BRAINSTRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1114634

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2006-06-13
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	4 Yvery Court Castle Road Cowes Isle of Wight PO31 7QG
Phone	01983292405
Email	hq@brainstrust.org.uk
Website	www.brainstrust.org.uk

Activities

Objects: (I) THE RELIEF OF SICKNESS AND THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HEALTH AMONG PEOPLE RESIDING PERMANENTLY OR TEMPORARILY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND SUFFERING FROM PRIMARY OR SECONDARY BRAIN TUMOURS;(II) TO INCLUDE ASSISTANCE IN THE TREATMENT AN CARE OF PERSONS SUFFERING FROM SUCH CONDITION AND IN FACILITATING TRAVEL TO PLACES OF TREATMENT OR CARE;(III) THE PROMOTION AND UNDERTAKING OF RESEARCH SCIENTIFIC WORK, SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT INTO ANY ASPECT OF THE OBJECTS OF THE CHARITY INCLUDING ALL AREAS RELATING TO THE CAUSES, DIAGNOSIS, EFFECT, TREATMENT, RELIEF FROM SYMPTOMS, CARE AND PREVENTION OF PRIMARY OR SECONDARY BRAIN TUMOURS AND TO DISSEMINATE THE RESULTS OF ANY SUCH WORK FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC AT LARGE;(IV) THE OBJECTS SHALL NOT BE LIMITED TO APPLICATION WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM BUT SHALL APPLY TO TREATMENT AND CARE OF THE SAID CONDITION WORLDWIDE;(V) THE OBJECTS SHALL INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR WORK AND RECREATION AND THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES TREATMENT AND EQUIPMENT NOT NORMALLY PROVIDED BY THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES.

Activities: The Trust's principal charitable objects are to provide funding for the support of and treatment for people diagnosed with primary brain cancer, particularly critically sited brain tumours. The Trust also funds translational scientific research into the treatment of brain cancer.

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Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** THE UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLDWIDE.
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£779,256	£739,180	£566,108	14
2024-03-31	£652,450	£730,525	£526,032	15
2023-03-31	£691,706	£791,844	£604,107	15
2022-03-31	£952,203	£663,431	£704,245	15
2021-03-31	£741,090	£511,271	£415,474	13

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
CHRISTOPHER BAKER	Chair	2012-06-09
Charlotte Davies		2025-05-28
Jack Lewis Jarvis		2024-01-25
KEVIN HIGGS		2008-07-27
Mary Barrington Ward		2025-05-28
Puneet Plaha		2021-03-04
Stephen Warrington		2016-05-18

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BRAINSTRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1114634

Accounts

brainstrust
the brain cancer people

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

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Front cover image: Six years ago, Jack Faint received news that changed everything: a brain tumour diagnosis at the age of 25. He was told he might be lucky to see 40. Today, he is running the length of India – 4,000 km – to support *brainstrust* and to show that even in the shadow of illness, there can be light.

Our challenge

I struggle with multiple issues – fatigue, physical and mental problems – but I try to focus on healing and the road to recovery.

Patient

I have experienced some heavy pressure type headaches. I found this and my balance were often worse if I didn't have my afternoon nap.

Patient

What am I not struggling with? I suffer daily symptoms, which include tinnitus, dizziness, head pressure and pain, which frightens my husband.

Patient

Six weeks of radiotherapy, followed by six rounds of chemotherapy, would start in September. I was petrified, though, for around a month.

Patient

I had to be on the drugs for two years at least, as my tumour was small but in an area associated with seizures. It devastated me. Everything caught up with me. It was the identity shift that was difficult – I wasn't prepared for going from a 'surgery survivor' to 'epileptic'.

Patient

My diagnosis was delivered over the phone by my GP, which was incredibly hard to deal with. The best way to describe my feelings at the time is a mixture of fear and an overwhelming sense of confusion. As how could this be happening to me? I had just finished my degree, which I had worked hard for. I was starting a new job that I was excited for at the end of the week, and I had just turned 24 years of age a few weeks prior. It felt like such a cruel twist of fate for this to happen as my life was just coming together how I wanted.

Patient

Over 80,000 people are living with a brain tumour in the UK. Only 12% of adults survive beyond five years following a diagnosis. Brain tumours reduce life expectancy by an average of 27 years, and they kill more children than any other cancer, yet treatment for a brain tumour is brutal and harmful. It hasn't changed in 40 years.

The impact of brain tumours is under-reported, support and research under-funded, and the true impact of the disease under-acknowledged and misunderstood.

When you hear the words 'you have a brain tumour', you face both a potential cancer diagnosis and the prospect of progressive and debilitating neurological disease. You are afraid, you are alone, you are confused, and your life changes dramatically in an instant.

Today, *brainstrust* is here to help people live their best possible lives with a brain tumour in the face of these stark facts. We help people thrive and have their best possible day. We are also here for tomorrow. We hope for a world in the future where brain tumours have little impact. But we know that hope is not a strategy. We support clinical research and work with our community of experts to improve investment and build capacity so that harm is reduced, care is improved at hospital and at home, and people are more confident and able to take control. Only then can life with a brain tumour be fulfilling and enjoyable, and people who hear the words 'you have a brain tumour' are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

This is our challenge.

Strategic report

Introduction from the chair and chief executive

A brain tumour diagnosis changes everything. The experiences, fear, uncertainty and daily challenges faced by people and their loved ones drive everything we do at *brainstrust*.

This year, **136,529 people sought help or information from us**, with **4,577 receiving direct support** from our team. These are the highest numbers in our 19-year history. On average, having reached out to *brainstrust*, people improved by **35% across our six quality-of-life indicators**, showing real, measurable impact from our support.

We've responded to rising demand by reshaping services for faster response times. We have brought counselling in-house and launched our **new brain metastases service** – this is already a thriving community meeting an urgent and growing need. Our volunteer network has grown to **over 200 people**, extending our reach and building lived-experience support into the heart of our work.

Alongside service delivery, our influence is growing. From leading patient involvement in clinical trials on national and international studies to representing our community in national cancer strategy discussions and on international research committees, *brainstrust* is helping to set the agenda for better care and vital progress in new treatments. We do this with patient voice, community interest and public benefit at the heart.

Strong governance and careful risk management underpin this growth. Our trustees work closely with our executive team to ensure resources are deployed responsibly, compliance is robust, and new opportunities are pursued sustainably. This year, we have strengthened systems, invested in resilient structures, and expanded trustee capacity to meet the demands of a growing organisation.

None of this would be possible without our supporters, volunteers, trustees and partners. You have helped us scale without losing humanity, grow without compromise and make change that lasts.

The challenge is immense: more people than ever need our help, and treatment has not advanced in 40 years. But *brainstrust* has never been stronger, more needed or more ready. Together we will continue to ensure people with a brain tumour are less alone, more resourced, more confident and living the lives they want.

With gratitude and determination,

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees

Will Jones
Chief Executive

Our purpose and our work

Our story

brainstrust was founded in 2006 by Helen Bulbeck and her husband, Peter, after Helen's daughter was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Their experience revealed how difficult it was to access clear information, meaningful support with clinical options, and a solution-focused community that truly understood the challenges of living with a brain tumour. Determined to change this, they established *brainstrust* to bridge this guidance gap. Since then, the charity has grown into a national organisation, dedicated to improving outcomes for everyone affected by a brain tumour, through trusted information, personalised support, a strong, supportive community and advocacy.

Our strategy: First, we are people

More recently, in April 2019, we launched 'First, we are people', a strategy that called for a fundamental shift: from seeing people purely as patients to recognising the rich, complex lives they lead beyond a diagnosis. This approach emphasises the emotional, practical and cultural realities of living with a brain tumour – not just the clinical ones.

Our aim has remained clear: to help people with the human challenges that they tell us matter to them after a brain tumour diagnosis. They want to be less isolated, more in control, actively engaged in their care, emotionally resilient and better equipped to live the lives they want.

Thanks for your support and hard work. It has made a huge difference to accept what I cannot change, to find courage to change what I can and to have some discernment to know the difference. All my love and gratitude.

Patient

Why this approach?

Everything about this strategy comes from what the brain tumour communities tell us matters most:

- You are a person for far more time than you are a patient.
- As a person, you face challenges with more confidence.
- Your choices are driven by what you value, not just what your symptoms are.
- What matters to you shapes your path more than what is the matter with you.
- Where patients see problems, people see possibilities.

This feedback shaped our direction. Together we built a strategy that doesn't just treat a condition; it respects a whole person.

Years on, 'First, we are people' continues to guide our work. It's a strategy we're delivering with the community, and it's helping people with a brain tumour feel informed, supported, connected, involved and hopeful. Because before anything else, we are people.

How we got here

This strategy has been co-created with our community and delivered with its support. It is helping us to achieve our mission – we are here for a world in which people with a brain tumour are involved, resourced, supported, confident and connected. They are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

The experts we asked

The conclusions and decisions reached in the development of our strategy result from conversations and day-to-day meetings and experiences over a six-month period with the following stakeholders:

- beneficiaries – people living life with a brain tumour and their caregivers
- supporters
- current and prospective philanthropic funders
- other charities
- *brainstrust* team members and trustees
- national research bodies
- local and national research funders
- clinical experts from all specialities
- campaign groups.

Looking ahead

This year work began – with our community and collaborators – on establishing our strategic direction for 2025 and beyond. Awareness of our work, understanding of our challenge, our scale, our reach and our impact have all grown during this period. *brainstrust* has never been more needed.

I'm feeling more positive and empowered because of the support the coaching has given me.

Patient

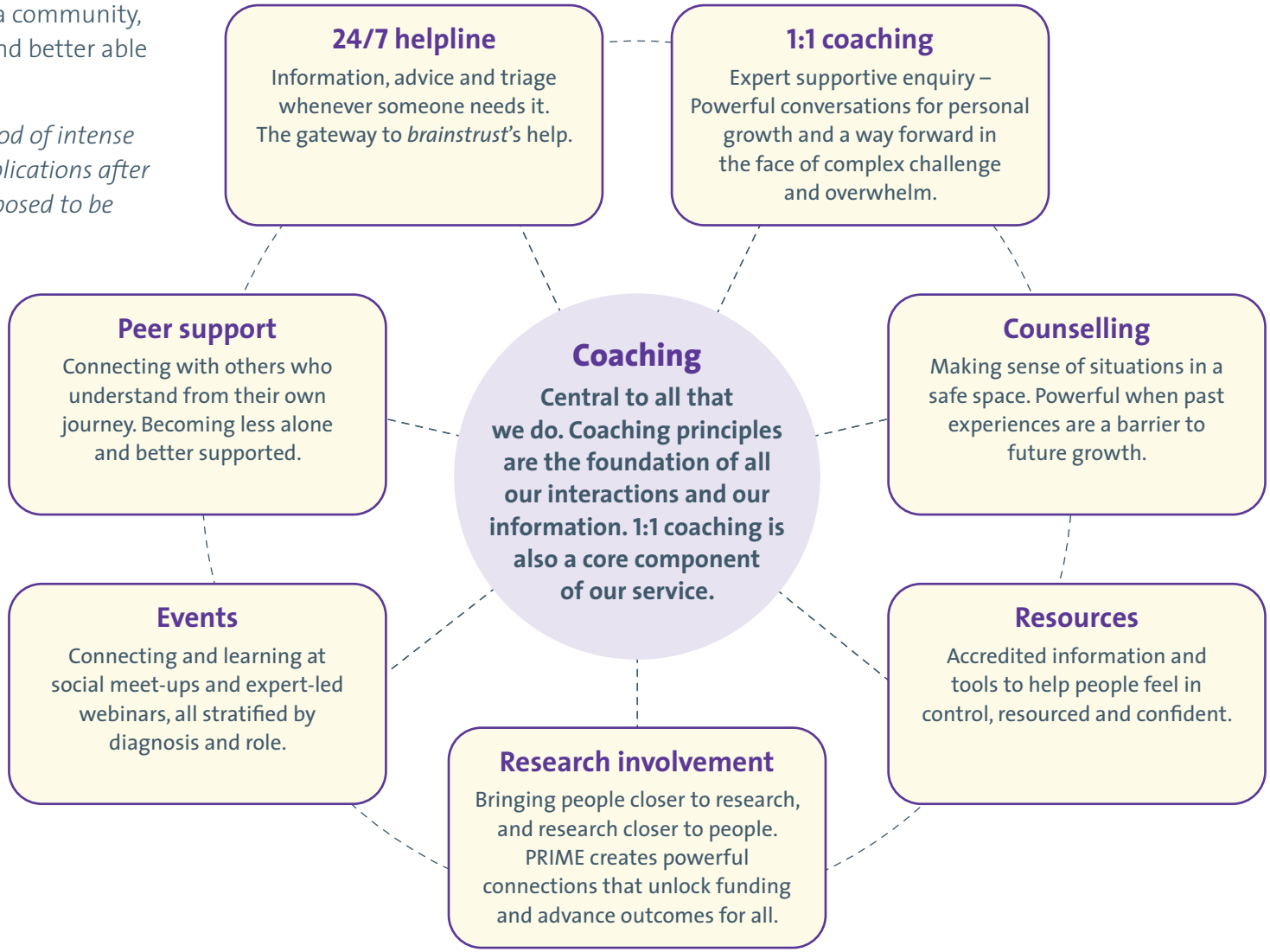
Our support

We help people to be less alone, part of a community, on top of things, resourced, supported and better able to navigate their clinical care.

I reached out to brainstrust *during a period of intense depression that followed a string of complications after my meningioma was removed. I was supposed to be one of the lucky ones, but I didn't feel like it. Mariel has been completely amazing: our coaching sessions got me through that difficult time, and she also set me up with a peer supporter, who has been equally wonderful. I don't really know what I would have done without this support, which was offered when I really needed it.*

Patient
April 2024

We do this for the people who need us, with the following services:



Key achievements

The impact we are having for the people who need us

More people than ever before have called upon brainstrust *for help, and in all measures we have been able to deliver our greatest ever impact for people living with a brain tumour. We have grown without compromise for our communities and can't thank our supporters and our teams enough for all their commitment and hard work to help us make this happen.*

Dr Helen Bulbeck
brainstrust Co-founder and Director of Services and Policy.

This year we achieved our largest year in terms of number of people helped, and also the impact we had for these people.

A total of 136,529 people sought help or information, with 4,577 of these people seeking direct support from one of our team (as opposed to ordering or downloading brain tumour information). This direct support includes our coaching and counselling services, peer support and our in-person and online supportive events.

In 2020 the pandemic influenced the way we structured our support and promulgated a shift away from geographical presence to a tumour-specific model. This meant a decline in focus on nations. As a result, in 2023 we recognised the need to reach more people on their brain tumour journey sooner and more equitably across the UK. This year we took tangible steps to ensure that where a person lives doesn't determine the support they can access – a deliberate move to a strategic model of expansion.

With the generous support of corporate and charitable funders, we have been able to launch our 'brain tumour support, sooner, faster and fairer' campaign. This has gained good traction and resulted in increased reach and engagement in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, as well as in more remote areas in England.

Already we have been able to grow the direct support we are providing to people in Wales by 55% (from 88 to 136 people), with *400 people in Wales downloading PDF brain tumour information, including Welsh language versions of our more popular resources.*

Adam Thomson
brainstrust, Impact Officer

How we measure impact

When we talk about impact, we focus on the long-term, demonstrable changes we create for the people who need us. Where counting people is a simple and immediate measure of service reach, impact demonstrates effectiveness by showing 'what works for who in what circumstances' through evidence. This helps us to improve services and demonstrate the value of our work. We have worked tirelessly to make capturing our impact, evaluating our work and reporting on our impact central to our culture at brainstrust.

Will Jones
brainstrust Chief Executive

Nine pillars drive our efforts to understand the impact of our work:

- accountability
- application of our resources
- improvement
- learning and adaptation
- advocacy with evidence
- effective communication
- engaged supporters
- planning with purpose
- a reflective and adaptive culture.

Measuring impact is about maximising the effectiveness of our work, ensuring that our resources are used efficiently in generating change. We have a culture where impact is at the centre of our processes and integral to the conversations we have with our beneficiaries. Tracking impact with transparency is mutually beneficial.

Methodology

We track progress against six indicators. These have been defined as being important to quality of life by our community of patients and their caregivers. In turn, these indicators support the four priorities in our strategy. These six indicators are:

- engagement with care and condition
- reduced isolation
- engagement with communities
- creating control
- feeling supported
- feeling resourced.

We learn how people are doing against these indicators using our bespoke progress tracker tool. This gives us a simple, flexible and human approach to understanding impact. Progress trackers are completed and monitored collaboratively with our beneficiaries. In completing a progress tracker, or multiple progress trackers, our beneficiaries establish where the focus of our support needs to be to help them move forward. To complete a progress tracker, patients and caregivers provide a score of how they are feeling on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of our indicators. They complete multiple progress trackers on their journeys with *brainstrust*, and this paints a picture of their progress.

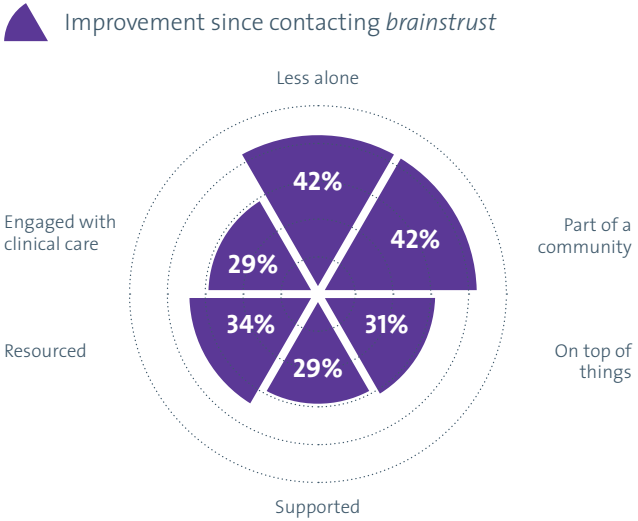
Thank-you for speaking to us both ... sometimes you just need that certain someone who knows what you are going through. I just keep remembering your words ... just one day at a time and live for the here and now. Once again, many thanks.

Caregiver

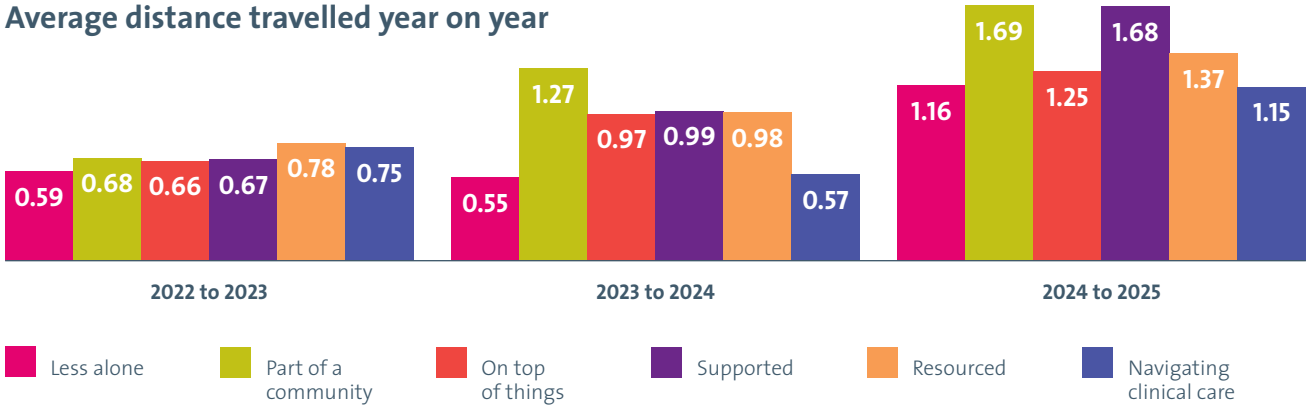
Our impact in 2024

The year 2024 saw us achieve the highest average distance travelled yet for the people we've helped. This is based on how people told us they felt when they first came to us and after receiving our support. On average against our six indicators, we helped people to improve by 35%, or 1.38, from their initial score on a scale of 1 to 5. A total of 51 people engaged fully in our evaluation to tell us this. We also have input from over 1,700 people that tells us what our community needs the most in terms of support. They tell us that they are alone, unsupported and have a lack of control at the point they seek help.

Our year, April 2024 – March 2025



Average distance travelled year on year



I just wanted to say, I am truly impressed with the work brainstrust *does. I was diagnosed with my tumour in June, and the experience of A&E and my three-week hospital stay was incredibly traumatic, even before processing the diagnosis itself. However,* brainstrust *has been phenomenal.*

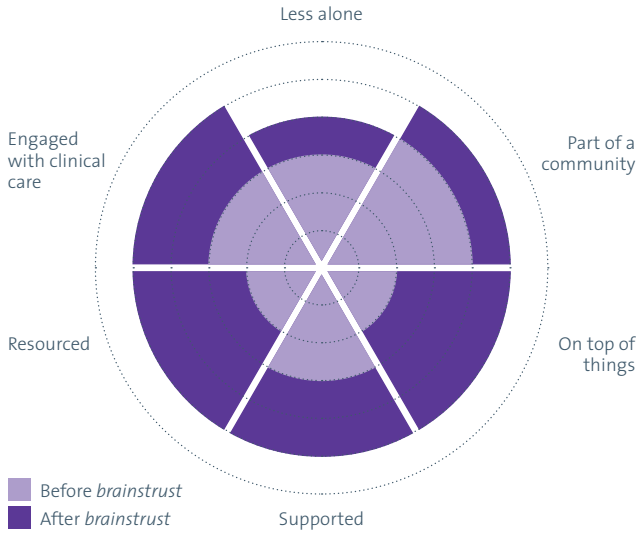
Patient

I now feel better equipped to deal with things and I remember to park the things that I have no control over and only deal with the things I can control.

Patient

Meet Heather

Heather was diagnosed with a meningioma in late 2023, which she describes as having impacted all aspects of her life, including her independence. When she reached out to us initially in 2024, we arranged to send her a brain box – specifically tailored to providing her with physical resources that would enable her to start taking back control of her life. She then went on to access more of our services, including our coaching service, and she would have a series of sessions outlining how she could feel more on top of things and work towards desired outcomes while facing this diagnosis and journey.



After she received our support, which also included attending meet-ups, accessing patient guides around clinical care and receiving support on behaviour and personality change, Heather felt more resourced, more on top of things and overall better equipped to handle her diagnosis.

The impact of coaching with *brainstrust*

Coaching plays a powerful role in driving positive change for patients, for those around them and for our healthcare systems. It empowers people to manage their own health and well-being, which in turn improves confidence, builds purpose and fosters resourcefulness and proactivity. For our health systems, activated or coached patients make for reduced healthcare costs through appropriate presentation, healthier lifestyles and better personal management of conditions. We see improved patient experience and a shift in focus, such that the patient becomes an equal and active partner, or co-pilot, in their care.

I now feel better equipped to deal with things, and I remember to park the things that I have no control over and only deal with the things I can control.

Patient

Our whole service is built on coaching principles, and people can also book one-to-one coaching sessions with our trained support specialists.

An evaluation of 100 coaching sessions that were conducted between patients or caregivers and their *brainstrust* coach on the Thrive platform reveals impressive impact.

When asked to score out of 10 whether the coachee would recommend coaching to another person in their position, the average score was 9.59.

When asked to score their satisfaction with their coach out of 5, the average was 4.93, and session satisfaction was rated at 4.74.

The popular topics that people tell us they want to address with coaching are 'finding what is right, not what is wrong' (25/100), 'learning to be resilient' (22/100) and 'learning how to live with uncertainty' (14/100).

I find speaking to Mariel helps me organise what is important to me. Before this session I felt anxious and gloomy, but I feel I am now more aware of my behaviour, what I can do and how I can look after myself better.

Patient

Ellie was fantastic, as always, and has really started to help me recognise my default of 'what have I done wrong', which is a big step to recognising my needs are still important.'

Patient

Information to help people take control on their brain tumour journeys

Providing useful resources and information is a growing part of our work. For the year in review, we have focused less on producing new information and more on making sure that more people can access this robust and trustworthy information sooner on their journeys, and wherever they are in the UK.

In the last year, we've seen high levels of traffic across our various online resources and information pages on our website. A total of 136,529 people sought information on **brainstrust.org.uk**, contributing to a total of 180,564 sessions.

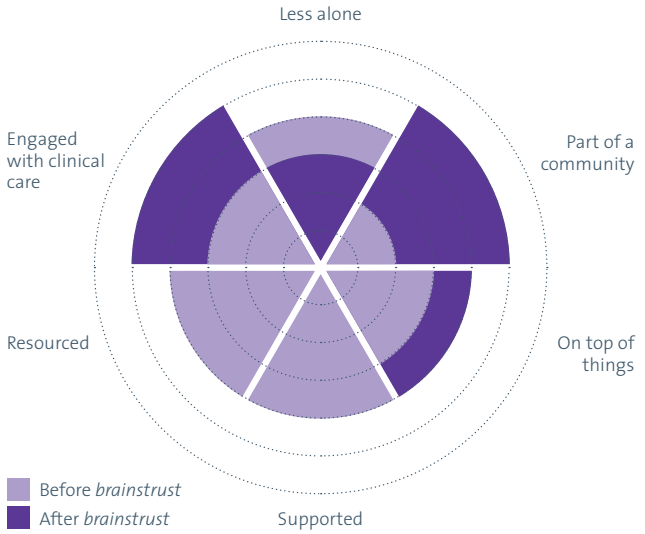
The total time people spent looking at information on our website was 2,307 hours.

A total of 8,035 people accessed and downloaded 12,540 online resources.

As we have grown, we have been promoting online access to our resources more proactively, but we also remain committed to printed information for those who need it.

Meet David

David came to us in late 2024, having received news he would be going into a biopsy to remove a high-grade brain tumour. David received immediate email support from one of our support specialists and was set up quickly with a peer supporter who could offer relevant information and reassurance for his situation.



After a few months, David felt a huge improvement in terms of feeling part of a community, as well as feeling more engaged with his clinical care and feeling on top of things. Over time, we identified that this journey had made him feel more lonely, which is an area his assigned support specialist aims to tackle together with David moving forward.

We have distributed 400 copies of our fatigue resource, 352 copies of the guide to managing behaviour and personality change and 320 and 316 copies respectively of our Patient Guide to Follow-up and Treatment. The Patient Guide comprises eight booklets that cover the whole brain tumour patient pathway, from diagnosis to end-of-life care, and includes living with and beyond a brain tumour diagnosis. The guide is accredited by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and helps people understand the clinical care they should be getting.

My neurosurgeon said my symptoms weren't related to my colloid cyst, even though I was experiencing the majority of the symptoms written on your information sheet. So I decided to see my GP to ask for a neurosurgery referral for a second opinion. I showed my GP your information sheet, and that convinced her to make the referral. I wouldn't have had the confidence to ask for a referral without it.

Brain tumour patient
January 2025

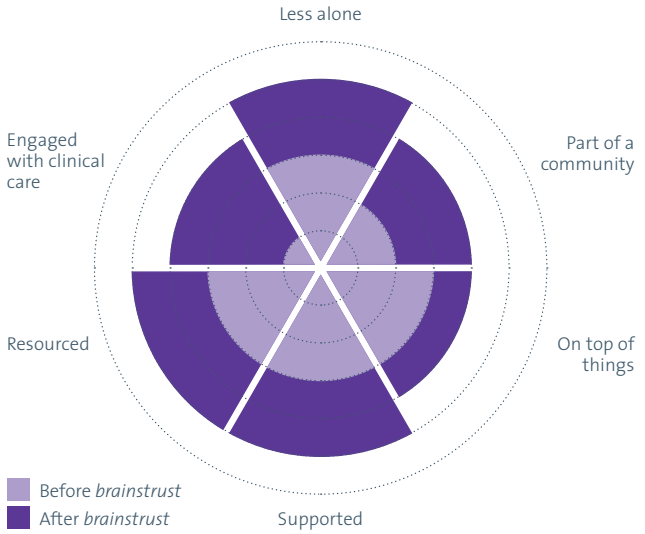
The *brainstrust* brain box remains popular. In 2024 we were able to send 357 of these vital toolkits to people, helping them to find a way forward following their diagnoses.

Each brain box is tailored to the needs of the recipient and includes guides, co-produced with the brain tumour community, on navigating treatment, understanding fatigue and personality changes, approaching end-of-life care and holding difficult conversations. It also contains age-appropriate and role-specific resources, from materials for teenagers and young adults to versions designed especially for parents and caregivers.

People tell us that the brain box connects them with reliable information when it is most appropriate, helping them make informed decisions with clarity and confidence.

Meet Angela

Angela has been supported by *brainstrust* since 2021, having found community and clarity by engaging continually with our service. Living long-term with an acoustic neuroma, Angela has found support, resources and the ability to engage more confidently with her clinical care. She did this by accessing and taking part in services such as PRIME (our Patient Research Involvement Movement), attending our regular fatigue webinars and also accessing our welfare and benefits support service.



How we're adapting to growth

This year we have had to respond to significant increase in demand, which has driven organisational change. We have reviewed how we triage cases and as a result have redesigned systems for fairer distribution of workload, faster response times and more consistent care.

We have built capacity during the year with the recruitment of volunteers. We now have over 200 volunteers supporting directly with service delivery. Roles range from providing voluntary peer support to members of the community, where lived experience is shared, to supporting clinicians and scientists with research projects through our Patient Research Involvement Movement (PRIME) programme. We have also been fortunate enough to be able to recruit qualified volunteer counsellors and accredited coaches who give their time freely to support others and build capacity across our team.

Central to being able to scale our direct support has been the continued growth of uptake by our patients and caregivers of the Thrive platform. This digital coaching platform has built-in evaluation and goal-setting capabilities, and feedback and impact have been impressive.

We have brought management of counselling services in-house, and by partnering with Leeds Beckett University, we have reduced costs, grown capacity and improved integration between counselling and coaching.

There is growing demand for support from people who have been diagnosed with secondary brain cancer. This is cancer that has spread to the brain from another primary site (for example, breast or lung cancer). To meet this demand,we have launched our brain metastases service. This already comprises respected information resources in print and online and a thriving community of people facing this complex diagnosis. Until now, this has been a glaring gap in provision. We recognise the value of collaboration in tackling new and growing challenges and have joined the Brain Metastases International Collaborative. This will ensure we have up-to-date data and information to respond to this growing need as more people are being diagnosed with metastatic brain cancer.

We recognise that others can help deliver our unique impact too. We have developed new tools for professionals – we lead coaching workshops around how to have a difficult conversation and have piloted 'coaching nuggets', developed to sit alongside our resources and give healthcare professionals fresh, practical insights and evidence-based techniques to support patients through powerful conversations.

We're not just keeping pace with demand; we're shaping services proactively to meet needs that others haven't yet seen, and we are empowering others – through training – to deliver change.

Jodie Eveleigh
brainstrust Head of Support

Our influence

Informing change in the future and creating impact for all

Policy and strategic influence

We are here not just to alleviate challenges that face the brain tumour community in the here and now but also to work for a better world tomorrow, for people diagnosed with a brain tumour in the future. Participating in a collaborative, multidisciplinary ecosystem that strives for better support services and treatments for patients and their families allows us to contribute to improved access to care, increase research funding and enhance public awareness. Collaborative efforts between charities, healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers and advocacy groups are making progress in managing the societal challenges posed by brain tumours in the UK.

Helen Bulbeck
brainstrust Co-founder and Director of Policy and Services

Where 20 years ago the scientific and political landscape was a desert for people with a brain tumour, today there is a thriving ecosystem of actors and activities. We see growth in political interest, balance between 'care and cure' and green shoots of hope for science and treatments. To ensure efficient, effective and relevant application of *brainstrust* resource and effort in this diverse and fluid policy space, we have worked to hone our focus to key policy commitments where we can drive meaningful change. In summary, and in consultation with our community, we are committed to standing for the following four issues.

Brain tumours are different and therefore present unique challenges.

As such, dedicated, meaningful support is required. Diagnosis needs to be prompt. People need fair access to treatment and rehabilitation. It needs to be understood that every diagnosis is life-changing. And patients and clinicians need to be heard and have a voice.

Everyone needs to understand that every diagnosis is life-changing.

While clinical outcomes vary, every diagnosis brings isolation, relationship changes, loss of independence, fear and anxiety, financial burden, fatigue and behaviour and personality change.

Patients must be partners in their care.

When patients are partners in their care, they are more resourceful, more proactive and more confident. They know what information they need and where to access it. They know what to ask because they know what is important to them. They can make informed decisions about their care. They are more secure with uncertainty, and they are experts on themselves and their conditions.

Research must be closer to patients, and patients closer to research.

Research-involved patients have better outcomes. They are more engaged in their care. Scientists need to understand that a diagnosis does not define a person, or how they perceive their health state, or what else might be happening in the real world to compete with the ability to maintain a patient's health and well-being.

During the year, we have seen progress against these ambitions. At the British Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS) conference, which returned to Cambridge, we saw patient experience moved to centre stage, from a side room lunch hour slot in the same city 12 years previously.

This gave equal footing to patient voice and scientific presentations in the main auditorium. Our leadership of the BNOS patient-centred care subcommittee and appointment of Helen Bulbeck to the EANO steering committee, where she is leading the Brain Tumour Advocacy Committee (BTAC), demonstrates national and international credibility for patient voice and is acknowledgement of *brainstrust*'s expertise in this space.

Furthermore, our work with the Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Clinical Trials Units has ensured that patient involvement is embedded in trial design through to dissemination of results.

Our continued role as PPIE lead on the Leeds Clinical and Translation Radiotherapy Centre of Excellence, funded by CRUK, has meant that we also have a therapeutic focus. And we began a collaboration with Brain Tumour Research and the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission to secure funding to re-establish the NCRI's 'Brain Group', a group of experts in clinical research, after the NCRI was closed.

On the national political stage, we have represented our community robustly and at the highest levels. Work here has been to ensure the unique needs of brain tumour patients are accommodated in the ongoing Health Service and Cancer Strategy planning work. The Health Secretary himself, and his wider team, has acknowledged these challenges and the need for progress in research.

We also continue to advocate for fairer and faster access to novel treatments and therapies. With growing interest and evidence in targeted therapies, new treatments and new technologies, we must have a regulatory system that is safe, responsive and proactive to meet the desperate need for progress that our community has. In the year, we advocated for progress and produced patient information and updates in real time to assist people in understanding this fast-changing landscape. Topics have included, regulation and approvals, vorasidenib, tumour treating fields, ADCV (DCVax), cannabinoids, CeGaT diagnostics and the peptide vaccine, ipilimumab, IOZK immunotherapy and more.

Where possible, we collaborate with other organisations to build capacity for this work, to minimise duplication and to ensure consistent messaging.

We see increasingly that *brainstrust* is helping to set the agenda, and we recognise that our work in the policy landscape also ensures our impact is for more people than those who contact us directly for help.

Looking ahead, our role is to create impact for public benefit with our support and to effect system change through:

- continued leadership in **national policy** and rare-cancer advocacy
- expanded international collaborations through **EANO** and **the IBTA**
- bridging **research, policy and patient experience**
- deeper integration with the healthcare system, ensuring our impact benefits *all* patients, not just those we reach directly.

When you look at our service and policy work as cohesive activity, 2024 was transformative. We grew – in numbers, scope, influence and impact. We showed it is possible to scale without losing humanity, to expand without diluting quality and to influence systems while keeping the individual at the centre.

Our direction is clear – support sooner, faster, fairer. With our strong foundation and a respected voice in both policy and research, we are ready to embrace the next year with passion and enthusiasm.

Helen Bulbeck
brainstrust Co-founder and Director of Policy and Services

Collaborations, networks and advisers

None of us is as smart as all of us

Indeed, meaningful collaboration and co-creation is central to our strategy and ethos as we work to secure the best outcomes for anyone who is living with a brain tumour. Our partnerships, of which we nurture around 80, are global and fall into four themes.

Patient-focused

These partnerships include clinical engagement with the 35 neuroscience and neurosurgical centres and organisations that are relevant to our community, such as Use My Data and the Patient Information Forum. Clinical engagement is a priority, as this is one way in which we can reach the community. It is, however, a two-way relationship, as healthcare professionals can visit our website and order resources for their patients, signpost coaching and other support services, and take advantage of training opportunities, such as our expert-led webinars and coaching programme.

Clinically focused

Clinical collaborations are hubs of clinical practice and research, such as the British Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS) and the European Association of Neuro-Oncology (EANO). We are very proud of our clinical network, which has been pivotal in the success of our webinar programme and the growth of our clinical research activity under the banner of PRIME.

I've joined several webinars and a support group, all of which I've found to be extremely informative and helpful. I'm also amazed by the access you provide to relevant research – it's been incredibly valuable.

Patient

This community's involvement in our educational events has been transformative for our beneficiaries. We maintain a community of over 20 clinical experts, who selflessly provide their time and knowledge to help people living with a brain tumour understand more about their conditions, why at times it is hard to make a choice about treatment, and how to live better with a brain tumour. This community continues to grow, and we are so grateful for the valuable and transformative expertise so generously gifted by this network.

Charities

We work closely with charities when we recognise that it is in the best interests of the community, and where capacity or effectiveness will be furthered. We have worked hard this year to continue to build these relationships.

We are actively involved in the Cancer52 network of rarer-cancer charities. We represent children and young people with brain cancer through our role on the Steering Group of the Children and Young People's Cancer Charity Coalition. We work closely with Cancer Research UK on matters relating to brain cancer and clinical research. And we work in partnership with charity Brain Tumour Research on a variety of projects, including our PRIME initiative, and on activity to inform UK governments on the

importance of addressing brain tumours at the highest levels possible. We are working closely with the International Brain Tumour Alliance, Brain Tumour Research, The Brain Tumour Charity, OurBrainBank and Brain Tumour Support to advocate for better access to novel treatments. More broadly, we represent the brain tumour community on the One Cancer Voice steering group. This is a group of over 60 cancer charities, collectively supporting millions of people living with cancer. The collective is working to improve lives and outcomes for cancer patients.

Notably, we have enjoyed our ongoing relationship with the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission. *brainstrust*'s chief executive, Will Jones, brings our experiences, insights and the voices of our communities to the Joint Strategy Board of the mission.

Organisational partnerships and collaborations

Our team maintains a broad portfolio of strategic and commercial relationships outside the health and charity sectors. These relationships with companies and individuals enhance our capabilities, capacity and expertise, and they all contribute meaningfully to our mission and our impact. We would like to express our specific appreciation to:

- Baker McKenzie
- Birds Bakery
- Charisma Charity Recruitment
- Class Networks
- Eric Callister
- Fitton Holman Creative
- Google UK
- Greenberg Traurig, LLP
- Harrison Black
- Irene Clarke
- John Roberts Associates
- J Pullan & Sons
- Louise Baker
- McQueenie Mulholland
- NFP People
- Nifty Communications
- The Rank Foundation (RankNet)
- Salesforce
- Slack
- Smarter Not Harder (SNH)
- TechSoup
- Think Creative Consultants
- Thrive Partners.

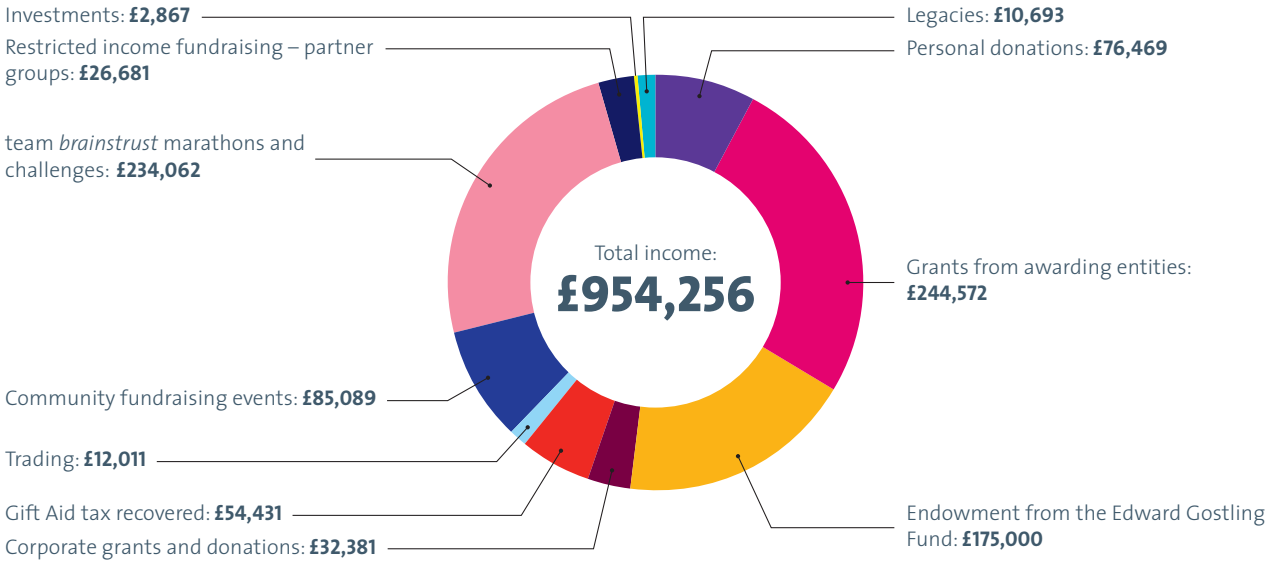
Your support

This year our supporters contributed £954,000 to fund *brainstrust*'s mission. This income comes from a diversified mix of traditional charity fundraising activity.

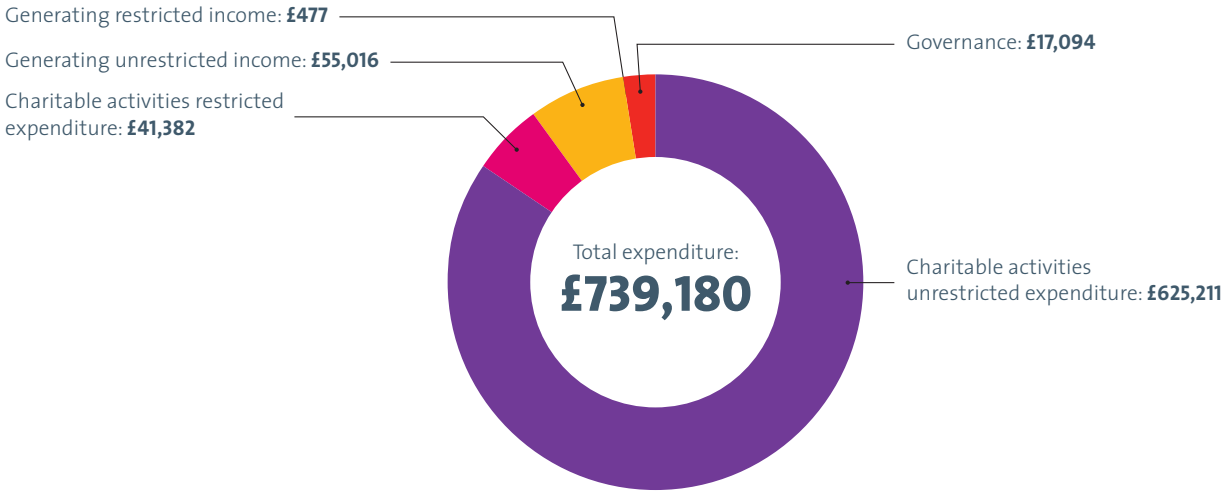
Our funding is derived from:

- trusts and foundations
- direct and regular giving by the general public
- companies who support our work
- sponsored events and challenges
- community fundraising
- Gift Aid recovery
- in-memory giving
- trading
- special-purpose fundraising to enable communities to access novel treatments and therapies.

Our income 2024



Our expenditure 2024



Thank you to our community of supporters

Thank you again to every one of our community supporters whose bravery, energy and generosity raised vital funds and also awareness of our work in their community. This ultimately helped our work to reach more people. We celebrated a record year of supporter fundraising, both in terms of numbers of supporters and amounts raised. Support comprised community action, marathons and challenges, fundraising in memory of loved ones and direct giving.

Tracey's trek

On 1 November 2024, Tracey Howe, a 61-year-old former physiotherapist and retired professor of rehabilitation sciences, embarked on a 5,000-mile trek around the coast of Britain. The 12-month self-supported challenge was in memory of Tracey's wife, Angela, and to raise funds for charities close to the couple's hearts. *brainstrust* is one of the beneficiaries of this incredible challenge, alongside The Beatson, Marie Curie, CoppaFeel! and Breast Cancer Now. So far Tracey has covered 2,500 miles in all weathers and has raised £45,000.

The Jones family's summer cycling challenge

October 2024

The Jones family took on two major cycling legs: almost 100 miles in the Netherlands (Rotterdam to Zandvoort) and 150 miles across England from Morecambe to Bridlington. Joined by supporters for the final stretch, they drew local attention and raised essential funds totalling £646.25 for our work.

Susan's perfect tea and cake garden party

June 2024

Susan hosted a garden party with tea and cake as part of her personal fundraising. Inspired by *brainstrust*'s support during her own brain tumour journey, she created a warm, communal space for awareness and raised a meaningful £785 through donations.

Wonderful memories: Suzanne's journey to honour her father

June 2024

Suzanne campaigned during the Wear Grey campaign in memory of her father, who died of a brain tumour. Her husband ran the Edinburgh Half Marathon, raising £1,327.50, to honour his memory and bring visibility to brain tumour challenges.

Pam Thompson's art exhibition: a journey of healing and support

January–March 2025

Pam Thompson showcased 132 art pieces spanning over eight years, intertwined with her experience of diagnosis, awake surgery and tumour regrowth. The travelling exhibition served as both artistic therapy and public engagement. Visitors could

connect with Pam's story, see *brainstrust*'s work in action and support via her JustGiving page, where she raised £2,363.76.

Bethany Haynes: our remarkable fundraiser

Bethany, diagnosed with an acoustic neuroma, has been active across many campaigns. In April 2024 she and her partner walked the 40-mile Coventry Way; she ran fundraisers at her rugby club; she joined *brainstrust*'s Run, Row, Ride; and she participated in Wear Grey. Her combined efforts raised just over £1,000 and helped raise awareness, especially in her own community.

European marathons and half marathons

As well as achieving astonishing fundraising success at home, team *brainstrust* members ran several major European events: the Barcelona Marathon, Paris Marathon, and Amsterdam Marathon's half and full marathons. Across those events, 32 runners collectively raised around £25,000 for our work. Ryan Doyle ran the Barcelona Marathon in support of his best friend, who is battling a brain tumour, and raised about £3,000, and Rob Gower ran the Paris Marathon in memory of his grandfather and raised over £3,000.

Follow the Seagulls – trek 26 or 50 miles to help our work

In 2024, 45 hikers took part in Follow the Seagulls: long-distance treks of 26 miles in a single day or 50 miles over two days. Locations include Whitby, the Isle of Wight, Fife and Dartmouth. All walkers completed their routes and raised over £31,000 for *brainstrust*.

brainstrust Bass Belle series

The *brainstrust* Bass Belle running races had a strong year: the 10K race (new in June 2024) sold out and raised more than £12,000, and the 10-miler celebrated its 10th year and also sold out, raising around £20,000. These events are part of *brainstrust*'s own portfolio, and they continue to boost awareness in local communities, bringing together runners of all ages and abilities.

