



Impact Report

2024 / 25

msdp
MERSEYSIDE SOCIETY for
DEAF PEOPLE

With thanks for your support in 2024-25



Joanne Parr

Chief Executive Officer



Elaine McDonald

Chair of Trustees

Welcome to the 2024-2025 MSDP impact report!

It gives me great pleasure to present this year's annual report and to reflect on the impact our teams and volunteers have had on improving lives, reducing isolation and connecting our communities.

The Board is acutely aware of the social isolation people with hearing loss experience and the impact on mental health; and once again our frontline teams and social clubs have facilitated a wide range of accessible activities and experiences from family events and coffee mornings to IT training and Deaf football fans enjoying tours and events.

One of our proudest achievements of 2025 was the realisation of the CEO and Board's ambition to reintroduce a service offer for families of deaf children in Merseyside. We were grateful for seed funding from Forrester Family Trust that enabled us to pilot a family development offer. Over the course of the year 30 families engaged with our new service offer and the Board are continuing to support the project whilst we look to secure further funding.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the ladies of

the Inner Wheel District 18 and Soroptimists International Liverpool for choosing MSDP as their 'charity of the year'. Their fundraising efforts and support in raising deaf awareness are valued and appreciated.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to challenging structural barriers, strengthening partnerships with Deaf-led and wider sector organisations, and ensuring that we continue to create a more inclusive, accessible future for people with hearing loss and their families across our region and beyond. I would 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 our staff, volunteers, external consultants and without the support of individuals and organisations who fund our work. From our collaborative work with NHS Trusts on improving access to our frontline staff empowering clients to achieve and enjoy the ordinary and extraordinary things in life, we are here for you.

Elaine McDonald
Chair of Trustees

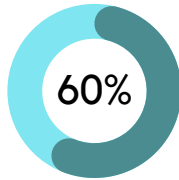
Contents



- 5** Our impact in 2024/25
- 6** In Safe Hands: Supporting Deaf Families with Online Safety NSPCC Project
- 8** Liverpool Football Club Partnership
- 10** Attending the British Deaf Association Conference
- 12** Building Futures in Deaf Studies: Student Placements at MSDP
- 14** Launching our New Children and Families Service
- 16** Staff Profile: Marc Boland
- 18** Deaf Awareness E-Learning
- 20** Free IT Course
- 21** Inner Wheel's Charity of the Year
- 22** Community Events
- 24** Finance
- 25** Partnerships
- 26** Future plans

Our **impact** in 2024/25

Percentage of workforce who are d/Deaf



60%



Interpreter bookings

666

Hours of community support delivered



11,831



Environmental Aids home visits

1,254



an increase of 14% on last year



Presentation & events delivered

55



Deaf people attended digital skills training

55



Students registered on accredited BSL courses

74



Volunteers

13



Deaf Awareness & Intro to BSL sessions provided

616

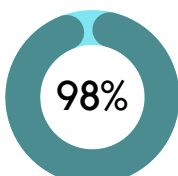


Families supported

30

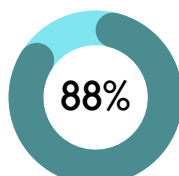
Student Survey Feedback

Materials = easy to understand



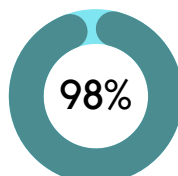
98%

Content = highly relevant



88%

Tutors = excellent'



98%



Duty sessions delivered

1,947



an increase of 34% on last year

In Safe Hands: Supporting Deaf Families with Online Safety NSPCC project

Over the past year, MSDP has played a leading role in a community-led campaign to improve online safety for Deaf children and their families.

Working with the NSPCC (National Deaf Children's Society), Knotty Ash Primary School and the Deafness Resource Centre, the In Safe Hands campaign aimed to create accessible, culturally relevant online safety resources for the d/Deaf community in Merseyside.

You can read the full report from the project and the resources we created on our website: msdp.org.uk/blog/2025/05/22/nsppc-joint-project



The project began in September 2023, when the NSPCC's Local Campaigns team delivered online safety workshops for parents and carers at MSDP. With BSL interpretation, the sessions highlighted the lack of tailored, accessible guidance for Deaf families. This led to the formation of a steering group bringing together Deaf-led and Deaf-aware organisations with lived experience and specialist knowledge.

Over the following year, the group worked with parents, carers and young people to understand the barriers Deaf families face online - including communication challenges, limited access to advice and difficulties navigating risks on gaming and social media platforms. Their input ensured all resources were accurate, accessible in BSL and grounded in real lived experience.

Three main resources were created. The first was a series of six BSL Online Safety Webinars for parents and carers, developed with WealdBSL. The group adapted the NSPCC's content to better reflect Deaf users' experiences - for example, changing "talk to your child" to "communicate with your child." Each 4-9 minute module covers topics such as bullying, grooming, gaming, parental controls and where to seek further advice, all supported by BSL interpretation and captions.

