with directors, key management personnel, or entities controlled by them, and no balances outstanding at the reporting date.