You have been absolutely amazing and compassionate if anyone should want to raise money for a charity I will always say* brainstrust *because you have been brilliant and the most helpful.

Supporter

Trusts and foundations

The generosity of our trust and foundation partners has had a real impact this year. Thanks to them, we have been able to expand our support, fund new initiatives and ensure that more people affected by brain tumours feel less alone.

We are grateful for the long-term support of funders, including the Edward Gostling Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

In addition, we are incredibly privileged to have been supported by these very generous funding partners:

- The Albert Hunt Trust
- The February Foundation
- The Henry Denman and Agneta Mary Cook Charity
- The Michael Marsh Charitable Trust
- National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All England
- National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All Northern Ireland
- National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All Scotland
- National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All Wales
- The Paul Bassham Charitable Trust
- The Rank Foundation
- Sheffield Church Burgesses Trust
- Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
- St James's Place
- UKH Foundation
- The Wyseliot Rose Charitable Trust

We are profoundly grateful for the generosity of our trust donors, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous. Your kindness has enabled us to stand beside more people than ever before, helping them navigate the challenges of a brain tumour diagnosis and supporting them to live their best possible lives.

I hope you realise the time/ advice/kind words/knowledge and lived experiences you've given us, sometimes at the drop of a hat, have really made a difference in our care.

Caregiver

Financial review

The Trust's published statutory accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 are incorporated in this Trustees' Annual Report and include considerable detail on the source and application of funds, and the financial position of the Trust at 31 March 2025, as required by the SORP for UK charities published by the Charity Commission. This report comments on the main points contained in the accounts.

In summary, total income generated in 2024–25 was £954K (2023–24: £652K), comprising a gross income of £753K unrestricted income and £26K restricted income funds, and an expendable endowment of £175K. The net surplus for the year was £40K (2023–24: (£78K)), of which a (£24K) deficit related to restricted income funds.

While, as reviewed elsewhere in the Trustees' Annual Report, *brainstrust*'s charitable impact has continued to increase, thus increasing our reach and effectiveness, we had to respond to the usual seasonal challenges across the year, but overall we were well placed to do this, and with careful management of costs, we put ourselves in good shape for a significant surplus in unrestricted funds at the end of the year. Overall expenditure in 2024–25, at £739K, of which £42K related to expenditure of restricted income funds, has only increased slightly year on year, from the previous year of 2023–24 (£730K), and was exactly in line with our budgeted target.

The Trust's total income for 2024–25, at £954K, (£175K restricted endowment capital funds) was, as noted above, an increase on the £652K raised in 2023–24, and while £60K short against our budgeted unrestricted targets, it was a significant boost to our balance sheet assets. Supporter fundraising is still challenging, but our donors managed to raise money despite the ongoing economic uncertainty. Grant income was steady, and our team *brainstrust* income was significant, with our charitable fundraisers and supporters really picking up this year. As mentioned above, the Trust also received an expendable endowment from the Edward Gostling Foundation of £175,000 for investment, with the interest and drawdowns over the next five years going towards our ongoing general work.

Most of the Trust's income, both general and restricted, is applied to supporting patients and their caregivers and families, from the point of a brain cancer diagnosis. Our support team provides UK-wide coverage, supported by many substantial funders.

The Trust has only cash investments, deposited with NatWest Bank and The Co-operative Bank. At 31 March 2025, the Trust had net reserves, including restricted income funds and endowment capital, of £741K (March 2024: £526K), which included unrestricted reserves of £186K (2024: £122K) and net restricted reserves of £555K (2024: £404K). The unrestricted surplus for the year in review has been added to our general charitable funds.

The Trust has a long-standing policy of holding unrestricted reserves to cover four months of defined core costs. As at 31 March 2025, unrestricted reserves were sufficient to cover just over four months of core costs. Our reserves have sustained us well in the past, and now we are continuing to build those reserves for the next fiscal year.

Our structure, governance, leadership and management

Our structure

brainstrust is a mature organisation. We are confident in our abilities and our purpose, and we are proud of our impact. As we near the end of our current strategy, we are more focused than ever on our purpose and the needs of our beneficiaries.

We are proud that we have catalysed a new ecosystem in the brain tumour charity and advocacy landscape that is focused on improving life for people with a brain tumour.

Our professional and highly trained team supports people across the UK, and these people can access impactful coaching, counselling and accredited *brainstrust* resources. We are a resilient organisation that has transitioned well over the last five years from being a 'large small' operation to a 'small big' charity with a scalable, professional and resilient structure.

Our governance

Good governance is an essential component of our success, particularly as we grow. It underpins our integrity, reinforces the trust and confidence our patients and partners place in us, and contributes to a strong high-performance culture.

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees

brainstrust is constituted as a trust, governed by its Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006.

The overall guidelines for the management and administration of the Trust are incorporated in the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006, as amended by Deeds of Amendment adopted by the trustees under the terms of the original deed and notified to the Charity Commission.

This places overall responsibility for the proper governance of the Trust with the appointed trustees. Day-to-day management of the Trust is delegated to William Jones, who has been appointed chief executive of the Trust. The chief executive, supported by the leadership team, makes recommendations to the trustees on the Trust's vision, patient and caregiver support, related research, financial fundraising, promotional activities and ensuring that funds raised are spent as efficiently as possible on resources that will be useful to people affected by brain cancer.

brainstrust's trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

I am proud to be part of a charity that takes governance seriously, not simply as a matter of compliance but as a foundation for trust, transparency and impact. Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our governance framework, ensuring robust oversight, strategic clarity and sound financial management. The board works closely with the executive team to ensure that brainstrust *is not only meeting its charitable objectives but doing so with integrity, accountability, and a constant focus on the needs of the brain tumour community. We remain committed to good governance as we look to the future with confidence and ambition.*

Kevin Higgs
Trustee

Looking ahead, we will be expanding our board of trustees from five people to seven. This is to bring even further diversity of experience, expertise and perspective to our governing team. We also recognise a need to build capacity in our trustee board to meet the growing workload that comes with the growth of our organisation. The Charity Governance Code suggests a board of at least five trustees, and we are mindful that this expansion will move us beyond this minimum number.

Our board of trustees

brainstrust's trustees for the year in review are Christopher Baker, Kevin Higgs, Stephen Warrington, Puneet Plaha and Jack Jarvis.

Chris Baker

Chair of Trustees

Chris is EMEA managing director at a leading global software company and has over 20 years' experience driving growth at some of the highest-profile companies in the world, including Microsoft and Salesforce. Chris has been a trustee for nearly 13 years and the chair of trustees at *brainstrust* for eight years.

Kevin Higgs

Trustee

Kevin is a financial adviser and has been a trustee for 15 years. In a chance meeting while at a previous employer, Kevin was immediately taken by the dedication and commitment of the charity to focus on the support and well-being of patients and families diagnosed with a brain tumour. He knew that he wanted to be a part of the journey that *brainstrust* has been on since 2006.

Stephen Warrington

Trustee

Stephen brings to the organisation extensive experience leading professional services businesses and consulting for major multinationals, and he has been a trustee for eight years. Stephen's teenage son was diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent successful surgery.

Puneet Plaha

Trustee

Puneet is an associate professor and consultant neuro-oncology surgeon in Oxford, with a specialist interest in brain tumours, especially endoscopic minimally invasive surgery and awake surgery. He has been a consultant neuro-oncology surgeon lead for the Oxford brain tumour MDT and neuro-oncology lead for Thames Valley since 2012. Puneet joined *brainstrust*'s board of trustees in March 2021.

Jack Jarvis

Trustee

Jack is a serving British Army Commando and record-setting transatlantic solo rower. He brings tenacity, energy and a high-performance mindset to our board. Jack is an ardent and successful fundraiser, motivated by personal experience of a glioblastoma in his family, as well as by his own experience navigating a complex rehabilitative journey after a serious accident. He understands the value, opportunity and impact that *brainstrust*'s work bears and is our newest board member, having joined in January 2024.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year to ratify the strategy and areas of activity for the Trust. In addition, trustees may meet with members of the team to work on specific projects. All trustees give their time freely, and no remuneration is paid.

***brainstrust* board of trustees, left to right: Puneet Plaha, Stephen Warrington, Jack Jarvis, Kevin Higgs, Chris Baker.**

In accordance with clause 9 of the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006:

(i) There must be at least three trustees. Apart from the first trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution of the trustees passed at a special meeting called under clause 15 of this deed.

(ii) In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

(iii) The trustees must keep a record of the name and address and the dates of appointment, reappointment and retirement of each trustee.

(iv) The trustees must make available to each new trustee, on his or her first appointment:

  (a) a copy of this deed and any amendments made to it

  (b) a copy of the charity's latest report and statement of accounts.

There are no exemptions from disclosure applicable to or within this report, and neither the charity nor any of its trustees are acting as custodian trustees.

Now in our 19th year of operation, we have an established national footprint across all elements of our activity. This is delivered with public benefit at the heart by a professional team with a professional leadership structure.

Our management

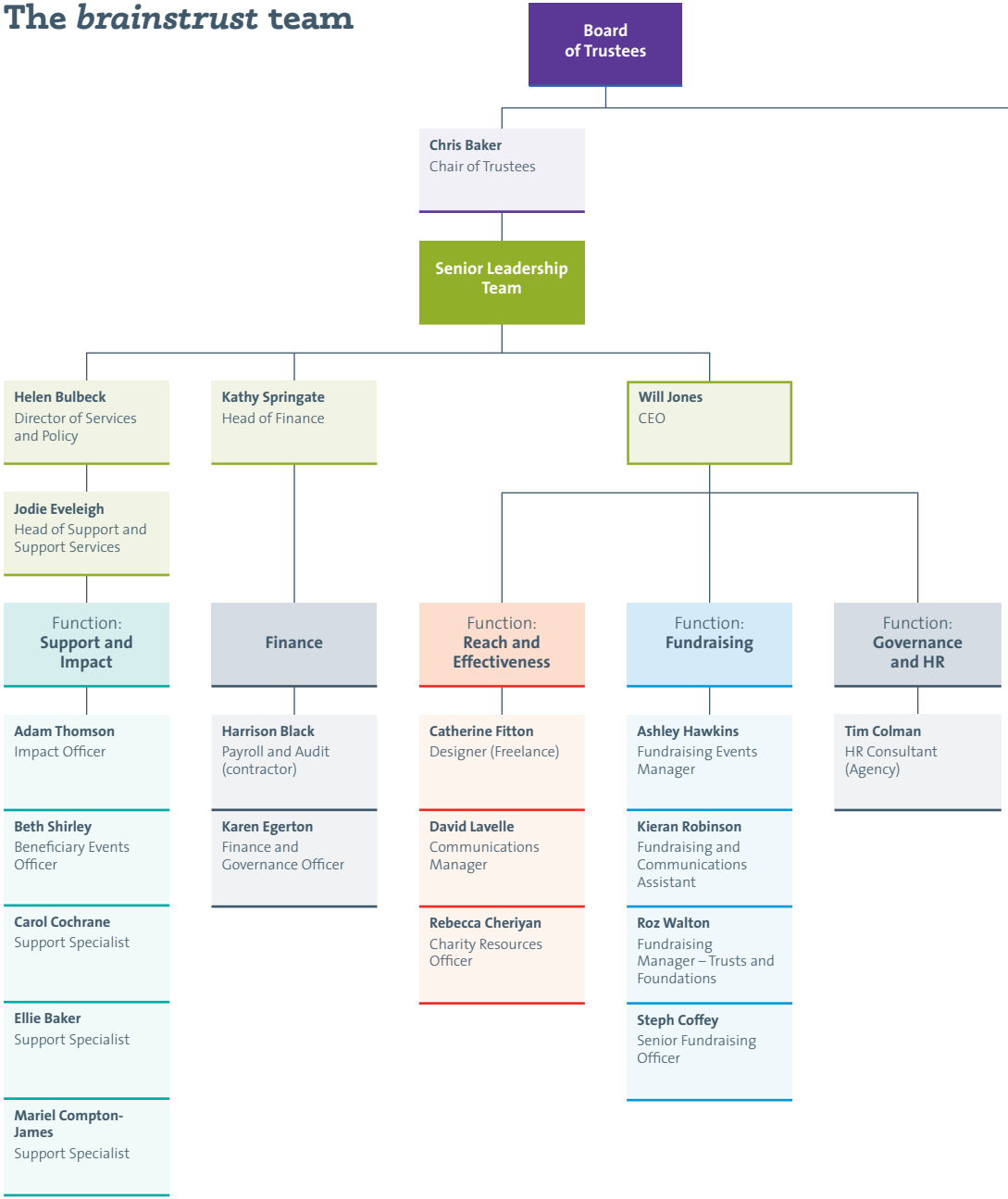
Leading the way

This leadership team and trustees have a clear mandate to:

- set an example
- look after people
- take ownership
- provide clarity
- make good decisions
- point the way
- build the future.

brainstrust has a stable, experienced and committed leadership team who are aligned in delivering our mission and who are the strongest advocates of our vision and values. Day to day, the leadership team work to promote, develop and instil purpose, autonomy and mastery throughout the organisation through a 'tight-loose' approach, which is manifested in tightly defined objectives for each member of the team but loosely defined method. This allows people to work the way that suits them best to achieve the right goals for *brainstrust* and our beneficiaries.

The *brainstrust* team



brainstrust senior staff contacts

Will Jones, Chief Executive, will@brainstrust.org.uk

Dr Helen Bulbeck, Director of Services and Policy, helen@brainstrust.org.uk

Kathy Springate, Head of Finance, kathy@brainstrust.org.uk

Jodie Eveleigh, Head of Support, jodie@brainstrust.org.uk

Incidents and reporting

For the year in review, and indeed for the duration of the organisation's history, we have had no reportable incidents relating to our fundraising, our service or our internal operations. We have in place policies and procedures for managing, reporting and escalating incidents and complaints. The following are available on request:

- Whistleblowing policy
- Complaints procedure – patient services
- Complaints procedure – fundraising
- Complaints policy – staff
- Complaints policy – volunteers

Registered charity number: 1114634

Report of the Trustees and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 for *brainstrust*

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

brainstrust – Contents of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

Structure, governance and management

Governing document
The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Reference and administrative details

Registered Charity number
1114634

Principal address
4 Yvery Court
Castle Road
Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO31 7QG

Trustees
C Baker
K Higgs
S Warrington
P Plaha
J L Jarvis
M Barrington Ward (appointed 28.5.25)
C Davies (appointed 28.5.25)

Auditors
Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

brainstrust is also a Scottish Charity, SC044642, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Trustees' Responsibility Statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

brainstrust – Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2025

Trustees' Responsibility Statement – continued

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).

Under charity law the trustees 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 charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable 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 charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and The Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. 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.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 28th September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

C Baker – Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of *brainstrust* (the 'charity') for the year ended 31st March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31st March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity 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 charity'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 trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which 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 charity'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 charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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 the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

As outlined above, our objective is to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements and irregularities. Whilst not a guarantee that such instances will be detected, our risk based approach, using systematic testing methods, judgement, communication with management, professional scepticism, observation of controls and systems, and audit experience/knowledge, allows us to be satisfied that our procedures are highly capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

Date: 30th September 2025

brainstrust – Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2025 Total funds £**	2024 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	**418,546**	**–**	**418,546**	335,021
Other trading activities	3	**331,164**	**26,679**	**357,843**	316,127
Investment income	4	**2,867**	**–**	**2,867**	1,302
Total		**752,577**	**26,679**	**779,256**	652,450
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	5	**96,398**	**477**	**96,875**	82,745
Charitable activities	6				
Charity activities		**586,466**	**41,382**	**627,848**	633,493
Other		**14,457**	**–**	**14,457**	14,287
Total		**697,321**	**41,859**	**739,180**	730,525
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**55,256**	**(15,180)**	**40,076**	(78,075)
Transfers between funds	18	**9,039**	**(9,039)**	**–**	–
Net movement in funds		**64,295**	**(24,219)**	**40,076**	(78,075)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**121,593**	**404,439**	**526,032**	604,107
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**185,888**	**380,220**	**566,108**	526,032

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Balance Sheet 31st March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2025 Total funds £**	2024 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	**5,700**	**–**	**5,700**	1,089
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	13	**45,524**	**–**	**45,524**	54,735
Cash at bank		**167,337**	**555,220**	**722,557**	515,920
		212,861	**555,220**	**768,081**	570,655
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	**(29,781)**	**(175,000)**	**(204,781)**	(32,403)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**183,080**	**380,220**	**563,300**	538,252
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**188,780**	**380,220**	**569,000**	539,341
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	15	**(2,892)**	**–**	**(2,892)**	(13,309)
NET ASSETS		**185,888**	**380,220**	**566,108**	526,032
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds				**185,888**	121,593
Restricted funds				**380,220**	404,439
TOTAL FUNDS				**566,108**	526,032

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 28th September 2025 and were signed on its behalf by: **C Baker** – Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2025

	Notes	**2025 £**	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	**220,263**	(62,443)
Interest paid		**(479)**	(727)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		**219,784**	(63,170)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		**(5,844)**	–
Interest received		**2,867**	1,302
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		**(2,977)**	1,302
Cash flows from financing activities			
Loan repayments in year		**(10,170)**	(9,920)
Net cash used in financing activities		**(10,170)**	(9,920)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**206,637**	(71,788)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		**515,920**	587,708
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**722,557**	515,920

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2025

1. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	**40,076**	(78,075)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**1,233**	867
Interest received	**(2,867)**	(1,302)
Interest paid	**479**	727
Decrease in debtors	**9,211**	22,976
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**172,131**	(7,636)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operations	**220,263**	(62,443)

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.24 £	Cash flow £	**At 31.3.25 £**
Net cash			
Cash at bank	**515,920**	**206,637**	**722,557**
	515,920	**206,637**	**722,557**
Debt			
Debts falling due within 1 year	**(9,922)**	**(247)**	**(10,169)**
Debts falling due after 1 year	**(13,309)**	**10,417**	**(2,892)**
	(23,231)	**10,170**	**(13,061)**
Total	**492,689**	**216,807**	**709,496**

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, 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 financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grant income is recognised when received. In the event that a grant is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Legacy gifts are recognised on a case by case basis following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title to the asset having been transferred to the charity.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings -25% on cost

continued ...

1. Accounting policies – continued

Taxation
The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. Donations and legacies

	2025 £	2024 £
Donations	**76,469**	88,928
Grants from awarding entities	**244,572**	162,644
Corporate grants and donations	**32,381**	28,412
Gift Aid tax recovered	**54,431**	44,976
Legacies	**10,693**	10,061
	418,546	335,021

3. Other trading activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Fundraising events	**83,292**	88,931
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**12,011**	14,331
Sponsored activities	**235,860**	193,125
Activities of partner groups	**26,680**	19,740
	357,843	316,127

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 – continued

4. Investment income

	2025 £	2024 £
Deposit account interest	**2,867**	1,302

5. Raising funds

Raising donations and legacies

	2025 £	2024 £
Fundraising fees	**16,094**	14,745
Promotional expenses	**45,835**	39,679
	61,929	54,424

Other trading activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Trading costs and purchases	**7,388**	7,580
Event costs	**6,671**	8,393
Sponsored activities costs	**20,887**	12,348
	34,946	28,321
Aggregate amounts	**96,875**	82,745

6. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Charity activities	**625,211**	**2,637**	**627,848**

continued ...

7. Support costs

	Governance costs £
Other resources expended	**14,457**
Charity activities	
	2,637
	17,094

8. Auditors' remuneration

	2025 £	2024 £
Fees payable to the charity's auditors for the audit of the charity's financial statements	**3,100**	3,000
Auditors' remuneration for non audit work	**2,172**	2,480

9. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st March 2025 nor for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st March 2025 nor for the year ended 31st March 2024.

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 – continued

10. Staff costs

Total gross salaries, benefits in kind and employers national insurance costs for the year ending 31st March 2025 were £419,109 (2024 – £459,090).

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Fundraising	**4**	4
Charitable Activities	**8**	9
Governance	**1**	1
Other	**1**	1
	14	15

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

continued ...

11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	335,021	–	335,021
Other trading activities	296,590	19,537	316,127
Investment income	1,302	–	1,302
Total	632,913	19,537	652,450
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	82,539	206	82,745
Charitable activities			
Charity activities			
	621,522	11,971	633,493
Other	14,287	–	14,287
Total	718,348	12,177	730,525
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(85,435)	7,360	(78,075)
Transfers between funds	2,000	(2,000)	–
Net movement in funds	(83,435)	5,360	(78,075)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	205,029	399,078	604,107
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	121,594	404,438	526,032

continued ...

12. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Website £	Totals £
COST			
At 1st April 2024	**1,905**	**11,176**	**13,081**
Additions	**–**	**5,844**	**5,844**
At 31st March 2025	**1,905**	**17,020**	**18,925**
DEPRECIATION			
At 1st April 2024	**1,708**	**10,284**	**11,992**
Charge for year	**103**	**1,130**	**1,233**
At 31st March 2025	**1,811**	**11,414**	**13,225**
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31st March 2025	**94**	**5,606**	**5,700**
At 31st March 2024	**197**	**892**	**1,089**

13. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	**11,950**	16,356
Other debtors	**566**	6,773
Prepayments	**33,008**	31,606
	45,524	54,735

continued ...

14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	**5,506**	9,831
Other creditors	**199,275**	22,572
	204,781	32,403

Other creditors includes a balance of £175,000 in respect of an endowment received, in the year, from the Edward Gostling Fund. Under the operative provisions of the deed of gift, it is possible for the Foundation to request full repayment of this amount, in the event of those terms not being satisfied. This potential liability is limited to a 5 year period from the date of the gift.

15. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Other creditors	**2,892**	13,309

16. Loans

An analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year on demand:		
Other loans	**10,169**	9,922
Amounts falling due between two and five years:		
Other loans – 1–5 years	**2,892**	13,309

17. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Within one year	**26,810**	26,810
Between one and five years	**2,234**	29,045
	29,044	55,855

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 – continued

18. Movement in funds

	At 1.4.24 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.25 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	**121,593**	**55,256**	**9,039**	**185,888**
Restricted funds				
Fund A	**967**	**1,154**	**–**	**2,121**
Fund E	**83,178**	**(2,217)**	**–**	**80,961**
Fund H	**27,263**	**349**	**–**	**27,612**
Fund I	**289,631**	**(20,479)**	**(9,039)**	**260,113**
Fund J	**581**	**8**	**–**	**589**
Fund L	**2,819**	**(1,582)**	**–**	**1,237**
Fund M	**–**	**7,587**	**–**	**7,587**
	404,439	**(15,180)**	**(9,039)**	**380,220**
TOTAL FUNDS	**526,032**	**40,076**	**–**	**566,108**

continued ...

18. Movement in funds – continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	**752,577**	**(697,321)**	**55,256**
Restricted funds			
Fund A	**1,154**	**–**	**1,154**
Fund E	**100**	**(2,317)**	**(2,217)**
Fund H	**383**	**(34)**	**349**
Fund I	**4,533**	**(25,012)**	**(20,479)**
Fund J	**8**	**–**	**8**
Fund L	**12,693**	**(14,275)**	**(1,582)**
Fund M	**7,808**	**(221)**	**7,587**
	26,679	**(41,859)**	**(15,180)**
TOTAL FUNDS	**779,256**	**(739,180)**	**40,076**

continued ...

18. Movement in funds – continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	205,029	(85,436)	2,000	121,593
Restricted funds				
Fund A	713	2,254	(2,000)	967
Fund E	82,258	920	–	83,178
Fund H	27,039	224	–	27,263
Fund I	286,960	2,671	–	289,631
Fund J	2,108	(1,527)	–	581
Fund L	–	2,819	–	2,819
	399,078	7,361	(2,000)	404,439
TOTAL FUNDS	604,107	(78,075)	–	526,032

continued ...

18. Movement in funds – continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	632,913	(718,349)	(85,436)
Restricted funds			
Fund A	2,254	–	2,254
Fund E	2,019	(1,099)	920
Fund H	362	(138)	224
Fund I	3,872	(1,201)	2,671
Fund J	3,169	(4,696)	(1,527)
Fund L	7,861	(5,042)	2,819
	19,537	(12,176)	7,361
TOTAL FUNDS	652,450	(730,525)	(78,075)

continued ...

18. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.25 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	205,029	(30,180)	11,039	185,888
Restricted funds				
Fund A	713	3,408	(2,000)	2,121
Fund E	82,258	(1,297)	–	80,961
Fund H	27,039	573	–	27,612
Fund I	286,960	(17,808)	(9,039)	260,113
Fund J	2,108	(1,519)	–	589
Fund L	–	1,237	–	1,237
Fund M	–	7,587	–	7,587
	399,078	(7,819)	(11,039)	380,220
TOTAL FUNDS	604,107	(37,999)	–	566,108

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 – continued

18. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,385,490	(1,415,670)	(30,180)
Restricted funds			
Fund A	3,408	–	3,408
Fund E	2,119	(3,416)	(1,297)
Fund H	745	(172)	573
Fund I	8,405	(26,213)	(17,808)
Fund J	3,177	(4,696)	(1,519)
Fund L	20,554	(19,317)	1,237
Fund M	7,808	(221)	7,587
	46,216	(54,035)	(7,819)
TOTAL FUNDS	1,431,706	(1,469,705)	(37,999)

Nature and purpose of funds

General Fund
The 'free reserves' after allowing for all restricted funds.

Restricted Funds
All other restricted funds have been created through fundraising or donations for the benefit of individual brain tumour patients. The charity uses the funds for direct treatment or to support research relating to the patients' needs.

19. Related party disclosures

During the year the charity purchased services from Fitton Holman Creative Limited totalling £13,905 (2024 – £14,040). The company is directed by one of the co-founder's sister, Catherine Fitton.

The co-founder's daughter, Leonora Stewart, supplied editorial services during the year to the charity totalling £475 (2024 – £1,700) at a commercial rate.

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	**76,469**	88,928
Grants from awarding entities	**244,572**	162,644
Corporate grants and donations	**32,381**	28,412
Gift Aid tax recovered	**54,431**	44,976
Legacies	**10,693**	10,061
	418,546	335,021
Other trading activities		
Fundraising events	**83,292**	88,931
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**12,011**	14,331
Sponsored activities	**235,860**	193,125
Activities of partner groups	**26,680**	19,740
	357,843	316,127
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	**2,867**	1,302
Total incoming resources	**779,256**	652,450
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Fundraising fees	**16,094**	14,745
Promotional expenses	**45,835**	39,679
	61,929	54,424
Other trading activities		
Trading costs and purchases	**7,388**	7,580
Event costs	**6,671**	8,393
Sponsored activities costs	**20,887**	12,348
	34,946	28,321
Charitable activities		
Medical grants and costs	**700**	1,545
Carried forward	**700**	1,545

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Charitable activities		
Brought forward	**700**	1,545
Patient support and staffing	**376,927**	404,073
Salaries	**157,680**	157,572
Travel	**26,208**	15,232
Administration	**34,520**	32,814
Office rent & rates	**27,943**	18,731
Fixtures and fittings	**103**	103
Depn of website	**1,130**	764
	625,211	630,834
Support costs		
Governance costs		
Auditors' remuneration	**3,100**	3,000
Auditors' remuneration for non audit work	**2,172**	2,480
Insurance	**2,637**	2,659
Other	**8,706**	8,080
Bank loan interest	**479**	727
	17,094	16,946
Total resources expended	**739,180**	730,525
Net income/(expenditure)	**40,076**	(78,075)

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Get in touch

Helping you

Talk to our team 24/7 on **01983 292 405**, or email **hello@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Helping us

Make a donation at **brainstrust.org.uk/donate**, call us on **01983 292 405** during office hours, or email **fundraising@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Registration

brainstrust is a registered charitable trust, registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as Charity No. 1114634, registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SC044642.

Registered address

brainstrust, 4 Yvery Court, Castle Road, Cowes PO31 7QG

www.brainstrust.org.uk
www.braintumourhub.org.uk

Regional office (north of England)

brainstrust, C19–21 Joseph's Well, Hannover Lane, Westgate, Leeds LS3 1AB

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Signature:

Full name: **Christopher John Baker**

Position: **Chair of the Board of Trustees**

Date: **28th September 2025**

brainstrust
the brain cancer people

brainstrust is a registered charitable trust – registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as Charity No. 1114634, registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SC044642.
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Trusted Information Creator
Patient Information Forum

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

BRAINSTRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1114634

Accounts

brainstrust
the brain cancer people

Trustees' annual report and accounts

1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024

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Our challenge

I struggle with multiple issues – fatigue, physical and mental problems – but I try to focus on healing and the road to recovery.

Patient

I have experienced some heavy pressure type headaches. I found this and my balance were often worse if I didn't have my afternoon nap.

Patient

What am I not struggling with? I suffer daily symptoms, which range from tinnitus, dizziness, head pressure and pain, which frightens my husband.

Patient

Six weeks of radiotherapy, followed by six rounds of chemotherapy, would start in September. I was petrified, though, for around a month.

Patient

I had to be on the drugs for two years at least, as my tumour was small but in an area associated with seizures. It devastated me. Everything caught up with me. It was the identity shift that was difficult – I wasn't prepared for going from a 'surgery survivor' to 'epileptic'.

Patient

My diagnosis was delivered over the phone by my GP, which was incredibly hard to deal with. The best way to describe my feelings at the time is a mixture of fear and an overwhelming sense of confusion, as how could this be happening to me? I had just finished my degree, which I had worked hard for. I was starting a new job, which I was excited for, at the end of the week, and I had just turned 24 years of age a few weeks prior. It felt like such a cruel twist of fate for this to happen as my life was just coming together how I wanted.

Patient

Over 80,000 people are living with a brain tumour in the UK. Only 12% of adults survive beyond five years following a diagnosis. Brain tumours reduce life expectancy by an average of 27 years, and they kill more children than any other cancer, yet treatment for a brain tumour is brutal and harmful. It hasn't changed in 40 years.

The impact of brain tumours is under-reported, support and research under-funded, and the true impact of the disease under-acknowledged and misunderstood.

When you hear the words 'you have a brain tumour', you face both a potential cancer diagnosis and also the prospect of progressive and debilitating neurological disease. You are afraid, you are alone, you are confused, and your life changes dramatically in an instant.

Today, *brainstrust* is here to help people live their best possible lives with a brain tumour in the face of these stark facts. We help people thrive and have their best possible day. We are also here for tomorrow. We hope for a world in the future where brain tumours have little impact. But we know that hope is not a strategy. We support clinical research and work with our community of experts to improve investment and build capacity so that harm is reduced, care is improved at hospital and at home, and people are more confident and able to take control. Only then can life with a brain tumour be fulfilling and enjoyable, and people who have heard the words 'you have a brain tumour' are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

This is our challenge.

Strategic report

Introduction from Chair and CEO

Thank you for taking an interest in *brainstrust*'s work.

In many respects, the year in review has been one of the most challenging in *brainstrust*'s history. Awareness of our challenge and our work has never been stronger, though as a result, demand for our support has never been greater. Furthermore, the complexity of needs within our community has grown. Driving this complexity is a struggling healthcare system, greater patient and family engagement in care and condition and a growing landscape of novel treatments and therapies to explore in the UK and internationally, particularly for high-grade brain tumour patients.

Concurrently we have faced yet more existential challenge with the global pandemic, swiftly followed by severe and sudden increases in the cost of business and cost of living.

However, in anticipation of ongoing uncertainty, we built reserves throughout previous years and as a result have been able to rise swiftly and decisively to these challenges.

We have applied reserves to sustain our service, managed costs meticulously, and simultaneously we have refocused the way we deliver our service. This has all been to the advantage of our beneficiaries. We have increased our impact for the brain tumour community by shifting to a 'diagnosis-led' mode of service delivery, with coaching at the heart, and as a result have become more effective and efficient.

The second half of the year saw a return to fundraising growth. We began to rebuild reserves and financial resilience, and we are supporting our growing community of people with a brain tumour and their caregivers more effectively than ever.

Despite the devastating circumstances our beneficiaries find themselves in having heard the words 'you have a brain tumour', *brainstrust* remains a happy, vibrant and progressive place to work and to volunteer. It is the passion, energy and focus of our team and volunteers throughout the year that have enabled us to drive change within and outwith for the people who need us. The unwavering focus on impact and outcomes for our community has enabled us to adapt promptly to our context and ride out ongoing and existential instability.

We must also acknowledge with deep sadness the death of *brainstrust* co-founder Peter Bulbeck, in August 2023. Peter's commitment and contribution to *brainstrust*'s growth has been astonishing. His influence fostered a powerful team culture, impeccable governance and a first-class financial track record. Peter remained a close friend and colleague to us all and our community until just days before his death. He held a vital role as head of governance, compliance and HR and was our chief financial officer.

While devastating to lose a member of the *brainstrust* family, this news was not unexpected – in recent years our board and executive leadership team have been able to plan carefully so that our finance and governance capabilities have not been unduly impacted.

We now look forward to the year ahead, where we enter the final year of our current 5 five-year strategic cycle. Our immediate goals are to sustain our return to growth so that we can reach more people, and deliver more impact and drive meaningful change for everyone in the UK with a brain tumour diagnosis. This is coupled with an ambition to explore in depth with our collaborators and beneficiaries what it is they need from us, and what it is that *brainstrust* needs to thrive in the years to come. We are looking forward with new energy, expertise and enthusiasm to the next five years.

We hope you enjoy learning about *brainstrust*, our impact, our challenge and our achievement in the pages that follow.

Thank you all, sincerely and as ever, for your support.

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees

Will Jones
Chief Executive

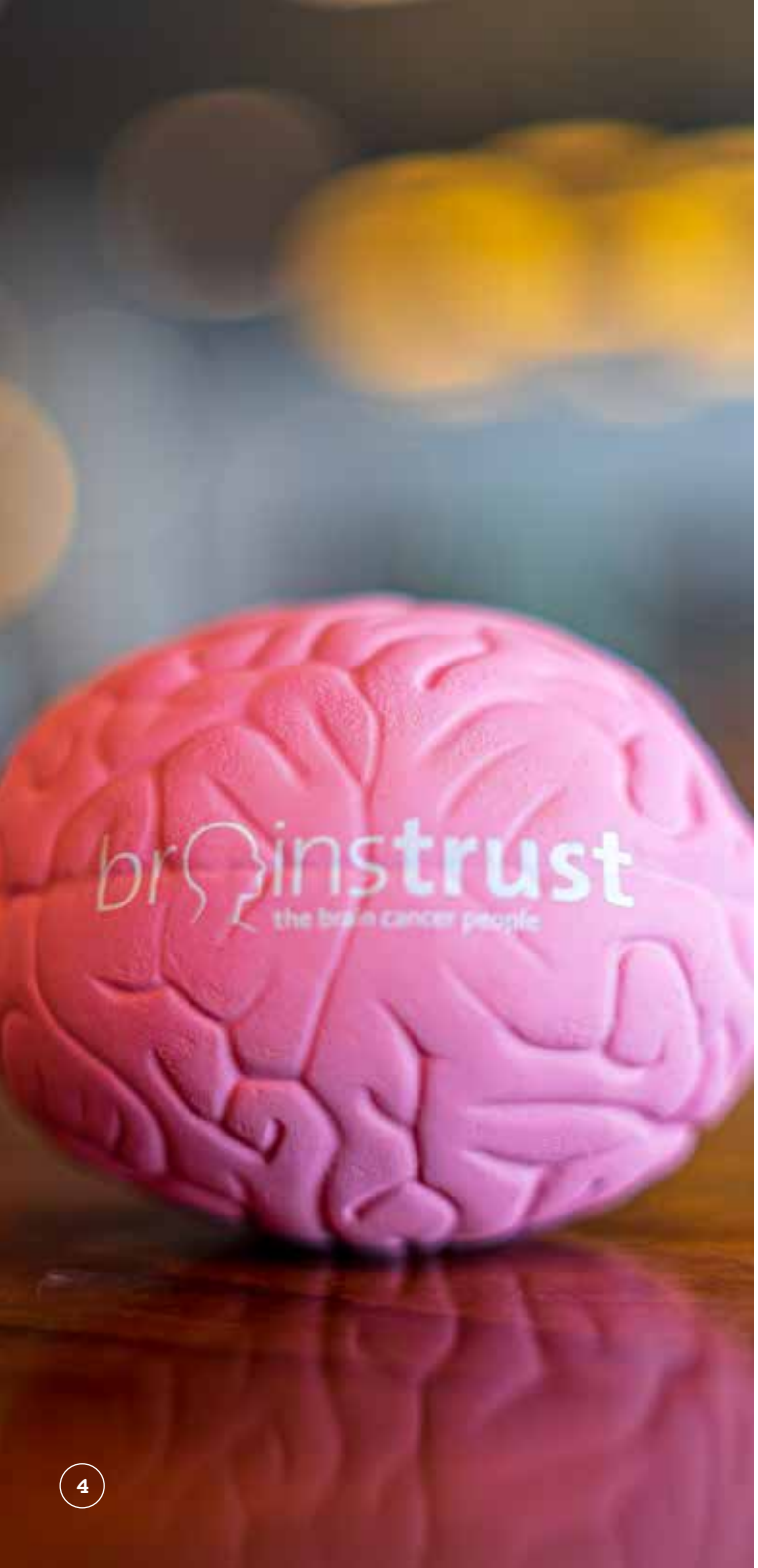
Thank you so much for your comprehensive and massively helpful reply; I can't tell you how helpful this is to me. It feels as though a light has been switched on and I can see potential routes to explore, including support for carers and family.

I very quickly wanted to reply to you as a courtesy, and I will certainly follow up your ideas and suggestions. I will be sharing this within the family, and together we can discuss options.

What you have offered us here is a way forward. Before this I feared I would go down an internet rabbit hole with no idea what I would be faced with.

Once again my profound gratitude for your help and advice and my wider gratitude for the brilliant work you and your organisation are doing for all those impacted by this condition.

Feedback from a caregiver



Our purpose and our work

Our strategy: First, we are people

In April 2019, we launched our current strategy. Thirteen years in the making, this strategy, 'First, we are people', puts laser focus on the human, practical and cultural contexts in which people find themselves following a brain tumour diagnosis. It sets out our journey to help people living with a brain tumour become less isolated, more in control, more involved with their clinical care and condition, and better resourced.

The human context sees a forgotten group of people who, following diagnosis, see themselves fall into a chasm between improving clinical care and the scientific pursuit of a cure. In acknowledging that before we are patients, we are people, we can help people navigate this void, for when we are patients, we are only patients for a small amount of the time. We want to do things that people want to do, not always the things that patients have to do.

The 'all together, stay calm in a crisis and sort out anything' me has been completely taken off guard. I am so lost.

Patient

In practical terms, we know from our close work with our community of people with a brain tumour, and their caregivers, that a brain tumour is isolating, the journey is confusing, communicating well is hard, behaviour and personality change devastates relationships, fatigue impacts 95% of those diagnosed, and there is a huge financial impact as work stops. These are just some of the challenges, and these challenges are not addressed in either the laboratory or the hospital. They are addressed at home, where help is hard to find.

How we got here

Our direction has been set in consultation with our community. We 'asked the experts' what they needed in order to understand what matters most.

We heard:

- You spend more time being a person than you do being a patient.
- As a person, you are more resourceful, more proactive and more confident in the face of challenges.

Louise is a most extraordinary communicator. I particularly like the way she relates what she is talking about to which part of the brain is relevant. It makes it all far more understandable. I hope to participate in the upcoming sessions. I've signed up for them.

Beneficiary feedback on *brainstrust* hypnotherapy

- Emotions and values drive your behaviour, not just clinicians. What matters to you is more important than what is the matter with you.
- People look at opportunities. As a person, you grow. Patients tend to focus on problems, and barriers are hard to overcome unless they can be treated or medicated.

Our current strategy has been co-created with our community and delivered with its support. This strategy is helping us to achieve our mission – we are here for a world in which people with a brain tumour are involved, resourced, supported, confident and connected. They are living the life they want, because they are people first and patients second.

The experts we asked

The conclusions and decisions reached in the development of our strategy result from conversations and day-to-day meetings and experiences over a six-month period with the following stakeholders:

- beneficiaries – people living with a brain tumour and their caregivers
- supporters
- current and prospective philanthropic funders
- other charities
- *brainstrust* team members and trustees
- national research bodies
- local and national research funders
- clinical experts from all specialities
- campaign groups.

Looking ahead

In 2024, work has begun with our community and collaborators on establishing our strategic direction for 2025 and beyond. Awareness of our work, understanding of our challenge, our scale, our reach and our impact have all grown during this period. *brainstrust* has never been more needed.

I have just received the brain box, which I must say is absolutely fantastic as a collective resource!

Navigating the complexities of brain tumours and especially how I will feel post treatment/surgery has been daunting but the resources that I have now have helped massively. The diary will be especially useful for tracking how I'm feeling/treatment etc.

Patient

Key achievements

Our support

I feel very fortunate to have the support of brainstrust. *They are the only brain tumour charity focused on providing emotional support throughout the brain tumour journey. Helping people find out what is most important to them and encouraging them to develop resilience and engagement with their own treatment is empowering and the absolutely most useful thing that can be done when someone is living the journey.*

Brain tumour patient feedback following coaching with *brainstrust*

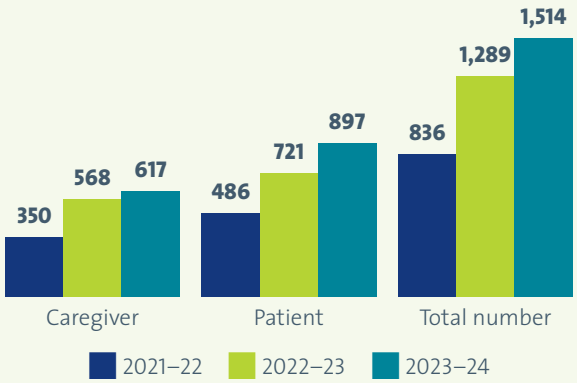
Reaching more people, sooner.

Awareness of *brainstrust* and our work is increasing, with more people than ever before accessing our support and information.

This is the result of concerted work to make sure we reach more people sooner. This is in response to community feedback, which consistently tells us 'I wish I'd known about your support earlier on my journey'.

The number of people with a brain tumour that we are helping each year is increasing, and the rate of increase is also increasing. In 2023–24, 897 people with a brain tumour and 617 caregivers contacted *brainstrust* directly for support. This total of 1,514 people accessing our coaching, events or helpline is a 17% increase.

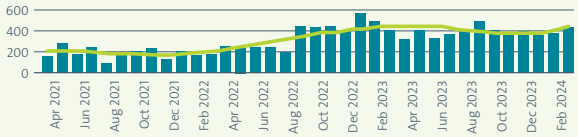
Number of people seeking direct support who are new to *brainstrust*



Once people have contacted *brainstrust* for help, we are here for them wherever they are on their brain tumour journey, and whenever they need us. At the end of the year, we were helping around 400 people a month. This represents an upward trend from a slight downturn in activity levels in the first half of the year. At this point

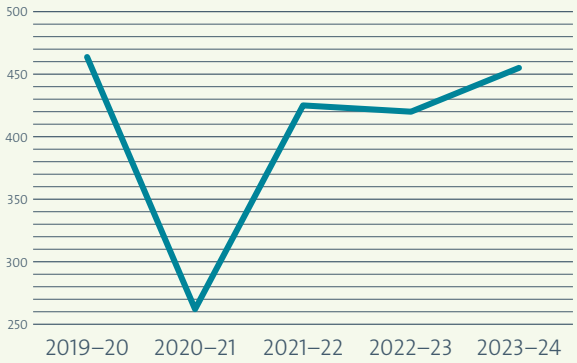
inflation, the increasing cost of our work, and the impact of the inflated cost of living on supporter fundraising meant we had to restrict and then restructure the way we offered our service. We are now working as effectively and efficiently as we can to meet the complex needs of those people who seek our help. Over the year in review, our support team helped 4,689 people, an 8% increase on the preceding year, and double the number of the year before that (2021–22: 2,339 people).

Number of people helped by *brainstrust* each month since 2021



Everyone who seeks support from *brainstrust* can receive a brain box free of charge if they would like one. The contents are tailored to their circumstances, and the toolkit helps them to take control, be more resourced, understand their clinical care and feel supported. In 2023–24 we sent 453 brain boxes to people who needed them. This is nearly double the number (262) that we were able to send at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020–21, and consistent with pre-pandemic levels.

Brain boxes sent to those that need them



As the number of people we help increases, we are working hard to make sure we are working efficiently to cope with scale.

Increasingly we are hearing that many people find the information they are looking for online at **brainstrust.org.uk** and that this information is helping them to feel better resourced and more in control.

In 2023–24, 125,405 people conducted 306,311 pageviews on **brainstrust.org.uk**. This is an increase of 28% in users on the preceding year (2022–23: 98,253) and a 42% increase in pageviews. More people are looking at more information on **brainstrust.org.uk**.

The most-accessed pages share information about brain tumour symptoms, end-of-life care, the different types of brain tumours and the stories of brain tumour patients and their caregivers.

Three thousand people have now provided feedback on our online information. Of these people, 89% tell us that the information helped them to be more resourced, more confident or more in control.

Pro-contra feedback on most-accessed online information

Page title	Pro	Contra	Helpful
The brain box	**886** (95.78%)	**39** (4.22%)	**95.78%**
End-of-life care	**597** (91.28%)	**57** (8.72%)	**91.28%**
Anatomy and tumour types	**149** (79.26%)	**39** (20.74%)	**79.26%**
Exercise and rest	**103** (87.29%)	**15** (12.71%)	**87.29%**
Brain tumour symptoms and diagnosis	**97** (93.27%)	**7** (6.73%)	**93.27%**
Recovering from surgery	**58** (71.60%)	**23** (28.40%)	**71.60%**
Information about meningiomas	**57** (82.61%)	**12** (17.39%)	**82.61%**
Download and resources	**44** (89.80%)	**5** (10.20%)	**89.80%**

To be as accessible as possible, to as many people as possible, and to ensure we are operating as efficiently as we can in the face of increasing costs, we have been making a concerted effort to signpost our online information alongside our printed resources. Anyone can access our information any way they wish, and we are seeing a significant increase in downloads of digital versions of our revered printed information. Twelve thousand digital (PDF) resources were downloaded during the year, a 73% increase on the previous year (2022–23: 6,928).

brainstrust *has been instrumental in helping us accept and come to terms with the diagnosis of a brain tumour and the treatment. We have accessed the webinar meet-ups, which has helped us hear people's experiences of going through it and what to expect and hearing positive stories as well as the harsh reality. Having a peer supporter has also been so helpful in being able to ask those awkward questions. We have met some brilliant, inspirational people through it, who we chat to regularly. My partner has really benefited from speaking to others going through it, and I am so grateful for this. Without* brainstrust *we would be a lot less positive and probably a lot more fearful than we are! I can't thank them enough for the work they do and the difference they make. They are truly life savers.*

Brain tumour patient

The impact we are having for the people who need us

Our approach to impact

There are nine pillars that drive our efforts to understand the impact of our work.

