

# Impact Report



2023 / 24



**Thank you for your  
support in 23/24.  
CEO & Chair  
of Trustees**



***Joanne Parr***

Chief Executive Officer



***Elaine McDonald***

Chair of Trustees

**I am pleased to report that the year has been one of stability and consolidation for the team at MSDP. After finalising the charity's latest Business Strategy and Plan, the Board has focused on governance, ensuring the charity is well managed and is able to provide quality and safe services for those communities that turn to us for support.**

In January we concluded a small restructure of services which facilitated the expansion of our frontline Advice and Support Service which leads on our drop in and appointment duty sessions.

We have seen growth in our Community Support Service and of Deaf people accessing our duty sessions. Financially, our careful management and investment of charitable resources has stood us in good stead amidst continuing challenges and competition for funds that our sector face.

Staff development has also been a priority for the year, with a number of staff currently undertaking funded apprenticeships in leadership and finance. I would like to extend my thanks to Liverpool Football Club and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for their support in

accessing the Apprenticeship Transfer Levy.

In April we conducted a staff wellbeing survey, and Trustees were delighted to see high levels of satisfaction amongst the team.

From our collaborative work with NHS Trusts on improving equality of access to our frontline staff empowering clients to achieve and enjoy the ordinary and extraordinary things in life, we are here to serve you.

Once again, I'd like to thank our Deaf and hard of hearing community and social groups across Liverpool and Wirral for their continued trust and support.

Finally, we would not be able to deliver services to make the impact that we do, without the skill and dedication of its staff, volunteers, external consultants and without the support of individuals and organisations that made donations and funded our work. From everyone at MSDP - thank you.

**Elaine McDonald**  
Chair of Trustees

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# Our **impact** in 2023/24



We provided **11,369 hours** of community support.

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Our **Advice & Support Service** undertook **1,456 sessions** of support to Deaf and Deaf-blind clients.

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We facilitated **762 BSL Interpreter bookings**.

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**981 delegates** attended a **Deaf Awareness** or introduction to **BSL session**. Some notable organisations that we trained:

**Liverpool Football Club**

**Hollyoaks cast & crew**

**The Beatles Story Museum**

**HMP Liverpool**

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**55 students** undertook one of our **BSL courses** in the financial year.

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Rehabilitation Officers completed **1,097 home visits** to assess, fit and repair environmental aids and equipment.

# Impact of our Support Service





**We provide support across Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral, not only to helping our clients with everyday tasks but also helping them to feel part of their local communities.**

Our Support Workers are skilled in a range of communication methods – including British Sign Language, Sign Supported English and Deaf-Blind tactile communication – and tailor their approach to meet each client's unique needs.

Our support goes beyond routine errands. We work closely with individuals to uncover opportunities that spark their interests and boost their confidence, whether that be joining a local arts group, attending community events or exploring new leisure activities.

For example, our team recently assisted a Deaf young lady who longed to socialise. Recognising her desire for connection, we identified a community-based social disco that perfectly suited her interests. Today, she enters the venue singing and dancing on stage with her peers, forging new, lasting friendships. Her goal for 2025 is to travel to new places, and we are proud to support her in making that dream a reality.

This year we also helped a Deaf-

Blind client realise his ambition to try rock climbing. MSDP staff successfully implemented a risk management plan and worked with a rock climbing venue to enable the client to join the group, which he now participates in weekly.

We also supported a client with complex needs to visit a lifelong friend in Newcastle. With support from our team, hours were moved around to enable the client to travel with his Support Worker. His goal in 2025 is to travel around the UK more. Finally, we identified that an elderly Deaf female, placed in a mainstream care home, was in cognitive decline due to a lack of access to her first language - BSL. MSDP consistently advocated for better access to ensure the client remains connected to her language and culture. After a review meeting with Adult Social Care, support hours were agreed and the client is much happier.

Often our clients don't want to take part in specific activities, but just want to be around people they can easily communicate with. Our Support Workers are here to empower and support them, however they want to engage. Our holistic model reduces isolation and creates a sense of belonging, reinforcing our mission to build a stronger, more inclusive community in Merseyside.