Accountability: We are trusted to deliver impact for the brain tumour community with resources donated by individuals, companies and other charities. Measuring and reporting on our impact allows us to demonstrate how effectively we are using these resources to achieve our goals.

Application of our resources: Many charities are constrained by limited available resources. By measuring impact, we can identify which of our efforts are delivering the most significant results. Our impact data guides decision-making on how we allocate resources for maximum effectiveness.

Improvement: Regularly assessing impact enables us to identify areas for improvement. By understanding what is working well and what isn't, we refine our strategies, modify programmes and enhance our approach to better serve the brain tumour community.

Learning and adaptation: The landscape in which we operate changes rapidly. Measuring impact helps us to stay agile and responsive to evolving needs. When we can track changes in our beneficiaries' lives, we are better equipped to adapt our work appropriately and with confidence.

Advocacy with evidence: When we are pushing for policy changes or increased funding, measuring impact provides evidence of the outcomes we are achieving or demonstrates the gaps that we need to close.

Effective communication: Sharing our impact data allows us to communicate our achievements effectively. It makes our stories relatable and understandable, enabling us to connect with a broader audience and inspire people to join our cause.

Engaged supporters: People and institutions want to know that their contributions are making a difference. Impact measurement provides donors with a clear picture of how their support is creating positive change.

Strategic planning: Impact data informs our planning. We can set realistic and achievable goals when we have a clear understanding of the outcomes we can deliver based on past performance.

A learning culture: A focus on impact cultivates a culture of continuous learning and improvement. We are more open to experimentation and innovation as we seek out the best possible ways to achieve our mission.

Measuring impact is about maximising the effectiveness of our work, ensuring that our resources are used efficiently in generating positive change for people with a brain tumour.

We have worked hard over recent years to create a culture where impact is not only at the centre of our processes but also a central part of the conversations we have with the people who need us. Tracking impact is mutually beneficial.

Methodology

We track progress against six indicators. These have been defined as being important to quality of life by our community of patients and their caregivers. In turn, these indicators support the four priorities in our strategy. These six indicators are:

- engagement with care and condition
- reduced isolation
- engagement with communities
- creating control
- feeling supported
- feeling resourced.

We learn how people are doing against these indicators using our bespoke progress tracker tool. This gives us a simple, flexible and human approach to understanding impact. Progress trackers are completed and monitored collaboratively with our beneficiaries. The process isn't unobtrusive, but it is helpful. In completing a progress tracker, or multiple progress trackers, we help people to establish where the focus of our support needs to be to help them move forward. To complete a progress tracker, patients and caregivers provide a score of how they are feeling on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of our indicators. They complete multiple progress trackers on their journey with *brainstrust*, and this paints a picture of their progress.

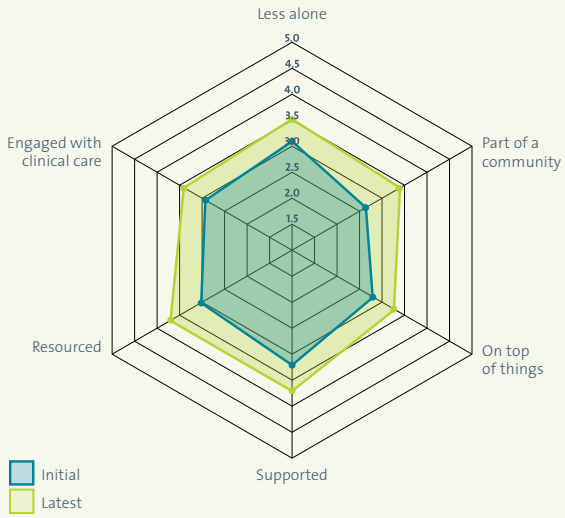
Our impact

You can see below how we have helped our community to navigate the complicated journey of living with a brain tumour diagnosis in the last year. The inner hexagon represents where people were on average when they first contacted us, and the outer hexagon represents their average latest scores.

We helped people the most in feeling a part of a community – taking the score from 2.6 to 3.4, a 20% improvement in the context of the 1 to 5 scale*. This jump represents the strength of our webinar and peer support services and also, we have learned, our fundraising events. All these activities bring our community together and connect them with others who share similar goals, challenges and experiences.

The next-highest increase comes from helping people to feel resourced, with an 18% improvement in the context of the 1 to 5 scale* (3.0 to 3.7). We're proud to offer materials that have been co-produced with our community such as our 'behaviour and personality change', 'my radiotherapy book' and 'who's in your clinical team' resources to help people feel more knowledgeable and supported. We also provide support via our brain boxes, online resources and informative webpages, which include information ranging from insights on novel therapies to the cancer pathways for young people and children.

Our impact



Impact indicator	Initial	Latest	Difference	% increase*
Less alone	3.1	3.5	0.4	**10%**
Part of a community	2.6	3.4	0.8	**20%**
On top of things	2.8	3.3	0.5	**13%**
Supported	3.2	3.7	0.5	**13%**
Resourced	3.0	3.7	0.7	**18%**
Navigating clinical care	2.9	3.4	0.5	**13%**

* Percentages shown are calculated as distanced travelled on the 1–5 scale. Each point (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4 and 4 to 5) represents a 25% change.

Overcoming isolation is still a big challenge for our community, and therefore for *brainstrust*. We aim to focus our efforts in the future on the priority of 'feeling less alone'. Here, we saw our smallest increase of 10%, from 3.1 to 3.5. We understand that at first this feels contradictory to our strongest result of helping people to feel part of a community, but feeling lonely even when surrounded by loved ones and a supportive network is still a very real challenge. We recently collaborated with an individual diagnosed with a brain tumour who captures this disconnect well: '[After a diagnosis like this] it forces you to look inwards, which does mean you live a lot in your own head'.

Our journey at *brainstrust* has been one of constant learning with, from and for our community. This data helps us understand what is most affecting an individual on their brain tumour journey. The feedback powers our personalised coaching, counselling, peer support and more. All are ways in which we help people overcome fear, engage with their challenges and care, improve their knowledge and understanding, and eliminate isolation.

PRIME – bringing people closer to research

I am proud of being in tune with the needs of the brain tumour patient community through our constant dialogue, and that this relationship goes both ways. Because of PRIME, we can help people grow and learn. My work is a conduit that helps people understand brain tumour research.

We do need to help the research community understand the value of patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE), and sometimes we are constrained by lack of capacity in our volunteer teams.

Looking ahead, we are thinking bigger, setting ambitious goals and want to make learning about brain tumour research as easy as possible.

Adam Thomson
Patient Involvement Officer,
brainstrust

In 2021, we created the Patient Research Involvement Movement (PRIME) to bridge the gap between the clinical community and brain tumour patients and their caregivers. Through PRIME, we are able to improve the quality of clinical brain tumour research, ensure trials are more likely to be funded, and contribute to a healthier landscape of treatment for the brain cancer community.

We continue to see a healthy growth in our PRIME community, going from 57 volunteer advocates and partners in 2022 to 115 in 2023 and now 151 in 2024. This community of research-primed and informed individuals is expert by experience and has made huge contributions to brain tumour research with top-level patient involvement support.

This expertise has been utilised in a vast range of projects aiming to improve care for those impacted. PRIME's input is powered by a community with a breadth of tumour types, symptom burdens, lifestyle priorities and treatment preferences.

With PRIME supporting between 15 and 30 studies at any given time, we make sure that our volunteers have plenty of opportunity to engage with new and promising projects developing in the research landscape.

We continue to improve the standard of patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in clinical research, remaining thought leaders in this space and continuing to grow our service.

PRIME Patient Research Involvement Movement

We do this by:

- collaborating with other charities, including Brain Tumour Research
- exploring new ways to share our services with clinicians
- having more conversations with researchers and research funders regarding funding for this vital service
- continuing to develop a training and webinar programme for our volunteers
- learning and adapting methods of delivering the best patient involvement.

We have continued to work in partnership with the charity Brain Tumour Research to grow this work to mutual benefit, and in the last year, we have introduced PRIME to Brain Tumour Research's community in the form of a blog, successfully inviting the community to be involved. We have also received an incredibly generous donation in the name of Lazaros Sofikitis, a young artist who passed away following a glioblastoma diagnosis. He wanted the funds raised in his name to go towards a project improving the quality of life for those diagnosed with a brain tumour in the future, and PRIME was chosen to carry on his legacy, which is integral to our work.

Since its inception, PRIME has successfully supported research applications to the value of £28.2 m, with partners who include:

A snapshot of our PRIME service in the last year

Our patient involvement and engagement support has served a range of important and pivotal projects that aim to improve care, quality of life and survival for those diagnosed. While many of these are clinical trials, we have also provided input for projects developing new technologies, studies to explore disparity of care and insights into tools and therapies for patients.

Here is a snapshot of some of our work in the last year.

BRAINatomy

BRAINatomy is a paediatric study exploring which brain regions are most and least safe to operate on in children. We have represented the patient community as a part of the PPIE team for BRAINatomy, alongside three others with lived experience, providing input and direction for study design at every stage. We also produced a video to promote and educate the community on the importance of the project.

CortexCheck

CortexCheck is an in-development medical device that would support patients and healthcare professionals with prognosis using simple blood biopsies. With ongoing support, we have provided documentation review, perspective on community need and appetite for more robust information around a patient's condition, as well as focus groups with the glioblastoma community.

Minderoo Precision Brain Tumour Programme

This project aims to integrate precision medicine into routine care in the NHS clinical setting for brain tumour patients. This would allow for a greater depth of understanding of someone's tumour type and therefore which treatments are most effective for them. While this framework was being developed, we reviewed

the proposed process and provided insight into the potential sticking points for the patient community.

Clinically Vulnerable Community Research

As part of a former NCRI working group, we supported in the collection of data from the clinically vulnerable brain cancer community to better understand their specific needs. We identified the key gaps in their care and presented a poster and a talk at BNOS to share this knowledge with specialists across the landscape of brain tumour research.

LEGATO

We support LEGATO, an international phase 3 clinical trial looking into the potential benefits of chemo-irradiation compared to chemotherapy, through regular correspondence and input on the direction and design of the trial.

The progress of PRIME

As touched on earlier, the number of volunteers reflects our steady growth, but that only tells a small part of the story. A lot of our impact can't be quantified but deserves to be celebrated.

In the last year, we represented the patient community as PPIE specialists in the Brain Tumour Research Novel Therapeutics Accelerator, twice, contributing to forward progress and exciting developments in multiple research projects. We have attended SBNS, BNOS, EANO and various other conferences and events to fly the flag of the community and ensure that any researchers who need our support know we are here to provide invaluable insight to their study design.

We have also produced academic posters both to share knowledge of the benefits of PPIE and specifically for a project exploring how we can provide better care to those who are diagnosed with a brain tumour while being clinically vulnerable – striving to ensure equity of care even for those with complicated health needs.

We have enhanced our information and resources, making sure our glioblastoma and high-grade alternative therapies webpage is up to date with as many safe, accessible and reviewed alternative treatments as possible. Alongside this, we have also made our library of research available and accessible for anyone wanting to learn more about our input into research papers that aim to increase awareness and knowledge of the community's priorities and needs, sorted by areas we determined to be most relevant to those affected the most.

We have also just begun collecting impact data to assess and guide the quality of our PRIME PPIE service. Feedback from three projects we provided robust support to have provided the following responses:

Feedback from PRIME partners and advocates

Question	Response (average) out of 10
Do you feel like the PPIE participants provided meaningful input?	9.7
Did you feel like the participants' voices were relevant?	9.7
Should this research be implemented into practice, do you expect the participants' input will change outcomes for those impacted in the future?	9
Do you feel like including PPIE in this project was an effective use of time and knowledge?	10
How valuable did you find the facilitation, organising and input from PRIME?	10

When asked to explain why these responses were submitted, the following soundbites were provided as part of the responses:

- We have already started to make changes based on the guidance and feedback received from participants in the sessions.
- *brainstrust* are always professional, approachable, enthusiastic, experts in their field, and I have learned a lot from working with them.
- Enjoyable, proactive, well organised, communicative, insightful, encouraging, pivotal. Overall an excellent experience.
- Incredibly helpful sessions with patients and caregivers across several domains of interest, including medical device design, clinical trial design and outreach efforts.
- We had a motivated patient group with experience of reviewing documents and their own experience to draw upon.

Another key change we've seen since PRIME launched over three years ago is how the process of referral to our service has evolved. In its infancy, PRIME mainly supported those we already had connections with, but through effective input and powerful patient involvement, we have quickly become the go-to for gold-standard patient and public involvement and engagement. This means that through our presence at events, social media presence and constantly reinforced reputation through word of mouth, many now find us quickly as soon as they need us.

In April 2023, a father, teacher, football coach mentor, and most importantly a great friend of mine, Phil Norman, aka Norms, – was diagnosed with pilocytic glioastrocytoma which is an intrinsic tumour at the top of the spinal cord/base of the brain. Across the planet, this type of tumour currently has 34 cases identified of its kind.

On 5 June 2023, Phil had his biopsy, and it was confirmed in September that the cancer was terminal. Phil is the most incredible human being and has had the most positive outlook after the toughest few months anyone could ever imagine. The support system around him is incredible, and most of the time, Phil has held people up around him by his charismatic nature and positivity.

The man is the kindest, most down-to-earth person I have ever met. A role model to so many people, and he will continue to be for many years to come! Phil will be back teaching in March and be the first to beat the tumour!

I am going to be running the Barcelona Half Marathon on 11 February to raise money for braintrust. *Cancer of the brain is still one of the least known forms of cancer and any support will be huge in bringing their research forward!*

Ryan Doyle, Barcelona Half Marathon – March 2024

Our influence – informing change in the future

We are here not just to alleviate challenges that face the brain tumour community in the here and now but also to work for a better world tomorrow, for people diagnosed with a brain tumour in the future. Participating in a collaborative, multidisciplinary ecosystem that strives for better support services and treatments for patients and their families allows us to contribute to improved access to care, increase research funding and enhance public awareness. Collaborative efforts between charities, healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers, and advocacy groups are making progress in managing the societal challenges posed by brain tumours in the UK.

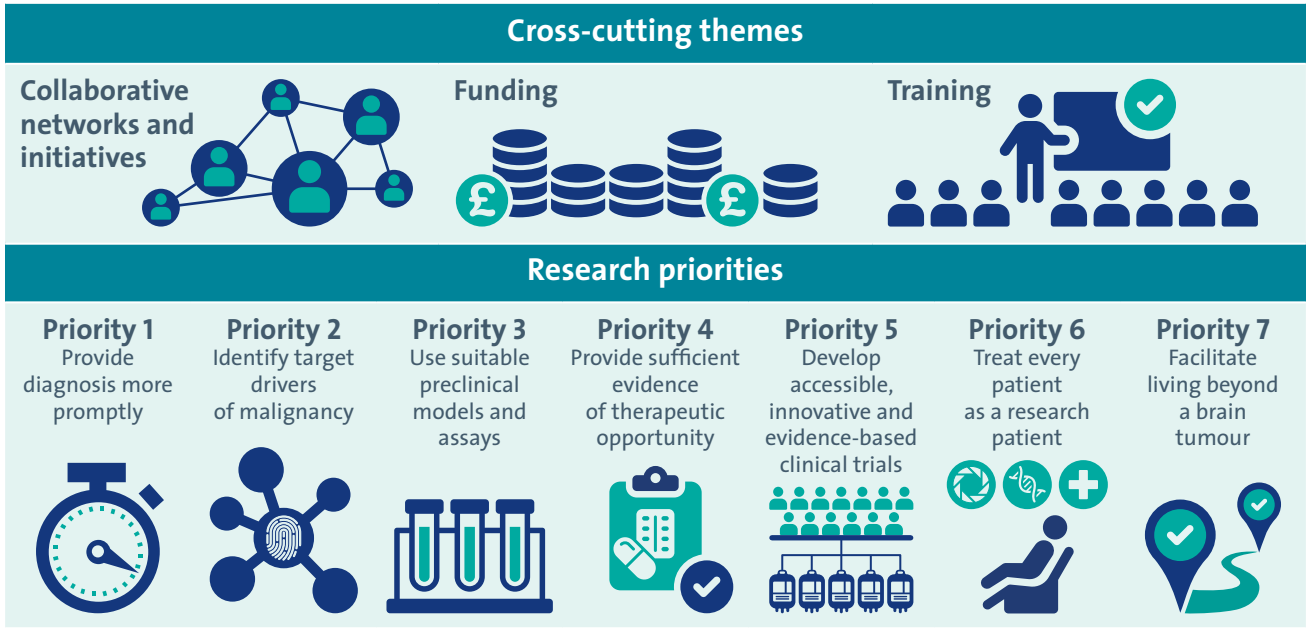
Helen Bulbeck
***brainstrust* Co-Founder and Director of Policy and Services**

The last year has brought significant evolution for the brain tumour community and reflects a period of transition, and not just politically. Even a year ago, whole-genomic sequencing seemed a world away, the development of infrastructure to deliver the green shoots that are emerging in neuro-oncology seemed an impossibility, and talk of building a national consortium that could work with national regulators, with multiple pharma partners and technology providers, was a mere whisper.

So what has changed? A seminal paper[1] was published in the last twelve months, which outlines the status, challenges and recommendations for adult brain tumour research in 2024. This paper identifies seven universal brain tumour research priorities and three cross-cutting themes:

These span the full research pipeline and patient journey and are common to brain tumour research globally.

A schematic outlining the cross-cutting themes and research for brain tumour research in the United Kingdom



1 Purshouse, Karin, Helen J. Bulbeck, Alasdair G. Rooney, Karen E. Noble, Ross D. Carruthers, Gerard Thompson, and others, 'Adult Brain Tumour Research in 2024: Status, Challenges and Recommendations', *Neuropathology and Applied Neurobiology*, 50/2 (2024).

In addition, a round-table workshop (November 2023) exploring what needs to change resulted in the publication of a report (2024)[2] that identifies the challenges and potential solutions that face adults living with a brain tumour. Together these papers have drawn a line in the sand and given direction to key policymakers and funders. They have influenced government funding, and the NIHR is about to launch a new round of funding that aligns with these priorities. *brainstrust* was a key presence in the development and authoring of these papers.

Counter to these was the demise of the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) in the spring of 2023. While unsettling and unexpected, *brainstrust* has worked closely with the NCRI patient and caregiver advocates to ensure that their voices remain front of mind in the clinical research community. Collaboratively with other brain tumour charities and the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission, we have regrouped and are launching a repurposed brain group in the autumn of 2024.

Additional turbulence was brought about by the change in political power. We have the ear of the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who has long been an advocate of the brain tumour community as a shadow minister – Wes Streeting is a warm ally, and we are well known to him.

So, the future is shaping up well; this really has been a year of transition. Building, developing, progressing, working, collaborating, delivering, communicating are the activities that resonate through discussions in the community.

Key focuses include:

1. Building a national consortium, working with multiple pharma partners to deliver precision clinical trials in glioma, covering all novel therapeutic approaches via centralised clinical trial stratification. This includes working closely with regulators (MHRA, NICE) to develop approval pathways for genomically complex rare tumours, and providing structure for a compassionate access programme that will deliver robust real-world data.
2. Building infrastructure (with NHS England Genomic Laboratory Hubs and Genomics England) to deliver multiple omic technologies to provide deep characterisation of glioma patients in clinically meaningful time frames (<3 weeks) with centralised analysis linked to key focus 1.
3. Using consortium and multi-omic infrastructure (key focuses 1 and 2) to progress rapidly assets coming through the Tessa Jowell Brain Tumour Accelerator programme to patients.

4. Working with the National Biomarker Centre and others to deliver better longitudinal testing regimes for glioma patients – for example, advanced imaging techniques and liquid biopsy approaches to improve monitoring for disease recurrence.
5. Working with technology providers (GE, Microsoft) to develop the computational infrastructure to advance AI and provide better therapy planning for glioma patients.

We are a small, unified disease community, with a tightly knit NHS and scientific workforce and a charity sector used to close collaboration. We have opportunities in basic and translational research; the UK hosts many world-leading research hubs for brain tumours, and the unique alignment of the NHS and academia means we are well placed to translate new discoveries into

2 Costello Medical and the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission, *Reimagining Rehabilitation for Adults with Brain Tumours: A Roadmap* (March 2024) <https://www.costellomedical.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/reimagining-rehabilitation-for-adults-with-brain-tumours.pdf> [accessed October 2024]

the clinic. We are keen to further develop these opportunities through the recently announced NIHR national research consortium, heralded as the next step in a £40 million government pledge to develop new life-saving and life-improving research. We have promising developments in genomics and precision medicine: brain tumours are one of the only cancers on the NHS England test directory for whole-genome sequencing, supporting the rollout of innovative new precision medicine trials as a test case for other cancers. Finally, there is a drive to bring the best of the NHS to the rest of the NHS: an NHS workforce committed to service improvement and sharing excellence across the country.

We understand the role we play in this exciting landscape. We are conscious that as a charity, we are here not just to alleviate challenges that face the brain tumour community in the here and now but also to work for a better world tomorrow, for people diagnosed with a brain tumour in the future. Participating in a collaborative, multidisciplinary ecosystem that strives for better support services and treatments for patients and their families allows us to contribute to improved access to care, increase research funding and enhance public awareness. Collaborative efforts between charities, healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers and advocacy groups are making progress in managing the societal challenges posed by brain tumours in the UK.

In acknowledgement of our relatively small size, we conduct our campaigning and influencing activity collaboratively, carefully and with a laser focus on patient need. We proactively partner with clinical bodies, hospitals and clinical teams, other charities and community interest groups, notably Brain Tumour Research, the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Brain Tumours, One Cancer Voice, the Children and Young People with Cancer Coalition, the International Brain Tumour Alliance and Cancer52, to make sure brain tumour patients and their caregivers have a voice.

We go about this work with a positive approach and the belief that none of us is as smart as all of us. If something is not working for our community, we are quick to acknowledge, slow to blame and swift to seek a solution, with every effort to bring the power of our ecosystem to bear on a solution.

Please refer to the Collaborations, networks and advisers section of this report for more information about who we are working with.

In July 2014 my father Andy, sister Charlie and I were faced with losing our beloved stepmum, Helen Noble (née Jefferson).

After a long and extremely difficult battle with a malignant brain tumour, Helen passed away. My family will never forget her kindness, sense of adventure and her incredible intelligence, and want to ensure we tell the story she could not tell herself.

In Helen's honour, Elliot and I will be running the Barcelona Marathon on 10 March 2024. Fuelled by the kind donations of our friends and family, we want to help raise awareness and some much-needed funds for the vital work brainstrust *does, to help find a cure for brain cancer and support the families going through a situation like ours.*

Will Noble, Barcelona Marathon – March 2024

Collaborations, networks and advisers

None of us is as smart as all of us

Indeed, meaningful collaboration and co-creation is central to our strategy and ethos as we work to secure the best outcomes for anyone who is living with a brain tumour. Our partnerships, of which we nurture around 80, are global and fall into the following four themes.

Patient-focused

These partnerships include clinical engagement with the 35 neuroscience and neurosurgical centres and organisations that are relevant to our community, such as Use My Data and the Patient Information Forum. Clinical engagement is a priority, as this is one way in which we can reach the community. It is, however, a two-way relationship, as healthcare professionals can visit our website and order resources for their patients, signpost coaching and other support services and take advantage of training opportunities, such as our expert-led webinars and coaching programme.

Clinically focused

Clinical collaborations are hubs of clinical practice and research, such as the British Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS), the former National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and the Cochrane Collaboration. We are very proud of our clinical network, which has been pivotal in the success of our webinar programme and the growth of our clinical research activity under the banner of PRIME.

This community's involvement in our educational events has been transformative for our beneficiaries. We have built a community of over 20 clinical experts, who have selflessly given up their time and knowledge to help people living

with a brain tumour understand more about their conditions, why at times it is hard to make a choice about treatment, and how to live better with a brain tumour. This community continues to grow, and we are so grateful for the valuable and transformative expertise so generously gifted by this network.

Public Health

We work across the four Public Health nations. This year, this work has been particularly significant, as we have worked closely with the Public Health government departments to ensure that our community is well supported during the return of services following the Covid-19 pandemic. This work has included advocating for cohorts of people living with a specific type of brain tumour, to ensure the treatment and surveillance that they need has been accessible. Furthermore, by using data from the National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service to reassure the community that waiting times and urgent referrals are returning to normal, our work with Public Health has enabled us to keep our community updated in a meaningful and relevant way.

Charities

We have always worked closely with charities when we have recognised that it is in the best interests of the community. We have worked hard this year to continue to build these relationships.

We are actively involved in the Cancer52 network of charities; we represent children and young people with brain cancer through our role on the Steering Group of the Children and Young People with Cancer Coalition (CYPCC); we work closely with Cancer Research UK on matters relating to brain cancer and clinical research; and we work in partnership with charity Brain Tumour Research on a variety of projects, including our PRIME initiative, and on activity to inform UK governments on the importance of addressing brain tumours at the highest levels possible. More broadly, we represent the brain tumour community on the One Cancer Voice steering group. This is a group of over 60 cancer charities, collectively supporting millions of people living with cancer. The collective is working to improve lives and outcomes for cancer patients.

Notably, we have enjoyed our ongoing relationship with the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission. *brainstrust*'s chief executive, Will Jones, brings our experiences, insights and the voices of our communities to the Joint Strategy Board of the mission.

Organisational partnerships and collaborations

Our team maintains a broad portfolio of strategic and commercial relationships outside the health and charity sectors. These relationships with companies and individuals enhance our capabilities, capacity and expertise, and they all contribute meaningfully to our mission and our impact. We would like to express our specific appreciation to:

- Baker McKenzie
- Charisma Charity Recruitment
- Class Networks
- Eric Callister
- Google UK
- Greenberg Traurig, LLP
- Harrison Black
- Irene Clarke
- John Roberts Associates
- Pullans
- Louise Baker
- McQueenie Mulholland
- Nifty Communications
- Salesforce
- Smarter Not Harder (SNH)
- TechSoup
- Think Creative
- Thrive Partners

I don't normally ask for donations, but this 10-miler is very local to me and on lanes I have run many times. For the past few years, I've watched from the sidelines for one reason or another, but this year I am able to take part. The best thing is this run supports the brainstrust *charity.*

Brain tumours devastated our family and have impacted very close friends too. So I'll jog these 10 miles a few weeks before Keith's and Darren's anniversaries in remembrance of my very funny, wild, wonderful and still-missed brothers.

Tara Gibbons, *brainstrust* Bass Belle 10-miler – November 2023

Your support

This year our supporters contributed £652,450 to fund *brainstrust*'s mission. This income comes from a diversified mix of traditional charity fundraising activity.

Our funding comes from:

- trusts and foundations
- direct and regular giving
- companies who support our work
- sponsored events and challenges
- community fundraising
- Gift Aid recovery
- in-memory giving
- trading
- special purpose fundraising to enable communities to access novel treatments and therapies.

There have been strong headwinds for supporter fundraising, with what effectively amounted to the cancellation of fundraising at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, followed by pervasive cost-of-living and cost-of-business pressures in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

We have weathered these periods well through careful, planned application of reserves and close management of costs across our whole operation. The second half of the year in review has seen us return to a fully diversified fundraising mix, and to growth in income. We have been able to reignite supporter fundraising, and we are delighted to see activity and income from community fundraising channels build in the second half of the year. This focus is bringing our work closer, once more, to the community we are here to serve.

Our three-year planning post-Covid anticipated a rapid return to a fundraising mix that relied heavily on supporter fundraising, as it was before the pandemic – 80% supporter income, 20% grants. Last year we reported that this was taking longer than expected, but in the second half of this year, we have achieved this goal.

A significant contributing factor to this achievement has been the acquisition of the Fit4theChallenge events portfolio and recruitment of Fit4theChallenge founder Ashley Hawkins as *brainstrust* fundraising events manager. The running events in the east of England have a track record of strong attendance, with the opportunity now to grow this portfolio and promote fundraising for our work alongside it. The first running event in November 2023 went exceptionally well – 465 runners took on the 10-mile route and raised £24,000 for our work.

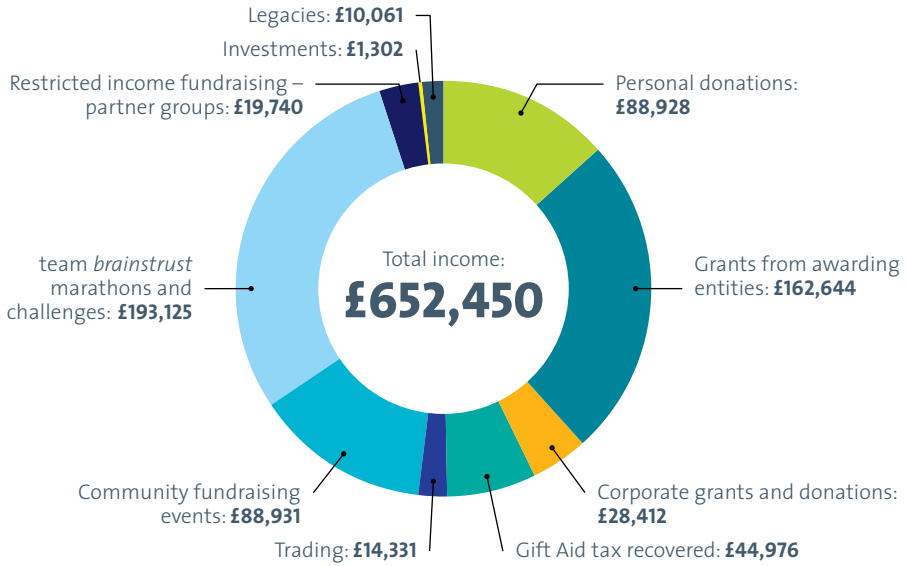
There are still threats to charity fundraising – cost of living and cost of business remain inflated; political and economic uncertainty and instability played out throughout the year; and increased competition for grant fundraising pervaded, the threat here being less the worthiness of our work but more the backlog created for philanthropic institutions caused by an overwhelming influx of applications to funders. The final quarter of the year saw many delayed but positive outcomes on this front for *brainstrust*, and we are grateful to each and every grant-making foundation that has chosen to support our mission.

Special appreciation and acknowledgement must also be made to those who have chosen to support *brainstrust* in memory of a loved one who has been lost to a brain tumour diagnosis.

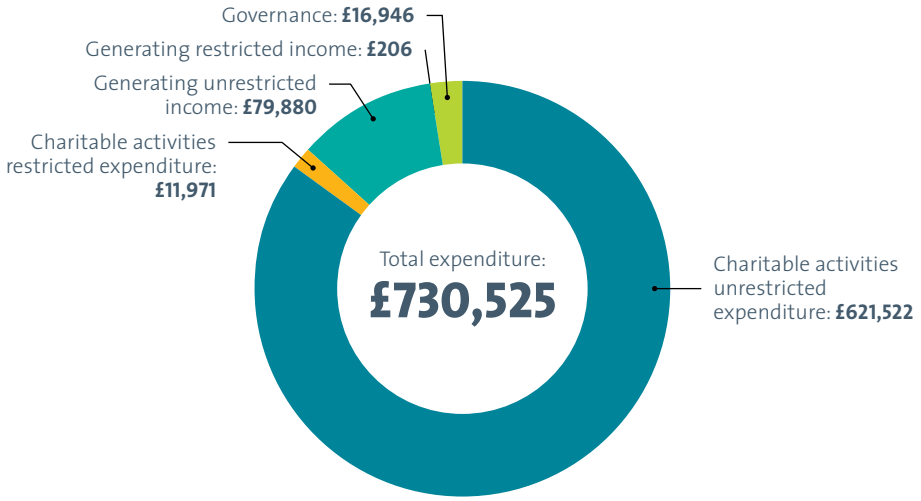
Many chose to make a contribution to our work by way of appreciation for the support they have received on their journey, and also so that others can be supported in the future. In-memory fundraising has remained an area of growth for *brainstrust*, and with our 'wonderful memories' campaign, we encourage and support donors respectfully and positively.

We have limited income from legacy fundraising and high-net-worth individuals, and we have minimal investment income, instead keeping cash available to provide liquidity and flexibility so that we can react promptly to the needs of our community.

Our income 2023-24



Our expenditure 2023-24



Thank you to our community of supporters

brainstrust Bass Belle 10-miler 2023

Sunday 26 November was the date for the renamed *brainstrust* Bass Belle 10-miler. Where *brainstrust* has been a long-standing beneficiary of the event, this is the first time it took place as a *brainstrust*-led event, following the acquisition of the Fit4theChallenge portfolio and recruitment of event founder Ashley Hawkins. Not only did the event sell out, but it was also the day that new records were set. We had a record number of sponsors supporting the race, the highest number of runners fundraising for the event, and both the male and female course records were smashed. In total the event raised more than £24,000 for *brainstrust*, making it one of the most successful fundraising events for the charity.

Cambridge Half Marathon, March 2024

After a hiatus during the pandemic, we returned to Cambridge for the Cambridge Half Marathon. All 15 team *brainstrust* places were filled in record time, and the runners raised £8,500 for our vital work. Ashley Hawkins, fundraising events manager for *brainstrust* met up with the team *brainstrust*, runners at the Cambridge Half Marathon, and all were presented with a *brainstrust* water bottle as a thank-you for signing up for the event and for their amazing fundraising efforts.

Barcelona Marathon, March 2024

Overseas challenges are a growing area for team *brainstrust*. They are popular and deliver strong fundraising results for the charity. Three runners took on the Barcelona Marathon for *brainstrust* and raised an incredible £6,000. The appetite for overseas challenges is building, with 27 runners signed up for the Amsterdam Marathon or Half Marathon in 2024.

Will Noble ran the Barcelona Marathon with team *brainstrust*:

In July 2014 my father Andy, sister Charlie and I were faced with losing our beloved stepmum, Helen Noble (née Jefferson).

After a long and extremely difficult battle with a malignant brain tumour, Helen passed away. My family will never forget her kindness, sense of adventure and her incredible intelligence, and want to ensure we tell the story she could not tell herself.

In Helen's honour, Elliot and I ran the Barcelona Marathon on 10 March 2024. Fuelled by the kind donations of our friends and family, we want to help raise awareness and some much-needed

funds for the vital work that brainstrust *does, to support the families going through a situation like ours.*

Follow the Seagulls

One of the original charity treks, this portfolio of two-day, 50-mile coastal treks involves a unique navigational element that brings added challenge. The events are difficult; we don't shy away from this – they have been developed to match the scale of people's passion for *brainstrust*'s cause.

In 2023, 32 people signed up for the treks, which took place in North Yorkshire, the Isle of Wight, Fife, Devon and, a new pilot event, East Sussex.

In order to address barriers created by increased costs of accommodation and travel, and tighter household budgets, we introduced one-day options in each location and reduced fundraising targets. This has been well received, and our smaller-than-usual teams of walkers raised £16,699.

While fundraising has been strong and provides a vital contribution to our work, we have yet to see a return to pre-pandemic participant numbers. Early registration numbers for the year ahead suggest that we have turned the corner here, and Follow the Seagulls is returning to growth.

Ravi's Dream: charity football match – 11 June 2023

On 11 June, Worthing FC transformed their 3,000-capacity ground into a vibrant hub of community spirit in support of Ravi's Dream. The event was a day-long celebration of football, filled with excitement, camaraderie, and purpose. The day kicked off with brilliant under 8 girl's and boy's tournaments, showcasing the energy and enthusiasm of the young players, followed by a mixed-gender adult match. The event raised £1,500.

When we got home from the event at Worthing FC, Ravi said, 'That was the best Sunday of my life ... Can we do it again?'

Gbenga, Ravi's dad

The Jim Woods Memorial Bike Ride – 9 July 2023

9 July marked the second annual Jim Woods Memorial Bike Ride, an event that has quickly become a cherished tradition among local cyclists and the wider community. Hosted by the Alton Cycling Club, the ride was first established in 2022 by John Heath, a close friend and fellow club member, in memory of Jim Woods, who tragically passed away from a brain tumour in 2020. The 2023 event raised a wonderful £1,000 for *brainstrust*.

When I first mooted the idea of a memorial ride in Jim's memory, it was Wendy Woods who suggested that we should raise money for brainstrust*, a suggestion that I was only too happy to embrace. I hope that our efforts have made a difference in some small way.*

John Heath

Ayesha Bell's 'Crainiversary' marathon walk – September 2023

Ayesha Bell's 'Crainiversary' marathon walk stands as a powerful symbol of resilience and determination. Marking the anniversary of her first brain surgery, Ayesha embarked on this incredible journey to raise funds for *brainstrust*, channelling her personal challenges into a force for good.

Despite the physical and emotional toll of multiple surgeries, ongoing treatment, and caring for her daughter, Ayesha completed the 26.3-mile walk through the Derbyshire Dales. Her remarkable effort not only raised £3,000 for *brainstrust* but also inspired countless others facing similar battles.

I would love to raise as many funds as we can for the fantastic cause, brainstrust*, who have been incredibly supportive to me during these past 12 months and I know will continue to be into the future.*

Ayesha Bell

Wear Grey – 2 to 8 October 2023

The Wear Grey 2023 – Chalk for Change campaign was an incredible success, bringing people together to raise awareness and vital funds for brain cancer support. This year's initiative encouraged participants to use chalk to create grey-themed art and messages, symbolising the fight against brain cancer.

The campaign resonated widely, with individuals, schools, businesses and communities enthusiastically joining the cause. Through these creative efforts, and with widespread support, the campaign successfully raised around £15,000.

It seemed appropriate that whilst planning my dad's funeral, which was during brainstrust *Wear Grey week, we asked for donations. We raised just over £581.*

Wear Grey supporter

Trusts and foundations

Your support is invaluable and vital to us; it has allowed us to widen and strengthen our brain tumour community. We want to say a very big thank you to all our generous and compassionate funders. We are grateful for the long-term support of funders, including the Edward Gostling, Rank and Garfield Weston Foundations.

In addition, we are incredibly privileged to have been supported by these very generous funding partners:

- Darlington Building Society 5% Pledge Fund
- GJW Turner Trust
- Pilkington Charities' Fund
- Sheffield Town Trust
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- Sovereign Health Care Community Programme
- The Mishcon Family Charitable Trust
- The Moondance Foundation
- William A Cadbury Charitable Trust
- The Wyseliot Rose Charitable Trust
- Yorkshire Building Society Charitable Foundation.

Thank you all for your generosity, and for the incredible kindness of the trust donors who have supported our mission but expressed to us their wish to remain anonymous. Your funding has allowed us to be there for an ever-increasing number of people who need us and to help them live their best possible lives.

I feel supported through contact with people like yourself, so thanks again for all you do. You really are a lifeline to folk like me.

Patient

Financial review

The Trust's published statutory accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 are incorporated in this Trustees' Annual Report and include considerable detail on the source and application of funds, and the financial position of the Trust at 31 March 2024, as required by the SORP for UK charities published by the Charity Commission. This report comments on the main points contained in the accounts.

In summary, gross income generated in 2023–24 was £652K (2022–23: £692K), of which £17K related to restricted income funds. The net deficit for the year was £78K (2022–23: £100K), of which £5K surplus related to restricted income funds.

While, as reviewed elsewhere in the Trustees' Annual Report, *brainstrust*'s charitable impact has been increased, thus increasing our reach and effectiveness, we had to respond to a significant and challenging drop in income in the first six months of the year in review, and we moved quickly to manage costs to help put ourselves in good shape for the second half of the year. Overall expenditure in 2023–24, at £730K, of which £12K related to planned expenditure of restricted income funds, has decreased year on year, from the previous year of 2022–23 (£792K) and is £19K under our budgeted target.

The Trust's gross income for 2023–24, at £652K, was, as noted above, a decrease on the £692K raised in 2022–23. This was £103K short against our target. We had a very challenging first half to the year, with the cost-of-living crisis biting into our supporter fundraising, although our donors still managed to raise money despite the ongoing economic uncertainty, and external factors, such as grants, were slow to materialise with fierce competition across the sector. However, charitable fundraising picked up significantly in the last six months of the year, reducing our overall deficit and continuing to grow our reserves. The momentum has continued, and the first quarter of the next fiscal year has started extremely positively.

Most of the Trust's income, both general and restricted, is applied to supporting patients and their caregivers and families, from the point of a brain cancer diagnosis. Our support team provides UK-wide coverage, supported by many substantial funders.

The Trust has only cash investments, deposited with NatWest Bank and The Co-operative Bank. At 31 March 2024, the Trust had net reserves, including our restricted income funds, of £526K (March 2023: £604K), which included unrestricted reserves of £122K (2023: £205K) and net restricted reserves of £404K (2023: £399K). The unrestricted deficit for the year in review has been deducted from our general charitable funds.

The Trust has a long-standing policy of holding unrestricted reserves to cover four months of defined core costs. As at 31 March 2024, unrestricted reserves were sufficient to cover just over three months of core costs. Our reserves have sustained us well in the past, and now we are rebuilding those reserves for the next fiscal year.

Our structure, governance, leadership and management

Our structure

brainstrust is a mature organisation. We are confident in our abilities and our purpose, and we are proud of our impact. As we near the end of our current strategy, we are more focused than ever on our purpose and the needs of our beneficiaries.

We are proud that we have catalysed a new ecosystem in the brain tumour charity and advocacy landscape, which is focused on improving life for people with a brain tumour.

Our professional and highly trained team supports people across the UK, and these people can access impactful coaching, counselling and accredited *brainstrust* resources. We are a resilient organisation that has transitioned well over the last five years from being a 'large small' operation to a 'small big' charity with a scalable, professional and resilient structure.

Our governance

Good governance is an essential component of our success, particularly as we grow. It underpins our integrity, reinforces the trust and confidence our patients and partners place in us and contributes to a strong high-performance culture.
Chris Baker, Chair of Trustees

brainstrust is constituted as a trust, governed by its Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006.

The overall guidelines for the management and administration of the Trust are incorporated in the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006, as amended by Deeds of Amendment adopted by the trustees under the terms of the original deed and notified to the Charity Commission.

This places overall responsibility for the proper governance of the Trust with the appointed trustees. Day-to-day management of the Trust is delegated to William Jones, who has been appointed chief executive of the Trust. The chief executive, supported by the leadership team, makes recommendations to the trustees on the Trust's vision, patient and caregiver support, related research, financial fundraising, promotional activities and ensuring that funds raised are spent as efficiently as possible on resources that will be useful to people affected by brain cancer.

brainstrust's trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Leading the way

brainstrust has a stable, experienced and committed leadership team who are aligned in delivering our mission and who are the strongest advocates of our vision and values. Day to day, the leadership team works to promote, develop and instil purpose, autonomy and mastery throughout the organisation through a 'tight-loose' approach, which is manifested in tightly defined objectives for each member of the team, but loosely defined method. This allows people to work the way that suits them best to achieve the right goals for *brainstrust* and our beneficiaries.

This leadership team and trustees have a clear mandate to carry out the following:

- **Set an example** – It is important to demonstrate our values in everything we do. We set high standards of behaviour and inspire colleagues, supporters and beneficiaries to do the same. We demonstrate fairness, integrity and resilience, and we build trust with our actions.
- **Look after people** – At *brainstrust*, we promote the well-being of individuals, teams and communities. We encourage a supportive culture and inclusive working arrangements. We prioritise one-to-one time with people to listen and understand their needs. We support and defend colleagues in difficult situations. We identify and deal with poor performance and bad behaviour.

- **Take ownership** – We welcome responsibility and accountability. We're proactive, pick up things that need doing without being asked and push to finish the job in hand. We're the first to admit mistakes, apologise when wrong and learn for next time.
- **Provide clarity** – We must communicate clearly and concisely through the right channel. We question any decisions, goals or explanations that are vague or ambiguous, and we work to clarify them. We are open, honest and straightforward in what we say and write. And we provide specific, understandable and useful feedback.
- **Make good decisions** – We use evidence and judgement to make good decisions. We know that timely decisions are important, so we don't procrastinate or fudge. We commit to collective decisions, particularly when we originally disagreed. We consult broadly, seek out contrary opinions and listen to quieter voices. We make sure we can explain our decisions, with context, rationale and evidence.
- **Point the way** – We share an inspiring vision for the future of the charity and everyone's part in it. In our work, we make sure that colleagues understand the outcomes we want to achieve and the value that they will create.
- **Build the future** – We bring great people on board. We actively look for the widest range of candidates to strengthen our diversity. We encourage our colleagues to learn, develop new skills and pursue their career aspirations, whether at *brainstrust* or elsewhere. And we give people opportunity and responsibility at the right pace for them. We continually improve *brainstrust*'s capability and the effectiveness and efficiency of our delivery. We try out new approaches and technologies and give others the time and space to do the same.

Our board of trustees

brainstrust's trustees for the year in review are Christopher Baker, Kevin Higgs, Stephen Warrington, Gillian Bilbo, Puneet Plaha and Jack Jarvis.

Chris Baker

Chair of Trustees

Chris is EMEA managing director at a leading global software company and has over 20 years' experience driving growth at some of the highest-profile companies in the world, including Microsoft and Salesforce. Chris has been a trustee for nearly 12 years and the chair of trustees at *brainstrust* for seven years.

Kevin Higgs
Trustee
Kevin is a financial adviser and has been a trustee for 14 years. In a chance meeting while at a previous employer, Kevin was immediately taken by the dedication and commitment of the charity to focus on the support and well-being of patients and families diagnosed with a brain tumour. He knew that he wanted to be a part of the journey that *brainstrust* has been on since 2006.

Stephen Warrington
Trustee
Stephen brings to the organisation extensive experience leading professional services businesses and consulting for major multinationals, and he has been a trustee for seven years. Stephen's teenage son was diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent successful surgery.

Gillian Bilbo
Trustee
Gillian is a retired headteacher and is now a school inspector, and she has been a trustee for eleven years. She brings a listening ear and an objective viewpoint to the board and is supportive of fundraising initiatives.

Gillian retired from *brainstrust*'s board on 11 December 2023.

Puneet Plaha
Trustee
Puneet is an associate professor and consultant neuro-oncology surgeon in Oxford, with a specialist interest in brain tumours, especially endoscopic minimally invasive surgery and awake surgery. He has been a consultant neuro-oncology surgeon lead for the Oxford brain tumour MDT and neuro-oncology lead for Thames Valley since 2012. Puneet joined *brainstrust*'s board of trustees in March 2021.

Jack Jarvis
Trustee
Jack is a serving British Army Commando and record-setting transatlantic solo rower. He brings tenacity, energy and a high-performance mindset to our board. Jack is an ardent and successful fundraiser, motivated by personal experience of a glioblastoma in his family, as well as by his own experience navigating a complex rehabilitative journey after a serious accident. He understands the value, opportunity and impact that *brainstrust*'s work bears, and is our newest board member, joining in January 2024.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year to ratify the broad strategy and areas of activity for the Trust. In addition, trustees may meet with members of the team to work on specific projects. All trustees give their time freely, and no remuneration is paid.

In accordance with clause 9 of the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006:

(i) There must be at least three trustees. Apart from the first trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution of the trustees passed at a special meeting called under clause 15 of this deed.

(ii) In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

(iii) The trustees must keep a record of the name and address and the dates of appointment, reappointment and retirement of each trustee.

(iv) The trustees must make available to each new trustee, on his or her first appointment:

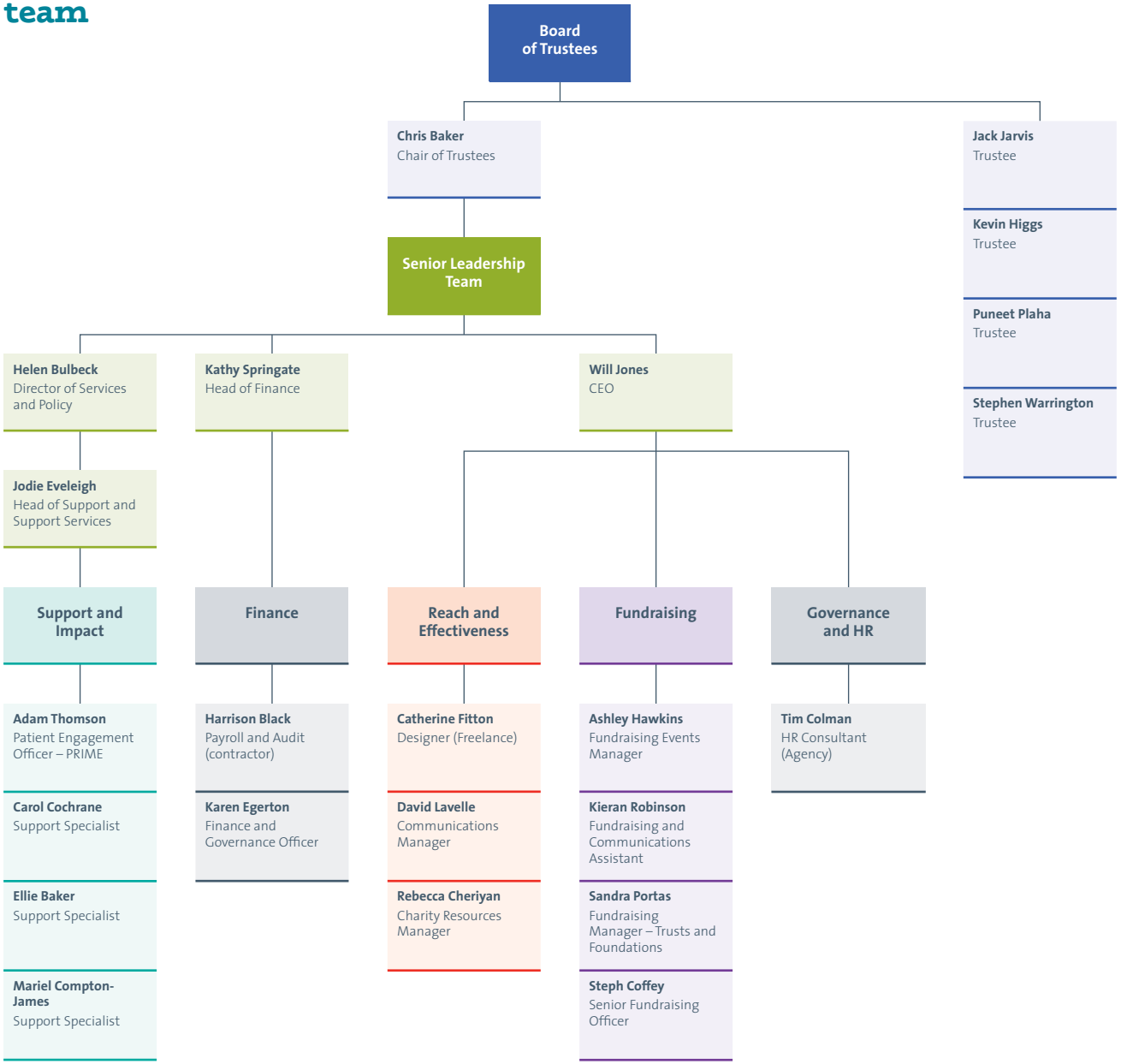
  (a) a copy of this deed and any amendments made to it

  (b) a copy of the charity's latest report and statement of accounts.

There are no exemptions from disclosure applicable to or within this report, and neither the charity nor any of its trustees are acting as custodian trustees.

Now in our 18th year of operation, we have an established national footprint across all elements of our activity. This is delivered with public benefit at the heart by a professional team with a professional leadership structure.

The *brainstrust* team



brainstrust senior staff contacts

Will Jones, Chief Executive, will@brainstrust.org.uk

Dr Helen Bulbeck, Director of Services and Policy, helen@brainstrust.org.uk

Kathy Springate, Head of Finance, kathy@brainstrust.org.uk

Jodie Eveleigh, Head of Support, jodie@brainstrust.org.uk

Incidents and reporting

For the year in review, and indeed for the duration of the organisation's history, we have had no reportable incidents relating to our fundraising, our service or our internal operations. We have in place policies and procedures for managing, reporting and escalating incidents and complaints. The following are available on request:

- Whistleblowing policy
- Complaints procedure – patient services
- Complaints procedure – fundraising
- Complaints policy – staff
- Complaints policy – volunteers.

Registered Charity Number: 1114634

Report of the Trustees and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 for *brainstrust*

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

brainstrust – Contents of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

Structure, governance and management

Governing document
The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity number
1114634

Principal address
4 Yvery Court
Castle Road
Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO31 7QG

Trustees
C Baker
K Higgs
G Bilbo (resigned 11.12.23)
S Warrington
P Plaha
J L Jarvis (appointed 25.1.24)

Auditors
Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

brainstrust is also a Scottish Charity, SC044642, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Trustees' Responsibility Statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

brainstrust – Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2024

Trustees' Responsibility Statement – continued

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed 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, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable 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 charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. 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.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 24th September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

K Higgs – Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of *brainstrust* (the 'charity') for the year ended 31st March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31st March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity 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 charity'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 trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which 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 charity'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 charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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 the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

As outlined above, our objective is to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements and irregularities. Whilst not a guarantee that such instances will be detected, our risk based approach, using systematic testing methods, judgement, communication with management, professional scepticism, observation of controls and systems, and audit experience/knowledge, allows us to be satisfied that our procedures are highly capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

Date: 13th August 2024

brainstrust – Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	**2024 Total funds £**	2023 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	**335,021**	**–**	**335,021**	409,643
Other trading activities	3	**296,590**	**19,537**	**316,127**	281,001
Investment income	4	**1,302**	**–**	**1,302**	1,062
Total		**632,913**	**19,537**	**652,450**	691,706
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	5	**82,539**	**206**	**82,745**	62,703
Charitable activities	6				
Charity activities		**621,522**	**11,971**	**633,493**	716,673
Other		**14,287**	**–**	**14,287**	12,468
Total		**718,348**	**12,177**	**730,525**	791,844
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**(85,435)**	**7,360**	**(78,075)**	(100,138)
Transfers between funds	18	**2,000**	**(2,000)**	**–**	–
Net movement in funds		**(83,435)**	**5,360**	**(78,075)**	(100,138)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**205,029**	**399,078**	**604,107**	704,245
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**121,594**	**404,438**	**526,032**	604,107

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Balance Sheet 31st March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	**1,089**	**–**	**1,089**	1,957
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	13	**54,735**	**–**	**54,735**	77,711
Cash at bank		**111,481**	**404,439**	**515,920**	587,708
		166,216	**404,439**	**570,655**	665,419
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	**(32,403)**	**–**	**(32,403)**	(39,796)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**133,813**	**404,439**	**538,252**	625,623
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**134,902**	**404,439**	**539,341**	627,580
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	15	**(13,309)**	**–**	**(13,309)**	(23,473)
NET ASSETS		**121,593**	**404,439**	**526,032**	604,107
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds				**121,593**	205,029
Restricted funds				**404,439**	399,078
TOTAL FUNDS				**526,032**	604,107

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 24th September 2024 and were signed on its behalf by: **K Higgs** – Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	**(62,443)**	(133,533)
Interest paid		**(727)**	(969)
Net cash used in operating activities		**(63,170)**	(134,502)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest received		**1,302**	1,062
Net cash provided by investing activities		**1,302**	1,062
Cash flows from financing activities			
Loan repayments in year		**(9,920)**	(9,679)
Net cash used in financing activities		**(9,920)**	(9,679)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**(71,788)**	(143,119)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		**587,708**	730,827
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**515,920**	587,708

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2024

1. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	**(78,075)**	(100,138)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**867**	867
Interest received	**(1,302)**	(1,062)
Interest paid	**727**	969
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	**22,976**	(38,189)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	**(7,636)**	4,020
Net cash used in operations	**(62,443)**	(133,533)

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Cash flow £	**At 31.3.24 £**
Net cash			
Cash at bank	**587,708**	**(71,788)**	**515,920**
	587,708	**(71,788)**	**515,920**
Debt			
Debts falling due within 1 year	**(9,679)**	**(243)**	**(9,922)**
Debts falling due after 1 year	**(23,473)**	**10,164**	**(13,309)**
	(33,152)	**9,921**	**(23,231)**
Total	**554,556**	**(61,867)**	**492,689**

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, 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 financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grant income is recognised when received. In the event that a grant is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Legacy gifts are recognised on a case by case basis following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title to the asset having been transferred to the charity.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings -25% on cost

continued ...

1. Accounting policies – continued

Taxation
The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. Donations and legacies

	2024 £	2023 £
Donations	**88,928**	90,081
Grants from awarding entities	**162,644**	242,952
Corporate grants and donations	**28,412**	32,769
Gift aid tax recovered	**44,976**	34,878
Legacies	**10,061**	8,963
	335,021	409,643

3. Other trading activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Fundraising events	**88,931**	81,731
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**14,331**	10,248
Sponsored activities	**193,125**	117,936
Activities of partner groups	**19,740**	71,086
	316,127	281,001

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 – continued

4. Investment income

	2024 £	2023 £
Deposit account interest	**1,302**	1,062

5. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	2024 £	2023 £
Fundraising fees	**14,745**	11,077
Promotional expenses	**39,679**	31,318
	54,424	42,395

Other trading activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Trading costs and purchases	**7,580**	4,755
Event costs	**8,393**	5,941
Sponsored activities costs	**12,348**	9,612
	28,321	20,308
Aggregate amounts	**82,745**	62,703

6. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Charity activities			
	630,834	**2,659**	**633,493**

continued ...

7. Support costs

	Governance costs £
Other resources expended	**14,287**
Charity activities	
	2,659
	16,946

8. Auditors' remuneration

	2024 £	2023 £
Fees payable to the charity's auditors for the audit of the charity's financial statements	**3,000**	2,700
Auditors' remuneration for non audit work	**2,480**	1,821

9. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st March 2024 nor for the year ended 31st March 2023.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st March 2024 nor for the year ended 31st March 2023.

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 – continued

10. Staff costs

Total gross salaries, benefits in kind and employers national insurance costs for the year ending 31st March 2024 were £459,090 (2023 – £483,632).

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Fundraising	**4**	4
Charitable Activities	**9**	9
Governance	**1**	1
Other	**1**	1
	15	15

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

continued ...

11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	409,643	–	409,643
Other trading activities	209,965	71,036	281,001
Investment income	1,062	–	1,062
Total	620,670	71,036	691,706
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	59,218	3,485	62,703
Charitable activities			
Charity activities			
	620,392	96,281	716,673
Other	12,468	–	12,468
Total	692,078	99,766	791,844
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(71,408)	(28,730)	(100,138)
Transfers between funds	2,563	(2,563)	–
Net movement in funds	(68,845)	(31,293)	(100,138)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	273,874	430,371	704,245
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	205,029	399,078	604,107

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 – continued

12. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Website £	Totals £
COST			
At 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024	**1,905**	**11,176**	**13,081**
DEPRECIATION			
At 1st April 2023	**1,605**	**9,519**	**11,124**
Charge for year	**103**	**765**	**868**
At 31st March 2024	**1,708**	**10,284**	**11,992**
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31st March 2024	**197**	**892**	**1,089**
At 31st March 2023	300	1,657	1,957

13. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	**16,356**	1,000
Other debtors	**6,773**	39,462
Prepayments	**31,606**	37,249
	54,735	77,711

14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	**9,831**	10,832
Other creditors	**22,572**	28,964
	32,403	39,796

continued ...

15. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Other creditors	**13,309**	23,473

16. Loans

An analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year on demand:		
Other loans	**9,922**	9,679
Amounts falling due between two and five years:		
Other loans – 1–5 years	**13,309**	23,473

17. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Within one year	**26,810**	–
Between one and five years	**29,045**	–
	55,845	–

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 – continued

18. Movement in funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	**205,029**	**(85,436)**	**2,000**	**121,593**
Restricted funds				
Fund A	**713**	**2,254**	**(2,000)**	**967**
Fund E	**82,258**	**920**	**–**	**83,178**
Fund H	**27,039**	**224**	**–**	**27,263**
Fund I	**286,960**	**2,671**	**–**	**289,631**
Fund J	**2,108**	**(1,527)**	**–**	**581**
Fund L	**–**	**2,819**	**–**	**2,819**
	399,078	**7,361**	**(2,000)**	**404,439**
TOTAL FUNDS	**604,107**	**(78,075)**	**–**	**526,032**

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	**632,913**	**(718,349)**	**(85,436)**
Restricted funds			
Fund A	**2,254**	**–**	**2,254**
Fund E	**2,019**	**(1,099)**	**920**
Fund H	**362**	**(138)**	**224**
Fund I	**3,872**	**(1,201)**	**2,671**
Fund J	**3,169**	**(4,696)**	**(1,527)**
Fund L	**7,861**	**(5,042)**	**2,819**
	19,537	**(12,176)**	**7,361**
TOTAL FUNDS	**652,450**	**(730,525)**	**(78,075)**

continued ...

18. Movement in funds – continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	273,874	(71,408)	2,563	205,029
Restricted funds				
Fund A	710	2,566	(2,563)	713
Fund E	79,003	3,255	–	82,258
Fund H	27,034	5	–	27,039
Fund I	323,624	(36,664)	–	286,960
Fund J	–	2,108	–	2,108
	430,371	(28,730)	(2,563)	399,078
TOTAL FUNDS	704,245	(100,138)	–	604,107

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	620,670	(692,078)	(71,408)
Restricted funds			
Fund A	2,566	–	2,566
Fund E	5,070	(1,815)	3,255
Fund H	119	(114)	5
Fund I	19,040	(55,704)	(36,664)
Fund J	2,141	(33)	2,108
Fund K	42,100	(42,100)	–
	71,036	(99,766)	(28,730)
TOTAL FUNDS	691,706	(791,844)	(100,138)

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 – continued

18. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	273,874	(156,844)	4,563	121,593
Restricted funds				
Fund A	710	4,820	(4,563)	967
Fund E	79,003	4,175	–	83,178
Fund H	27,034	229	–	27,263
Fund I	323,624	(33,993)	–	289,631
Fund J	–	581	–	581
Fund L	–	2,819	–	2,819
	430,371	(21,369)	(4,563)	404,439
TOTAL FUNDS	704,245	(178,213)	–	526,032

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 – continued

18. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,253,583	(1,410,427)	(156,844)
Restricted funds			
Fund A	4,820	–	4,820
Fund E	7,089	(2,914)	4,175
Fund H	481	(252)	229
Fund I	22,912	(56,905)	(33,993)
Fund J	5,310	(4,729)	581
Fund K	42,100	(42,100)	–
Fund L	7,861	(5,042)	2,819
	90,573	(111,942)	(21,369)
TOTAL FUNDS	1,344,156	(1,522,369)	(178,213)

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF FUNDS

General Fund
The 'free reserves' after allowing for all restricted funds.

Restricted Funds
All other restricted funds have been created through fundraising or donations for the benefit of individual brain tumour patients. The charity uses the funds for direct treatment or to support research relating to the patients needs.

19. Related party disclosures

During the year the charity purchased services from Fitton Holman Creative Limited totalling £14,040 (2023 – £14,985). The company is directed by one of the co-founder's sister, Catherine Fitton.

During the year the charity paid the co-founders and management employees of *brainstrust*, Peter and Helen Bulbeck, £nil (2023 – £3,960) for administrative use of their property.

The co-founder's daughter, Leonora Bulbeck, supplied editorial services during the year to the charity totalling £1,700 (2023 – £2,100) at a commercial rate.

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	**88,928**	90,081
Grants from awarding entities	**162,644**	242,952
Corporate grants and donations	**28,412**	32,769
Gift aid tax recovered	**44,976**	34,878
Legacies	**10,061**	8,963
	335,021	409,643
Other trading activities		
Fundraising events	**88,931**	81,731
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**14,331**	10,248
Sponsored activities	**193,125**	117,936
Activities of partner groups	**19,740**	71,086
	316,127	281,001
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	**1,302**	1,062
Total incoming resources	**652,450**	691,706
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Fundraising fees	**14,745**	11,077
Promotional expenses	**39,679**	31,318
	54,424	42,395
Other trading activities		
Trading costs and purchases	**7,580**	4,755
Event costs	**8,393**	5,941
Sponsored activities costs	**12,348**	9,612
	28,321	20,308

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2023

	2024 £	2023 £
Charitable activities		
Medical grants and costs	**1,545**	1,400
Patient support and staffing	**404,073**	463,460
Salaries	**157,572**	159,660
Travel	**15,232**	22,243
Administration	**32,814**	35,241
Office rent & rates	**18,731**	31,316
Fixtures and fittings	**103**	103
Depn of website	**764**	764
	630,834	714,187
Support costs		
Governance costs		
Auditors' remuneration	**3,000**	2,700
Auditors' remuneration for non audit work	**2,480**	1,821
Insurance	**2,659**	2,486
Other	**8,080**	6,978
Bank loan interest	**727**	969
	16,946	14,954
Total resources expended	**730,525**	791,844
Net expenditure	**(78,075)**	(100,138)

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Get in touch

Helping you

Talk to our team 24/7 on **01983 292 405**, or email **hello@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Helping us

Make a donation at **brainstrust.org.uk/donate**, call us on **01983 292 405** during office hours, or email **fundraising@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Registration

brainstrust is a registered charitable trust, registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as Charity No. 1114634, registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SC044642.

Registered address

brainstrust, 4 Yvery Court, Castle Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 7QG.

www.brainstrust.org.uk.
www.braintumourhub.org.uk.

Regional office (north of England)

brainstrust, C19–21 Joseph's Well, Hannover Lane, Westgate, Leeds LS3 1AB.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Signature:

Full name: **K Higgs**

Position: **Trustee**

Date: **24th September 2024**

brainstrust
the brain cancer people

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Trusted Information Creator
Patient Information Forum

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

BRAINSTRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1114634

Accounts

brainstrust
the brain cancer people

Trustees' annual report and accounts

brainstrust – the brain cancer people

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

When you become a caregiver, you suddenly have to make decisions about someone's health and wellbeing that you never thought you'd have to. Suddenly everything falls to you.

Caregiver to a low grade glioma patient

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Our challenge

'I struggle with multiple issues – fatigue, physical and mental problems – but I try to focus on healing and the road to recovery.' **Patient**

'What am I not struggling with? I suffer daily symptoms, which range from tinnitus, dizziness, head pressure and pain, which frightens my husband.' **Patient**

***'Following on from my father's diagnosis yesterday myself and my family are in a state of shock, while trying to navigate what lies ahead so as to ensure that my father has the best possible care.'* Caregiver**

'I had to be on the drugs for two years at least, as my tumour was small, but in an area associated with seizures. It devastated me. Everything caught up with me. It was the identity shift that was difficult – I wasn't prepared for going from a "surgery survivor" to "epileptic".' **Patient**

***'My diagnosis was delivered over the phone by my GP, which was incredibly hard to deal with. The best way to describe my feelings at the time is a mixture of fear paired with an overwhelming sense of confusion. As how could this be happening to me? I had just finished my degree, which I had worked hard for. I was starting a new job that I was excited for at the end of the week, and I had just turned 24 years of age a few weeks prior. It felt like such a cruel twist of fate for this to happen as my life was just coming together how I wanted.'* Patient**

Over 80,000 people are living with a brain tumour in the UK. Only 12% of adults survive beyond five years following a diagnosis. Brain tumours reduce life expectancy by an average of 27 years, and they kill more children than any other cancer, yet treatment for a brain tumour is brutal and harmful. It hasn't changed in 40 years.

The impact of brain tumours is under-reported, support and research under-funded, and the true impact of the disease under-acknowledged and misunderstood.

When you hear the words 'you have a brain tumour', you face both a potential cancer diagnosis and also the prospect of progressive and debilitating neurological disease. You are afraid, you are alone, you are confused, and your life changes dramatically in an instant.

Today, *brainstrust* is here to help everyone live their best possible life with a brain tumour in the face of these stark facts. We help people thrive and have their best possible day. We are also here for tomorrow. We hope for a world in the future where brain tumours have little impact. But we know that hope is not a strategy. We support clinical research and work with our community of experts to improve investment and build capacity so that harm is reduced, care is improved at hospital and at home, and people are more confident and able to take control. Only then can life with a brain tumour be fulfilling and enjoyable, and people who have heard the words 'you have a brain tumour' are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

This is our challenge.

Strategic report

Will Jones
Chief Executive

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees

Letter from chair and CEO

Thank you for taking an interest in our mission and passion for helping people with a brain tumour to have the best support available so that they can live their lives as people first and patients second.

Following a strong year on all fronts in 2021–22, this year has been one of planned investment to build capacity. We have grown our team, expanded our collaborative relationships and developed our skills to meet demand, which has increased steadily each quarter. And with this growth, we have sustained impact.

While from an organisational and governance perspective, this paints a picture of positive progress, we are only too aware that for those diagnosed with a brain tumour, the challenges of isolation, fear, confusion in the face of complex treatment, lack of support and poor clinical outcomes are as present as ever. There are over 80,000 people living with a brain tumour in the UK, and we still have much work to do to reach everyone who needs us.

But we are rising to this challenge.

We are reaching more people every day, with beneficiary numbers growing over the year at 15% each quarter, and we have grown our skills and capacity to meet new needs in the brain tumour community. Perhaps the most pertinent of these is the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Working with volunteers, we have been able to provide welfare and benefits support, which has helped those that need it secure £94,760 in vital support over the year.

Leaning into where we know we have the most impact, we have formalised our intensive coaching offer, in partnership with Thrive Partners and made possible thanks to our Rank Foundation Golden Award. With the funding from The Rank Foundation, we have been able to pilot the Thrive platform, bringing structured online coaching to the cancer care and charity space for the first time. Feedback and outcomes are good, with people scoring their experience as 10/10, from 164 completed sessions. Our expert coaches have been scored 5/5 from these sessions.

Fundraising is an equally important part of our work. To be able to support everyone who needs us and sustain our impact, we need to raise over £1.5m every year.

Our diverse portfolio of fundraising continues to sustain our work, with our community as passionate as ever about giving back and enabling us to help others. While at face value not a record year for income, the period in review carries a high level of unrestricted income, which is vital in helping us cover our core costs and deliver our service. Funds raised over the year total £691,706. This has been derived from a traditional mix of charity fundraising channels. The fourth quarter of the year did bring a slowdown in community fundraising and trading activity as our supporters bore the weight of the cost-of-living crisis.

Looking to the year ahead, and in the face of a challenging social, economic and political climate, we are planning to consolidate our expanded scale following this period of investment, sustain or grow our impact, and inspire more people and organisations to get behind our mission to help people with a brain tumour to live their lives as people rather than patients.

Our purpose and our work

Our strategy: First, we are people

In April 2019, we launched our current strategy. Thirteen years in the making, this strategy, 'First, we are people', puts laser focus on the human, practical and cultural contexts in which people find themselves following a brain tumour diagnosis. It sets out our journey to help people living with a brain tumour become less isolated, more in control, more involved with their clinical care and condition, and better resourced.

The human context sees a forgotten group of people who, following diagnosis, see themselves fall into a chasm between improving clinical care and the scientific pursuit of a cure. In acknowledging that before we are patients, we are people, we can help people navigate this void, for when we are patients, we are only patients for a small amount of the time. We want to do things that people want to do, not always the things that patients have to do.

The "all together, stay calm in a crisis and sort out anything" me has been completely taken off guard. I am so lost. **Patient**

In practical terms, we know from our intimately close work with our community of people with a brain tumour, and their caregivers, that a brain tumour is isolating, the journey is confusing, communicating well is hard, behaviour and personality change devastates relationships, fatigue impacts 95% of those diagnosed, and there is a huge financial impact as work stops. These are just some of the challenges, and these challenges are not addressed in either the laboratory or the hospital. They are addressed at home, where help is hard to find.

How we got here

Our direction has been set in consultation with our community. We 'asked the experts' what they needed, to understand what matters most.

We heard:

- You spend more time being a person than you do being a patient.
- As a person, you are more resourceful, more proactive and more confident in the face of challenges.
- Emotions and values drive your behaviour, not just clinicians. What matters to you is more important than what is the matter with you.
- People look at opportunities. As a person, you grow. Patients tend to focus on problems, and barriers are hard to overcome unless they can be treated or medicated.

Our current strategy has been co-created with our community and delivered with its support. This strategy is helping us to achieve our mission – we are here for a world in which people with a brain tumour are involved, resourced, supported, confident and connected. They are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

The experts we asked

The conclusions and decisions reached in the development of our strategy result from conversations and day-to-day meetings and experiences over a six-month period with the following stakeholders:

- beneficiaries – people living life with a brain tumour and their caregivers
- supporters
- current and prospective philanthropic funders
- other charities
- *brainstrust* team members and trustees
- national research bodies
- local and national research funders
- clinical experts from all specialities
- campaign groups.

Key achievements

Our support

This year we have grown our team to meet increasing demand and build capacity so that we can continue to help more people than ever before with brainstrust*'s unique and impactful support.*

Riding the momentum we carried through the pandemic, this year has seen us move forward, with and for our community at pace, and without compromising our impact.

Every day the resourcefulness and resilience of our community inspire and motivate us, and our strategy and structure have enabled us to scale our work across new regions. We hoped that this year would be exciting for brainstrust*, for our community and for our team, and it has been. This is not to make light of the devastating challenges faced by the people we are here for, but it is a comment on how we have never felt more confident, single-minded and committed to our mission to make life better for people post-diagnosis.*

Helen Bulbeck, Co-Founder and Director of Services

During the year, **3,439 people accessed our help** by phone or email, webchat or video call. An increase of 47% on last year (2,339), and 172% on the year before (1,264).

1,306 people accessed our help for the first time during the year. 739 of these people were brain tumour patients. 567 were caregivers or close friends or family members seeking support. This is a 58% increase on last year (825).

I'm having a bad day. I feel very demoralised and very down. Hard with the "simple" day-to-day things and even harder with more difficult days, like today. I find it easier to put things in writing. I can take as much time as I need to explain. I just wouldn't be able to find the words in a phone call. I am so glad I can turn to you for help. You understand. I don't feel so alone. I'm starting to feel better now, and calmer.

Brain tumour patient, south-east England

We were able to send **368 brain boxes** to people who needed them. This is 34 fewer than last year.

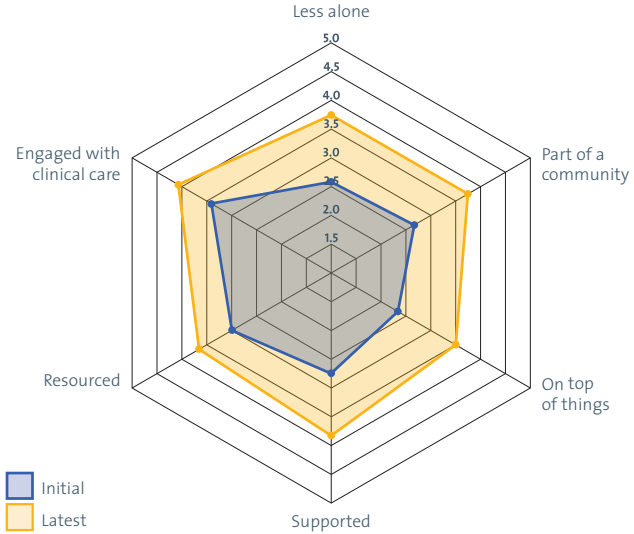
Our volunteer-led welfare and benefits support service **helped 41 people to access financial support worth £94,760.** This comprises Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and one-off grants from local organisations.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, we provided **372 counselling sessions to 62 people** via our network of specially trained and professionally qualified counsellors.

On average, those that have accessed counselling through us have progressed by 0.97 across our impact indicators **This represents a 24% improvement.**

24%

People who accessed counselling with *brainstrust* reported feeling more on top of things and less alone – where for both indicators we enabled a 29% improvement.



When I found out about brainstrust, *it was nice to speak to like-minded people who were in a similar position and stage of a brain tumour diagnosis. They kindly sent out a* brainstrust *brain box, which meant a lot to me at the time, as I didn't feel so isolated, as I wasn't on my own going through this. This must have cost a lot, so I donated – as I still refer to one of the books that was sent to me, it is a very small price to pay. There is a Zoom meeting that I can attend if I want to and speak to other people, where you can vent off frustrations, amongst lots of other things that concern you. I have attended the Liverpool event held recently, which consisted of people working in different fields of brain tumours in the morning session, and in the afternoon we could ask questions amongst other activities held, and I found this INVALUABLE. Long may they continue, as they do a sterling job.*

Brain tumour patient, Liverpool

Online support and information

120,668 people came to brainstrust.org.uk for the first time for information during the year, a 9% increase from 110,928 the previous year.

9%

These people accessed **270,716 pages and downloaded 9,384 copies of long-form health information** from our website.

During the year, the **most popular information** has been about diagnosis, brain tumour types, patient stories, end-of-life care and glioblastoma trials and treatments.

Of the 2,469 people who have provided feedback on our information, 2,219 (90%) tell us that what they have read has **helped them to feel better resourced and more in control.**

The most highly rated information on our website is our content about end-of-life care, the brain box, anatomy and tumour types and brain tumour symptoms and diagnosis.

Thrive with *brainstrust*

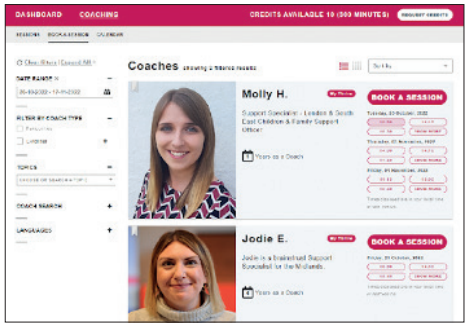
I found it helpful to lay out all the things I'm feeling overwhelmed about and what I do and don't have control over and work out the places where I can get more support/information around my treatment and what the next steps are. The exercise of writing things down and categorising those areas was useful and helped get everything out of my head, and I felt supported and heard.

Brain tumour patient, London

During the pandemic, we accelerated our plans to make our coaching service available online. This work progressed at pace during the year in review, culminating in the launch of the 'Thrive' coaching platform.

On this platform, people can select a coach, book sessions and attend via secure video call. Goals and topics are set prior to the call, and evaluation takes place within the platform.

Coaching via the Thrive platform gives users structure and direction in the support they receive. The platform allows people to choose when the sessions take place and to set the focus. This sets a clear pathway to attaining their goals. As it is a video platform, people get to see their *brainstrust* support specialist during the sessions, so they can feel as connected as possible with their coaching journeys.



Feedback and outcomes are good, with people scoring their experience as 10/10, from 164 completed sessions on the platform. Our expert coaches have been scored 5/5 from these sessions.

Madi's story

Madi's story shows the significant impact this work can have. Madi has lived with brain tumours for nearly 30 years and is a survivor of multiple surgeries. She recently came to *brainstrust* for support as her third surgery approached and she faced ill-health retirement from a career she had worked hard for and loved.

Madi engaged with our coaching service through the Thrive platform and told us: 'There is something about there being a particular place to go that adds value to the sense of belonging and community. It also reminds me that there are other *brainstrust* resources, such as the fatigue book, that I can go back to. The follow-up emails my coach sends me after each session provide me with an opportunity to respond in writing, as do the feedback and booking forms on Thrive. Writing is a very helpful reflective tool for me and helps me consolidate what I am taking away from each of the face-to-face online sessions. The online sessions are helpful to me, as I don't need to travel and can rest before or after sessions, depending on my fatigue.'

Madi told us: 'I feel empowered and have the sense of being held in a kind of soft safety net. The questions I've been asked and the relationship I've built with my coach provide an inner voice to challenge some of the less helpful thoughts I may have. I have achieved a sense of relative calm whilst waiting for information about my ill health, retirement and next surgery.'

Using our progress tracker tool over the four-month period she was engaged in online coaching, Madi improved her overall well-being by 76% from an initial total score of 17 out of 30 across all six of our key indicators to her most recent maximum total score of 30 out of 30.

Our impact

Background

There are nine pillars that drive our efforts to understand the impact of our work.

Accountability: We are entrusted with resources, often donated by individuals, corporations or governments. Measuring impact allows charities to demonstrate how effectively we are using these resources to achieve our goals.

Resource allocation: Limited resources are a common challenge for charities. By measuring impact, we can identify which of our efforts are delivering the most significant results. This information guides informed decision-making on where we allocate resources for maximum effectiveness.

Improvement: Regularly assessing impact enables us to identify areas for improvement. By understanding what is working well and what isn't, we refine our strategies, modify programmes, and enhance our approach to better serve the people we are here for.

Learning and adaptation: The landscape in which we operate changes rapidly. Measuring impact helps us to stay agile and responsive to evolving needs. When we can track changes in our beneficiaries' lives, we are better equipped to adapt our work appropriately and with confidence.

Advocacy with evidence: When we are pushing for policy changes or increased funding, measuring impact provides tangible evidence of the outcomes we are achieving, or demonstrates the gap that we need to close.

Effective communication: Sharing our impact data allows us to communicate our achievements effectively. It makes our stories relatable and understandable, enabling us to connect with a broader audience and inspire people to join our cause.

Engaged supporters: People and institutions want to know that their contributions are making a difference. Impact measurement provides donors with a clear picture of how their support is creating positive change.

Strategic planning: Impact data informs our planning. We can set more realistic and achievable goals when we have a clear understanding of the outcomes we can deliver based on past performance.

A learning culture: A focus on impact cultivates a culture of continuous learning and improvement. We are more open to experimentation and innovation as we seek out the best possible ways to achieve our mission.

Measuring impact is about maximising the effectiveness of our work, ensuring that our resources are used efficiently in generating positive change for people with a brain tumour.

We have worked hard over recent years to create a culture where impact is not only at the centre of our processes but also a central part of the conversations we have with the people who need us. Tracking impact is mutually beneficial.

Methodology

We track progress against six indicators. These have been defined as being important to quality of life by our community of patients and their caregivers. In turn, these indicators support the four priorities in our strategy. These six indicators are:

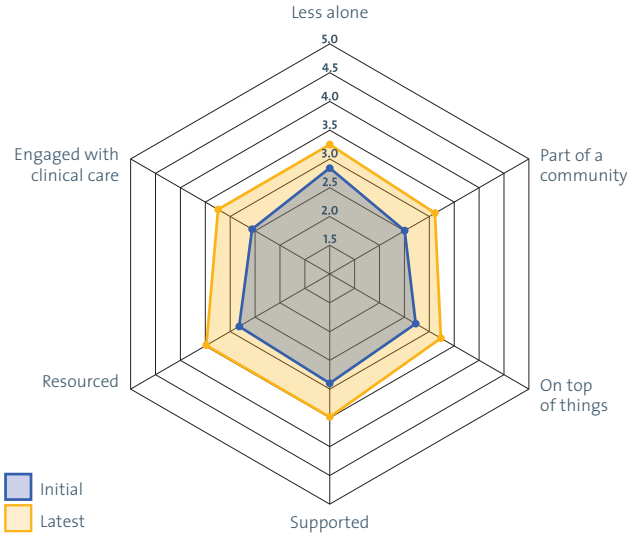
- engagement with care and condition
- reduced isolation
- engagement with communities
- creating control
- feeling supported
- feeling resourced.

We learn how people are doing against these indicators using our bespoke progress tracker tool. This gives us a simple, flexible and human approach to understanding impact. Progress trackers are completed and monitored collaboratively with our beneficiaries. The process isn't unobtrusive, but it is helpful. In completing a progress tracker, or multiple progress trackers, we help people to establish where the focus of our support needs to be to help them move forward. To complete a progress tracker, patients and caregivers provide a score of how they are feeling on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of our indicators. They complete multiple progress trackers on their journey with *brainstrust*, and this paints a picture of their progress.

The impact we're having

People who have come to us for help in the last year have made progress against our six key impact indicators.

On average, people have progressed by 0.57, on a scale from 1 to 5. This equates to a 14.25% average increase in well-being across the board. This is even greater for some indicators.



- We helped people improve the most with feeling able to navigate their clinical care, where we saw a 17.25% increase.
- After that we saw a 16.25% increase in feeling resourced.
- An area our focus should turn to from here is helping people to feel less alone, as we saw our smallest increase, of 10%, here.

In total, during this given period, we had 84 people complete their second progress trackers and 328 people complete their first.

We have worked hard over the year to close the gap, ensuring we are collecting as many second trackers as possible to get an accurate picture of the impact of our services.

I've been feeling really alone since my last consultation as I feel like I'm burdening friends and family by discussing it over and over but at the same time it's such a huge decision I don't want to make it on my own.

Patient

Beneficiary change 2022–2023

Over the year, we helped the vast majority of people who contacted us to sustain or improve well-being in the face of progressive neurological disease where, by all clinical measures, regression is more than likely.

It is important that we are realistic in our expectations, given the context in which many of the seriously or terminally ill people with whom we work find themselves. For many in this space, maintenance of well-being is an important and ambitious goal, and we are proud to help people achieve this.

Adam Thomson, Patient Involvement Officer and Impact Lead

Numbers alone don't always shine a light on the powerful outcomes that *brainstrust* creates for people, or the challenging circumstances they face. Over the year we heard a lot about the impact our work is having directly and unprompted from the people that need us:

I am now at the stage where I really want to share all that I have learnt on my brain tumour journey, and give back to the community. With that in mind, it was perfect timing when I bumped into the lovely team from brainstrust *at a brain tumour conference I'd been asked to speak at. Combining my coaching qualifications and experience on my brain tumour journey, I can now support others in coming to terms with where they are at, and then help them start to take powerful, positive action to live their best lives possible.*

Damon, *brainstrust* volunteer and brain tumour patient

Area of impact	Beneficiary feedback
Less alone	• *That's the first time I've been able to talk with other brain tumour patients in person, and I found it very therapeutic.* • *I do feel so incredibly blessed and lucky to have found you and* brainstrust. *It really does feel so comforting knowing you are there. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.* • *I remember when I got my brain box, it felt like a warm hug and stopped me from feeling alone. I hope someone else gets to feel the same.*
Supported	• *I'm still in shock, but it's because of all the amazing people in my life, like you, who continue to encourage and support me. Thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement. I am very lucky to have such amazing people around me and wouldn't be where I am without you, I am sure.* • *You have been a real beacon of hope for me when I felt all at sea at the beginning of this journey.*
On top of things	• *I found the session very useful. I now feel I am heading in the right direction to be as in control and on top of things as I can be. Mariel put me at ease, as this was the first online interactive thing I have ever done, and she also teased out the positive things I didn't realise I was already doing and some issues that we could address at a later date. Thank you for your advice today.*
Resourced	• *The hypnotherapy helps me to focus on my needs, relax, find a calm place in my head. It reminds me that I need to look after myself. The 'meningioma matters' sessions give me relevant information and keep me up to date, allowing me to learn from others' experience as well as providing a support network who 'get it' in relation to lived experience. The information on the website has been useful in researching things like radiotherapy. The Facebook site gives me that community again; it's nice to feel I can occasionally offer understanding or suggestions to others.*
Part of a community	• *For the first time, I felt the group really knew what I was feeling. Acoustic neuromas are rare, so I haven't been able to find people who have been through similar experiences, and this forum was supportive, friendly and informative. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to learn and share ideas with this group. Looking forward to the next one.* • *I have found the online 'family and friends' Meetup very helpful and supportive. It has been interesting to connect with other people who are experiencing similar situations but who obviously have different ways of coping. I have found it a very useful platform for exchanging management/coping skills, and it helps me to feel less alone with my situation.* • *Reading other people's stories has really helped me not feel so alone with the life-changing nature of this diagnosis. I've learnt to accept the new me, and know that while I'm different to how I was – there are certain situations I now find difficult, and I don't have as much energy as before – that's OK. A brain tumour affects different people in different ways. Accepting this, and accepting help from everywhere it's offered, plus talking about it and telling your story, can really help.*
Confident navigating clinical care	• *You should know that your advice was instrumental in us obtaining a treatment that saved Caroline's life. I'll always be grateful to you for that.* • *The information webinars (understanding scans) help me understand and ask questions. The information sheets are really useful (radiotherapy, uncertainty) and the new meningioma information is great.* • *In the short time of contacting* brainstrust, *you changed my future instantly, and you helped me get the care I needed and knew I deserved. I am forever grateful to you for that.*

Meet Hannah, caregiver for her dad

When my dad got diagnosed with a grade IV glioblastoma last year, our lives turned upside down. My dad and I have always been close, and it hit me really hard.

brainstrust sent us a brain box as soon as we got our diagnosis, and their resources really helped, but a few months in, I realised I needed extra support. I reached out to *brainstrust* who instantly set me up with Molly, one of their coaches. Molly was amazing, and we spoke lots about my dad, all my concerns, and sometimes (read: regularly) the sessions just allowed me to have a really big (and much-needed) cry.

After a couple of months, we reached the decision that I was ready to start counselling. I was just going back to university after the summer, and we decided that the summer holidays would be a good time to do it. As soon as I sent the email, Molly and *brainstrust* put me in touch with a counsellor, who helped enormously. Even now, Molly still checks in occasionally to make sure I'm doing okay and to let me know that support is still there if I need it.

Through *brainstrust* coaching with Molly for many months, and her helping me take the steps for reaching out for counselling over the summer, I felt like I was able to come to terms with my dad's diagnosis. Their support means I can enjoy my time with him, however long that may be. I feel more able to navigate my dad's ups and downs and the harsh reality of what we are dealing with. I feel like I have taken steps to come to terms with everything now. This has meant that I can now enjoy the time I have left with my dad without dealing with anticipatory grief and guilt.

PRIME Patient Research Involvement Movement

PRIME – bringing people closer to research

In 2021, we created the Patient Research Involvement Movement (PRIME) to bridge the gap between the clinical community and brain tumour patients and their caregivers. This work improves the quality of clinical brain tumour research and its design.

This time last year, 57 volunteer research partners and advocates were supporting PRIME with top-level patient involvement. Over this year, we have more than doubled this number, with a combined total of 115 individuals lending their insight and knowledge to clinical trial design.

The PRIME community is expert by experience. And this expertise has been used to test and design intervention tools to support mental well-being, influence studies that explore how treatment prior to surgery may improve outcomes, and provide guidance on how patients should be stratified into a trial comparing photon and proton therapy, just to name a few.

At any given time, PRIME supports 15 to 30 studies. There is a range of opportunities for the patient and caregiver community to be involved, ensuring that researchers working in the field have access to strong patient involvement.

In the future, we will continue to improve the standard of patient and public involvement (PPI) in clinical research, remain thought-leaders in this space and continue to grow our service. We will do this by:

- collaborating with other charities, including Brain Tumour Research
- exploring new ways to share our services with clinicians
- having more conversations with researchers and research funders regarding funding for this vital service
- continuing to develop a training and webinar programme for our volunteers
- learning and adapting methods of delivering the best patient involvement.

We have continued to work in partnership with the charity Brain Tumour Research to grow this work to mutual benefit. We have also received generous support from Naseem's Manx Brain Tumour Charity in the previous year to bring people with glioblastoma closer to relevant research.

PRIME has successfully supported research applications to the value of £20m, with partners who include:

The story of a trial: PORTRAIT

Working with Dr Gerben Borst, we inputted into the PORTRAIT study, which is to explore how using Optune prior to and following surgery might improve surgical outcomes.

We worked together to plan for the patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) strategy, which began with setting up focus groups.

We organised, recruited for and facilitated focus groups for Dr Borst, where he shared the study design with the community and they fed back their thoughts and ideas.

Following review of the study design, a PRIME research partner, Grant Stobart, was recruited to help produce patient-facing materials for the study.

The PRIME team, Grant and the PORTRAIT team met regularly to work on informational videos for those recruited to the study.

This also determined language, accessibility and preferences for those enrolled. Throughout the design process of the study, Dr Borst would refer to Grant and the PRIME team at *brainstrust* for input and discussion.

Dr Borst can use our ongoing PPI input to support his funding application, increasing the strength of the study proposal.

The story of a trial: APPROACH

Analysis of Proton vs. Photon Radiotherapy in Oligodendroglioma and Assessment of Cognitive Health.

- Dr Louise Murray, Professor Susan Short et al., University of Leeds
- Funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR): £1,499,803
- Start date: June 2021
- End date: June 2031

brainstrust's role as co-investigator involves support of the Trial Management Group (TMG) with two further experienced patient advocates, each from two participating centres. These individuals form the PPI panel that advises APPROACH researchers and fully participates in the decisions needed as the study proceeds.

This PPI panel is self-organising, ensuring that it is fully integrated throughout preparation, execution and dissemination, and in the governance structures. *brainstrust* assisted with establishing the terms of reference and methodology for PPI so that PPI is truly in the DNA of the trial. This will be facilitated through a PPI panel. At regular touch points, a focus group of patients, caregivers and the public is consulted to ensure that value is added and impact is made. The panel ensures that patient opinion, experience and insights are garnered and heard, and it provides a bridge for dialogue between patients and clinicians.

The activity is discursive and participative in its consideration of evidence emerging from the trial, and it identifies areas of patient impact where further information is needed. *brainstrust* also assists with dissemination of trial news and results. Developing dissemination strategies is a core part of our work. This is done through established networks that include the NCRI consumer forum, charities, neuro-oncology societies and, in the case of this trial, radiotherapy organisations.

Our influence – informing change in the future

Brain tumours present severe challenges to society in the UK, not only affecting individuals and families but also our healthcare systems and government. These broader challenges include:

Healthcare burden: Diagnosing and treating brain tumours involves complex procedures, including surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. These treatments require specialist medical expertise and equipment, which strains resources.

Limited treatment options: Brain tumours are difficult to treat, and in many cases, there are limited effective treatment options. This leads to frustration among patients and their families, as well as healthcare professionals, who are trying to provide the best care possible.

Long-term care needs: Brain tumour survivors require expensive long-term care and support due to ongoing medical and psychological needs. This strains families and systems alike.

Research and funding: Brain tumours remain an area of active research, but funding for brain tumour research is limited compared to other diseases. This hinders the development of new treatment options and innovative therapies.

Public awareness and stigma: There is a lack of public awareness and understanding about brain tumours, leading to stigma and misconceptions. This impacts patients' social interactions and ability to access support.

Access to care: As highlighted by the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission and our experience supporting people, inequalities in access to gold-standard healthcare and treatment are a challenge.