# Improving patient experience in Liverpool





**MSDP work with organisations across Merseyside to ensure voices of the Deaf community are heard. Mark McKenna, Head of Patient and Family Experience at NHS University Hospitals of Liverpool Group, tells us what it means to partner with MSDP.**

At NHS University of Hospitals of Liverpool Group, we want to provide the best possible experience to patients and families who use our services. To do this, it is essential that we capture feedback from people in all our communities so that we can share good practice and also learn what we can do better.

MSDP have been invaluable in helping us to understand the experiences of people from the deaf community in Merseyside and beyond. Working in partnership with MSDP, we have learned about some of the problems that people in the deaf community have had when attending our hospitals and also some of the barriers they have in contacting us and providing feedback.

Janice Connolly, Community Engagement Manager, has been working in partnership with our Patient Experience and Engagement Team to help us find ways to make it easier for people in the deaf community to provide feedback.

We will always treat any complaint we receive seriously, but we also want to find different ways for people to share feedback with us to help us improve and to also share praise with our staff when they have had a good experience.

Together with MSDP, we have co-produced a patient experience survey designed specifically for patients whose first language is BSL. This innovative survey contains videos explaining each question in BSL so that we gain valuable feedback on experience from the deaf community in a way that suits them. Over the next year, we will develop and use further surveys using this approach.

We are excited to build on this success and work together with MSDP to explore further ways in which we can capture feedback from the deaf community and use this within our hospitals to improve the care and experience of people who are deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing.

If you are deaf or Hard of Hearing, or know someone who is, then please let us know about your experiences of attending hospital in Liverpool by filling in the patient experience survey:

[www.shorturl.at/Pyn1l](http://www.shorturl.at/Pyn1l)



## Supporting the BDA's 'BSL in Our Hands' campaign

I support  
**BSL**  
for **every**  
child



**In 2024 the British Deaf Association (BDA) launched it's pioneering early years campaign, 'BSL In Our Hands', as part of Sign Language Week.**

This initiative is a bold call to action, calling for every Deaf child in the UK to be given immediate access to British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL) from birth. With 90% of Deaf children born to hearing parents, the campaign challenges the outdated belief that families must choose between spoken English and sign language. Instead, it champions a bilingual-bimodal approach that enriches cognitive development, emotional well-being and lifelong cultural identity.

BDA's campaign aligns with our 3-year plan to support all relevant families in our local area to have

access to some level of BSL, so MSDP have wholeheartedly joined the campaign.

Our CEO Joanne Parr travelled to Westminster to join the campaign launch, and meet with BDA CEO Rebecca Mansell (pictured overleaf). It was a very successful day and brought the two charities even closer together in their mission to support access to sign language.

Our Community Engagement Manager Janice Connolly has become a member of the BDA Alliance and her role is to feed in the views of Deaf people in our region

You can find out more about the BDA's BSL in Our Hands campaign on their website:  
[www.bda.org.uk/bsl-in-our-hands](http://www.bda.org.uk/bsl-in-our-hands)



# Making MSDP Digital

**This year MSDP has embarked on a comprehensive digital transformation, designed to modernise operations and enhance service delivery.**

By investing in robust digital infrastructure—including a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform and an internal Learning Management System (LMS)—we have significantly expanded our capacity to train both staff and volunteers internally.

This modernisation not only streamlines our administrative processes but also ensures that our team has immediate access to up-to-date training materials, enabling continuous professional development regardless of whether they are working from the office or remotely.

## **Care Planner rota system**

The rollout of the Care Planner rota system represents another key milestone in our digital journey. This system provides all staff with real-time visibility of their shifts, ensuring that every Support Worker can confidently access their fixed schedule. This clarity in

shift allocation has been instrumental in managing our services more efficiently, reducing administrative burdens and allowing us to focus on delivering consistent, high-quality support to our service users.

As part of this digital overhaul, all key documents have been reviewed and transferred into the Care Planner system, creating a centralised, secure repository that enhances organisational transparency and compliance.

## **VOLA Consortium grant**

We have also been enhancing the digital offering for our community members. In Summer 2024 we were grateful to the VOLA Consortium for a grant towards upgrading IT equipment in our computer room at Queen's Drive and to cover costs of enhancing our WIFI capability to enable community access. We have been working with a Deaf IT enthusiast who has delivered sessions on basic IT.