Impact on employment and finances: A brain tumour diagnosis is expensive to families, and to the state. Diagnosis and treatment lead to disruptions in employment and financial stability. Patients face challenges in maintaining employment, due to treatment schedules, cognitive impairments and physical limitations.

We are here to address these challenges, participating in a collaborative, multidisciplinary ecosystem striving for better support services for patients and their families, improved access to care, increased research funding and enhanced public awareness. Collaborative efforts between charities, healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers and advocacy groups are making progress in managing the societal challenges posed by brain tumours in the UK.

We are conscious that as a charity, we are here not just to alleviate challenges that the brain tumour community faces in the here and now, but also to work for a better world tomorrow, for people diagnosed with a brain tumour in the future.

In acknowledgement of our relatively small size, we conduct our campaigning and influencing activity collaboratively, carefully and with a laser focus on patient needs.

We proactively partner with clinical bodies, hospitals and clinical teams, other charities and community interest groups, notably Brain Tumour Research, the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Brain Tumours, One Cancer Voice, the Children and Young People Cancer Coalition, the International Brain Tumour Alliance and Cancer52, to make sure brain tumour patients and their caregivers have a voice.

Key concerns we are looking to be addressed are:

- quality and equality of care inside and outside the clinic
- prompt diagnosis
- addressing delays in follow-up and treatment
- NHS workforce shortages
- cost of living after brain tumour diagnosis and access to support
- implementation of shared decision-making
- access to novel treatments and therapies and adaptive trial design
- better access to funding for brain tumour researchers.

We go about this work with a positive approach and the belief that 'none of us is as smart as all of us'. If something is not working for our community, we are quick to acknowledge, slow to blame and swift to seek a solution, with every effort to bring the power of our ecosystem to bear on a solution.

Please refer to the 'Collaborations, networks and advisers' section of this report for more information about who we are working with.

Award winning work that improves patient experience

We have been working collaboratively with two NHS trusts in Liverpool and Preston to improve the patient pathway, both in terms of experience and service effectiveness. Issues included no brain site-specific team based at acute trusts, which led to a fragmented pathway and poor patient experience. Patients were falling between the emergency department, acute medical units, acute oncology and palliative care, so that nobody had responsibility for the patients. This meant a lack of follow-up, no central point of contact and a lack of information, so patients didn't know what timescales they could expect or what the next steps were. Patients and their caregivers were interviewed by *brainstrust* support specialists in focus groups and by telephone so that we could work with the NHS trusts to improve the patient experience and service effectiveness based on their feedback. We are very grateful to everyone who has given us the time and honesty to deliver this work.

The outcomes of this work have led to:

- the establishment of a brain tumour pathway, so that everyone receives coordinated care and a management plan
- the allocation of a key worker
- the point of referral to neuro-oncology from the emergency department to within 72 hours to allow optimisation of steroids and accurate information being available for the MDT meeting
- all patients having a holistic needs assessment with an acute oncology support worker
- All patients being tracked by a cancer care navigator
- improved communication with additional information written and produced by *brainstrust* about what to expect when diagnosed with a suspected brain tumour
- delivery of the pathway being increased from five days to seven, so that weekend referrals are overseen
- improved length of stay – patients are being discharged earlier when appropriate following first review.

This work has been shared at a local level and is easily transferable to other NHS trusts. It won a Nursing Times Award in 2022, and acute oncology teams from London, Birmingham, Barnsley, Wigan and Oxford have expressed a desire to replicate this work. The work also won a Macmillan Professional Excellence Award.

By bringing patients closer to their clinical teams we have been able to help develop award winning patient experience in hospitals.

Collaborations, networks and advisers

‘None of us is as smart as all of us’

Indeed, meaningful collaboration and co-creation is central to our strategy and ethos as we work to secure the best outcomes for anyone who is living with a brain tumour. Our partnerships, of which we nurture around 80, are global and fall into four themes:

Patient-focused

These partnerships include clinical engagement with the 35 neuroscience and neurosurgical centres and organisations that are relevant to our community, such as Use My Data and the Patient Information Forum. Clinical engagement is a priority, as this is one way in which we can reach the community. It is, however, a two-way relationship, as healthcare professionals can visit our website and order resources for their patients, signpost coaching and other support services, and take advantage of training opportunities, such as our expert-led webinars and coaching programme.

Clinically focused

Clinical collaborations are hubs of clinical practice and research, such as the British Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS), the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and the Cochrane Collaboration. We are very proud of our clinical network, which has been pivotal in the success of our webinar programme and the growth of our clinical research activity under the banner of PRIME.

This community’s involvement in our educational events has been transformative for our beneficiaries. We have built a community of over 20 clinical experts, who have selflessly given up their time and knowledge to help people living with a brain tumour understand more about their condition, why at times it is hard to make a choice about treatment, and how to live better with a brain tumour. This community continues to grow, and we are so grateful for the valuable and transformative expertise so generously gifted by this network.

Public Health

We work across the four Public Health nations. This year, this work has been particularly significant, as we have worked closely with the Public Health government departments to ensure that our community is well supported during the return of services following the Covid-19 pandemic. This work has included advocating for cohorts of people living with a specific type of brain tumour to ensure the treatment and surveillance that they need has been accessible. Furthermore, by using data from the National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service to reassure the community that waiting times and urgent referrals are returning to normal, our work with Public Health has enabled us to keep our community updated in a meaningful and relevant way.

Charities

We have always worked closely with charities when we have recognised that it is in the best interests of the community. Our collaborations with charities have become stronger and deeper during the pandemic, and we have worked hard this year to continue to build these relationships.

We are actively involved in the Cancer52 network of charities; we represent children and young people with brain cancer through our role on the steering group of the Children and Young People with Cancer Coalition; we work closely with Cancer Research UK on matters relating to brain cancer and clinical research; and we work in partnership with charity Brain Tumour Research on a variety of projects, including our PRIME initiative, and on activity to inform UK governments on the importance of addressing brain tumours at the highest levels possible.

Notably, we have enjoyed our ongoing relationship with the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission. *brainstrust*'s chief executive, Will Jones, brings our experiences, insights and the voices of our communities to the Joint Strategy Board of the mission.

Organisational partnerships and collaborations

Our team also maintains a broad portfolio of strategic and commercial relationships outside the health and charity sectors. These relationships with companies and individuals enhance our capabilities, capacity and expertise, and they all contribute meaningfully to our mission and our impact. We would like to express our specific appreciation to:

- Baker McKenzie
- Charisma Charity Recruitment
- Class Networks
- Eric Callister
- Google UK
- Greenberg Traurig, LLP
- Harrison Black
- Irene Clarke
- J Pullan & Sons
- Louise Baker
- McQueenie Mulholland
- Nifty Communications
- Rhys Coren, RA
- Salesforce
- Smarter Not Harder (SNH)
- TechSoup
- Think Creative Consultants Ltd
- Thrive Partners.

Reaching out to all available support networks is key. We were in such shock at the time of my son's diagnosis and found charities later.

Caregiver to a low grade glioma patient

Your support

This year our supporters raised £691,706 to fund *brainstrust*'s mission. This income remains from a diversified mix of traditional charity fundraising activity. Our funding comes from:

- trusts and foundations
- direct and regular giving
- companies who support our work
- sponsored events and challenges
- community fundraising
- Gift Aid recovery
- in-memory giving
- trading
- government support relating to the Covid-19 pandemic
- special-purpose fundraising to enable communities to access novel treatments and therapies.

We have limited income from legacy fundraising and high-net-worth individuals, and we have minimal investment income, instead keeping cash available to provide liquidity and flexibility so that we can react promptly to the needs of our community.

With all public fundraising cancelled at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have since worked hard to reignite supporter fundraising. We have been delighted to see activity and income from community fundraising channels build on last year. This focus is bringing our work closer, once more, to the community we are here to serve.

This being said, we remain in a challenging, and changing fundraising environment. Our three-year year planning post-Covid anticipated a rapid return to a fundraising mix that relied heavily on supporter fundraising, as it was before the pandemic – 80% supporter income, 20% grants.

However, our short-term planning and activities have had to adapt in response to changes in the fundraising landscape, where headwinds during the year have included cost-of-living pressures for supporters, political uncertainty in society, increased competition for grant fundraising, combined with unforeseen increases in operational costs across our whole organisation.

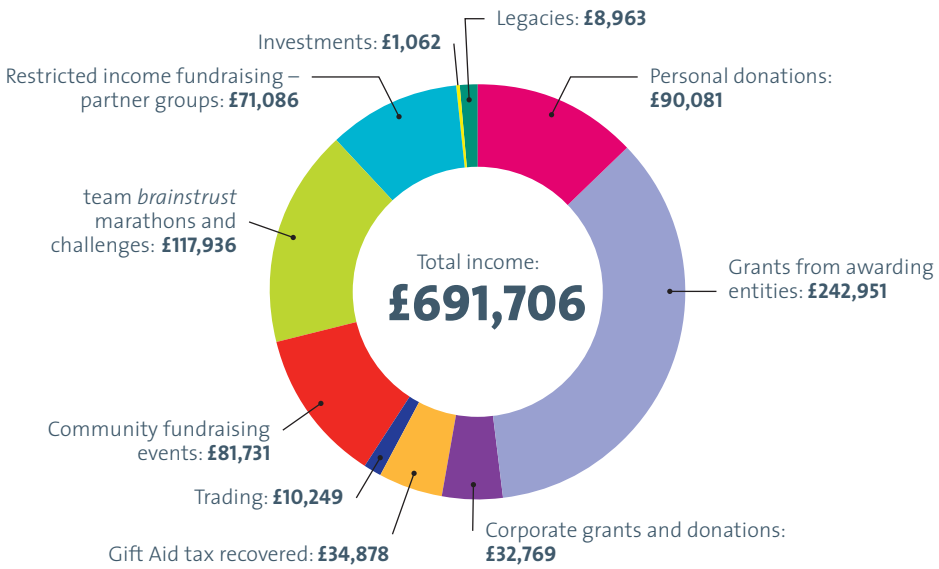
Our short-term planning anticipates these challenges – support from philanthropic and grant-giving partners remains as important as ever as our loyal community supporters struggle with cost-of-living pressures and uncertainty at home and work.

We continue to work hard to rebalance our fundraising mix, but to achieve the healthy and sustainable balance of 2019, we will need the wider societal pressures to ease.

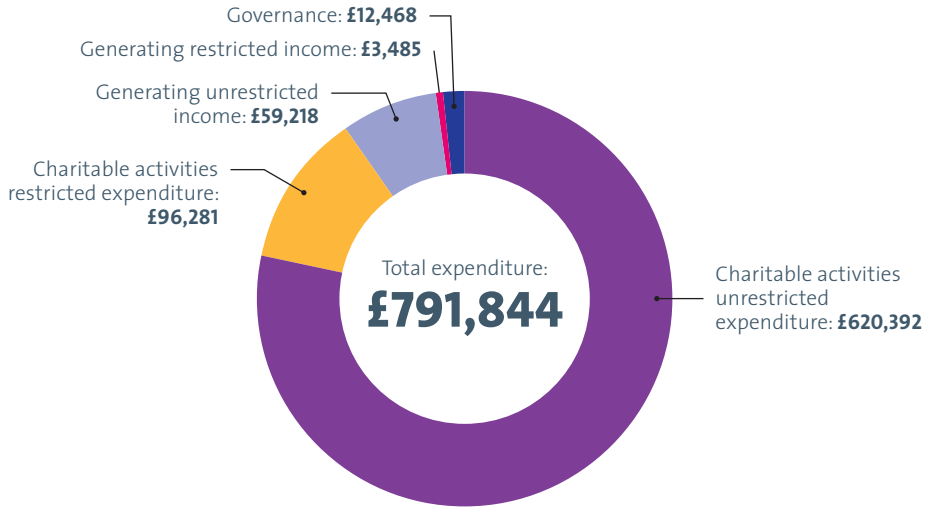
Hand in hand with the fundraising challenges that we anticipate will play out for at least the rest of the year, we are actively controlling costs wherever possible without compromising on the impact of our work in the communities that we serve.

In-memory fundraising, team *brainstrust* (marathons and challenges) and trust and foundation fundraising remain areas of growth for *brainstrust* despite these challenges.

Our income 2022-23



Our expenditure 2022-23



As we reflect on another year of remarkable achievements, we are reminded that the true measure of our success lies not just in the numbers we've raised but also in the countless lives we've touched and the stories of transformation we've authored together. With gratitude for all those who have joined us, we move forward, inspired by the light of our community, which illuminates the darkest of moments that come with a brain tumour diagnosis.

Will Jones, Chief Executive, *brainstrust*

Thank you to our community of supporters

'Be more Reesh' – Donna's Cardiff Half Marathon

Donna signed up with team *brainstrust* early in the year, taking inspiration from her friend Areesha, who was sadly lost to a brain tumour this year. Donna describes Areesha as someone who 'never shied away from a challenge'. Donna chose to set herself a fundraising target of £1,500.

Turns out running a half marathon is pretty damn hard.

Thanks to everyone that donated to my fundraising efforts. Thank you to everyone who has asked about my training, checked in on me and said good luck to me. Thank you to everyone that came out and cheered today. Thank you to everyone that told me I could do it even when I didn't think I could. Thank you to everyone who's asked about why I'm doing it and let me talk to them about Reesh. And a special thanks to Laura for being the best training

buddy I could have asked for. I'm so glad you let me tag along with you on this ride.

And lastly, to Reesh, I miss you so much, but it felt like I had you with me today. And that in itself was worth this entire journey.

Thank you so much for your support along this journey. I'm so glad I picked brainstrust *to fundraise for.*

Prior to taking part in the half marathon, Donna shared her thoughts on her upcoming challenge with team *brainstrust*.

The Cardiff Half Marathon took place on 2 October, and although Donna has admitted she's 'most definitely not a natural runner, or an experienced one', she trained hard, and with less than a month to go, we invited Donna to share her motivation for running and to reflect on her training so far.

I've been sitting in front of a blank screen for the last half an hour, trying to figure out how to start to write what motivated me to run the Cardiff Half. And with tear-stained cheeks, I reluctantly admit it was grief. That kind of grief that is all-encompassing and physically painful. That kind of grief that just makes you wish there was something, anything, you could do to make it go away, but there isn't.

On 19 February 2022, I lost my dear friend Areesha to a brain tumour that she was diagnosed with less than a year before. Reesh was not like anyone I'd met before. She was wildly extroverted, loud, dramatic and absolutely hilarious. And she said yes to everything. Once, she flew to New York, then drove to Philadelphia on her own to meet up with our roller derby team and play the last two games on our first USA tour. Then she flew back home 48 hours later. To say Reesh lived life to the fullest is an understatement – she packed more into 35 short years than most do in a much longer lifetime. And I'm so glad she did.

I knew I wanted to do something to honour her 'say yes' attitude, and when my friend Laura said she was running the Cardiff Half in memory of Reesh, I asked if she wanted someone to do it with her. And the next thing I know, I'm signing up to run 13.1 miles, having not run in over six months and never having run more than seven miles in my entire life. But one thing I knew for sure was that if Reesh was still here, she'd be our biggest cheerleader.

Training has been full of ups and downs. It started off fairly well, and I was following my training plan, and it wasn't too hard to motivate myself to put my trainers on and get some miles in. But unfortunately, after avoiding Covid for 2.5 years, my luck finally ran out. It hit me pretty hard, and I wasn't able to run, or exercise at all, for five very long weeks. But patience (not one of my virtues) prevailed, and I managed to lace my trainers back up towards the end of August and restart training. It's been humbling to not see the progression I wanted to. I've had to dramatically adjust my goals for the race, but it really has brought me back to the bigger picture of why I'm running. I am running for Reesh, for someone that was so incredibly full of life, so ready to take on any challenge and so willing to help her friends when they needed it. And I guess this is what running the Cardiff Half for brainstrust *feels like to me: helping a friend.*

I am so incredibly grateful for the generosity people have shown with their donations. Whilst I am nervous about the race, there is no doubt in my mind I can do it. And on the day, when I hit that inevitable wall, I'll think of Reesh cheering me on and every single person who has supported me along the way.

Donna, you're an inspiration – we can't thank you enough for your amazing support and for smashing your fundraising target by raising a huge £1,630.

Kerstin Kramer's 3 Pistes Cycle Sportive

On Saturday 4 June, Kerstin Kramer took on the 3 Pistes Cycle Sportive (the UK's highest cycle sportive) in support of *brainstrust*. In an epic challenge, she tackled eight categorised climbs, five of the UK's six highest roads and three Scottish ski centres – all spanning 103 miles.

When the ride was originally planned, Kerstin and her close friend and fellow GP, Margaret, had pledged to conquer this incredible challenge together. But sadly, last November Margaret was diagnosed with a brain tumour and suddenly had to face a very different type of challenge. In this moment, Margaret and her family reached out to *brainstrust* for support and found an understanding community ready to welcome them with open arms. While Margaret had to withdraw from the challenge, Kerstin chose to ride in her honour and raised over £2,200 in support of her chosen charity, *brainstrust*, and the wider brain tumour community.

The inaugural Jim Woods Memorial Ride

'A great ride in memory of a great man' is how one Alton Cycling Club member described the Jim Woods Memorial Ride.

The inaugural Jim Woods Memorial Ride took place on Sunday 10 July. The ride was organised by John Heath in memory of club member Jim Woods, who sadly died of a brain tumour in 2020, and who is fondly remembered by many.

In memory of Jim Woods

Jim was a keen club cyclist, joining ACC in 2010 on his return from France. Always good company on and off the bike, Jim loved cycle touring, Sunday club rides and all things social.

Jim was diagnosed in September 2018 with a malignant brain tumour and sadly passed away in April 2020. He is hugely missed by his many friends and family. His gentle humour and keen intellect live on in the memories of all who knew him.

The day of the ride

The ride began on Sunday morning, with the team enjoying excellent weather and quiet lanes. For many at the club, this was their first ever Audax ride, and the first organised by Alton Cycling Club since 2006, and it was a great success.

Considering the warm weather, the team of 60 friendly cyclists completed an impressive 100 km and raised an incredible £773.31 for *brainstrust*.

Alton Cycling Club are looking forward to organising this as an annual Audax event from now on. The next ride will be in July 2024. We cannot wait!

Dreaming big with Ravi Adelekan

In December 2022, 8 year old brain tumour patient Ravi Adelekan launched his fundraising campaign 'Ravi's Dream' in support of 2 charities close to his heart – *brainstrust* and The Brain Tumour Charity. His goal was to raise £250,000 for the work of the charities so that all children with brain tumours can get the help they need.

Ravi's fundraising journey began in his home town of Brighton with the launch of his charity music video – a cover of the song 'A Million Dreams' from The Greatest Showman. With appearances from Hugh Jackman and Michael Gracey of Greatest Showman fame, the video also features an amazing array of internationally acclaimed musicians including Bastille, Damon Albarn, Paloma Faith, The Big Moon, and Metronomy.

You can watch the video here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDETq8P88SI

Ravi has since won a Pride of Britain award for his courage, reaching millions in his mission to help children with a brain tumour to be better supported.

Thank you to our trust and foundation supporters

Your support is invaluable and vital to us; it has allowed us to widen and strengthen our local communities. We value our relationships with all our generous and compassionate funders and are grateful to The Rank Foundation for its ongoing support.

We are also indebted to the National Lottery Community Fund and players of The National Lottery. Their grants helped us support many more people with our high-impact coaching, allowed us to reach more people in Scotland and to plan free all-day health and well-being events.

In addition, we are incredibly privileged to have been supported by these very generous funding partners:

- The Edward Gostling Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Hospital Saturday Fund
- St. James's Place Charitable Foundation
- Wyseliot Rose Charitable Trust
- Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
- The Moondance Foundation
- The February Foundation
- The Meikle Foundation
- The Thistledown Education Trust
- The Hobson Charity
- The Mishcon Family Charitable Trust
- Sandra Charitable Trust
- The Hodge Foundation
- The Oakdale Trust.

Thank you, all, for your generosity, and for the incredible kindness of an anonymous trust donor. Your funding has allowed us to be there for an ever-increasing number of people who need us and to help them live their best possible lives.

Financial review

The Trust's published statutory accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 are incorporated in this Trustees' Annual Report and include considerable detail on the source and application of funds, and the financial position of the Trust at 31 March 2023, as required by the SORP for UK charities published by the Charity Commission. This report comments on the main points contained in the accounts.

In summary, gross income generated in 2022–2023 was £692K (2021–22: £952K), of which £71K related to restricted income funds. The net deficit for the year was £100K (2021–22: £289K surplus), of which £32K related to restricted income funds.

While, as reviewed elsewhere in the Trustees' Annual Report, *brainstrust*'s charitable impact has been significantly increased, thus increasing our reach and effectiveness. We have had to invest in meeting demand and scaling our efforts over the year, and this has come at an increased cost due to new, planned-for recruitment and an increase in live events. Overall expenditure in 2022–2023, at £792K, of which £100K related to planned expenditure of restricted income funds, has naturally increased year on year, alongside a higher level of activity, from the previous year of 2021–22 (£663K).

The Trust's gross income for 2022–23, at £692K, was, as noted above, a decrease on the £952K raised in 2021–22. However, it is only £16K short against our targets. We have not yet seen a return to a 'normal' twelve months since before Covid-19, but our supporters, through grants, donations and, in many cases, the hard physical graft of traditional fundraising through, for example, sponsored and testing walks and marathons, have raised this money despite the ongoing economic uncertainty and external factors, such as recruitment and cost-of-living pressures in our team and for our community. This has made for a challenging fourth quarter in terms of fundraising and planning/pipeline development, but the significant growth in our reserves last year has helped us to weather the storm.

Most of the Trust's income, both general and restricted, is applied to supporting patients and their caregivers and families, from the point of a brain cancer diagnosis. Our support team provides UK-wide coverage, supported by the National Lottery Community Fund and other substantial funders.

The Trust has only cash investments, deposited with NatWest Bank and The Co-operative Bank. At 31 March 2023, the Trust had net reserves, including our restricted income funds, of £604K (March 2022: £704K), which included unrestricted reserves of £205K (2022: £274K) and net restricted reserves of £399K (2022: £430K). The unrestricted deficit for the year in review has been deducted from our general charitable funds.

The Trust has a long-standing policy of holding unrestricted reserves to cover four months of defined core costs. As at 31 March 2023, unrestricted reserves were sufficient to cover just over five months of core costs, the excess providing a useful cushion as the UK, and especially the charity sector, continues to operate in a very unusual and unpredictable environment.

Our structure, governance, leadership and management

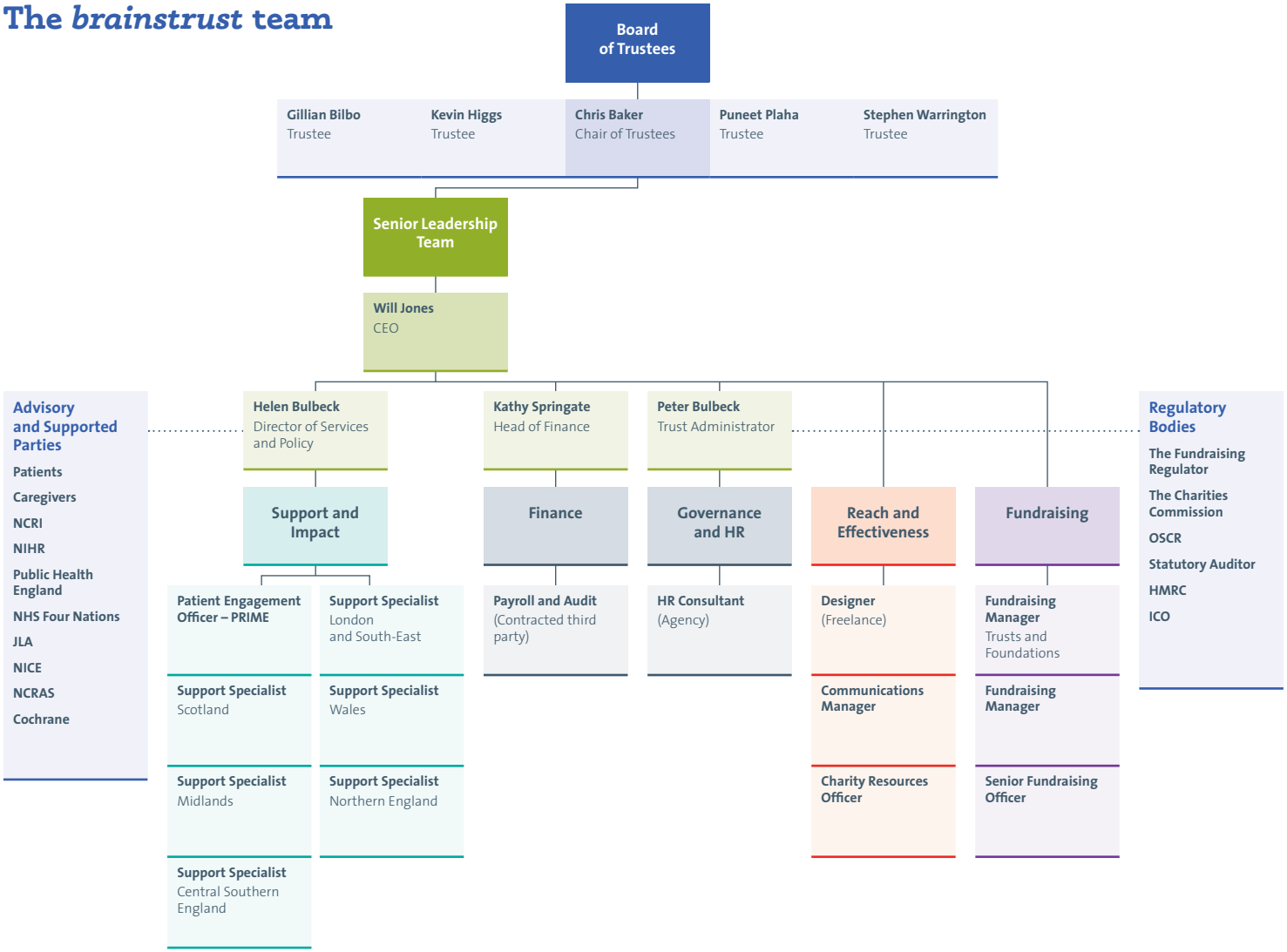
Our structure

brainstrust is a mature organisation. We are confident in our abilities, our purpose and our impact. As we near the end of our current strategy, we are more focused than ever on our purpose and the needs of our beneficiaries.

We are proud that we have catalysed a new ecosystem in the brain tumour charity and advocacy landscape that is focused on improving life for people with a brain tumour.

Our professional and highly trained team supports people across the UK, and these people can access impactful, accredited *brainstrust* resources. We are a resilient organisation that has transitioned well over the last five years from being a 'large small' operation to a 'small big' charity with a scalable, professional and resilient structure.

The *brainstrust* team



Our governance

Good governance is an essential component of our success, particularly as we grow. It underpins our integrity, reinforces the trust and confidence our patients and partners place in us, and contributes to a strong high-performance culture.

Chris Baker, Chair of Trustees

Focused discussions, an agile and adaptable approach to planning and sound cooperation between the appointed trustees and the managers of the Trust have ensured that brainstrust *has continued to provide support and guidance for our patients, in accordance with its aims, while maintaining a secure financial footing.*

Gillian Bilbo, Trustee, *brainstrust*

brainstrust is constituted as a trust, governed by its Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006.

The overall guidelines for the management and administration of the Trust are incorporated in the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006, as amended by Deeds of Amendment adopted by the trustees under the terms of the original deed and notified to the Charity Commission.

This places overall responsibility for the proper governance of the Trust with the appointed trustees. Day-to-day management of the Trust is delegated to William Jones, who has been appointed chief executive of the Trust. The chief executive, supported by the leadership team, makes recommendations to the trustees on the Trust's vision, patient and caregiver support, related research, financial fundraising, promotional activities and ensuring that funds raised are spent as efficiently as possible on resources that will be useful to people affected by brain cancer.

brainstrust's trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Leading the way

brainstrust has a stable, experienced and committed leadership team who are aligned in delivering our mission and who are the strongest advocates of our vision and values. Day to day, the leadership team work to promote, develop and instil purpose, autonomy and mastery throughout the organisation through a 'tight-loose' approach, which is manifested in tightly defined objectives for each member of the team, but loosely defined method. This allows people to work the way that suits them best to achieve the right goals for *brainstrust* and our beneficiaries.

This leadership team and trustees have a clear mandate to:

- **Set an example** – It is important to demonstrate our values in everything we do. We set high standards of behaviour and inspire colleagues, supporters and beneficiaries to do the same. We demonstrate fairness, integrity and resilience, and we build trust with our actions.
- **Look after people** – At *brainstrust*, we promote the well-being of individuals, teams and communities. We encourage a supportive culture and inclusive working arrangements. We prioritise one-to-one time with people to listen and understand their needs. We support and defend colleagues in difficult situations. We identify and deal with poor performance and bad behaviour.
- **Take ownership** – We welcome responsibility and accountability. We're proactive, pick up things that need doing without being asked and push to finish the job in hand. We're the first to admit mistakes, apologise when wrong and learn for next time.
- **Provide clarity** – We must communicate clearly and concisely through the right channel. We question any decisions, goals or explanations that are vague or ambiguous, and we work to clarify them. We're open, honest

and straightforward in what we say and write. And we provide specific, understandable and useful feedback.

- **Make good decisions** – We use evidence and judgement to make good decisions. We know that timely decisions are important, so we don't procrastinate or fudge. We commit to collective decisions, particularly when we originally disagreed. We consult broadly, seek out contrary opinions and listen to quieter voices. We make sure we can explain our decisions, with context, rationale and evidence.
- **Point the way** – We share an inspiring vision for the future of the charity and everyone's part in it. In our work, we make sure that colleagues understand the outcomes we want to achieve and the value that they will create.
- **Build the future** – We bring great people on board. We actively look for the widest range of candidates to strengthen our diversity. We encourage our colleagues to learn, develop new skills and pursue their career aspirations, whether at *brainstrust* or elsewhere. And we give people opportunity and responsibility at the right pace for them. We continually improve *brainstrust*'s capability and the effectiveness and efficiency of our delivery. We try out new approaches and technologies and give others the time and space to do the same.

Our board of trustees

brainstrust's trustees for the year in review are Christopher Baker, Kevin Higgs, Stephen Warrington, Gillian Bilbo and Puneet Plaha.

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees
Chris is EMEA managing director at a leading global software company and has over 20 years' experience driving growth at some of the highest-profile companies in the world, including Microsoft and Salesforce. Chris has been a trustee for nearly eleven years and the chair of trustees at *brainstrust* for six years.

Kevin Higgs
Trustee
Kevin is a financial adviser and has been a trustee for fourteen years. In a chance meeting while at a previous employer, Kevin was immediately taken by the dedication and commitment of the charity to focus on the support and well-being of patients and families diagnosed with a brain tumour. He knew that he wanted to be a part of the journey that *brainstrust* has been on since 2006.

Stephen Warrington
Trustee
Stephen brings to the organisation extensive experience leading professional services businesses and consulting for major multinationals, and he has been a trustee for six years. Stephen's teenage son was diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent successful surgery.

Gillian Bilbo
Trustee
Gillian is a retired headteacher and is now a school inspector, and she has been a trustee for ten years. She brings a listening ear and an objective viewpoint to the board and is supportive of fundraising initiatives.

Puneet Plaha
Trustee
Puneet is an associate professor and consultant neuro-oncology surgeon in Oxford, with a specialist interest in brain tumours, especially endoscopic minimally invasive surgery and awake surgery. He has been a consultant neuro-oncology surgeon lead for the Oxford brain tumour MDT and neuro-oncology lead for Thames Valley since 2012. Puneet joined *brainstrust*'s board of trustees in March 2021.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year to ratify the broad strategy and areas of activity for the Trust. In addition, trustees may meet with members of the team to work on specific projects. All trustees give their time freely, and no remuneration is paid.

In accordance with clause 9 of the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006:

(i) There must be at least three trustees. Apart from the first trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution of the trustees passed at a special meeting called under clause 15 of this deed.

(ii) In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

(iii) The trustees must keep a record of the name and address and the dates of appointment, reappointment and retirement of each trustee.

(iv) The trustees must make available to each new trustee, on his or her first appointment:

  (a) a copy of this deed and any amendments made to it

  (b) a copy of the charity's latest report and statement of accounts.

There are no exemptions from disclosure applicable to or within this report, and neither the charity nor any of its trustees are acting as custodian trustees.

Now in our 17th year of operation, we have an established national footprint across all elements of our activity. This is delivered with public benefit at the heart by a professional team with a professional leadership structure.

brainstrust senior staff contacts

Will Jones, *Chief Executive*,
will@brainstrust.org.uk

Dr Helen Bulbeck, *Director of Services and Policy*,
helen@brainstrust.org.uk

Kathy Springate, *Head of Finance*,
kathy@brainstrust.org.uk

Jodie Eveleigh, *Head of Support*,
jodie@brainstrust.org.uk

Incidents and reporting

For the year in review, and indeed for the duration of the organisation's history, we have had no reportable incidents relating to our fundraising, our service or our internal operations. We have in place policies and procedures for managing, reporting and escalating incidents and complaints. The following are available on request:

- Whistleblowing policy
- Complaints procedure – patient services
- Complaints procedure – fundraising
- Complaints policy – staff
- Complaints policy – volunteers

Registered Charity Number: 1114634

Report of the Trustees and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 for *brainstrust*

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

brainstrust – Contents of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023

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Notes to the Cash Flow Statement 37
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Detailed Statement of Financial Activities 43

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

Structure, governance and management

Governing document
The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Reference and administrative details

Registered Charity number
1114634

Principal address
4 Yvery Court
Castle Road
Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO31 7QG

Trustees
C Baker
K Higgs
G Bilbo
S Warrington
P Plaha

Auditors
Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

brainstrust is also a Scottish Charity, SC044642, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Trustees' Responsibility Statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

brainstrust – Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2023

Trustees' Responsibility Statement – continued

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed 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, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable 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 charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. 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.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on **5th October 2023** and signed on its behalf by:

C Baker – Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of *brainstrust* (the 'charity') for the year ended 31st March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31st March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity 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 charity'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 trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

or our knowledge obtained in 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 this gives rise to 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which 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 charity'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 charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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 the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

As outlined above, our objective is to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements and irregularities. Whilst not a guarantee that such instances will be detected, our risk based approach, using systematic testing methods, judgement, communication with management, professional

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

scepticism, observation of controls and systems, and audit experience/knowledge, allows us to be satisfied that our procedures are highly capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
East Quay
Kite Hill
Wootton Bridge
Isle of Wight
PO33 4LA

Date: 13th October 2023

brainstrust – Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	**2023 Total funds £**	2022 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	**409,642**	**–**	**409,642**	337,854
Other trading activities	3	**209,966**	**71,036**	**281,002**	608,240
Investment income	4	**1,062**	**–**	**1,062**	26
Other income		**–**	**–**	**–**	6,083
Total		**620,670**	**71,036**	**691,706**	952,203
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	5	**59,218**	**3,485**	**62,703**	90,184
Charitable activities	6				
Charity activities		**620,392**	**96,281**	**716,673**	558,284
Other		**12,468**	**–**	**12,468**	14,963
Total		**692,078**	**99,766**	**791,844**	663,431
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**(71,408)**	**(28,730)**	**(100,138)**	288,772
Transfers between funds	17	**2,563**	**(2,563)**	**–**	–
Net movement in funds		**(68,845)**	**(31,293)**	**(100,138)**	288,772
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**273,874**	**430,371**	**704,245**	415,473
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**205,029**	**399,078**	**604,107**	704,245

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Balance Sheet 31st March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	**1,957**	**–**	**1,957**	2,824
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	**77,711**	**–**	**77,711**	39,522
Cash at bank		**188,630**	**399,078**	**587,708**	730,827
		266,341	**399,078**	**665,419**	770,349
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	**(39,796)**	**–**	**(39,796)**	(35,655)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**226,545**	**399,078**	**625,623**	734,694
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**228,502**	**399,078**	**627,580**	737,518
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	14	**(23,473)**	**–**	**(23,473)**	(33,273)
NET ASSETS		**205,029**	**399,078**	**604,107**	704,245
FUNDS	17				
Unrestricted funds				**205,029**	273,874
Restricted funds				**399,078**	430,371
TOTAL FUNDS				**604,107**	704,245

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 5th October 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

C Baker – Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	**(133,533)**	277,073
Interest paid		**(969)**	(818)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		**(134,502)**	276,255
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		**–**	(3,469)
Interest received		**1,062**	26
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		**1,062**	(3,443)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Loan repayments in year		**(9,679)**	(7,169)
Net cash used in financing activities		**(9,679)**	(7,169)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**(143,119)**	265,643
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		**730,827**	465,184
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**587,708**	730,827

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2023

1. Reconciliation of net (expenditure)/income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	**(100,138)**	288,772
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**867**	2,675
Interest received	**(1,062)**	(26)
Interest paid	**969**	818
Increase in debtors	**(38,189)**	(14,134)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**4,020**	(1,032)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	**(133,533)**	277,073

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.22 £	Cash flow £	**At 31.3.23 £**
Net cash			
Cash at bank	**730,827**	**(143,119)**	**587,708**
	730,827	**(143,119)**	**587,708**
Debt			
Debts falling due within 1 year	**(9,558)**	**(121)**	**(9,679)**
Debts falling due after 1 year	**(33,273)**	**9,800**	**(23,473)**
	(42,831)	**9,679**	**(33,152)**
Total	**687,996**	**(133,440)**	**554,556**

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, 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 financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grant income is recognised when received. In the event that a grant is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Legacy gifts are recognised on a case by case basis following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title to the asset having been transferred to the charity.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings -25% on cost

continued ...

1. Accounting policies – continued

Taxation
The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. Donations and legacies

	2023 £	2022 £
Donations	**90,081**	57,896
Grants from awarding entities	**242,951**	175,831
Corporate grants and donations	**32,769**	53,576
Gift aid tax recovered	**34,878**	50,551
Legacies	**8,963**	–
	409,642	337,854

3. Other trading activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Fundraising events	**81,731**	75,417
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**10,249**	12,472
Sponsored activities	**117,936**	174,339
Activities of partner groups	**71,086**	346,012
	281,002	608,240

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 – continued

4. Investment income

	2023 £	2022 £
Deposit account interest	**1,062**	26

5. Raising funds

Raising donations and legacies

	2023 £	2022 £
Fundraising fees	**11,077**	33,129
Promotional expenses	**31,318**	26,782
	42,395	59,911

Other trading activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Trading costs and purchases	**4,755**	7,972
Event costs	**5,941**	11,433
Sponsored activities costs	**9,612**	10,868
	20,308	30,273
Aggregate amounts	**62,703**	90,184

6. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Charity activities			
	714,187	**2,486**	**716,673**

continued ...

7. Support costs

	Governance costs £
Other resources expended	**12,468**
Charity activities	
	2,486
	14,954

8. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st March 2023 nor for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st March 2023 nor for the year ended 31st March 2022.

9. Staff costs

Total gross salaries, benefits in kind and employers national insurance costs for the year ending 31st March 2023 were £483,632 (2022 – £431,130).

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
Fundraising	**4**	4
Charitable Activities	**9**	9
Governance	**1**	1
Other	**1**	1
	15	15

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

continued ...

10. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	337,854	–	337,854
Other trading activities	262,228	346,012	608,240
Investment income	26	–	26
Other income	6,083	–	6,083
Total	606,191	346,012	952,203
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	66,402	23,782	90,184
Charitable activities			
Charity activities	538,688	19,596	558,284
Other	14,963	–	14,963
Total	620,053	43,378	663,431
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(13,862)	302,634	288,772
Transfers between funds	20,000	(20,000)	–
Net movement in funds	6,138	282,634	288,772
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	267,736	147,737	415,473
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	273,874	430,371	704,245

continued ...

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Website £	Totals £
COST			
At 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023	**1,905**	**11,176**	**13,081**
DEPRECIATION			
At 1st April 2022	**1,502**	**8,755**	**10,257**
Charge for year	**103**	**764**	**867**
At 31st March 2023	**1,605**	**9,519**	**11,124**
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31st March 2023	**300**	**1,657**	**1,957**
At 31st March 2022	403	2,421	2,824

12. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	**1,000**	(90)
Other debtors	**39,462**	15,499
Prepayment	**37,249**	24,113
	77,711	39,522

13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	**10,832**	12,840
Other creditors	**28,964**	22,815
	39,796	35,655

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 – continued

14. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Other creditors	**23,473**	33,273

15. Loans

An analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:

	2023 £	2022 £
Amounts falling due within one year on demand:		
Other loans	**9,679**	9,558
Amounts falling due between two and five years:		
Other loans – 1–5 years	**23,473**	33,273

16. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Within one year	**–**	13,990

continued ...

17. Movement in funds

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	**273,874**	**(71,408)**	**2,563**	**205,029**
Restricted funds				
Fund A	**710**	**2,566**	**(2,563)**	**713**
Fund E	**79,003**	**3,255**	**–**	**82,258**
Fund H	**27,034**	**5**	**–**	**27,039**
Fund I	**323,624**	**(36,664)**	**–**	**286,960**
Fund J	**–**	**2,108**	**–**	**2,108**
	430,371	**(28,730)**	**(2,563)**	**399,078**
TOTAL FUNDS	**704,245**	**(100,138)**	**–**	**604,107**

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	**620,670**	**(692,078)**	**(71,408)**
Restricted funds			
Fund A	**2,566**	**–**	**2,566**
Fund E	**5,070**	**(1,815)**	**3,255**
Fund H	**119**	**(114)**	**5**
Fund I	**19,040**	**(55,704)**	**(36,664)**
Fund J	**2,141**	**(33)**	**2,108**
Fund K	**42,100**	**(42,100)**	**–**
	71,036	**(99,766)**	**(28,730)**
TOTAL FUNDS	**691,706**	**(791,844)**	**(100,138)**

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 – continued

17. Movement in funds – continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	267,736	(13,862)	20,000	273,874
Restricted funds				
Fund A	677	33	–	710
Fund E	76,895	2,108	–	79,003
Fund H	30,031	(2,997)	–	27,034
Fund I	40,134	303,490	(20,000)	323,624
	147,737	302,634	(20,000)	430,371
TOTAL FUNDS	415,473	288,772	–	704,245

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	606,191	(620,053)	(13,862)
Restricted funds			
Fund A	33	–	33
Fund E	5,069	(2,961)	2,108
Fund H	3	(3,000)	(2,997)
Fund I	340,907	(37,417)	303,490
	346,012	(43,378)	302,634
TOTAL FUNDS	952,203	(663,431)	288,772

continued ...

17. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	267,736	(85,270)	22,563	205,029
Restricted funds				
Fund A	677	2,599	(2,563)	713
Fund E	76,895	5,363	–	82,258
Fund H	30,031	(2,992)	–	27,039
Fund I	40,134	266,826	(20,000)	286,960
Fund J	–	2,108	–	2,108
	147,737	273,904	(22,563)	399,078
TOTAL FUNDS	415,473	188,634	–	604,107

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 – continued

17. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,226,861	(1,312,131)	(85,270)
Restricted funds			
Fund A	2,599	–	2,599
Fund E	10,139	(4,776)	5,363
Fund H	122	(3,114)	(2,992)
Fund I	359,947	(93,121)	266,826
Fund J	2,141	(33)	2,108
Fund K	42,100	(42,100)	–
	417,048	(143,144)	273,904
TOTAL FUNDS	1,643,909	(1,455,275)	188,634

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF FUNDS

General Fund
The 'free reserves' after allowing for all restricted funds.

Restricted Funds
All other restricted funds have been created through fundraising or donations for the benefit of individual brain tumour patients. The charity uses the funds for direct treatment or to support research relating to the patients needs.

18. Related party disclosures

During the year the charity purchased services from Fitton Holman Creative Limited totalling £14,985 (2022 – £10,462). The company is directed by one of the co-founder's sister, Catherine Fitton.

During the year the charity paid the co-founders and management employees of *brainstrust*, Peter and Helen Bulbeck, £3,960 (2022 – £4,320) for administrative use of their property.

The co-founder's daughter, Leonora Bulbeck, supplied editorial services during the year to the charity totalling £2,100 (2022 – £1,890) at a commercial rate.

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	**90,081**	57,896
Grants from awarding entities	**242,951**	175,831
Corporate grants and donations	**32,769**	53,576
Gift aid tax recovered	**34,878**	50,551
Legacies	**8,963**	–
	409,642	337,854
Other trading activities		
Fundraising events	**81,731**	75,417
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**10,249**	12,472
Sponsored activities	**117,936**	174,339
Activities of partner groups	**71,086**	346,012
	281,002	608,240
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	**1,062**	26
Other income		
Gov grants – Furlough claimed	**–**	6,083
Total incoming resources	**691,706**	952,203
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Fundraising fees	**11,077**	33,129
Promotional expenses	**31,318**	26,782
	42,395	59,911
Other trading activities		
Trading costs and purchases	**4,755**	7,972
Event costs	**5,941**	11,433
Sponsored activities costs	**9,612**	10,868
	20,308	30,273

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Other trading activities		
Charitable activities		
Medical grants and costs	**1,400**	3,000
Patient support and staffing	**463,460**	318,242
Salaries	**159,660**	163,094
Travel	**22,243**	8,972
Administration	**35,241**	31,803
Office rent & rates	**31,316**	30,498
Fixtures and fittings	**103**	9
Depn of website	**764**	2,666
	714,187	558,284
Support costs		
Governance costs		
Auditors' remuneration	**3,225**	3,000
Insurance	**2,486**	2,196
Other	**8,274**	8,949
Bank loan interest	**969**	818
	14,954	14,963
Total resources expended	**791,844**	663,431
Net (expenditure)/income	**(100,138)**	288,772

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Get in touch

Helping you

Talk to our team 24/7 on **01983 292 405**, or email **hello@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Helping us

Make a donation at **brainstrust.org.uk/donate**, call us on **01983 292 405** during office hours, or email **fundraising@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Registration

brainstrust is a registered charitable trust, registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as Charity No. 1114634, registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SC044642.

Registered address

brainstrust, 4 Yvery Court, Castle Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 7QG

www.brainstrust.org.uk
www.braintumourhub.org.uk

Regional office (north of England)

brainstrust, C19–21 Joseph's Well, Hannover Lane, Westgate, Leeds LS3 1AB

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Signature:

Full name: **Christopher John Baker**

Position: **Chair of the Board of Trustees**

Date: **5 October 2023**

When I was feeling overwhelmed after my husband's craniotomy, I reached out to the team at brainstrust. *Their support has been reassuring and the family and friends Meetups have provided an opportunity for me to connect with others in a similar situation. All the team at* brainstrust *have been amazing at keeping in touch and I am very grateful for the brain box and the informative booklets in it.*

Caregiver

brainstrust is a registered charitable trust – registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as Charity No. 1114634, registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SC044642.
© *brainstrust* 2023.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

BRAINSTRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1114634

Accounts

brainstrust
the brain cancer people

'I was told that I had a golf-ball-sized brain tumour in my left frontal lobe. I had also just found out that I was pregnant with Gracie (now six), and I had a nine-month-old baby. After my first operation, I couldn't walk up the stairs, or leave the house. It's been a long road to recovery, with lasting challenges that include anxiety and extreme fatigue. I was terrified that I wouldn't be able to look after my children. I have had to work hard to get to where I am today, but I found brainstrust *– their support has been vital. I have also been able to give something back to the community, by walking two marathons in two days with Charlotte and Mel, and raising over £5,000 to help others on this journey.'* **Sarah**

Trustees' annual report and accounts

brainstrust – the brain cancer people

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

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Our challenge

'I have had to learn to live with the uncertainty and accept my life is different now ... If you are waiting for treatment or lucky enough to be given a choice of treatments, my advice would be to find out all you can about the options, know there is support from brainstrust *to help you feel okay about what is ahead, remember to breathe and that you are not alone.'*

Lin is living with an astrocytoma and has to make complex decisions about her treatment, which is fraught with risk.

'I'm still suffering with tiredness and fatigue, and other people who have been through the same have said this can last months and maybe even years, so I guess this could just be a new way of life that I have to get used to. I'm taking anti-convulsant medication, which I will continue with for at least a year to prevent seizures, which up to now I have not suffered with pre- or post-op. I'm still waiting to hear back from the DVLA regarding my driving licence, but my consultant did say I couldn't drive for 12 months, so I'm following that advice until I hear differently. You don't realise how much this impacts you until it happens.'

Kay has recently had surgery to remove a large meningioma. She is working hard on recovery and coming to terms with her new normal.

'It was shocking to be told there is no cure. At just 68 years of age, it took away the retirement my dad and his beloved partner, Kath, should have been enjoying. He could no longer drive. His car was his pride and joy.

Each scan showed the tumour was stable – and so it stayed for over three years. The treatment had certainly done its job in giving us more time together. However, his mobility got progressively worse. A stick was replaced by a walking frame, and eventually, he needed someone to be with him by his frame, as coordinating his foot movements on the most affected side became very difficult. His balance was badly affected, and due to the location of the tumour, his eyesight got steadily worse, such that he found it hard to read even large print and deal with different levels of light. But he was still with us.'

Ian cared for his father, who died after living with a glioblastoma diagnosis for four years.

'As a result of my brain tumour, I have single-sided hearing loss, tinnitus, fatigue, balance issues, dizziness and nausea. All of this makes everyday living a huge effort, and I have had to relearn how to live my life. It now requires a lot of planning, pacing and resting.

My first contact with brainstrust *was when I got in touch to request a brain box. This is an amazing box packed with lots of useful information for anyone diagnosed with a brain tumour, and it is posted to your home free of charge. My next step was to join some of the online workshops and Meetup groups that* brainstrust *organises. I was really nervous at first, but I found it incredibly helpful to connect with others going through the same or a similar experience to myself. I have also received invaluable coaching from Jodie, my regional support specialist.'*

Helen is 51 and married with two boys, aged 21 and 15. She lives in Staffordshire. Her experience of life with a brain tumour has shown that it affects the whole family.

Over 80,000 people are living with a brain tumour in the UK. Only 12% of adults survive beyond five years following a diagnosis. Brain tumours reduce life expectancy by an average of 27 years, and they kill more children than any other cancer, yet treatment for a brain tumour is brutal and harmful. It hasn't changed in 40 years.

Our brains are incredible – they make us who we are. Your brain sparks the love, the joy and everything else that you feel. It's the most complex organ in the human body – it is the supercomputer that creates everything that defines humanity. The brain is also incredibly delicate, soft and intricately balanced.

This makes it susceptible to harm.

The impact of brain tumours is under-reported, support and research under-funded, and the true impact of the disease under-acknowledged and misunderstood.

When you hear the words 'you have a brain tumour', you face both a potential cancer diagnosis and also the prospect of progressive and debilitating neurological disease. You are afraid, you are alone, you are confused, and your life changes dramatically in an instant.

Today, *brainstrust* is here to help everyone live their best possible life with a brain tumour in the face of these stark facts. We help people thrive and have their best possible day. We are also here for tomorrow. We hope for a world in the future where brain tumours have little impact. But we know that hope is not a strategy. We support clinical research and work with our community of experts to improve investment and build capacity so that harm is reduced, care is improved in hospital and at home, and people are more confident and able to take control. Only then can life with a brain tumour be fulfilling and enjoyable, and people who have heard the words 'you have a brain tumour' are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

This is our challenge.

Chief executive's introduction

The headwinds for us all still blow with the rolling uncertainties of a lingering pandemic, political turmoil, a rising cost of living and a devastating war in Europe. Yet in our work at *brainstrust*, we find progress, solace, focus and hope. Our clear strategy, our strong community and our single-minded focus on helping people thrive following a brain tumour diagnosis provide focus and invigoration for our team and for the incredible brain tumour community.

Over the last year, we have worked hard to build resilience and capacity at *brainstrust* following the existential shock of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have strengthened our finances to help us through the significant and material uncertainties that exist, and we are in the process of scaling and strengthening our team – a vital step in strengthening our organisation in the face of unprecedented and sustained demand for our help.

We now welcome over 100 people each month to our support. And these people are staying with us. They receive coaching and counselling, they access our library of accredited resources, and they participate in our thriving calendar of workshops and events. This is an increase of 77% on last year's workload, and we do this with a small but dedicated and skilled team.

Nearly everyone we help tells us that they wish they'd found us sooner on their journey with a brain tumour. We hear this, and we are working hard to reach more people at diagnosis. Being able to meet with the clinical community again, face to face, is helping here. We meet to share our work and collaborate on referral pathways and improving care. Not being able to access information in hospital has been a massive setback for the brain tumour community during the pandemic, but now we are confident that the tide is turning.

We know that when our community thrives, so does *brainstrust*, and the stronger we are, the more people we can help – a virtuous circle. Our sustained or increasing impact in the face of continuing growth is testament to this, and full credit to our small team for powering on.

But we reserve a special thank-you, for you.

You are the community that inspires us. You energise us, you educate us, and you keep us focused. You also generate the vital funds and awareness that fuel our mission and our progress – thank you.

None of us is as smart as all of us, and it is your belief in us – your belief in our mission and your belief in our vision that everybody who hears the words 'you have a brain tumour' can live their best possible life with *brainstrust*'s help – that drives us. This is because with us you are a person first and a patient second.

We thrive in a world where we are a person before we are seen as a patient. We thrive where we get to do the things that people want to do as opposed to those things that patients have to do.

First, we are people. In our support, in our research, in our campaigning and in our fundraising, that's our vision, and it's the mission you are powering.

Will Jones,
Chief Executive,
brainstrust

Why we are here and what we do

Our strategy: First, we are people

In April 2019, we launched our current strategy. Thirteen years in the making, this strategy, 'First, we are people', puts laser focus on the human, practical and cultural contexts in which people find themselves following a brain tumour diagnosis. It sets out our journey to help these people become less isolated, more in control, more engaged with their clinical care and condition, and better resourced.

The human context sees a forgotten group of people who, following diagnosis, see themselves fall into a chasm between improving clinical care and the scientific pursuit of a cure. In acknowledging that before we are patients, we are people, we can help people navigate this void, for when we are patients, we are only patients for a small amount of the time. We want to do things that people want to do, not always the things that patients have to do.

In practical terms, we know from our intimately close work with our community of people with a brain tumour, and their caregivers, that a brain tumour is isolating, the journey is confusing, communicating well is hard, behaviour and personality change devastates relationships, fatigue impacts 95% of those diagnosed, and there is a huge financial impact as work stops. These are just some of the challenges, and these challenges are not addressed in either the laboratory or the hospital. They are addressed at home, where help is hard to find.

How we got here

Our direction has been set in consultation with our community. We 'asked the experts' what they needed in order to understand what matters most.

We heard:

- You spend more time being a person than you do being a patient.
- As a person, you are more resourceful, more proactive and more confident in the face of challenges.

- Emotions and values drive your behaviour, not just clinicians. What matters to you is more important than what is the matter with you.
- People look at opportunities. As a person, you grow. Patients tend to focus on problems, and barriers are hard to overcome unless they can be treated or medicated.

Our current strategy has been co-created with our community and delivered with its support. This strategy is helping us to achieve our mission – we are here for a world in which people with a brain tumour are involved, resourced, supported, confident and connected. They are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

The experts we asked

The conclusions and decisions reached in the development of our strategy result from conversations and day-to-day meetings and experiences over a six-month period with the following stakeholders:

- beneficiaries – people living with a brain tumour and their caregivers
- supporters
- current and prospective philanthropic funders
- other charities
- *brainstrust* team members and trustees
- national research bodies
- local and national research funders
- clinical experts from all specialities
- campaign groups.

Our goal

A world where people with a brain tumour are involved, resourced, supported, confident and connected. They are living the lives they want, because they are people first and patients second.

To make this happen, we aim to:

- **help people overcome fear**
- **help people to engage with their challenges and care**
- **eliminate isolation**
- **improve knowledge and understanding**

through our work in the following areas:

- **coaching and support**
- **building communities**
- **information and education**
- **regional insight and relevance**
- **clinical engagement, development and network building**
- **engaging people in research**

which is only possible with:

- **effective fundraising**
- **efficient marketing and promotion**
- **administrative support**
- **good governance**

What implementing this strategy looks like: achievements and performance

Our support

'It has been a challenging yet rewarding year for us. We have struggled with capacity after a significant uplift in activity, which has doubled since Covid-19 restrictions ended. Our team has risen to the challenge, but we are not sure how sustainable this is. Alongside making sure we are as efficient as we can be, we have worked hard to build resilience during the period so that we can scale capacity as we move ahead on our mission.

We are looking forward to expanding our support to build our impact, reach more people and work more sustainably. We have the strategy and structures in place to deliver and scale our work. It's an exciting period ahead for brainstrust *and the team.'*

Helen Bulbeck,
Co-Founder and Director
of Services,
brainstrust

How we have helped

Direct support for people with a brain tumour

- Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, **2,339 people contacted our team of support specialists for help** by phone, webchat, video call or email. This is over 1,000 more (an 85% increase) from the previous year, when 1,264 accessed our help in these ways.

- **825 people were new to *brainstrust*** (481 patients, 344 caregivers), a 72% increase from 479 people the previous year.

- **404 brain boxes were sent to people who needed them**, double the number of the previous year (203).

- **Over 200 counselling sessions were provided**, with over half (54%) being held by Zoom. This compares to 17% in 2019/2020. The rest of the sessions were held by telephone (46%).

Counselling is very hard to access quickly through NHS channels, with waiting lists extending to months. People can be referred, but with an appointment date that is beyond their prognosis. *brainstrust*'s rapid-access counselling service alleviates this pressure and enables people to access counselling quickly through our network of private counsellors. All are qualified practitioners, and have had additional training on the needs of the brain tumour community.

Online support and information

- **110,928 people accessed our online information for the first time during the year.** This is an increase of 4% from 107,112 the previous year.
- These people **accessed information on our website 256,778 times**.
- There were **5,160 downloads of long-form health information** from our website.
- **Information about end-of-life care**, the **brain box**, and our information about **brain tumour symptoms and diagnosis** have proved to be the **most popular and the most useful** in terms of number of people reached and positive feedback.
- **1,663 people** (91% of respondents) have told us that the brain tumour information on our website **helped them feel more resourced, more confident or more in control**.

Events

We hosted 134 events (webinars, Meetups and workshops), a 31% increase compared to the 102 held the previous year.

Overall attendance was also significantly up, at 1,032, compared to the previous year's 784.

From the team

'During the year, we saw a growth in demand for quick, accessible information. We adapted our information programme of work to meet this demand and expanded our library of Know Hows significantly. These met the changing needs that people told us they had. Topics included finance and welfare benefits, how to bring structure to your day, how to find a new normal, knowing what to ask at diagnosis and how to find trusted information.'

Jodie Eveleigh,
Support Specialist, Midlands,
and Information Lead

'We made sure that our events programme remained relevant as we navigated our way through and beyond pandemic restrictions. These often varied between regions and nations, and people told us their appetite for risk was different, depending on their circumstances. We adopted a flexible, hybrid approach with events running online and offline. This enabled us to support more people, with a more diverse range of topics, while maintaining or improving impact.

Carol Cochrane,
Support Specialist, Scotland,
and Events Lead

'We have been travelling less. This has made it harder to connect with some groups, including clinicians. However, we have been able to use the time available to develop deeper, more impactful coaching relationships with people who are in crisis or who need more in-depth and ongoing support. We have spent a lot more time on the phone and honing our skills using new modes of communication.'

Helen Bulbeck,
brainstrust Co-Founder and
Director of Services

'We offer both rapid-access coaching and counselling. We work with the person to identify their needs so that any intervention is personalised for them. People living with a brain tumour often come to brainstrust *with a direct ask for counselling. We have no context for them, no understanding of what has brought them to us, and we do not know whether counselling is an appropriate intervention for them. With careful questioning and by supporting the person to develop their understanding of the differences between counselling and coaching, more often than not, coaching will be the preferred intervention.*

Both interventions are transformative – we are delighted to be able to offer both, freely, as part of our extensive support offer. In addition to the six counsellors that deliver our service, we have been very pleased to add a play therapist to the network.'

Molly Hughes,
Support Specialist,
London and the South-East

The impact we're having

'Financial measures and numbers to do with 'people reached' or 'people helped' are important but shouldn't be considered in isolation. When looking at performance in the charity sector, we must look at the true impact our organisations are having. And by 'impact', we don't just mean reach (counting people); we also mean the change we have driven. Charity is in the incredible position of existing to improve society, or put simply, to improve lives. We need to look closely at the lives that we're changing and report back on what that change looks like. We must also use our understanding of impact to acknowledge where we need to go further or faster.'

Will Jones,
Chief Executive,
brainstrust

'Thank you so much for being here. I feel more confident and not alone with you at the end of an email.'
Patient

Understanding the impact we are having is vital to all of us at *brainstrust*. We have worked hard to instil this principle in our principles and processes. A genuine interest to understand and report on people's progress sits at the very centre of our work. We track progress against six indicators. These have been defined as being important to quality of life by our community of patients and their caregivers. In turn, these indicators support the four priorities in our strategy. These six indicators are:

- engagement with care and condition
- reduced isolation
- engagement with communities
- creating control
- feeling supported
- feeling resourced.

We learn how people are doing against these indicators through the use of our bespoke progress tracker tool. This gives us a simple, flexible and human approach to understanding impact. Progress trackers are completed and monitored collaboratively with our beneficiaries. The process isn't unobtrusive, but it is helpful. In completing a progress tracker, or multiple progress trackers, we help people to establish where the focus of our support needs to be to help them move forward. To complete a progress tracker, patients and caregivers provide a score of how they are feeling on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of our indicators. They complete multiple progress trackers on their journey with *brainstrust*, and this paints a picture of their progress.

'You truly are a ray of light and the support we need at this time as my father and I feel very much alone in caring for my mother.'
Caregiver

Our impact

On average across all six indicators, we have helped people improve their well-being by almost 18%. The average initial score was 2.87/5, and the average latest score was 3.75/5. This is despite facing a progressive, life-limiting, life-changing or terminal diagnosis.

People see the biggest improvements in feeling supported and feeling part of a community, with an increase of 0.94/5 and 1.03/5 respectively as compared to their initial scores.

Fig 1: *brainstrust* beneficiary-reported outcomes before and after engaging with our services (178 respondents from the year in review)

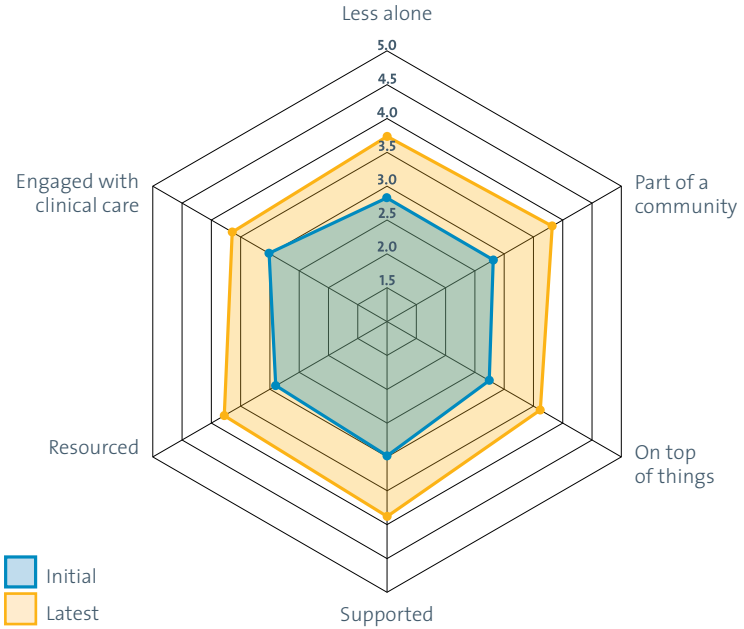
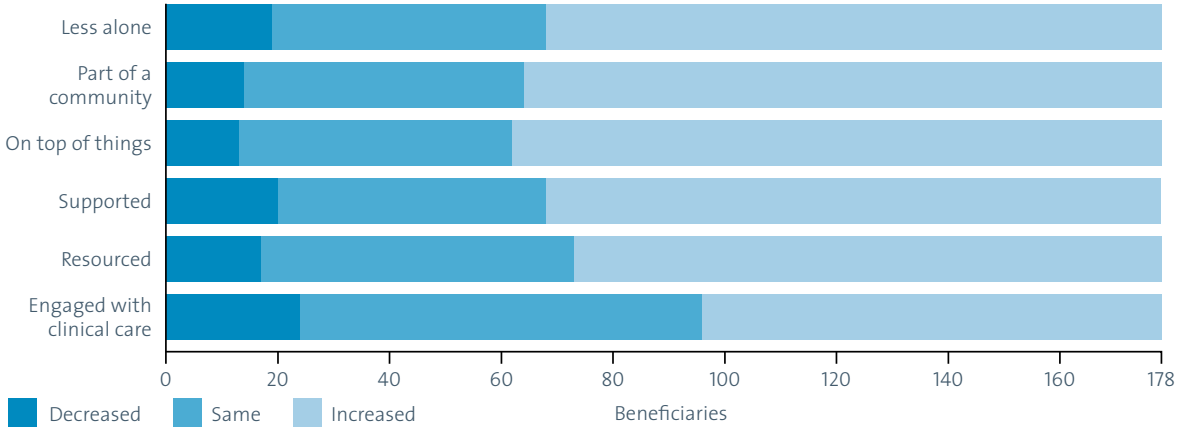


Fig 2: *brainstrust* beneficiary outcomes – overview of cohort's progress by indicator (178 respondents from the year in review)



What we have learned from this year's impact data

For the year in review, we have noticed that people are contacting us with a higher initial score than average across all indicators. The average initial score for this period is 3.3/5. This is higher than our historical average of 2.87/5. This may mean that people are getting to us later on their journey, when they are more confident and have a better understanding of their complex pathway. While we are still having a positive impact and improving well-being across all six indicators, we have work to do to ensure those who would benefit from our support are able to access us when they need it most. This reinforces the need for strong clinical engagement and making sure *brainstrust* is accessible, available and a known option for all patients at every point of their pathway.

This higher starting point can also be attributed to Covid-19 having a lesser effect on people's lives this year when compared to the previous year – people are more in

control of their circumstances, and clinical pathways are less disrupted.

We see a smaller distance travelled when people are in a better place when they reach out to us, but despite this, we still have a significant positive impact on well-being for people who are in a desperate situation. We know that our greatest impact is in helping people to feel part of a community.

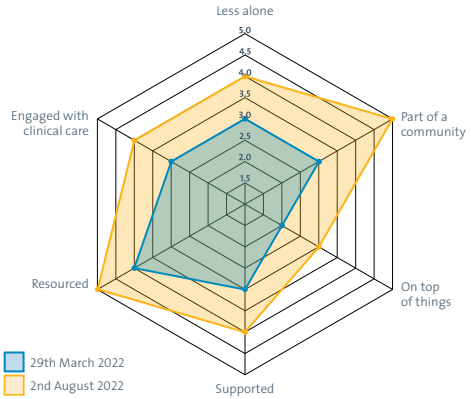
This consistency in distance travelled year on year affirms our planning. We know that we can be even more effective. As we build capacity in the year ahead, we will be able to provide additional and more focused support in regions where we are not currently as proactive as we would like. This investment will enable us to offer dedicated, accessible regional support in new areas for those who need it most, when they need it most.

Meet Luke

Luke was diagnosed with a low-grade brain tumour. When we first started talking in March, he struggled with anxiety, panic and avoidance. We had regular coaching calls. During our dialogue, I sent him links for our Know Hows on driving, mindfulness, scanxiety and how to live with uncertainty, as well as our information about acceptance.

We talked about how hypnotherapy may help him to learn techniques to recentre when he is most overwhelmed or anxious. At first he was slightly dubious but thought he would give it a try. He now attends most of the weekly resets and says that they have been so helpful for him. He has now attended the Brighton Meetup and the tea and a wee blether, virtual brew and low-grade Meetups.

Luke has completely transformed in the time I have known him. He is now a lot more confident and assured in himself. We no longer need our monthly phone check-ins, but I do email to see how he's doing every two months, as he has now moved from shared care to supported self-care in our triage system.



We reflected together recently on his progress tracker changes. Luke tells us that he is feeling:

- more on top of things (initially 2/5, now 3/5 – a 20% improvement)
- better supported (initially 3/5, now 4/5 – a 20% improvement)
- not alone (initially 4/5, now 4/5)
- much more resourced (initially 2/5, now 5/5 – a 60% improvement)
- much more able to navigate his clinical care (initially 2/5, now 4/5 – a 40% improvement)
- much more a part of a community (initially 2/5, now 5/5 – a 60% improvement).

During this exercise, Luke said, *'Thank you very much for this. I appreciate you taking time to help and update me. Looks like I'm doing much better. I feel like I am, with thanks to you and* brainstrust.'

Molly Hughes,
brainstrust Support Specialist,
London and the South-East

Our involvement in research – PRIME one year on

In 2021, we created the Patient Research Involvement Movement (PRIME) to provide the help needed to bridge the gap between the clinical community and patients and caregivers. The aim of this work is to improve the quality of clinical brain tumour research and its design.

Since inception, PRIME has grown rapidly, achieving a great deal in the clinical research landscape. We have recruited 50 research advocates, who lend their insights to researchers, helping to shape the trials and studies that will hopefully improve care for future patients. We have also trained seven research partners in how to deliver top-level patient and public involvement, and we have signed over 400 people up to our weekly research updates, helping them become more knowledgeable about the field.

The studies we've supported include developing core outcome sets to better identify patient needs, altering standard care by introducing new, cutting-edge technologies, and looking at how we can more efficiently get treatments out of the lab and to the patients, among many others. These studies could ultimately improve the quality of life for those living with a brain tumour today and in the future.

Looking forward, we will continue to improve the quality of patient and public involvement in clinical research. We will do this by:

- growing our excellent community of research-primed patients and caregivers
- supporting more clinicians and researchers as our group of research partners expands
- providing exceptional and effective patient involvement
- shaping the trials and studies that can achieve meaningful change for our community.

We are working in partnership with the charity Brain Tumour Research to grow this work.

Your support

In 2021, our supporters raised £952,203 to fund *brainstrust*'s mission. This income remains from a diversified mix of traditional charity fundraising activity. Our funding comes from:

- trusts and foundations
- direct and regular giving
- companies who support our work
- sponsored events and challenges
- community fundraising
- Gift Aid recovery
- in-memory giving
- trading
- government support relating to the Covid-19 pandemic
- special-purpose fundraising to enable communities to access novel treatments and therapies.

We have limited income from legacy fundraising and high-net-worth individuals, and we have minimal investment income, instead keeping cash available to provide liquidity and flexibility so that we can react promptly to the needs of our community.

We were grateful to secure significant support from statutory and philanthropic partners, which helped us to survive an unprecedented year during the pandemic. We are now working to strengthen those relationships as part of a more diverse fundraising portfolio that reduces risk.

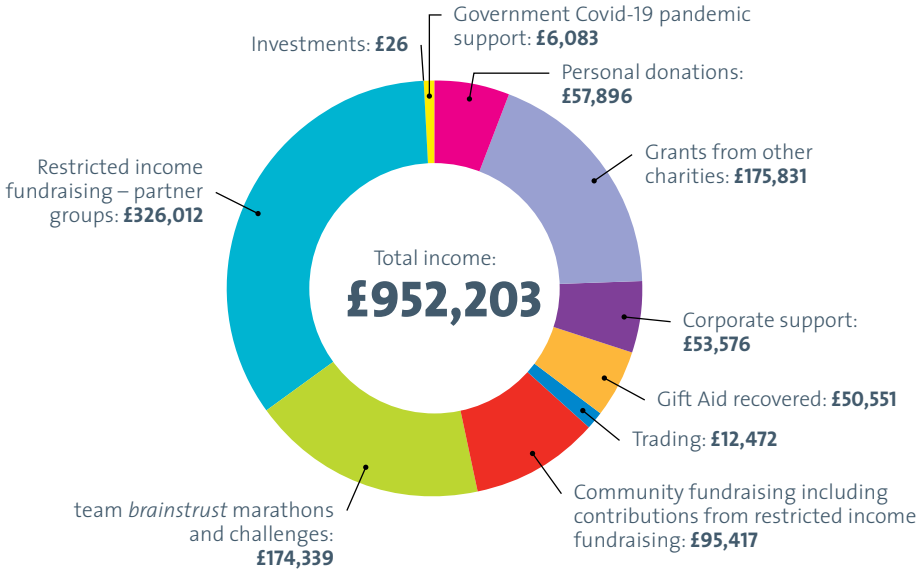
With all public fundraising cancelled at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have since worked hard to reignite supporter fundraising. We have been delighted to see activity and income from community fundraising channels build on last year. This focus is bringing our work closer, once more, to the community we are here to serve.

Of the gross income generated in 2021–2022, totalling £952,203 (2020–21: £741,000), £346,000 related to restricted income funds. The net surplus for the year was £289,000 (2020–21: £230,000), of which £283,000 related to restricted income funds.

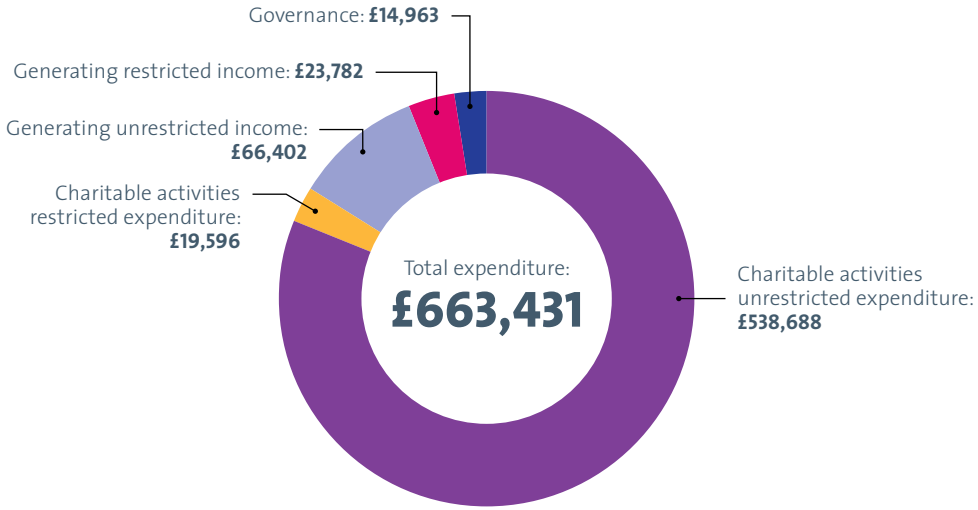
'Our supporters continue to inspire us with their ideas for fundraising activities, and it's rewarding to be able to take a tailored and individualised approach to the way we help to realise their ambitions and passions.'

Julia Smith,
Fundraising Manager,
brainstrust

Our income 2021–22



Our expenditure 2021–22



Here are just some of *brainstrust*'s fundraising highlights for the year.

Jack Jarvis rows the Atlantic, sets a new world record and raises funds and awareness for *brainstrust*

On 3 December 2021, Jack Jarvis set off from the south coast of Portugal to attempt a world-first row. He aimed to row across the Atlantic, completely solo, on a route never before attempted. He did this to raise money for *brainstrust* in memory of his grandad. After 111 days at sea, with 4,630 nautical miles covered, Jack reached land in Miami on 24 March 2022, raising £70,000 and helping us to reach millions of people with our mission.

Run, Row, Ride – 30 miles, 30 days, your way

Every day, 30 people are diagnosed with a brain tumour in the UK. For these 30 people, the road ahead is scary and uncertain. By taking on Run, Row, Ride, and raising £200, supporters can make sure that people who are newly diagnosed with a brain tumour don't have to face the journey alone.

With the Covid-19 pandemic forcing mass-participation and challenge events to be cancelled, we had to amplify creative ways to fundraise individually or in small groups. The Run, Row, Ride event was new in 2019 and provided our supporters with the perfect way to join our mission and fundraise their own way in the absence of mass-participation events. The event has raised £44,600 in three years and has proved to be an inspiring and accessible way for people with a brain tumour and their loved ones to support our vital work, and get active during a period fraught with restrictions.

Follow the Seagulls

With the easing of restrictions and a desire in the community for a challenge that matches the scale of passion for our work, Follow the Seagulls returned in 2021. Postponed events were finally able to take place in September.

Walkers gathered in Whitby, on the Isle of Wight, in Fife, and in Dartmouth to trek 50 miles in two days to support the brain tumour community. First walked in 2013 on the Isle of Wight, Follow the Seagulls has grown steadily into a four-location event, but it's no walk in the park.

Our heroes all put in some serious training hours before joining together to experience routes that took in sections of the South West Coast Path, the Cleveland Way and the Fife Coastal Path.

To date, this amazing event has raised over £208,000, with £49,000 raised at Follow the Seagulls 2021, but it is more than a fundraising trek – the weekend never fails to bring people from the community together, to galvanise around a challenge that is tackled at a pace comfortable enough to share stories, perspectives and advice on life with a brain tumour. All who take part in Follow the Seagulls do so because the challenge matches the scale of their passion for helping people with a brain tumour get the vital support they need.

The London Marathon

The London Marathon took place on Sunday 3 October, with the virtual London Marathon staged on the same day.

We welcomed eight runners to team *brainstrust*, seven who ran in London and one, Alice, who completed her marathon virtually.

Alice chose to complete her marathon with a route that started in Polstead, near Colchester, and ended in Pin Mill, on the River Orwell, Ipswich – she actually covered 28 miles, going 1.8 miles further than the usual marathon distance, thanks to a few wrong turns. Alice was joined by her sister-in-law and even received a donation along the route from two well-wishers.

Our runners in London included our head of support, Jane, who is on her way to complete the inspiring challenge of running 12 marathons in 12 months, with the London Marathon her third.

Also running in London was Adam, who had set himself the epic challenge of completing 15 marathons in 15 days to mark 15 years of *brainstrust*. Adam's 15th marathon was the London Marathon, and he says it was his favourite of them all, and not just because it was the last.

Adam and Jane were joined in London by team *brainstrust* members Carol, Ethan, Spencer, Michelle and Charlie. Spencer credited the support he received from his family for helping him along the way, and Charlie commented, 'It was a pleasure to run for *brainstrust*, a charity that provided so much support for my family.'

For Carol and Ethan, the London Marathon was their first ever. Ethan reflected: 'I am very proud and happy to raise a good sum of money for an amazing cause in *brainstrust*, who were there for my family in the time we needed it most. This is the least I could do – and I hope that the charity continues to help others like our family. Brain cancer doesn't get enough attention, in our opinion. It's time we raised awareness!'

Our London Marathon team raised £14,000 for our work – to you all, thank you.

Support from trusts and foundations

Thank you to our trust and foundation partners for caring about people who are living with a brain tumour diagnosis. Your support has played a meaningful role in helping *brainstrust* to survive and thrive. Your compassion has helped us to make a difference.

We are grateful to The Rank Foundation for its continued support. We value our membership of RankNet and the opportunities it brings for learning and sharing.

Thank you to The National Lottery Community Fund and players of The National Lottery. The second year of our Reaching Communities grant has helped us to support more people in the Midlands and southern England with our high-impact coaching.

Thank you to new funding partner the Moondance Foundation for helping us to grow our service in Wales.

We are grateful to The Wyseliot Rose Charitable Trust for its dedication and kindness over many years.

Financial review

The Trust's published statutory accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 are incorporated in this Trustees' Annual Report and include considerable detail on the source and application of funds, and the financial position of the Trust at 31 March 2022, as required by the SORP for UK charities published by the Charity Commission. This report comments on the main points contained in the accounts.

In summary, gross income generated in 2021–2022 was £952K (2020–21: £741K), of which £346K related to restricted income funds. The net surplus for the year was £289K (2020–21: £230K), of which £283K related to restricted income funds.

Through adaptive planning and changes to our patient and caregiver offers, *brainstrust* has weathered the pandemic in good financial health.

As reviewed elsewhere in the Trustees' Annual Report, *brainstrust*'s charitable impact has been significantly increased due to measures as disparate as taking elements of our support online (thus increasing our reach and effectiveness while increasing cost only within budget) and focusing to an even greater extent on that which our research tells us is the type of support that brings real benefit to our stakeholders and beneficiaries. Therefore, in a controlled way, overall expenditure in 2021–22, at £663K, has naturally increased year on year, alongside a higher level of activity, from the lockdown year of 2020–21 (£511K).

The Trust's gross income for 2021–22, at £952K, was, as noted above, a significant increase on the £741K raised in 2020–21. Most community fundraising was severely impacted during 2020–21, and while 2021–22 has not yet seen a return to a 'normal' twelve months, our supporters, through grants, donations and, in many cases, the hard physical graft of traditional fundraising through, for example, sponsored and testing walks, marathons and, in one extreme case, rowing the Atlantic solo and by our own increasing use of technology, our income streams have covered our costs and allowed for a significant growth in our reserves.

Most of the Trust's income, both general and restricted, is applied to supporting patients and their caregivers and families, from the point of a brain cancer diagnosis. Our support team provides UK-wide coverage, supported by the Big Lottery Fund and other substantial funders.

The Trust has only cash investments, deposited with NatWest Bank and The Co-operative Bank. At 31 March 2022, the Trust had net reserves, including our restricted income funds, of £704K (2021: £415K), which included net unrestricted reserves of £274K (2021: £268K) and net restricted reserves of £430K (2021: £148K). The unrestricted surplus for the year in review has been added to our general charitable funds.

The Trust has a long-standing policy of holding unrestricted reserves to cover four months of defined core costs. As at 31 March 2022, unrestricted reserves were sufficient to cover just over six months of core costs, the excess providing a useful cushion as the UK, and especially the charity sector, continues to operate in a very unusual and unpredictable environment.

Structure, governance, leadership and management

'We believe good governance is an essential component of our success, particularly as we grow. It underpins our integrity, reinforces the trust and confidence our patients and partners place in us, and contributes to a strong high-performance culture.'

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees

'Focused discussions, an agile and adaptable approach to planning and sound cooperation between the appointed trustees and the managers of the Trust have ensured that brainstrust *has continued to provide support and guidance for our patients, in accordance with its aims, while maintaining a secure financial footing.'*

Gillian Bilbo
Trustee

brainstrust is constituted as a trust, governed by its Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006.

The overall guidelines for the management and administration of the Trust are incorporated in the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006, as amended by Deeds of Amendment adopted by the trustees under the terms of the original deed and notified to the Charity Commission.

This places overall responsibility for the proper governance of the Trust with the appointed trustees. Day-to-day management of the Trust is delegated to William Jones, who has been appointed chief executive of the Trust. The chief executive, supported by the leadership team, makes recommendations to the trustees on the Trust's vision, patient and caregiver support, related research, financial fundraising, promotional activities and ensuring that funds raised are spent as efficiently as possible on resources that will be useful to people affected by brain cancer.

Leadership at *brainstrust*

brainstrust has a stable, experienced and committed leadership team who are aligned in delivering our mission and who are the strongest advocates of our vision and values. Day to day, the leadership team work to promote, develop and instil purpose, autonomy and mastery throughout the organisation through a 'tight-loose' approach, which is manifested in tightly defined objectives for each member of the team, but loosely defined method. This allows people to work the way that suits them best to achieve the right goals for *brainstrust* and our beneficiaries.

This leadership team and trustees have a clear mandate to:

- **Set an example** – It is important to demonstrate our values in everything we do. We set high standards of behaviour and inspire colleagues, supporters and beneficiaries to do the same. We demonstrate fairness, integrity and resilience, and we build trust with our actions.
- **Look after people** – At *brainstrust*, we promote the well-being of individuals, teams and communities. We encourage a supportive culture and inclusive working arrangements. We prioritise one-to-one time with people to listen and understand their needs. We support and defend colleagues in difficult situations. We identify and deal with poor performance and bad behaviour.
- **Take ownership** – We welcome responsibility and accountability. We're proactive, pick up things that need doing without being asked and push to finish the job in hand. We're the first to admit mistakes, apologise when wrong and learn for next time.
- **Provide clarity** – We must communicate clearly and concisely through the right channel. We question any decisions, goals or explanations that are vague or ambiguous, and we work to clarify them. We're open, honest and straightforward in what we say and write. And we provide specific, understandable and useful feedback.
- **Make good decisions** – We use evidence and judgement to make good decisions. We know that timely decisions are important, so we don't procrastinate or fudge. We commit to collective decisions, particularly when we originally disagreed. We consult broadly, seek out contrary opinions and listen to quieter voices. We make sure we can explain our decisions, with context, rationale and evidence.
- **Point the way** – We share an inspiring vision for the future of the charity and everyone's part in it. In our work, we make sure that colleagues understand the outcomes we want to achieve and the value that they will create.
- **Build the future** – We bring great people on board. We actively look for the widest range of candidates to strengthen our diversity. We encourage our colleagues to learn, develop new skills and pursue their career aspirations, whether at *brainstrust* or elsewhere. And we give people opportunity and responsibility at the right pace for them. We continually improve *brainstrust*'s capability and the effectiveness and efficiency of our delivery. We try out new approaches and technologies and give others the time and space to do the same.

Senior staff contacts

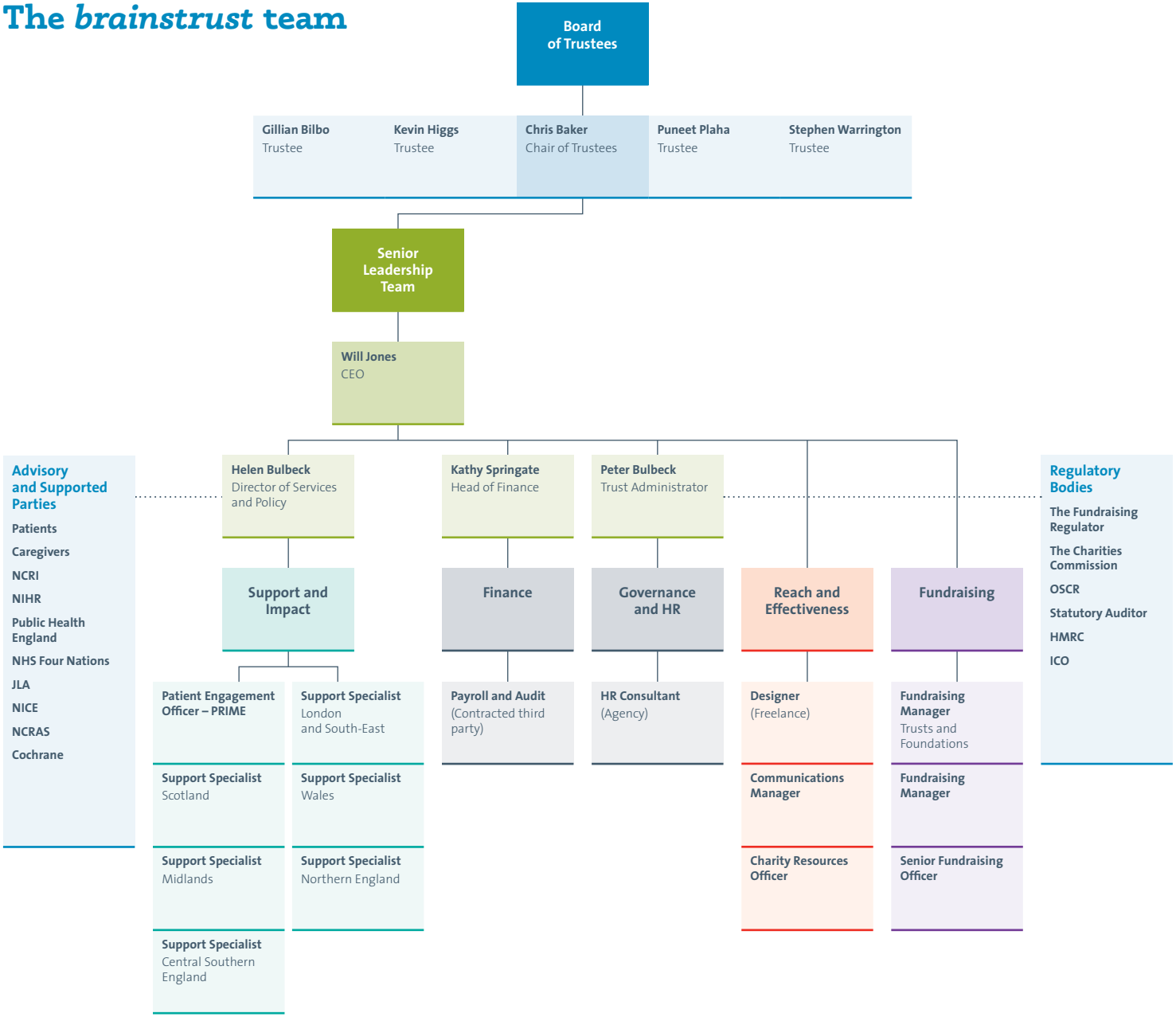
Will Jones,
Chief Executive,
will@brainstrust.org.uk

Dr Helen Bulbeck,
Director of Services and Policy,
helen@brainstrust.org.uk

Peter Bulbeck,
Trust Administrator and Clerk to Trustees,
hq@brainstrust.org.uk

Kathy Springate,
Head of Finance,
kathy@brainstrust.org.uk

The *brainstrust* team



In recent years, *brainstrust* has matured rapidly. We have increased confidence in our work, our abilities and our impact. We are more focused than ever before on our purpose and the needs of our beneficiaries. We are proud that we have catalysed a new ecosystem in the brain tumour charity and advocacy landscape that is focused on improving life for people with a brain tumour.

Our professional and highly trained team now supports people across the UK, and these people can access impactful, accredited resources. We are a resilient organisation that has transitioned well from being a 'large small' operation to a 'small big' charity with a scalable, professional and resilient structure.

Trustees

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year to ratify the broad strategy and areas of activity for the Trust. In addition, trustees may meet with members of the team to work on specific projects. All trustees give their time freely, and no remuneration is paid.

In accordance with clause 9 of the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006:

(i) There must be at least three trustees. Apart from the first trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution of the trustees passed at a special meeting called under clause 15 of this deed.

(ii) In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

(iii) The trustees must keep a record of the name and address and the dates of appointment, reappointment and retirement of each trustee.

(iv) The trustees must make available to each new trustee, on his or her first appointment:
  (a) a copy of this deed and any amendments made to it
  (b) a copy of the charity's latest report and statement of accounts.

There are no exemptions from disclosure applicable to or within this report, and neither the charity nor any of its trustees are acting as custodian trustees.

Now in our 16th year of operation, we have an established national footprint across all elements of our activity. This is delivered with public benefit at the heart by a professional team with a professional leadership structure.

Our board of trustees

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees
Chris is EMEA managing director at a leading global software company and has over 20 years' experience driving growth at some of the highest-profile companies in the world, including Microsoft and Salesforce. Chris has been a trustee for nearly ten years and the chair of trustees at *brainstrust* for five years.

Kevin Higgs
Trustee
Kevin is a financial adviser and has been a trustee for thirteen years. In a chance meeting while at a previous employer, Kevin was immediately taken by the dedication and commitment of the charity to focus on the support and well-being of patients and families diagnosed with a brain tumour. He knew that he wanted to be a part of the journey that *brainstrust* has been on since 2006.

Stephen Warrington
Trustee
Stephen brings to the organisation extensive experience leading professional services businesses and consulting for major multinationals, and he has been a trustee for five years. Stephen's teenage son was diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent successful surgery.

Gillian Bilbo
Trustee
Gillian is a retired headteacher and is now a school inspector, and she has been a trustee for nine years. She brings a listening ear and an objective viewpoint to the board and is supportive of fundraising initiatives.

Puneet Plaha
Trustee
Puneet is an associate professor and consultant neuro-oncology surgeon in Oxford, with a specialist interest in brain tumours, especially endoscopic minimally invasive surgery and awake surgery. He has been a consultant neuro-oncology surgeon lead for the Oxford brain tumour MDT and neuro-oncology lead for Thames Valley since 2012. Puneet joined *brainstrust*'s board of trustees in March 2021.

brainstrust's trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Collaborations, networks and advisers

Our ethos is that 'none of us is as smart as all of us'. Indeed, meaningful collaboration and co-creation is a key component of our approach as we work to secure the best outcomes for anyone who is living with a brain tumour. Our partnerships, of which we nurture around 80, are global and fall into five themes:

Patient-focused

These partnerships include clinical engagement with the 35 neuroscience and neurosurgical centres and organisations that are relevant to our community, such as Use My Data and the Patient Information Forum. Clinical engagement is a priority, as this is one way in which we can reach the community. It is, however, a two-way relationship, as healthcare professionals can visit our website and order resources for their patients, signpost coaching and other support services, and also take advantage of training opportunities, such as our expert-led webinars and coaching programme.

Clinically focused

Clinical collaborations are hubs of clinical practice and research, such as the British Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS), the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and Cochrane. We are very proud of our clinical network, which has been pivotal in the success of our webinar programme and the growth of our clinical research activity under the banner of PRIME. This community's involvement in our educational events has been transformative for our beneficiaries. We have built a community of over 20 clinical experts, who have selflessly given up their time and knowledge to help people living with a brain tumour understand more about their condition, why at times it is hard to make a choice about treatment, and how to live better with a brain tumour. This community continues to grow, and we are so grateful for the valuable and transformative expertise so generously gifted by this network.

Public Health

We work across the four Public Health nations. This year, this work has been particularly significant, as we have worked closely with the Public Health government departments to ensure that our community is well supported during the return of services following the Covid-19 pandemic. This work has included advocating for cohorts of people living with a specific type of brain tumour to ensure the treatment and surveillance that they need has been accessible. Furthermore, by using data from the National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service to reassure the community that waiting times and urgent referrals are returning to normal, our work with Public Health has enabled us to keep our community updated in a meaningful and relevant way.