We are committed to embracing this new, innovative technology. By harnessing these digital tools, we are better equipped to respond to the needs of our community, optimise our internal operations, and ultimately deliver an even higher standard of support.



## A closer look at our new CRM...

Our Advice & Support Service Manager, Mark Hart, shares his views on how the new CRM has impacted his workflow.

### How has the new CRM helped you with clients day-to-day?

The new CRM has greatly helped the team, as we can now easily follow up on clients' duty history and appointments. Previously, we relied on limited paper-based information, which made tracking more difficult.

### Can you share a time when the CRM made a difficult task easier?

The CRM has saved us a lot of time by eliminating the need to manually write referral forms for every appointment. It also allows us to refer clients to different MSDP departments within the system, making it easier to keep track of referrals and appointments.

### What is your favourite thing about the CRM? What could be improved?

My favourite part of the CRM is that it helps me keep track of when my next appointment is due and has significantly sped up processes. One improvement could be adding automated reminders for upcoming tasks to enhance efficiency further.

### Has the CRM improved team communication? How?

Yes, the duty team can access clients' appointment details, history, and personal information when needed. This is especially helpful if a client cannot remember their National Insurance number, National Health Insurance details, or other important contact information. Overall, the CRM has made our work much easier and more efficient.



# Launching our new Deaf Awareness e-learning

**In 2024 we were lucky enough to receive funding from CAF and the Lottery Community Fund. One of the projects we invested in was the development of our first Deaf Awareness e-learning package, which aims to increase the number of frontline professionals with awareness of the barriers people with hearing loss face when accessing healthcare and in other customer-facing environments.**

Developed by Deaf professionals at MSDP and Julie Ryder at Hear First, our online modules build on MSDP's 160 years of experience supporting the Deaf community in Merseyside.

The e-learning offers two options: a general Deaf awareness course and a tailored module for health and social care staff. Through engaging content— graphics, videos, and interviews with people from the Deaf community— the

modules provide practical strategies that can be easily applied to improve communication and service delivery.

Profit from the e-learning modules will support MSDP's mission, including expanding services for Deaf children and their families in Merseyside. We fully launched the e-learning in September 2024 and will be marketing it to our network in Merseyside and more widely this year.

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*Our communities told us that access to health services was their number one priority, so we designed a general deaf awareness as well as a health specific service.*

**Ian Cockburn,**  
Training Project Lead



## Details of the 2 modules



**1**

### **Deaf Awareness for everyone**

This module is designed for all types of organisations, offering an introduction to Deaf awareness, the challenges faced by individuals with hearing loss, and practical steps to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

**2**

### **Deaf awareness for the health & social care sector**

This module was designed for professionals in the health and social care sector. It includes everything from the first module, plus a section tailored specifically to making healthcare and social settings more accessible and welcoming for patients and clients with hearing loss.

You can find out more on our new  
Deaf Awareness website:  
[deafaware.msdp.org.uk](https://deafaware.msdp.org.uk)



**Interview with one  
of our tutors:**

*Jennifer Sealey*



We welcomed Apprentice Tutor Jennifer Sealey to the team in November 2023 and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her on achieving her **Level 3 teaching qualification**.

Jennifer is Deaf and prior to joining MSDP she worked for SignHealth as an Outreach Worker in Manchester, supporting deaf clients with various different additional needs. Since joining MSDP she has been involved in delivering our Deaf Awareness and British Sign Language courses.

### How have you found working at MSDP so far?

I have learnt a lot since working at MSDP, especially from my line manager Ian. I have completed a teacher training course and a BSL linguistics course which has enabled me to understand how to deliver BSL training, develop training materials and work with a diverse range of students.

### Why did you decide you wanted to teach?

I have had aspirations to become a teacher for some time now. I think the key to improving access for deaf people in mainstream society is down to raising awareness and training in BSL.

### What is your favourite thing about teaching BSL?

I enjoy seeing my students progress, and I enjoy seeing their communication skills improve week by week. I like to see them pass their assessments and the joy, confidence and positivity this brings to them.