BNOS BRITISH NEURO-ONCOLOGY SOCIETY

Cochrane

EANO

NCRI National Cancer Research Institute

SOCIETY OF BRITISH NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS www.sbns.org.uk

SNO The Society for NeuroOncology

Charities

We have always worked closely with charities when we have recognised that it is in the best interests of the community. Our collaborations with charities have become stronger and deeper during the pandemic, and we have worked hard this year to continue to build these relationships.

We are actively involved in the Cancer52 network of charities; we represent children and young people with brain cancer through our role on the Steering Group of the Children and Young People with Cancer Coalition; we work closely with Cancer Research UK on matters relating to brain cancer and clinical research; and we work in partnership with charity Brain Tumour Research on a variety of projects, including our PRIME initiative, and on activity to inform UK governments on the importance of addressing brain tumours at the highest levels possible.

Notably, we have enjoyed our continued support of the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission (TJBCM). *brainstrust* provides financial support to the mission's work, and our chief executive, Will Jones, shares our experiences, insights and the voices of our communities through his role on the Joint Strategy Board of the TJBCM.

Organisational partnerships and collaborations

Our team also maintains a broad portfolio of strategic and commercial relationships outside the health and charity sectors. These relationships with companies and individuals enhance our capabilities, capacity and expertise, and they all contribute meaningfully to our mission and our impact. We would like to express our specific appreciation to:

Anaplan
Baker McKenzie
Charisma Charity Recruitment
Class Networks
Eric Callister
Google UK
Harrison Black
Irene Clark
J Pullan & Sons
Louise Baker
McQueenie Mulholland
Nifty Communications
Salesforce
Smarter Not Harder (SNH)
TechSoup
Think Creative Consultants Ltd
Thrive
Tim Colman
Vicki Munro

Registered Charity Number: 1114634

Report of the Trustees and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022 for *brainstrust*

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
Pyle House
136/137 Pyle Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1JW

brainstrust – Contents of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022

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Detailed Statement of Financial Activities 37–38

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2022. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

Structure, governance and management

Governing document
The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Reference and administrative details

Registered Charity number
1114634

Principal address
4 Yvery Court, Castle Road
Cowes, Isle of Wight
PO31 7QG

Trustees
C Baker
K Higgs
G Bilbo
S Warrington
B Young (resigned 9.11.21)
P Plaha

Auditors
Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
Pyle House, 136/137 Pyle Street
Newport, Isle of Wight
PO30 1JW

brainstrust is also a Scottish Charity, SC044642, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Events since the end of the year

Information relating to events since the end of the year is given in the notes to the financial statements.

Trustees' Responsibility Statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

brainstrust – Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2022

Trustees' Responsibility Statement – continued

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed 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, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable 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 charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. 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.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on **20th September 2022** and signed on its behalf by:

C Baker – Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of *brainstrust* (the 'charity') for the year ended 31st March 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31st March 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity 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 charity'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.

There continues to be uncertainty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and other global matters. The charity have taken measures to ensure the impact of this is limited and whilst there remain challenges, the charity has performed well in the year and therefore the going concern basis is considered appropriate.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which 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 charity'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 charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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 the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

As outlined above, our objective is to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements and irregularities. Whilst not a guarantee that such instances will be detected, our risk based approach, using systematic testing methods, judgement, communication with management, professional scepticism, observation of controls and systems, and audit experience/knowledge, allows us to be satisfied that our procedures are highly capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under Section 154 of that Act and under 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 charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
Pyle House, 136/137 Pyle Street
Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1JW

Date: 26th September 2022

Note:
The maintenance and integrity of the *brainstrust* website is the responsibility of the trustees; the work carried out by the auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, the auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

brainstrust – Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	**2022 Total funds £**	2021 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	**337,854**	**–**	**337,854**	509,005
Other trading activities	3	**262,228**	**346,012**	**608,240**	164,950
Investment income	4	**26**	**–**	**26**	40
Other income		**6,083**	**–**	**6,083**	67,096
Total		**606,191**	**346,012**	**952,203**	741,091
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	5	**66,402**	**23,782**	**90,184**	38,708
Charitable activities	6				
Charity activities		**538,688**	**19,596**	**558,284**	472,096
Other		**14,963**	**–**	**14,963**	469
Total		**620,053**	**43,378**	**663,431**	511,273
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**(13,862)**	**302,634**	**288,772**	229,818
Transfers between funds	17	**20,000**	**(20,000)**	**–**	–
Net movement in funds		**6,138**	**282,634**	**288,772**	229,818
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**267,736**	**147,737**	**415,473**	185,655
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**273,874**	**430,371**	**704,245**	415,473

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Balance Sheet 31st March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total funds £	2021 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	**2,824**	**–**	**2,824**	2,030
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	**39,522**	**–**	**39,522**	25,388
Cash at bank		**300,456**	**430,371**	**730,827**	465,184
		339,978	**430,371**	**770,349**	490,572
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	**(35,655)**	**–**	**(35,655)**	(35,462)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**304,323**	**430,371**	**734,694**	455,110
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**307,147**	**430,371**	**737,518**	457,140
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	14	**(33,273)**	**–**	**(33,273)**	(41,667)
NET ASSETS		**273,874**	**430,371**	**704,245**	415,473
FUNDS	17				
Unrestricted funds				**273,874**	267,736
Restricted funds				**430,371**	147,737
TOTAL FUNDS				**704,245**	415,473

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 20 September 2022 and were signed on its behalf by:

C Baker – Chair of Trustees

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	**277,073**	241,382
Interest paid		**(818)**	(469)
Net cash provided by operating activities		**276,255**	240,913
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		**(3,469)**	–
Interest received		**26**	40
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		**(3,443)**	40
Cash flows from financing activities			
New loans in year		**–**	50,000
Loan repayments in year		**(7,169)**	–
Net cash (used in)/provided by financing activities		**(7,169)**	50,000
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**265,643**	290,953
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		**465,184**	174,231
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**730,827**	465,184

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2022

1. Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	**288,772**	229,818
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**2,675**	2,030
Interest received	**(26)**	(40)
Interest paid	**818**	469
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	**(14,134)**	2,068
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	**(1,032)**	7,037
Net cash provided by operations	**277,073**	241,382

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.21 £	Cash flow £	**At 31.3.22 £**
Net cash			
Cash at bank	**465,184**	**265,643**	**730,827**
	465,184	**265,643**	**730,827**
Debt			
Debts falling due within one year	**(8,333)**	**(1,225)**	**(9,558)**
Debts falling due after one year	**(41,667)**	**8,394**	**(33,273)**
	(50,000)	**7,169**	**(42,831)**
Total	**415,184**	**272,812**	**687,996**

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, 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 financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grant income is recognised when received. In the event that a grant is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Legacy gifts are recognised on a case by case basis following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title to the asset having been transferred to the charity.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings -25% on cost

continued ...

1. Accounting policies – continued

Taxation
The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting
Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. Donations and legacies

	2022	2021
	£	£
Donations	**57,896**	72,702
Grants from awarding entities	**175,831**	358,670
Corporate grants and donations	**53,576**	42,196
Gift Aid tax recovered	**50,551**	33,437
Legacies	**–**	2,000
	337,854	509,005

3. Other trading activities

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fundraising events	**75,417**	46,241
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**12,472**	11,013
Sponsored activities	**174,339**	62,477
Activities of partner groups	**346,012**	45,219
	608,240	164,950

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022 – continued

4. Investment income

	2022	2021
	£	£
Deposit account interest	**26**	40

5. Raising funds

Raising donations and legacies	**2022**	2021
	£	£
Fundraising fees	**33,129**	6,933
Promotional expenses	**26,782**	19,311
	59,911	26,244

Other trading activities	**2022**	2021
	£	£
Trading costs and purchases	**7,972**	8,093
Event costs	**11,433**	2,073
Sponsored activities costs	**10,868**	2,298
	30,273	12,464
Aggregate amounts	**90,184**	38,708

6. Charitable activities costs

	Direct costs
	£
Charity activities	**558,284**

continued ...

7. Support costs

	Governance costs £
Other resources expended	**14,963**

8. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st March 2022 nor for the year ended 31st March 2021.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31st March 2022 nor for the year ended 31st March 2021.

9. Staff costs

Total gross salaries, benefits in kind and employer's National Insurance costs for the year ending 31st March 2022 were £431,130 (2021 – £370,904).

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Fundraising	**4**	3
Charitable Activities	**9**	8
Governance	**1**	1
Other	**1**	1
	15	13

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

10. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	509,004	1	509,005
Other trading activities	119,731	45,219	164,950
Investment income	40	–	40
Other income	67,096	–	67,096
Total	695,871	45,220	741,091

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022 – continued

10. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities – continued

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	38,708	–	38,708
Charitable activities			
Charity activities	467,740	4,356	472,096
Other	469	–	469
Total	506,917	4,356	511,273
NET INCOME	188,954	40,864	229,818
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	78,782	106,873	185,655
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	267,736	147,737	415,473

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Website £	Totals £
COST			
At 1st April 2021	**1,494**	**8,118**	**9,612**
Additions	**411**	**3,058**	**3,469**
At 31st March 2022	**1,905**	**11,176**	**13,081**
DEPRECIATION			
At 1st April 2021	**1,494**	**6,088**	**7,582**
Charge for year	**8**	**2,667**	**2,675**
At 31st March 2022	**1,502**	**8,755**	**10,257**
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31st March 2022	**403**	**2,421**	**2,824**
At 31st March 2021	–	2,030	2,030

continued ...

12. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	**(90)**	1,078
Other debtors	**15,499**	6,176
Prepayments	**24,113**	18,134
	39,522	25,388

13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	**12,840**	12,742
Other creditors	**22,815**	22,720
	35,655	35,462

14. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Other creditors	**33,273**	41,667

15. Loans

An analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:

	2022 £	2021 £
Amounts falling due within one year on demand:		
Other loans	**9,558**	8,333
Amounts falling due between two and five years:		
Other loans – 1–5 years	**33,273**	33,333
Amounts falling due in more than five years:		
Repayable by instalments:	**–**	8,334

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022 – continued

16. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Within one year	**13,990**	24,081
Between one and five years	**–**	13,990
	13,990	38,071

17. Movement in funds

	At 1.4.21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	**267,736**	**(13,862)**	**20,000**	**273,874**
Restricted funds				
Fund A	**677**	**33**	**–**	**710**
Fund E	**76,895**	**2,108**	**–**	**79,003**
Fund H	**30,031**	**(2,997)**	**–**	**27,034**
Fund I	**40,134**	**303,490**	**(20,000)**	**323,624**
	147,737	**302,634**	**(20,000)**	**430,371**
TOTAL FUNDS	**415,473**	**288,772**	**–**	**704,245**

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	**606,191**	**(620,053)**	**(13,862)**
Restricted funds			
Fund A	**33**	**–**	**33**
Fund E	**5,069**	**(2,961)**	**2,108**
Fund H	**3**	**(3,000)**	**(2,997)**
Fund I	**340,907**	**(37,417)**	**303,490**
	346,012	**(43,378)**	**302,634**
TOTAL FUNDS	**952,203**	**(663,431)**	**288,772**

continued ...

17. Movement in funds – continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.20 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.21 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	78,782	188,954	267,736
Restricted funds			
Fund A	677	–	677
Fund E	75,180	1,715	76,895
Fund H	31,016	(985)	30,031
Fund I	–	40,134	40,134
	106,873	40,864	147,737
TOTAL FUNDS	185,655	229,818	415,473

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	695,871	(506,917)	188,954
Restricted funds			
Fund E	5,071	(3,356)	1,715
Fund H	15	(1,000)	(985)
Fund I	40,134	–	40,134
	45,220	(4,356)	40,864
TOTAL FUNDS	741,091	(511,273)	229,818

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022 – continued

17. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.20 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	78,782	175,092	20,000	273,874
Restricted funds				
Fund A	677	33	–	710
Fund E	75,180	3,823	–	79,003
Fund H	31,016	(3,982)	–	27,034
Fund I		343,624	(20,000)	323,624
	106,873	343,498	(20,000)	430,371
TOTAL FUNDS	185,655	518,590	–	704,245

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,302,062	(1,126,970)	175,092
Restricted funds			
Fund A	33	–	33
Fund E	10,140	(6,317)	3,823
Fund H	18	(4,000)	(3,982)
Fund I	381,041	(37,417)	343,624
	391,232	(47,734)	343,498
TOTAL FUNDS	1,693,294	(1,174,704)	518,590

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF FUNDS

General Fund

The 'free reserves' after allowing for all restricted funds.

Restricted Funds

Funds designated for specific trials and treatments.

continued ...

brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2022 – continued

17. Movement in funds – continued

All other restricted funds have been created through fundraising or donations for the benefit of individual brain tumour patients. The charity uses the funds for direct treatment or to support research relating to the patients' needs.

18. Related party disclosures

During the year the charity purchased services from Fitton Holman Creative Limited totalling £10,462 (2021 – £15,745). The company is directed by one of the co-founder's sister, Catherine Fitton.

During the year the charity paid the co-founders and management employees of *brainstrust*, Peter and Helen Bulbeck, £4,320 (2021 – £4,400) for administrative use of their property.

The co-founder's daughter, Leonora Bulbeck, supplied editorial services during the year to the charity totalling £1,890 (2021 – £980) at a commercial rate.

19. Post Balance Sheet events

Since the Balance Sheet date, there continues to be uncertainty regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and other global matters. The charity has continued to minimise the impact of this by maximising charity activity income and reducing costs where possible. The charity's positive financial result in the year ended 31st March 2022 and the forecast/results since this date indicate that the charity is in a good position to address these challenges going forward.

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	**57,896**	72,702
Grants from awarding entities	**175,831**	358,670
Corporate grants and donations	**53,576**	42,196
Gift aid tax recovered	**50,551**	33,437
Legacies	**–**	2,000
	337,854	509,005
Other trading activities		
Fundraising events	**75,417**	46,241
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**12,472**	11,013
Sponsored activities	**174,339**	62,477
Activities of partner groups	**346,012**	45,219
	608,240	164,950
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	**26**	40
Other income		
Gov grants – Furlough claimed	**6,083**	66,627
Gov grants – COVID support	**–**	469
	6,083	67,096
Total incoming resources	**952,203**	741,091
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Fundraising fees	**33,129**	6,933
Promotional expenses	**26,782**	19,311
	59,911	26,244
Other trading activities		
Trading costs and purchases	**7,972**	8,093
Carried forward	**7,972**	8,093

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

brainstrust – Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Other trading activities		
Brought forward	**7,972**	8,093
Event costs	**11,433**	2,073
Sponsored activities costs	**10,868**	2,298
	30,273	12,464
Charitable activities		
Medical grants and costs	**3,000**	600
Patient support and staffing	**318,242**	269,348
Salaries	**163,094**	135,244
Travel	**8,972**	(238)
Administration	**31,803**	24,537
Office rent & rates	**30,498**	28,006
Fixtures and fittings	**9**	–
Depreciation of website	**2,666**	2,030
	558,284	459,527
Support costs		
Governance costs		
Auditors' remuneration	**3,000**	3,198
Insurance	**2,196**	1,970
Other	**8,949**	7,401
Bank loan interest	**818**	469
	14,963	13,038
Total resources expended	**663,431**	511,273
Net income	**288,772**	229,818

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Reference and administrative details

Helping you

Talk to our team 24/7 on 01983 292 405, or email hello@brainstrust.org.uk.

Helping us

Make a donation at brainstrust.org.uk/donate, call us on 01983 292 405 during office hours, or email fundraising@brainstrust.org.uk.

Registration

brainstrust is a registered charitable trust, registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as Charity No. 1114634, registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SC044642.

Registered address

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4 Yvery Court
Castle Road
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www.brainstrust.org.uk
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Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Signature:

Full name: **Christopher John Baker**
Position: **Chair of the Board of Trustees**
Date: **20 September 2022**

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Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

BRAINSTRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1114634

Accounts

brainstrust
the brain cancer people

When I am a patient, I am dependent.

When I am a person, I am resourceful.

And that's why we are able to help people living with a brain tumour to reach their potential and thrive.

Trustees' annual report and accounts *brainstrust* – the brain cancer people

1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

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Our challenge

'Facing your own mortality is a big thing when you've got young family.'

Patient, Kent

'I've been strange. I left work. I cleared the house out thinking that this was the end. Family are at a loss as to what to do with me.'

Patient, London

'I feel like I'm in a fight with my hands tied behind my back.'

Caregiver, Liverpool

'I can't tell you how much better it has made me feel just reinforcing that I'm not alone and there's a whole community out there, because at first it doesn't feel that way!'

Patient, London

Brain tumour support and brain tumour research is under-funded, the needs of the community are under-acknowledged, and the impact of the disease is under-reported.

But these facts don't help you when you hear the words 'you have a brain tumour'.

A brain tumour diagnosis brings with it the double impact of a cancer diagnosis and a progressively debilitating neurological disease. The treatment is complex and nearly always harmful, and diagnosis brings with it enormous impact on well-being and mental health. Fear, isolation, disempowerment and loss of control abound.

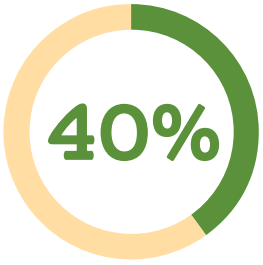
This is where the *brainstrust* community helps.

We are for a world where people with a brain tumour are involved, resourced, supported, confident and connected. They are living the life they want, because they are people first and patients second.

We provide personalised 24/7 support from the point of diagnosis and build resources that help people with a brain tumour to become stronger. We also work with people in the clinical setting to secure the best care possible for people with the condition. And because we truly understand the challenges faced by the brain tumour community, we're able to campaign appropriately and effectively to solve real issues.

In the last 15 years, we've helped thousands of people on their brain tumour journey. Our impact is evidential. And with your support we can help even more of those who need us.

More than **60,000** **people in the UK** are living with a brain tumour diagnosis



of all cancers spread to the brain

It is the **most common** form of cancer in people under **40**

Chief executive's introduction

If the previous year ended with the spectre of an impending global crisis, dealing with the full force of that crisis has been central to *brainstrust*'s activity for this year in review.

Put simply, because brain tumours didn't stop for Covid-19, neither could we.

From the outset all at *brainstrust* recognised that extraordinary times called for extraordinary action. In April 2021, we committed to being invaluable – to each other, to our friends and families and to the people in the brain tumour community who needed us. We vowed to do this within the framework of our strategy 'first we are people', which resonated with our community more than ever before in the context of this crisis, and we committed to making sure that on every step of the journey, we would be creating a chapter in *brainstrust*'s history that we would be proud of.

We recognised immediately that people with a brain tumour would be more isolated than ever before, because of shielding and isolation; more afraid and confused than ever, because of continually changing restrictions, changes and delays to routine monitoring and treatment; and less engaged with care, because of remote appointments and closure of local services. We were also aware that the people who needed us would have less of a voice because of the focus of campaigning on getting services 'back on track' rather than building better.

With the team comfortably making the shift to home working, we were able to look at services and how we could maximise impact.

- Events moved online to give people every possible opportunity to engage and connect, laugh and learn.
- We launched the Covid hub so people could understand issues and updates pertaining to treatment and shielding.
- Our policy work pivoted to engage with the NHS at the highest possible levels to ensure that the needs of our community were heard.
- We embarked on unprecedented levels of outreach work – reaching out to those who we knew would be alone and afraid, to help them feel better.
- We made it clear that we were very much open for business with mailings and updates to the clinical community explaining changes to our services and changes to the needs of the brain tumour community.

We also faced the challenge of funding this work.

Cancelling all public events equated to cancelling *brainstrust*'s 2020 fundraising calendar. But our supporters rallied behind our emergency appeal; existing funders pledged flexibility, and new funders came on board to ensure our work didn't stop. For this, we are eternally grateful. We harnessed innovative, new approaches to fundraising throughout the peaks of the pandemic and were able to bring back the limited number of people who were placed on furlough late in the summer.

Not only did we pivot and adapt, but we have also been extremely generative during this period. We have updated our brand and identity to better align with our 'people first' strategy. We have launched new resources, including a new website for *little brainstrust*, our dedicated arm for children and families, and a new hub for the forgotten but important community of meningioma patients in

the UK. We have engaged more closely with the clinical community, and the shared challenge of the pandemic has meant even closer cooperation, collaboration and communication with other charities.

Focused and effective governance during a crisis is vital, and *brainstrust*'s leadership team and board of trustees stepped up to the challenge from the outset. Meetings moved to monthly and were conducted remotely with full attendance for the year in review. We prepared contingencies, appraised risk dynamically, and budgets and forecasts were reviewed and updated monthly.

The result? It has been a challenging year, but one of which we are immensely proud. In the context of Covid-19, we have surpassed all expectations in nearly all areas of our work. We have been able to help more people and have more impact in more ways than ever before. However, we are painfully aware that there are still many people who have not been able to access *brainstrust*'s coaching, support and information. These people will be lost, afraid and alone in the face of a devastating diagnosis. We are working now towards achieving our greatest possible success in the circumstances. Key to this will be reaching more people with a brain tumour sooner and galvanising a wider community around our vital mission. No person with a brain tumour should feel lost, afraid or alone. Everyone diagnosed with a brain tumour should have the opportunity to seek support from *brainstrust* and join our movement for person-centred care.

After all, before we are patients, we are people. We thrive for the things that inspire us as people, not those that we must do as patients.

Will Jones
Chief Executive

'I can't thank your charity enough. When I phoned, I actually wasn't sure what I hoped to achieve. I have been really struggling and really needed to talk to someone – Jodie was amazing, especially as I was a stranger to her and called and then just burst into tears, but then, after chatting to her for some time, she really made me feel so much better. For the first time in a long time, I feel I have a bit of control over my condition, even if it's just to know there is help out there.'

Patient, Sussex, June 2020

Why we are here and what we do: *brainstrust*'s objectives and activities

First, we are people.

In April 2019, we launched our current strategy. Fourteen years in the making, this strategy, 'First, we are people', puts laser focus on the human, practical and cultural contexts in which people find themselves following a brain tumour diagnosis. It sets out our journey to help these people become less isolated, more in control, more engaged with their clinical care and condition, and better resourced.

The human context sees a forgotten group of people who, following diagnosis, see themselves fall into a chasm between improving clinical care and the scientific pursuit of a cure. In acknowledging that before we are patients, we are people, we can help people navigate this void, for when we are patients, we are only patients for a small amount of the time. We want to do things that people want to do, not always the things that patients have to do.

In practical terms, we know from our intimately close work with our community of people with a brain tumour, and their caregivers, that a brain tumour is isolating, confusion abounds following diagnosis, communicating well is hard, behaviour and personality change devastates relationships, fatigue impacts 95% of those diagnosed, and there is a huge financial impact as work stops. These are just some of the challenges, and these challenges are not addressed in either the laboratory or the hospital.

brainstrust's vision

A world where people with a brain tumour are involved, resourced, supported, confident and connected. They are living the life they want, because they are people first and patients second.

To make this happen, we aim to:

- help people overcome fear
- help people to engage with their challenges and care
- eliminate isolation
- improve knowledge and understanding.

Through our work in the following areas:

- coaching and support
- building communities
- information and education
- regional insight and relevance
- clinical engagement, development and network building
- engaging people with research.

Which is only possible with:

- effective fundraising
- efficient marketing and promotion
- administrative support
- good governance.

'We are working relentlessly and single-mindedly towards achieving our vision. The framework for strategic planning at brainstrust *consists of a 12-month plan, three-year goals and a five-year vision. This is an effective model that affords flexibility and the ability to be reactive to risks or opportunities as they arise, while ensuring we are working to achieve our longer-term goals to transform life for people with a brain tumour.'*
Chris Baker, Chair of Trustees

Our values

brainstrust **is underpinned by a set of values that are core to not only our services but everything we do.**

We are ...

- tenacious
- honest
- positive
- relevant
- challenging
- personal
- attentive
- strong
- enduring
- curious
- just
- enabling
- community-led

So our community feels ...

- engaged
- acknowledged
- at ease
- expert in themselves
- in control
- able to question
- resourced
- confident
- not alone

Janice and Elly's shared experience of a brain tumour diagnosis has inspired their mission to connect with and support the wider brain tumour community. They are raising funds for *brainstrust*'s work to support others, like them, with a meningioma diagnosis.

Achievements and performance

Our support, our research, and the impact we are having

'This community makes me feel not so alone any more. Just knowing that there is a place where I can go to for advice and support if and when I need it is so comforting.'

Patient, March 2020

During the year we were able to **provide coaching, support and information** directly to

604

new patients or caregivers, and our team handled

1,662

one-to-one contacts by phone or email.

1,034

people attended

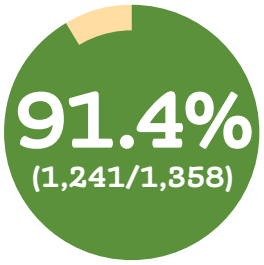
128

online events. These events were either social events to help people tackle isolation and to build communities, or educational expert-led webinars to help people **engage with their care and take control** of their care and condition.

The *brainstrust* **online support group** grew to

2,879

members.



of visitors who engaged with evaluation told us that *brainstrust*'s online information helped them **feel more resourced, more confident or more in control.**

136,269

people sought information on **brainstrust.org.uk, visiting**

315,441

pages.

Adapting to working in the pandemic

We were quick to establish a dedicated Covid-19 support hub, refocusing our information and policy activities to make sure that news and information was shared and explained in a manner that was relevant, accessible, trustworthy and easy to understand for people with a brain tumour: www.brainstrust.org.uk/corona-comms. Topics covered include shielding; vaccines, risk and efficacy; personal stories; and the impact of the pandemic on brain tumour care and treatment. Five thousand people accessed the hub to the end of March 2021.

This year, connecting with others in a similar situation has proved to be more important than ever before as our communities found themselves isolating and shielding. Our shift to online events has helped us to reach more people at a time when it has been most needed.

Through offering online events and support groups, we have been able to remove geographical and physical limitations to the building of communities, helping people to feel less isolated and more connected to others.

Our strong ongoing relationships within the clinical community have resulted in many leading experts and clinicians giving their time and sharing their expertise generously with us through delivering webinars for the benefit of *brainstrust*'s community. The knowledge shared has helped people to feel more in control, more resourced and better engaged with their own care.

The opening up of our webinar series to healthcare professionals has ensured that some of this expert knowledge has been shared more widely within clinical communities, meaning that broader patient care is positively impacted through increased knowledge and understanding of the specific issues faced by our community.

'It's been tough, challenging, exhilarating, stressful, plus a load of other things. But good has come from it – not least in the fundamental belief that we are needed more than ever, and in our ability to deliver no matter what. It's down to the team!'

Helen Bulbeck, *brainstrust* Co-founder and Director of Services

Progress with our mission

'Our mission is clear and well defined. We work in a very focused way to drive progress against six impact indicators, which in turn help us with our strategic aims. In creating control, improving engagement, tackling isolation and helping people to feel resourced and supported, we will eliminate loneliness, overcome fear, improve knowledge and understanding, and help people be at the centre of their care.'
Jane Gardiner, Head of Support, *brainstrust*

1. Creating control

'I can't thank your charity enough. When I phoned, I actually wasn't sure what I hoped to achieve. I have been really struggling and really needed to talk to someone – Jodie was amazing, especially as I was a stranger to her and called and then just burst into tears, but then, after chatting to her for some time, she really made me feel so much better. For the first time in a long time, I feel I have a bit of control over my condition, even if it's just to know there is help out there.'

Patient, Sussex, June 2020

All our services work synergistically to instil confidence and help patients take control. During the course of the year, those who engaged in evaluation reported, on aggregate, that they felt 20% (0.95/5) more in control having engaged with our work.

Accessing simple, factual information about brain tumours can be difficult due to conflicting information being available, which can leave people feeling confused and overwhelmed.

This year, we significantly expanded the library of brain tumour Know Hows. This gives the community access to concise, clear and impartial information about topics that are relevant to them. The Know Hows are divided into different categories, including information designed to help people become more in control, engaged with their clinical care, and better resourced.

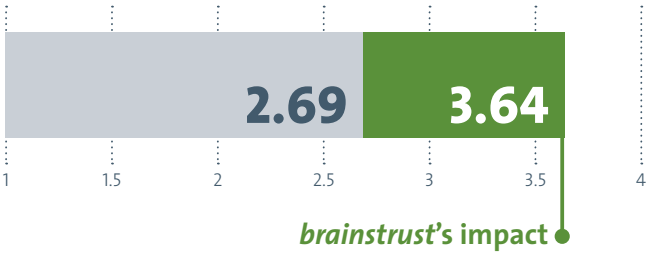
We produce Know Hows in response to topics that we are regularly contacted about by our community. Additions to the Know How library include 'How to prepare for medical appointments', as a response to concerns raised about the shift from face-to-face to phone consultations during the pandemic, and 'How to deal with scanxiety', a topic of concern to the community and one that is more pertinent due to delays in MRI scans and increased waiting times for results as a result of the pandemic.

Counselling also continues to play a vital role in helping people with a brain tumour, and their caregivers, to live life proactively and to the best of their ability following diagnosis. Yet it is a service that remains notoriously hard to access. In acknowledgement of this, *brainstrust* has developed a network of rapid-access counsellors who can provide help to people in the brain tumour community. This network provided over 200 counselling sessions last year, helping people to feel more in control.

Trusted information is key to helping people take control.

Initial and final score against impact indicator

On top of things



'Not only [have you] been so patient with us due to my dad having so much upheaval and his first ever seizure last week. But the lady I had counselling me, was just wonderful and so incredibly kind to offer me a further six sessions of counselling, which finished today.'

'The imaging webinar gave me the confidence to open a conversation with my oncologist yesterday about my scans, and I actually felt able to question what was being proposed. We had what I feel was a really positive conversation. The webinar gave me the confidence and knowledge that I needed – I wouldn't have been able to do this before.'

2. Helping people engage with care and their condition

We recorded 1,034 attendees at 128 webinars during the year, supported by 10 expert speakers covering topics that included:

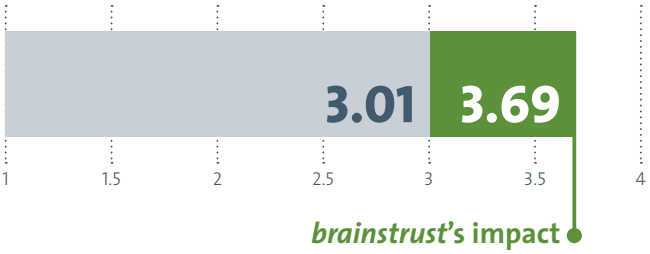
- understanding imaging
- treatments
- epilepsy
- power of attorney
- managing anxiety
- hypnotherapy
- fatigue
- cannabinoids
- diet and nutrition
- dry mouth

'[brainstrust] *helped me understand and find a solution to an ongoing problem no one has been able to help with, so appreciated. Thank you.'*

'I am an occupational therapist working within cancer care, and this webinar was very informative and taught me lots about radiotherapy that I didn't know in such detail. It will help me to understand this treatment better and to explain this to clients I meet who have questions about it.'

Many of the coaching conversations that took place during the year (of which there were 1,662) were to prepare people for consultations with their clinical team. These conversations were particularly relevant this year because of the increased anxiety caused by a shift to telephone consultations as a result of the pandemic.

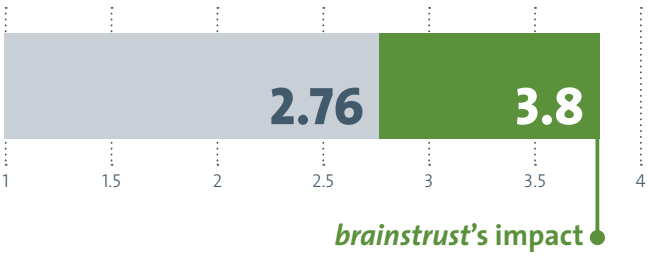
Engaged with clinical care



3. Eliminating isolation

Isolation has been exacerbated for the brain tumour community during the pandemic. Our peer support service is resourced by 30 volunteer peer supporters who can help people in similar situations to them deal with such issues as awake brain surgery, fatigue, the impact of radiotherapy, managing behaviour change and much more. The current active caseload for this group is 15 people, and we are looking to grow this over the coming year. Our Meetup social events took place online with 361 attendees.

Less alone



'This is the third webinar I have done, and they have all been really welcoming and friendly, and full of useful tips and information. It is really comforting to know that you are not alone, and there are people willing to help. Thank you!'

'It was well organised and everyone was friendly. Smiling faces, as well as difficult sharing of challenging experiences. I enjoyed meeting some other people with my sort of tumour. This was new.'

4. Helping people feel resourced

Robust, reliable, accessible and expert information is a cornerstone of our work, personalised where possible to meet the specific needs of the recipient.

In addition to our educational events, this year 248 people received a *brainstrust* brain box, and our wider library of resources remained in high demand.

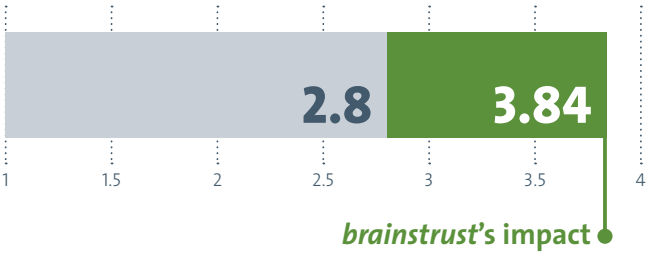
Topics we cover expanded to include dedicated information for people diagnosed with meningioma, and as part of our brand update, we restructured our library of online information to make it more accessible to users.

'I'm so glad there is something that supports people with a meningioma. I'm heading there right now!'

'This is so brilliant ... brainstrust*, you've done it again! Thank you ... You've no idea how much this will help us – our very own site! I really needed to see this today. You've never failed me yet.'*

'We're thrilled at the launch of brainstrust*'s new website dedicated to providing advice, information and support to people with a meningioma. We hope it will help people like us navigate their way through diagnosis and treatment and, perhaps most importantly, live well with a meningioma. A huge thank-you to all our supporters who helped us raise the funds for this amazing resource.'*

Resourced



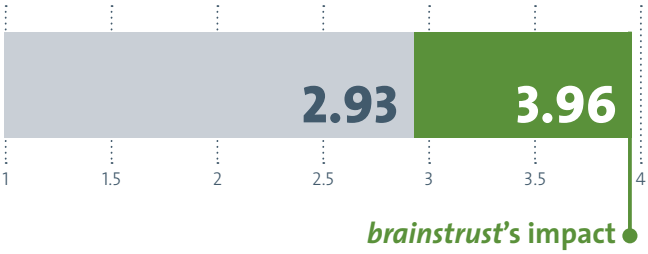
'Each time I attend a webinar, I learn more, helping me to cope and accept better. No one else is able to offer this.'

Accreditation of our health information remains critical to us and ensures we can be confident that our information is robust, accessible, authoritative, evidence-based and trustworthy. With the cessation of NHS England's Information Standard mark, we have begun the transition to the PIF TICK standard to ensure continuity of rigorous process and quality. Ongoing review of resources and expert input into our information will continue as a result.

5. Making sure people feel supported

There were 604 new people who contacted *brainstrust* by phone or email for information or coaching, and during the year, our team handled 1,662 one-to-one interactions. This has contributed to sustained impact during a difficult time for the brain tumour community.

Supported



'Hearing other people's experiences and realising that I'm not alone in many of the thoughts that go through my head. Although I can't control what is happening to me, I feel I now have a better understanding of a way to approach things, and a framework of things to try.'

'Always good to know that other people understand what you are going through and will listen without judging you.'

'It spoke to me about all the issues of the unknown I'm currently facing. It was great to see how I feel reflects what others might also be feeling. To have this support means so much to my well-being improvements.'

To ensure we are providing the right level of support to the right people, and to help us manage an increasing ongoing caseload effectively, we have introduced stratification of our support for patients and caregivers. This acknowledges that some people may only need a 'light touch' and others much more intensive help.

6. Building communities

With the nation having to stay at home, connecting people has been harder than ever this year for people with a brain tumour. However, we have seen remarkable progress with online tools providing opportunity to help people with a brain tumour to connect.

The webinars and Meetups have contributed greatly to building on our work to date, and have enabled us to facilitate growth of community in novel ways. For example, people from across the UK have been able to connect based on factors broader than geography, including diagnosis, age, stage of disease and key concerns in common. Whereas before people looking to connect regarding one of these topics may have been too far apart, online communication has made our communities tighter and more relevant.

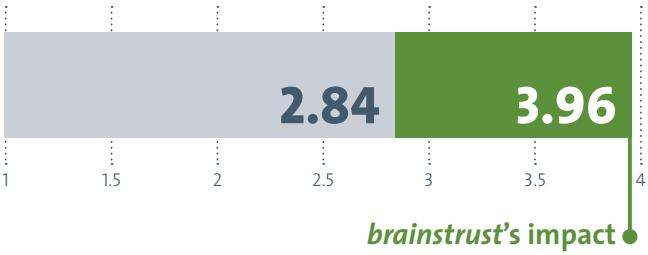
Diagnosis-specific groups have proved to be particularly popular, running monthly and attracting between 12 and 20 people, who have been eager to discuss issues that are pertinent to them – for example, epilepsy with low-grade glioma.

'Thank you to all who run these webinars. I gain so much, from learning and understanding to having a welcome break from reality and being able to be part of a community where we can relate to each other's experiences.'

'I really valued the chance to speak to others also living with a meningioma. Thank you.'

'Good to meet people in "live" time, not just on a Facebook group.'

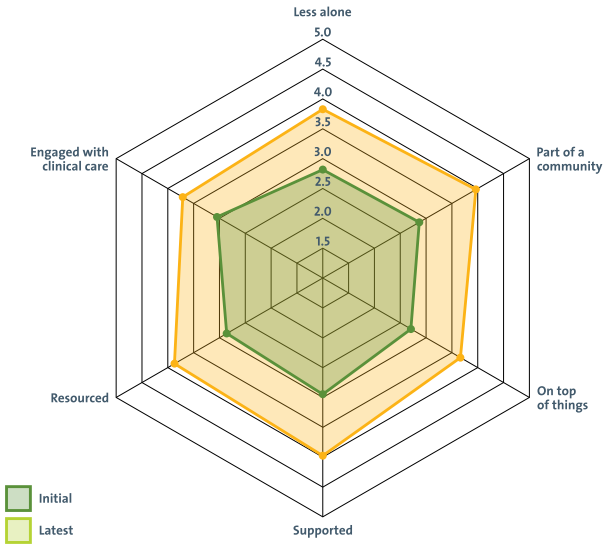
Part of a community



***brainstrust* Meetup on Hove Lawns – a rare opportunity for the community to connect in person safely during the pandemic.**

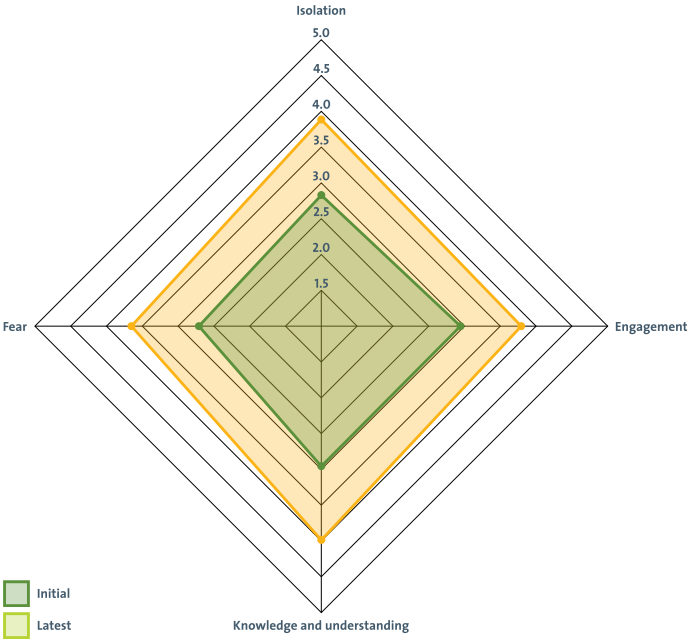
Overall impact and progress

The figure below shows improvements made for each of the six indicators that were described as most important by our community.



- On average, people have progressed nearly a whole point (0.96/5), or 19.2%, across the six indicators, meaning they feel they are moving towards a less difficult position.
- This is slightly down from last year's average of 23%, which may be related to our events and Meetups moving online.
- Despite this, we are making the biggest impact in helping people to feel 'part of a community', as this sees the highest average increase with 1.09.
- We are also helping to guide and make others feel less alone as the indicators 'resourced' and 'supported' follow closely, both with an average increase of 1.03.
- The smallest increase comes from 'being engaged with clinical care', with a 0.66 difference, which we hope to improve in 2021 after launching our Patient Research Involvement Movement (PRIME).
- In 2020–21, 61 individuals completed two or more progress trackers, and 115 completed their first, giving us a good insight into the current state of our beneficiaries.

The figure below shows the improvements made across *brainstrust*'s four strategic priorities.



- On average, people have improved nearly a whole point (0.97/5), or 19.4%, across the priorities.
- All points have increased by a similar amount, the smallest difference being 'engagement' (with 0.84/5) and the highest being 'isolation' (with 1.05/5), meaning we're balancing the impact we make on improving each of these key areas for our community.

Bringing the brain tumour community closer to research and research closer to the community

Patient and public involvement and engagement (PPI&E) in research is a growing area of work for *brainstrust*. Increasingly people want to understand their options regarding clinical trials, know that they have left no stone unturned, and contribute to clinical research to help others.

Our PPI&E activity is aligned increasingly with our mission as the patient community becomes more informed about its options. Research-engaged patients feel more supported, more engaged with their care and condition and more confident about their choices. Our role is to build the community of clinical research participants and advocates to grow the community for the benefit of the clinical and patient communities.

The year 2020–21 has been the year when we have capitalised on the groundwork laid over the last five years. We have made a concerted effort to activate our clinical research offer, a consolidated collaboration between the clinical research community and people living with a brain tumour. This has been grounded in evidence-based healthcare, healthcare data and what is meaningful to patients and their caregivers. Never has this been more important. A genotype does not explain how a person perceives their health state, what motivates or stands in the way of behaviour changes, or what life events are competing with the ability to maintain both health and well-being. The thrust of integrated care systems is towards system-wide outcomes measurement, but there is a case to be made in that this loses sight of what is key to this – the person living with the disease and what matters to them. There is no story to be told without the patient – the patient is the only form of data – and the value the patient brings to the agenda exceeds that of the purely clinical. And so the opportunity here is significant – with investment in brain cancer research, we are growing our involvement so that brain cancer is represented equitably across all brain tumour types and across the trajectory of the disease, from pre-diagnosis, through diagnosis and treatment, living well with a brain tumour, to recurrence where applicable, through to end of life and beyond. This needs to be done with objectivity and consistency, with both the patient and the caregiver at the centre so that this is reflected in the clinical research agenda. We know that inequalities exist around treatment options and care pathways, that recurrence and end of life care remain areas to address, that we need more people signing up for clinical research, that there is ambiguity around patient-reported outcome measures (PROs). There is clear scope and opportunity to stimulate research in this area, and with increased public awareness, we are set to take this forward in 2021.

Connecting people with science in an engaging way is a key part of our work to help people feel more in control and more informed after a brain tumour diagnosis.

So what does this look like? This has been addressed through four channels, the underlying principle being to bring our community of people living with a brain tumour closer to clinical research and vice versa.

The first channel has been the development of a new portal for clinicians on our website, brainstrust.org.uk/healthcare-partners, so that

Our research advocates meet online and in person to support investigators with clinical research.

we can improve our visibility in online searches and prioritise refreshing clinical relationships now that things are settling after a challenging 2020. We have a significant library of clinical research generated by *brainstrust*, which deserves a shopfront so that clinicians and people living with a brain tumour can access up-to-date research about the things that matter to them.

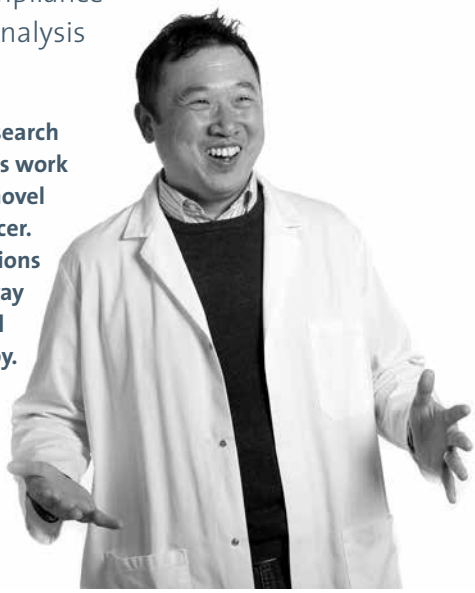
The second channel has been to harness the energy that we know sits within our community; people want to be involved in research but don't know how. To date, *brainstrust* has developed public and patient involvement (PPI) strategies for over 80 neuro-oncology trials and represents PPI at co-applicant level in several multicentred trials. This work has attracted around £20 million to the neuro-oncology clinical research landscape and ranges from lab-based research focused on the epidemiology of brain tumours (ICEP2, £3.1m), neuro-oncological (APPROACH £6.3m) and neuro-surgical research (FUTURE GB £1.7m) through to research around quality of life (BTLife £200K). It understands what gold standard PPI looks like, so that it is in the DNA of a trial, and has co-led the NCRI steering group for 100 NCRI consumer representatives. It has developed PPI strategies for trials, for societies such as the British Psychosocial Society (BPOS), for academic institutions such as the Clinical and Translation Radiotherapy Group (CTRad) and for organisations such as IQVIA, a world leader in using data, technology, advanced analytics, and expertise to enable a more modern and effective healthcare system that transforms patient outcomes.

So we're proud to have launched our Patient Research Involvement Movement (PRIME) this year. This is the mortar for our PPI work, with people who are living with a brain tumour placed at the heart of this work. PRIME members are research advocates who are integral to the clinical research landscape. Project objectives are:

- to be the 'go to' for the research community
- to have people at the centre
- to strengthen the quality/relevance of applications so that more funding is attracted
- to be multidisciplinary and multicentred
- to be co-produced
- to increase capacity within *brainstrust* so that we have more people involved in more trials
- to be seen as a leader in the field.

Our third channel has been our work around PROs. We have been privileged to have been part of the development of the COBra (core outcomes in brain tumour trials) study during 2020. Our PRIME advocates will be involved in this. There is a need to create a standardised approach to measuring patient-centred outcomes that directly reflect the goals of the study under consideration and that are capable of measuring the impact of the proposed intervention. This will ensure:

- a consistency of approach in the types of measure used, across trials and units
- accuracy in matching those measures to the outcomes expected of an intervention
- diligence and compliance in data capture, analysis and reporting



Dr Wai Liu is a senior research fellow at St George's. His work focuses on developing novel approaches against cancer. These involve modifications to drug regimens as a way of enhancing the overall activity of chemotherapy. Dr Liu has presented regularly to the *brainstrust* community to help people understand cannabinoids and associated research.

- adoption of international guidelines, standardising how PROs and health-related quality of life measures are incorporated into intervention trials, a standardised approach to analysis of PRO data, and minimum standards for the reporting of PRO data.

The outcome of this work will be the development of a core outcome set (COS) for use in high-grade glioma trials using the methodological approach recommended by the Core Outcome Measures in Effectiveness Trials (COMET) initiative. Patient and public involvement (PPI) is central to this work, with experienced representation and a clear structure for involvement and measurement of impact.

Our last channel to bring the communities closer has been the launch of the neuro-oncology special collection, in collaboration with the Cochrane organisation. The publication of the latest Cochrane systematic reviews on brain tumours brings together years of collaborative effort to transform the clinical research landscape and make it relevant for people living with a brain tumour.

So what are these reviews? Why are they important, and how do they fit into the bigger picture? Systematic reviews identify and analyse all research published on a particular topic – providing reliable insight into the effectiveness of interventions, highlighting where knowledge is lacking and, crucially, providing a guide for future research. Transparency in the research selection process is vital to ensure there is no conflict of interest, or bias towards cell-based research, which can detract from the clinically relevant research that the brain tumour community needs.

The findings of the reviews can be categorised into three broad research areas, representing the interests and concerns of people with a brain tumour:

1. getting a prompt, safe and accurate diagnosis
2. shared decision-making and risk sharing in glioma
3. understanding the best treatment when decisions are difficult.

These systematic reviews have already supported many recently funded, NCRI-adopted studies. These include Future GB – a neurosurgical trial looking at different technologies – and the Spring trial, which explores the use of prophylactic anti-epilepsy medication in patients who are having brain tumour surgery.

Collaboration is the key to change

At every stage of this process, people living with brain cancer have been in the DNA of this work: identifying the topics, applying for funding of the reviews, ensuring the lay summaries are simple and accessible, and developing future studies through the NCRI.

This transformation of the neuro-oncology clinical research landscape wouldn't have happened without this genuine collaboration between patients, their caregivers and the clinicians who support the brain tumour community. *brainstrust* has been in the DNA of this work since the very first conversation about this happened in 2013. Our ability to be the mortar, reaching all stakeholder groups, has been a key component of the success we're celebrating today.

Our new look

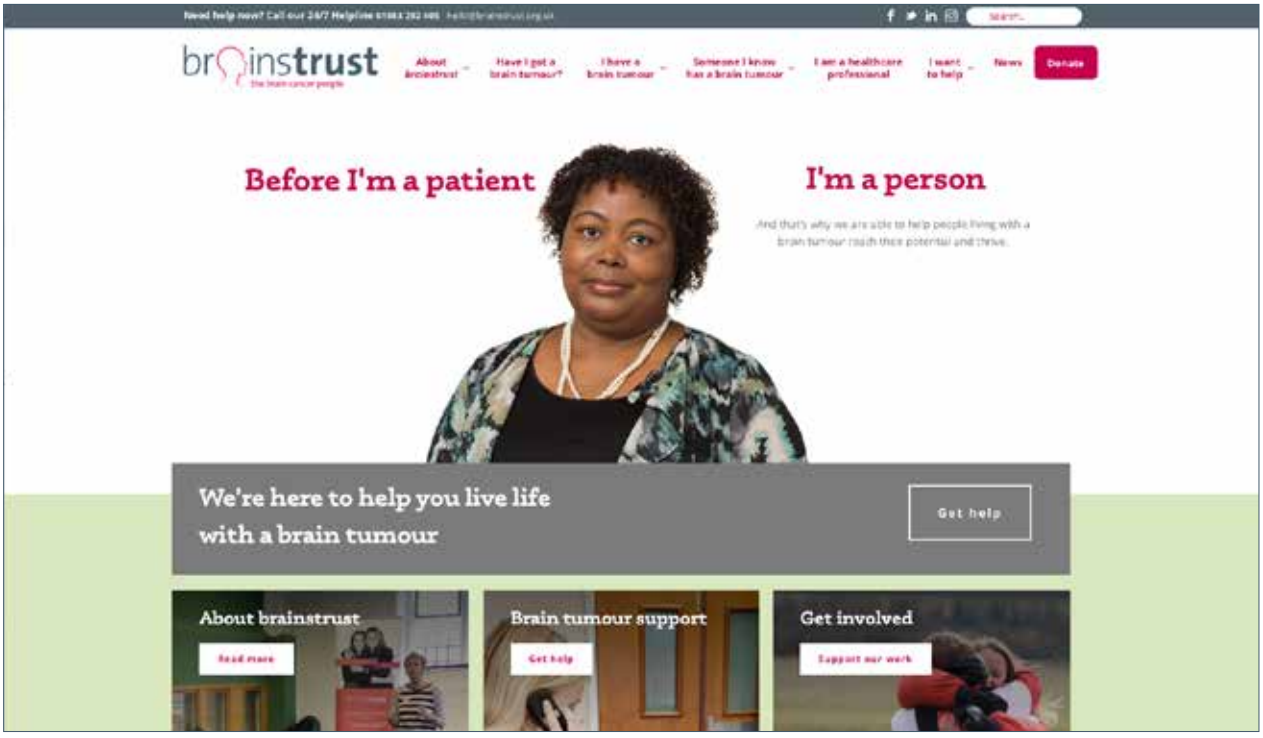
In 2020 we updated our key messages and visual identity, to better communicate our 'people first' strategy. *brainstrust*'s name, logo purpose, activities and team remain seamlessly aligned, but with these updates, we are now doing a better job of saying why we are here, who we are and what we do, so that even more people from all walks of life can share an affinity with *brainstrust* and benefit from our high-impact support.

'Being diagnosed with a brain tumour is devastating, and it's easy to become locked into a relentless medical process that forgets we are human. We may be patients, but first and foremost, we are people. Our mission is to support those with a brain tumour with a focus on the very human needs they have at each and every step of their journey.'

Ben Young
Trustee, *brainstrust*

'Reflecting our strategy, this evolution in our look and feel centres people at the heart of everything we do. We're the same organisation, with a streamlined look that demonstrates clearly how we make life better for people with a brain tumour. Bolder statements (rooted in evidence) and updates to our colour palette reflect the optimism of our belief that with access to brainstrust *support, community and resources, everyone with a brain tumour can have their best possible day.'*

Eve Flynn
Communications Manager, *brainstrust*



Your support

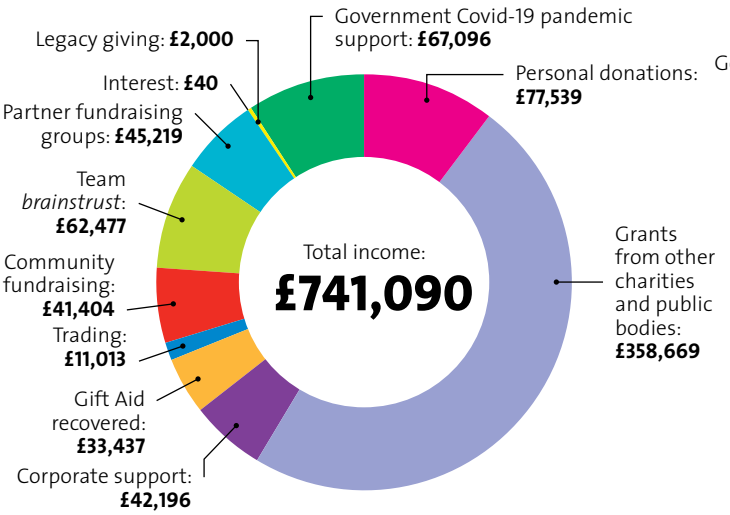
In 2020 our supporters raised £740,623 to support *brainstrust*'s mission. Despite the gloomy outlook at the beginning of the year because of the pandemic, our team and community galvanised rapidly around what needed to be done to grow our services in the face of increased and more complex demand. While income remains from a diversified mix of traditional charity fundraising activity, because of the nature of the government restrictions put in place during the pandemic, we have seen greater reliance on support from trusts and foundations, and also welcome support from the UK government, who were quick to see the vital contribution that healthcare charities such as *brainstrust* can provide during a time of national crisis.

Our funding comes from:

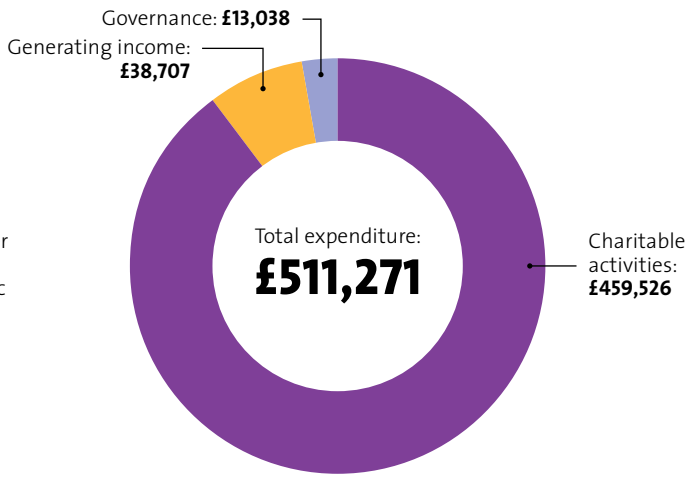
- trusts and foundations
- direct and regular giving
- companies who support our work
- sponsored events and challenges
- community fundraising
- Gift Aid recovery
- in memory giving
- trading
- UK government support relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have limited income from special purpose fundraising, legacy fundraising and high-net-worth individuals and minimal investment income, instead keeping cash available to provide liquidity and flexibility so that we can react promptly to the needs of our community.

Our income 2020-21



Our expenditure 2020-21



Just some of *brainstrust*'s fundraising highlights for the year include:

Hot cross run

Good Friday (2 April 2021) saw friends Stephen Miller and Rob Eagles take to the 2.2-mile track at Liverpool's Sefton Park to complete a 24-hour endurance run to raise funds for *brainstrust* and Molly Olly's Wishes. This event was the latest in a series of runs Stephen has completed in support of *brainstrust* since losing his mum to a GMB in 2013, raising a huge grand total of £6,032.

The Great *brainstrust* Create-Off

Taking self-care as our theme for Brain Tumour Awareness Month 2021, this challenge took the definition further than bubble baths and invited participants to explore their creativity as a route to unwinding, relaxing and recharging. The winning drawing and paintings will feature in the forthcoming *brainstrust* 2022 calendar.

Running for Jacob

After her son Jacob underwent a series of treatments for a craniopharyngioma, Heather felt she wanted to 'bring something positive and give something back', so she took on the Run, Row, Ride 30-mile challenge in November 2020. She was quickly joined on the challenge by other family members, and they raised a brilliant total of £1,200.

Maidstone Harriers support #TeamSeth

#TeamSeth is a movement that grew up around seven-year-old Seth and his family, the Dickensons, and saw Maidstone Harriers host a virtual 10K race in February 2021 – with optional pirate costumes. The competitive running club counted Seth's mum as a member, and in support of the family, they opted to donate the entire profits of the race to *brainstrust*, raising over £3,500.

Women On the Move Against Cancer (WOMAC)

The start of 2021 saw WOMAC (Women On the Move Against Cancer) announce that *brainstrust* had received the nomination to be their charity of the year. With a range of fundraising initiatives planned throughout the year, including putting together a team to run the London Landmarks Half Marathon and hosting Weeks for WOMAC, cake sales and trying some wild swimming.

The Brain Tumour Twins

Janice and Elly originally met while working for Buckingham Palace, and they became not only friends but also roommates. Sadly, the friends both received the same meningioma diagnosis, but despite the devastation that a brain tumour diagnosis brings, Janice and Elly's bond grew even stronger because of their shared experience. Now, on a mission to connect and support the wider brain tumour community, Janice and Elly have created 'The Brain Tumour Twins', raising funds for *brainstrust* in support of others with a meningioma diagnosis, with a total during the year in review of over £3,100.

Maximus Foundation UK

Bethany's motivation to nominate *brainstrust* for a donation from the Maximus Foundation UK came as a result of the support she saw her close friend Sammy receive on her brain tumour journey. The nomination was successful, and *braintrust* received £2,500 in November 2020. The Maximus Foundation UK has the aim to help people in need through supporting the charities who work with them.

Geoff's year of challenges becomes a two-year challenge

Inspired to take on fundraising challenges as a result of the support his friend received from *brainstrust*, Geoff Worsley initially set himself the task of fundraising through a year of challenges, starting with his first half marathon in February 2020. The onset of lockdowns did nothing to dampen Geoff's determination, as events went virtual, and he continued to train and run to raise for *brainstrust*. Alongside support from friends and family, Geoff has also been sponsored by three generous companies, TBSC, GeminiSix and SAM Charter, raising so far over £1,300. And Geoff has still not stopped running and already has a very full programme of events for the rest of 2021.

Mairi's lockdown challenge

The postponement of Follow the Seagulls due to Covid-19 did not stop supporter Mairi from carrying out her own challenge in support of *brainstrust* and in memory of her husband, Michael. Determined to support others, Mairi moved her challenge from the Seagulls route around Fife to her flat in early April 2021, completing 50 miles on a cross-trainer in just three days and smashing her £1,750 target.

Emma Mosley and #BrainTumourAwareness Month

Emma knows all too well the impact of a brain tumour diagnosis, as she received her own in early 2020. So, during #BrainTumourAwarenessMonth, to celebrate TEAFEST, Emma pulled out all the stops, hosting two fantastic community fundraisers to raise money to support people with brain tumours. Emma joined the Rock Choir rehearsal at Newburgh Primary School to provide refreshments, cakes and a raffle, and she also arranged a TEAFEST event at a local community centre, raising over £640.

Support from trusts and foundations

Government restrictions last year made community and challenge-based fundraising increasingly difficult to deliver, with the postponement and cancellation of many events and so we shifted to a more grant-focused income plan. Competition in this arena is always fierce, even more so this year, as many charities felt the pinch of the pandemic.

We were fortunate that our existing relationships with several funders provided us with unique opportunities, and we were also successful at forging new partnerships with grant makers with whom we hadn't previously worked.

The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) was very supportive in allowing us to temporarily repurpose existing funding. We were also successful in securing an £8,000 Awards for All grant to rebuild capacity for our service in Scotland. TNLCF was also one of the chosen distributors of government support, and through this scheme, we were able to secure an additional £93,000 of income to cover our general operating costs.

We would also like to express our gratitude to a new *brainstrust* partner, the Edward Gostling Foundation, who, after funding an initial bid, invited us to apply for (and awarded) a second grant of £2,500 for our work. We hope to maintain this relationship into the future.

Further generous support was secured from The Rank Foundation. We were successfully awarded three separate grants from its own philanthropy schemes, and a DCMS-backed Recovery Grant, together worth over £50,000. In addition, we were also invited to apply for two new funded positions through the Time to Shine programme, both applications were successful and have enabled us to add two additional team members to build capacity in our research, impact and project management activities.

We are truly grateful for all the support made available to us from trusts and foundations. We acknowledge that we have secured an unusually high proportion of grant funding compared to other income streams for the year in review, but we also acknowledge that these are unusual times. The strategy has been appropriate for the circumstances, but our challenge and focus now is to rebalance our typically diverse fundraising portfolio.

Diversity and inclusion at *brainstrust*

This year we have been involved in an important and challenging conversation about our inclusivity as an organisation. Breaking this vast topic down, we have focused on three areas where we can have an impact: internal, external and societal.

Internal: How diverse and inclusive are our team and our internal practices? What do we need to do to tackle unconscious bias internally and support the members of our team from minority groups?

External: Who are we prioritising with our work? Who are we missing? How can we make our services more inclusive?

Societal: What can we do at a policy level? How can we influence change outside our immediate circles?

It's been important that the whole team input into this work. We set up a working group with representation from different teams across the organisation, with the role keeping momentum going.

Keen not to jump into this work from a position of ignorance, we spent time initially having honest conversations about where we are falling short, and we all completed an anonymous staff survey to give people an opportunity to share their honest feedback. Based on this survey and the conversations that followed, and accepting the fact that we cannot do everything at once, we have worked to identify the gaps and areas for improvement and meet regularly to update on actions.

So far we have made great strides addressing our recruitment process, improving our advertisement of roles, ensuring impartiality in selection by anonymising CVs and introducing an anonymous survey so we can monitor and track our progress.

Internally, we have undergone unconscious-bias training and have regular discussions around how we can ensure our services are appropriate for different audiences. We have committed to and are working on a programme to reach marginalised communities that are most in need of our services. Given the fact that brain tumours and their treatment are a cause of disability for many people, we are focusing currently on accessibility and disability.

How we're already meeting the needs of people who access our services

As a charity, we are committed to meeting the diverse needs of our community and adopt an inclusive approach as standard. We are disability aware and take steps to ensure that our venues are accessible for our community in that they offer step-free access or a lift, hearing induction loops, accessible toilets and good public transport links. Many of our community follow particular

'We're exploring ways in which we can proactively reach out to more marginalised communities, and we're continually monitoring what we do in order to try to ensure that we are offering fair and equal access to our services for everyone.'

Eve Flynn, Communications Manager

dietary approaches due to treatment and other diagnosis-specific factors, and these are always respected in our event catering offer.

Our resources are produced according to the PIF TICK standard, ensuring that they are easy to access and navigate. We regularly provide written resources in alternative formats to those with visual impairments, in the exact format that each individual requires.

The recent expansion of our event offer to online has ensured the inclusion of those who have previously experienced barriers to event attendance, such as mobility, transport, fatigue, support and childcare.

Despite all this, we know that we can do better. We're exploring ways in which we can proactively reach out to more marginalised communities, and we're continually monitoring what we do in order to try to ensure that we are offering fair and equal access to our services for everyone.

We're listening – engaging with feedback

During the year in review we received no substantiated or notifiable complaints about either our services or fundraising practices.

We have robust policies in place for managing complaints and actively encourage feedback.

We are proud of our record of having never received a complaint about our work and will continue to encourage people to let us know how we might improve the way that we work.

Financial review

The Trust's published statutory accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 are incorporated in this Trustees' Annual Report, and include considerable detail on the source and application of funds, and the financial position of the Trust at 31 March 2021, as required by the SORP for UK charities published by the Charity Commission. This report comments on the main points of note.

In summary, gross income generated in 2020–21 was £741K (2019–2020 £607K). The net surplus for the year was £230K (2019–2020 £17K deficit).

The impact of COVID-19 on our financial year 2020–21 was therefore not entirely negative. On the expenditure side, as reviewed elsewhere in the Trustees' Annual Report, *brainstrust*'s charitable impact has been significantly increased due to measures as disparate as taking our support largely online (thus increasing our reach) to focusing to an even greater extent on what brings real benefit to our stakeholders and beneficiaries. Thus, overall expenditure in 2020–21, at £511K has been reduced from £624K in 2019–20, with, as covered elsewhere in this report, a quantified increase in impact.

The Trust's gross income for 2020–21, at £741K, was, as noted above, a significant increase on the £607K raised in 2019–20. Most community fundraising was severely impacted during 2020–21, through both the general Covid-19 restrictions and wholesale cancellation of public events. However, *brainstrust* still benefited from significant community fundraising, through organising some safe events while lockdown was eased during 2020, and, most importantly, by taking fundraising, as well as our charitable support, online. *brainstrust*'s financial security was also enhanced through our regular grant income, successful application for a number of emergency grants, and the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The majority of the Trust's income, both general and restricted, is applied to supporting patients, their caregivers and families, from the point of a brain cancer diagnosis. Our support team has an emphasis on UK-wide geographical coverage, supported by the Big Lottery Fund and other substantial funders.

The Trust has only cash investments, deposited with NatWest Bank and The Co-operative Bank. At 31 March 2021, the Trust had net reserves, including our restricted income funds, of £415K (2020 £186K), which included net unrestricted reserves of £268K (2020 £79K) and net restricted reserves of £147K (2020 £107K). The surplus for the year under review has been added to our general charitable funds.

The Trust has a policy in normal times of holding unrestricted reserves to cover four months of defined core costs. At 31 March 2021, unrestricted reserves were sufficient to cover 6.7 months of core costs, the excess providing a useful cushion as the UK, and especially the charity sector, begins to emerge from a very difficult period. The *brainstrust* team plans to continue with the growth and impact of its charitable support work, backed by secure finances, during 2021–22 and beyond.

Structure governance and management

'We believe good governance is an essential component of our success, particularly as we grow. It underpins our integrity, reinforces the trust and confidence our patients and partners place in us, and contributes to a strong high-performance culture.'
Chris Baker, Chair of Trustees

'Focused discussions, an agile and adaptable approach to planning and sound cooperation between the appointed trustees and the managers of the Trust have ensured that brainstrust *has continued to provide support and guidance for our patients, in accordance with its aims, while maintaining a secure financial footing.'*
Gillian Bilbo, Trustee, *brainstrust*

brainstrust is constituted as a trust, governed by its Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006.

The overall guidelines for the management and administration of the Trust are incorporated in the Declaration of Trust, dated 4 March 2006, as amended by Deeds of Amendment adopted by the trustees under the terms of the original deed and notified to the Charity Commission.

This places overall responsibility for the proper governance of the Trust with the appointed trustees. Day-to-day management of the Trust is delegated to William Jones, who has been appointed chief executive of the Trust. The chief executive, supported by the leadership team, makes recommendations to the trustees on the Trust's vision, patient and caregiver support, related research, financial fundraising, promotional activities and ensuring that funds raised are spent as efficiently as possible on resources that will be useful to people affected by brain cancer.

brainstrust's trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Governance at *brainstrust* and Covid-19

Despite our board having to deal with their own personal and professional challenges during the pandemic, we quickly adapted. In liaison with the appropriate advisers, we ensured that online and telephone meetings constituted formal meetings, and in the face of a fast-moving situation in which our organisation had to adapt equally rapidly, we increased the frequency of our meetings from quarterly to monthly, as required by the current circumstances, and also ran regular drop-in sessions where the board could engage with *brainstrust*'s day-to-day activities, successes and challenges. This ensured that trustees were abreast of *brainstrust*'s activities, risks, impact and outputs in near real time. This meant decisions could be made quickly and with the most up-to-date information, ensuring that *brainstrust* would not only endure the pandemic, but provide the maximum possible public benefit throughout and beyond. We are mindful that *brainstrust*'s trustees all give their time freely on a voluntary basis, and we are extremely grateful to every member of our board for their increased engagement and incredible support during this period.

'Our management and board have worked totally in sync to make the judgements required to sustain both our current services and future prospects amidst such alarming uncertainty. None of us individually could offer the definitive answer, but together as a team and through intense dialogue, we crafted a robust path for success.'

Stephen Warrington, Trustee, *brainstrust*

Senior staff contacts

William Jones, Chief Executive
will@brainstrust.org.uk

Dr Helen Bulbeck, Director of Services and Policy
helen@brainstrust.org.uk

Peter Bulbeck, Trust Administrator and Clerk to Trustees
hq@brainstrust.org.uk

Kathy Springate, Head of Finance
kathy@brainstrust.org.uk

Tom Cowie, Head of Income
tom@brainstrust.org.uk

Jane Gardiner, Head of Support
jane@brainstrust.org.uk

Trustees

brainstrust's trustees for the year in review are Christopher Baker, Kevin Higgs, Stephen Warrington, Gillian Bilbo and Ben Young.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year to ratify the broad strategy and areas of activity for the Trust. In addition, trustees may meet with members of the team to work on specific projects. All trustees give their time freely, and no remuneration is paid.

In accordance with clause 9 of the Declaration of Trust dated 4 March 2006:

(i) There must be at least three trustees. Apart from the first trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution of the trustees passed at a special meeting called under clause 15 of this deed.

(ii) In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

(iii) The trustees must keep a record of the name and address and the dates of appointment, reappointment and retirement of each trustee.

(iv) The trustees must make available to each new trustee, on his or her first appointment:

(a) a copy of this deed and any amendments made to it

(b) a copy of the charity's latest report and statement of accounts.

There are no exemptions from disclosure applicable to or within this report, and neither the charity nor any of its trustees are acting as custodian trustees.

Now in our 15th year of operation, we have an established national footprint across all elements of our activity. This is delivered with public benefit at the heart by a professional team with a professional leadership structure.

Chris Baker
Chair of Trustees

Chris is senior vice president at a global cloud content management company and has over 20 years' experience driving growth at some of the highest-profile software companies in the world, including Microsoft and Salesforce. Chris has been a trustee for nearly nine years and the chair of trustees at *brainstrust* for four years.

Kevin Higgs
Trustee

Kevin is a financial adviser and has been a trustee for 12 years. In a chance meeting while at a previous employer, Kevin was immediately taken by the dedication and commitment of the charity to focus on the support and well-being of patients and families diagnosed with a brain tumour. He knew that he wanted to be a part of the 'journey' that *brainstrust* has been on since 2006.

Stephen Warrington
Trustee

Stephen brings to the organisation extensive experience leading professional services businesses and consulting for major multinationals, and has been a trustee for four years. Stephen's teenage son was diagnosed with a brain tumour and underwent successful surgery.

Gillian Bilbo

Trustee

Gillian is a retired headteacher and is now a school inspector, and she has been a trustee for eight years. She brings a listening ear and an objective viewpoint to the board and is supportive of fundraising initiatives.

Ben Young

Trustee

A former journalist, Ben has spent more than 25 years helping to inform, entertain and engage a wide range of audiences across multiple platforms. This has taken him from writing editorial, into advertising as a creative director, and on to the role of HR director at Time Inc, Warner Bros. and Ogilvy UK. He now works as a strategic storyteller. He is married, with four children, and lives in Northamptonshire. He joined the board of *brainstrust* in 2018.

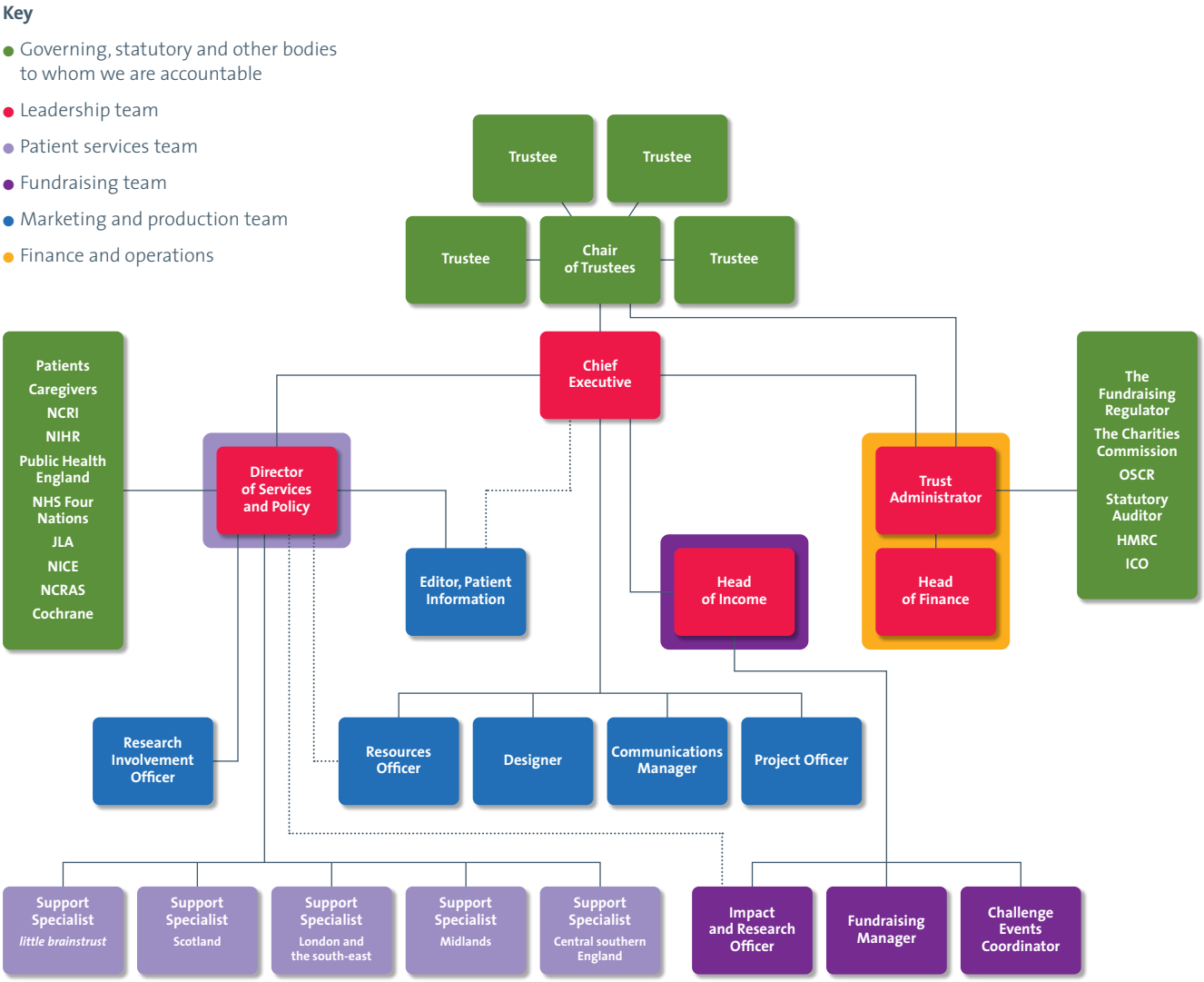
Puneet Plaha MBBS, MS, MD, FRCS(SN)

(appointed 4 March 2021)
Trustee

Puneet is an associate professor and consultant neuro-oncology surgeon in Oxford, with a specialist interest in brain tumours, especially endoscopic minimally invasive surgery and awake surgery.

He qualified in medicine from one of India's premier institutes, JIPMER, Pondicherry University, in 1996 and completed his master's degree in surgery from the same institute in 2000. He undertook an MD degree from Bristol in 2011. He completed his neurosurgical training programme as part of the South West rotation (Bristol and Plymouth) from 2005–2010.

He is a consultant neuro-oncology surgeon lead for the Oxford brain tumour MDT, and he has been a neuro-ocology lead for Thames Valley since 2012.



Collaboration, networks and advisers

Our ethos is that 'none of us is as smart as all of us'. Indeed, meaningful collaboration is a key component of our approach as we work to secure the best outcomes for anyone who is living with a brain tumour. Our partnerships, of which we nurture around 80, are global and fall into four themes:

Patient-focused

These include clinical engagement with the 35 neuroscience and neurosurgical centres, organisations that are relevant to our community such as Use My Data and the Patient Information Forum. Clinical engagement is a priority, as this is one way in which we can reach the community. It is, however, a two-way relationship, as healthcare professionals can visit our website and order resources for their patients, signpost coaching and other support services, and also take advantage of training opportunities, such as our expert-led webinars and coaching programme.

Clinically focused

Clinical collaborations are hubs of clinical practice and research, such as the British Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS), the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and the Cochrane Collaboration. This year we have launched the neuro-oncology special collection with Cochrane and the James Lind Alliance, a suite of reviews that share the evidence for some key topics that are relevant to the community. You can read more about this work here: www.brainstrust.org.uk/cochrane-special-collection-launch. We are really proud of our clinical network, which has been pivotal in the success of our webinar programme in 2020–21. We have a community of about 20 clinical experts who have selflessly given up time and their knowledge to help people living with a brain tumour understand more about their condition, why at times it is hard to make a choice about treatment and how to live better with a brain tumour. This community is set to grow in 2021–22. We are so grateful for the valuable and transformative expertise so generously gifted by this network.

BNOS BRITISH NEURO-ONCOLOGY SOCIETY

Cochrane

EANO

SOCIETY OF BRITISH NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS www.sbns.org.uk

SNO The Society for NeuroOncology

NCRI National Cancer Research Institute

Public Health

We work across the four Public Health nations. This year this work has been particularly significant, as we have worked closely with the Public Health government departments to ensure that our community is well supported during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whether this has been advocating for cohorts of people living with a specific type of brain tumour to ensure the treatment and surveillance that they need has been accessible, or using data from the National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service to reassure the community that waiting times and urgent referrals are at pre-pandemic levels, our work with Public Health has enabled us to keep our community updated in a meaningful and relevant way. We have established a specific area on our website to serve as the conduit between Public Health and the community.

brainstrust.org.uk/corona-comms

Charities

We have always worked closely with charities when we have recognised that it is in the best interests of the community. Our collaborations with charities have become stronger and deeper during the pandemic. Challenges facing the third sector have meant that we have liaised more with like-minded organisations, which have not always been related to brain cancer. Collaborations have emerged that tackle challenges facing our communities and optimise the charity voices in what is a complex and noisy environment. One such example includes the development of our collaboration with Cancer Research UK, where we are working together to provide monthly intelligence on Covid-19 and its impact on cancer services and management of patients. This includes information gathered from CRUK, GPs and cancer charities, which we then share with the brain tumour community.

Accounts

Report of the Trustees and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 for *brainstrust*

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
Pyle House
136/137 Pyle Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1JW

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brainstrust – Report of the trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Reference and administrative details

Registered Charity number

1114634

Principal address

4 Yvery Court
Castle Road
Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO31 7QG

Trustees

C Baker
K Higgs
G Bilbo
S Warrington
B Young
P Plaha (appointed 4.3.21)

Auditors

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
Pyle House
136/137 Pyle Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1JW

brainstrust is also a Scottish Charity, SC044642, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Events since the end of the year

Information relating to events since the end of the year is given in the notes to the financial statements.

Trustees' Responsibility Statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Trustees' Responsibility Statement – continued

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed 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, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable 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 charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. 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.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on **28 July 2021** and signed on its behalf by:

C Baker – Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of *brainstrust* (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity 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 charity'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.

There continues to be global uncertainty as a result of the Covid -19 pandemic. The charity have taken measures to ensure the impact of this is limited and whilst there remains difficulties in generating fundraising income, the charity have more than compensated this with additional income in other areas, government support and the reduction in operating costs. The charity has performed well in the year and therefore the going concern basis is considered appropriate.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which 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 charity'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 charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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 the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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:

As outlined above, our objective is to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements and irregularities. Whilst not a guarantee that such instances will be detected, our risk based approach, using systematic testing methods, judgement, communication with management, professional scepticism, observation of controls and systems, and audit experience/ knowledge, allows us to be satisfied that our procedures are highly capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the trustees of *brainstrust*

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under Section 154 of that Act and under 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 charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor
Eligible to act as an auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006
Pyle House
136/137 Pyle Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1JW

Date: **18 October 2021**

Note:
The maintenance and integrity of the Brainstrust website is the responsibility of the trustees; the work carried out by the auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, the auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

brainstrust – Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	**2021 Total funds £**	2020 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	**509,004**	**–**	**509,004**	341,589
Other trading activities	3	**119,731**	**45,219**	**164,950**	265,012
Investment income	4	**40**	**–**	**40**	154
Other income		**67,096**	**–**	**67,096**	–
Total		**695,871**	**45,219**	**741,090**	606,755
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	5	**38,708**	**(1)**	**38,707**	65,945
Charitable activities	6				
Charity activities		**467,739**	**4,356**	**472,095**	557,645
Other		**469**	**–**	**469**	–
Total		**506,916**	**4,355**	**511,271**	623,590
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		**188,955**	**40,864**	**229,819**	(16,835)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		**78,782**	**106,873**	**185,655**	202,490
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		**267,737**	**147,737**	**415,474**	185,655

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Balance sheet 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	**2021 Total funds £**	2020 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	**2,030**	**–**	**2,030**	4,059
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	**25,388**	**–**	**25,388**	27,456
Cash at bank		**317,447**	**147,737**	**465,184**	174,231
		342,835	**147,737**	**490,572**	201,687
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	**(35,461)**	**–**	**(35,461)**	(20,091)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		**307,374**	**147,737**	**455,111**	181,596
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		**309,404**	**147,737**	**457,141**	185,655
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	14	**(41,667)**	**–**	**(41,667)**	–
NET ASSETS		**267,737**	**147,737**	**415,474**	185,655
FUNDS	17				
Unrestricted funds				**267,737**	78,782
Restricted funds				**147,737**	106,873
TOTAL FUNDS				**415,474**	185,655

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on **28 July 2021** and were signed on its behalf by:

C Baker – Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	**241,382**	(34,603)
Interest paid		**(469)**	–
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		**240,913**	(34,603)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest received		**40**	154
Net cash provided by investing activities		**40**	154
Cash flows from financing activities			
New loans in year		**50,000**	–
Net cash provided by financing activities		**50,000**	–
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		**290,953**	(34,449)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		**174,231**	208,680
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		**465,184**	174,231

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	**229,819**	(16,835)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	**2,029**	2,029
Interest received	**(40)**	(154)
Interest paid	**469**	–
Decrease in debtors	**2,068**	14,825
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	**7,037**	(34,468)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operations	**241,382**	(34,603)

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.20 £	Cash flow £	**At 31.3.21 £**
Net cash			
Cash at bank	**174,231**	**290,953**	**465,184**
	174,231	**290,953**	**465,184**
Debt			
Debts falling due within 1 year	**–**	**(8,333)**	**(8,333)**
Debts falling due after 1 year	**–**	**(41,667)**	**(41,667)**
	–	**(50,000)**	**(50,000)**
Total	**174,231**	**240,953**	**415,184**

The notes form part of these financial statements

brainstrust – Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, 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 financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grant income is recognised when received. In the event that a grant is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Legacy gifts are recognised on a case by case basis following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor for the estate has communicated in writing both the amount and settlement date. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title to the asset having been transferred to the charity.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings	-25% on cost

continued...

1. Accounting policies – continued

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. Donations and legacies

	2021 £	2020 £
Donations	**72,702**	36,802
Grants from awarding entities	**358,669**	223,452
Corporate grants and donations	**42,196**	50,733
Gift aid tax recovered	**33,437**	30,602
Legacies	**2,000**	–
	509,004	341,589

3. Other trading activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Fundraising events	**46,241**	79,088
Sale of 'brainstrust' items	**11,013**	8,063
Sponsored activities	**62,477**	134,903
Schools and colleges	**–**	3,188
Activities of partner groups	**45,219**	39,770
	164,950	265,012

continued...

4. Investment income

	2021 £	2020 £
Deposit account interest	**40**	154

5. Raising funds

Raising donations and legacies

	2021 £	2020 £
Fundraising fees	**6,933**	6,245
Promotional expenses	**19,311**	25,903
	26,244	32,148

Other trading activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Trading costs and purchases	**8,093**	4,280
Event costs	**2,073**	13,185
Sponsored activities costs	**2,297**	16,332
	12,463	33,797
Aggregate amounts	**38,707**	65,945

continued...

6. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Charity activities			
	459,526	12,569	472,095

7. Support costs

	Governance costs £
Other resources expended	**469**
Charity activities	
	12,569
	13,038

8. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

continued...

9. Staff costs

Total gross salaries, benefits in kind and employers national insurance costs for the year ending 31st March 2021 were £370,904 (2020 – £405,958).

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
Fundraising	**3**	3
Charitable Activities	**8**	8
Governance	**1**	1
Other	**1**	1
	13	13

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

10. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	304,607	36,982	341,589
Other trading activities	225,242	39,770	265,012
Investment income	154	–	154
Total	530,003	76,752	606,755
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	64,773	1,172	65,945
Charitable activities			
Charity activities	518,977	38,668	557,645
Total	583,750	39,840	623,590
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(53,747)	36,912	(16,835)
Transfers between funds	23,894	(23,894)	–

continued...

10. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities – continued

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Net movement in funds	(29,853)	13,018	(16,835)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	108,635	93,855	202,490
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	78,782	106,873	185,655

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £	Website £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021	**1,494**	**8,118**	**9,612**
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2020	**1,494**	**4,059**	**5,553**
Charge for year	**–**	**2,029**	**2,029**
At 31 March 2021	**1,494**	**6,088**	**7,582**
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2021	**–**	**2,030**	**2,030**
At 31 March 2020	–	4,059	4,059

continued...

12. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	**1,078**	500
Other debtors	**6,176**	1,800
Prepayments	**18,134**	25,156
	25,388	27,456

13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	**12,741**	6,532
Other creditors	**22,720**	13,559
	35,461	20,091

14. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Other creditors	**41,667**	–

15. Loans

An analysis of the maturity of loans is given below:

	2021 £	2020 £
Amounts falling due within one year on demand:		
Other loans	**8,333**	–
Amounts falling due between two and five years:		
Other loans – 1–5 years	**33,333**	–
Amounts falling due in more than five years:		
Repayable by instalments:		
Other loans more 5yrs instal	**8,334**	–

continued...

16. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Within one year	**24,081**	24,081
Between one and five years	**13,990**	37,972
	38,071	62,053

17. Movement in funds

	At 1.4.20 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.21 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	**78,782**	**188,955**	**267,737**
Restricted funds			
Fund A	**677**	**–**	**677**
Fund E	**75,180**	**1,715**	**76,895**
Fund H	**31,016**	**(985)**	**30,031**
Fund I	**–**	**40,134**	**40,134**
	106,873	**40,864**	**147,737**
TOTAL FUNDS	**185,655**	**229,819**	**415,474**

continued...

17. Movement in funds – continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	**695,871**	**(506,916)**	**188,955**
Restricted funds			
Fund E	**5,070**	**(3,355)**	**1,715**
Fund H	**15**	**(1,000)**	**(985)**
Fund I	**40,134**	**–**	**40,134**
	45,219	**(4,355)**	**40,864**
TOTAL FUNDS	**741,090**	**(511,271)**	**229,819**

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.19 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.20 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	108,635	(53,747)	23,894	78,782
Restricted funds				
Big Lottery Fund Grant	1,283	(1,283)	–	–
Fund A	16,313	2,815	(18,451)	677
Fund B	4,575	2	(4,577)	–
Fund C	721	–	(721)	–
Fund D	4	–	(4)	–
Fund E	70,818	4,362	–	75,180
Fund F	140	–	(140)	–
Fund G	1	–	(1)	–
Fund H	–	31,016	–	31,016
	93,855	36,912	(23,894)	106,873
TOTAL FUNDS	202,490	(16,835)	–	185,655

continued...

17. Movement in funds – continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	530,003	(583,750)	(53,747)
Restricted funds			
Big Lottery Fund Grant	36,982	(38,265)	(1,283)
Fund A	2,815	–	2,815
Fund B	1	1	2
Fund C	1	(1)	–
Fund E	5,937	(1,575)	4,362
Fund H	31,016	–	31,016
	76,752	(39,840)	36,912
TOTAL FUNDS	606,755	(623,590)	(16,835)

continued...

17. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.19 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.21 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	108,635	135,208	23,894	267,737
Restricted funds				
Big Lottery Fund Grant	1,283	(1,283)	–	–
Fund A	16,313	2,815	(18,451)	677
Fund B	4,575	2	(4,577)	–
Fund C	721	–	(721)	–
Fund D	4	–	(4)	–
Fund E	70,818	6,077	–	76,895
Fund F	140	–	(140)	–
Fund G	1	–	(1)	–
Fund H	–	30,031	–	30,031
Fund I	–	40,134	–	40,134
	93,855	77,776	(23,894)	147,737
TOTAL FUNDS	202,490	212,984	–	415,474

continued...

17. Movement in funds – continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,225,874	(1,090,666)	135,208
Restricted funds			
Big Lottery Fund Grant	36,982	(38,265)	(1,283)
Fund A	2,815	–	2,815
Fund B	1	1	2
Fund C	1	(1)	–
Fund E	11,007	(4,930)	6,077
Fund H	31,031	(1,000)	30,031
Fund I	40,134	–	40,134
	121,971	(44,195)	77,776
TOTAL FUNDS	1,347,845	(1,134,861)	212,984

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF FUNDS

General Fund

The 'free reserves' after allowing for all restricted funds.

Restricted Funds

Big Lottery Fund Grant

This fund has been set up for the project of high impact coaching for the brain tumour community. The grant awarded by the Big Lottery Fund will support volunteers, employees, recruitment, running expenses, training, travel, equipment, consultancy and overheads.

Other Restricted Funds

All other restricted funds have been created through fundraising or donations for the benefit of individual brain tumour patients. The charity uses the funds for direct treatment or to support research relating to the patients needs.

continued...

18. Related party disclosures

During the year the charity purchased services from Fitton Holman Creative Limited totalling £15,795 (2020 – £11,745). The company is directed by one of the co-founder's sister, Catherine Fitton.

During the year the charity paid the co-founders and management employees of *brainstrust*, Peter and Helen Bulbeck, £4,400 (2020 – £4,960) for administrative use of their property.

The co-founder's daughter, Leonora Bulbeck, supplied editorial services during the year to the charity totalling £980 (2020 – £2,310) at a commercial rate.

19. Post balance sheet events

Since the Balance Sheet date, there continues to be global uncertainty regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The charity have continued to minimise the impact of this, taking measures to gain financial support through government means, maximising charity activity income and reducing costs where possible. The charity's positive financial result in the year ended 31st March 2021 and the forecast/results since this date indicate that the charity is in a good position to address these challenges going forward.

brainstrust – Detailed statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	**72,702**	36,802
Grants from awarding entities	**358,669**	223,452
Corporate grants and donations	**42,196**	50,733
Gift aid tax recovered	**33,437**	30,602
Legacies	**2,000**	–
	509,004	341,589
Other trading activities		
Fundraising events	**46,241**	79,088
Sale of '*brainstrust*' items	**11,013**	8,063
Sponsored activities	**62,477**	134,903
Schools and colleges	**–**	3,188
Activities of partner groups	**45,219**	39,770
	164,950	265,012
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	**40**	154
Other income		
Gov grants – Furlough claimed	**66,627**	–
Gov grants – COVID support	**469**	–
	67,096	–
Total incoming resources	**741,090**	606,755
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Fundraising fees	**6,933**	6,245
Promotional expenses	**19,311**	25,903
	26,244	32,148

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

brainstrust – Detailed statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Raising donations and legacies		
Other trading activities		
Trading costs and purchases	**8,093**	4,280
Event costs	**2,073**	13,185
Sponsored activities costs	**2,297**	16,332
	12,463	33,797
Charitable activities		
Medical grants and costs	**600**	3,645
Patient support and staffing	**269,348**	300,614
Salaries	**135,244**	153,208
Travel	**(238)**	30,092
Administration	**24,537**	26,401
Office rent & rates	**28,006**	30,325
Depn of website	**2,029**	2,029
	459,526	546,314
Support costs		
Governance costs		
Auditors' remuneration	**3,198**	2,960
Insurance	**1,970**	1,895
Other	**7,401**	6,476
Bank loan interest	**469**	–
	13,038	11,331
Total resources expended	**511,271**	623,590
Net income/(expenditure)	**229,819**	(16,835)

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Reference and administrative details

Helping you

Talk to our team 24/7 on 01983 292 405,
or email hello@brainstrust.org.uk.

Helping us

Make a donation at
www.brainstrust.org.uk/donate,
or call us on 01983 292 405
during office hours.

Registration

brainstrust is a registered charitable trust.
Registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as Charity No. 1114634.
Registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as Charity No. SC044642.

Registered address

brainstrust
4 Yvery Court
Castle Road
Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO31 7QG

www.brainstrust.org.uk
www.braintumourhub.org.uk

Regional office (North of England)
brainstrust
C19–21 Joseph's Well
Hannover Lane
Westgate
Leeds
LS3 1AB

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Signature:

Full name: **Chris Baker**
Position: **Chair of Board of Trustees**
Date: **28 July 2021**

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Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

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