### What advice would you give to someone considering learning BSL?

I always recommend that students undertake a deaf awareness course and complete a basic introduction to BSL course before starting a level 1 course. This gives students the basic skills and understanding of how to communicate with deaf people, before they advance further.

### What are your plans at work over the next year?

Over the next year I will be concentrating on achieving my NVQ level 6 BSL and Signature Assessment Training.



## Our work with University of Liverpool

**Our working partnership with University of Liverpool continues, with a new cohort of Medical Students attending Deaf Awareness Training to improve their communication skills commencing in September 2024.**

### **Background to the partnership**

It's a partnership that began over 20 years ago. The original workshops were set up and jointly delivered by Dr Maggie Hammond, one of our School of Medicine Communication for Clinical Practice lecturers working with Linda Doddridge from MSDP. Over the past years, the workshops have been firmly integrated in the curriculum and timetable to enable smaller groups of students and more interactive practice. Facilitation of the session is now entirely provided by expert MSDP trainers.

## **Addressing the communication challenges that Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients face in medical settings.**

Session activities are designed to raise awareness of the barriers encountered by Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients and the skills and services that can help overcome these barriers in practice.

Students have the opportunity to practice role-plays with and without the support of BSL interpreters and to reflect on communication practice when communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients, including an awareness of their own limitations and the importance of interpreters.

## **Delivering tangible results**

Pre-and post-session questionnaires show that students' self-rated confidence in their communication skills increases


after the workshop.

Here's what some of our recent students have had to say about the sessions:

"I feel as though I have learned some really useful tools to help me to communicate better."

"I still do not feel confident to take a detailed history and/or explain medical information to a D/deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing person. However, I am now more aware of services and help that may be available for both parties during a consultation."

"It was really useful to have the workshop delivered by facilitators who are deaf so that we would be able to hear their story and understand things from their perspective. Who else understands better what it is like?"



*Despite improvements, Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the UK continue to experience multiple barriers when accessing healthcare. We hope with our workshop, which is attended by all our graduates from Liverpool School of Medicine, to improve equity of access and healthcare experience for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the UK.*

**Isobel Jenkins**  
Liverpool University





# Community Events





In 2023/24 we hosted a wide range of events that brought our community together, provided valuable information, and supported the well-being of Deaf people. In addition to our regular clubs we arranged a variety of educational talks, craft sessions, fundraising events, social gatherings and day trips. Here are some of the highlights:

Save Energy at home – Healthy Homes Project from LCC

Dog training

Deaf CAMHS – ADHD & Autism

Visit to World of Glass in St Helens

Carbon monoxide – Royal Association of Deaf People

Christmas children's party

Halloween children's party

Chess lessons

Bowel Cancer UK

SignLive – explanation of their directory

Visit to the police stables

Christmas Fayre

Titanic Museum Trip

Mersey tunnel visit

Visit to Bootle Fire Station Museum

Fraud talk - Merseyside Police

Knife crime talk - Danny's Place charity

PIP - green paper explanation

Visit to Merseyside Police Headquarters

Easter children's party

Depression / bereavement – SignHealth

Cyber crime unit – Merseyside Police

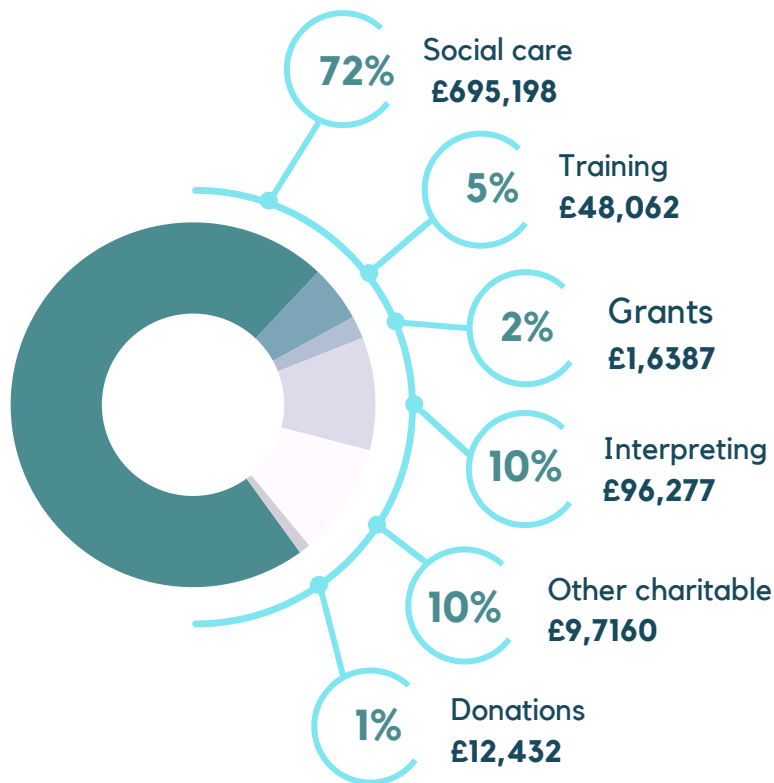
Diabetes dietician

MacMillian Coffee Morning

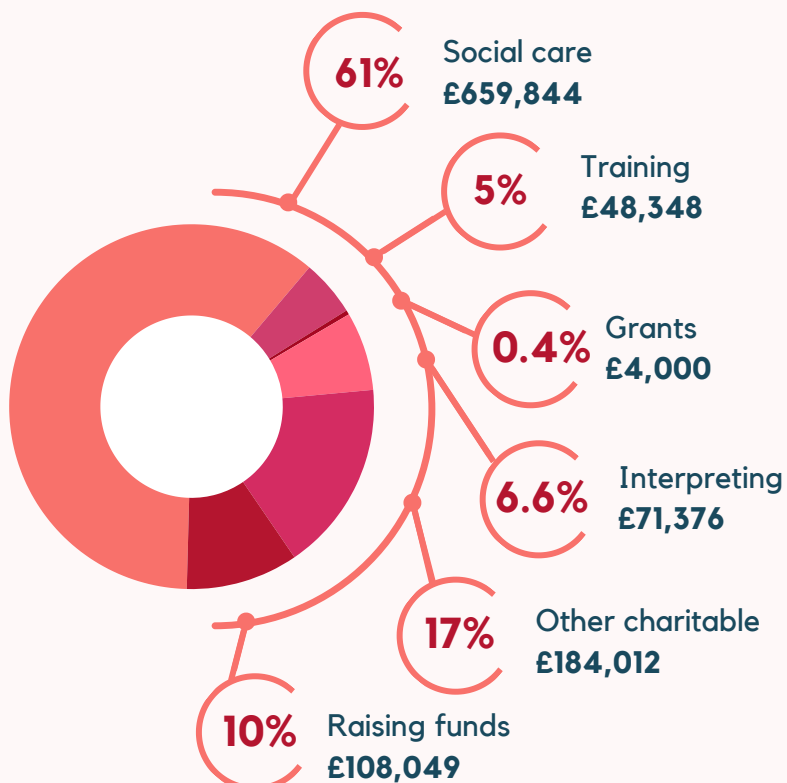
Wirral Healthwatch visit



# Finances



## Money received



## Money spent



# Partnerships



A huge thank you to our partners and peers for their support and collaboration over the past year. We're stronger together, and we look forward to building on our success in the years to come!

## Our main partners are:



Deaf Chief Officers Group



## We are contracted under



# Future plans



MSDP is aware of the skills shortage nationally of Deaf tutors and of registered Deaf-Blind Interpreters. We will be working locally and nationally with partners, including Signature, to establish collaborations to **support the development of our training programmes and our training team.**

In response to feedback from our communities, MSDP is committed to developing **new services for families of Deaf children and Deaf parents.** We will be proactively seeking funding over the next year to deliver projects which support local families and explores opportunities to learn sign language.

We will **continue to support the most vulnerable people across our region.** Staff have reported an increase in the numbers of vulnerable adults seeking support for very complex issues requiring multi-agency response.

Additionally, as our frontline staff are Deaf and have multi-modal communication methods including International Sign Language we have experienced an increase in **Deaf asylum seekers, refugees and migrants** seeking support through our Duty service.

As part of our fundraising plan, the team is looking to secure funds to **further expand on our offer to these client groups.**