The second resource was the youth-led Signing Sparks video, facilitated by NK Theatre Arts. Eight Deaf young people took part in workshops to decide which themes mattered most to them. Their final film raises awareness of social media safety; it includes interactive questions and ensures young Deaf voices lead the discussion.

The third output was two BSL SignVideo clips promoting access to the NSPCC and Childline helplines, showing how Deaf young people and families can get confidential support.

The campaign launched in December 2024 at Knotty Ash Primary School, followed by an online event for professionals, widening awareness across education and safeguarding networks. Although regionally focused, the resources have national relevance.

Through In Safe Hands, MSDP has strengthened partnerships, amplified Deaf voices and ensured online safety guidance is accessible, culturally appropriate and empowering for Deaf children and families.



Our partnership with Liverpool Football Club

This year, MSDP strengthened its relationship with Liverpool Football Club through several events with our Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. The first event took place in March 2024, when LFC donated tickets for MSDP members to attend the Legends match at Anfield.

An initial offer of 20 tickets increased to 45 due to high interest, reflecting how meaningful shared events like football can be. For many, it was their first time experiencing a live match in the stadium and signing You'll Never Walk Alone together was a memorable experience. In May, the partnership continued with a behind-the-scenes tour of



Anfield. Participants visited key areas of the stadium - including the dressing rooms, pitchside tunnel and trophy displays - and took part in a Q&A session with former LFC player David Fairclough.

BSL interpreters were present throughout, and club staff were noted for their clear communication and supportive approach. Feedback described the day as enjoyable, informative and, for some, quite emotional.

.....

One attendee said that visiting Anfield had been a long-held ambition and that the accessible setup made the experience even more meaningful. Others highlighted the value of spending time together as a family and the inspiration it gave to younger fans.

.....

Beyond the enjoyment of the events themselves, they also demonstrated practical steps that can make large venues more accessible. Interpreter support, staff awareness and small adjustments all contributed to a smoother and more comfortable experience for attendees.

MSDP has collaborated with Liverpool FC before through initiatives such as the Red Caravan and Q&A sessions featuring players like John Barnes and Peter Beardsley. The 2025 activities, however, represented a more sustained effort to build accessibility



into the planning from the outset. Attendees also shared ideas for future improvements, including adding signed content to stadium screens during musical moments - a suggestion that reflects the community's interest in shaping inclusive sport. MSDP looks forward to continuing its work with Liverpool FC to ensure Deaf fans have more opportunities to take part in events that matter to them.



The British Deaf Association (BDA) Conference

In July 2025, four MSDP staff attended the British Deaf Association's (BDA) BSL Conference in Leeds. The event brought together Deaf educators, campaigners, interpreters, families, and organisations to celebrate BSL and consider its future.

Marking 135 years of the BDA, this year's theme focused on Deaf culture, identity, and Deaf leadership. The conference included speeches, panel discussions, and community-led workshops, creating space for both celebration and reflection about the challenges facing Deaf communities.

Janice (Community Engagement



Manager) and Ian (Education and Training Manager) had attended before, while Charley (Advice and Support Officer) and Marc (Support Service Manager) were attending for the first time. All described it as engaging, emotional and insightful. A key theme was Deaf-led leadership, with many Deaf CEOs, managers and educators highlighting the importance of representation and providing strong role models for future generations.

Janice came away motivated to support others into leadership. She plans to share opportunities from the BDA's Advisory Board and launch a monthly BSL Sign Club in Liverpool in September. She also reflected on the importance of creating informal spaces where learners and fluent signers can come together, helping to strengthen confidence, fluency, and community connections beyond formal education settings.

Charley was struck by the importance of early bilingual education and the long-term impact of language deprivation. Stories from Deaf adults denied access to their language highlighted the need for young people to see role models in education, healthcare, and leadership. This reinforced MSDP's focus on keeping language access central to our work with families and young people.

Technology was also discussed, particularly AI and automatic signing tools. Attendees raised concerns about accuracy, authenticity, and design. Janice noted that many tools feel "robotic" and are designed by hearing people rather than with Deaf users, highlighting the need for Deaf voices in future development.

Marc reflected on the closure of many Deaf clubs and social spaces, noting gaps in cultural continuity and social connection. He stressed the importance of accessible, Deaf-led spaces to keep younger generations engaged and maintain a sense of community and identity.

Overall, the conference provided ideas and inspiration. We are already taking forward initiatives to ensure Deaf perspectives remain central to our services, community spaces, and technology development. The conference strengthened our commitment to championing Deaf leadership locally while contributing to the wider national movement for equality, access, and cultural pride.



Building Futures in Deaf Studies: Student Placements at MSDP

.....

For students studying BSL and Deaf Studies, real-world experience is an important part of education. To support students' development, for the last few years MSDP has hosted students from Heriot-Watt University and medical students from local universities .

The programme began to support Deaf awareness and BSL education in the wider community, but has developed into a partnership benefiting both students and MSDP. Heriot-Watt students spend around ten weeks immersed in a Deaf-led organisation, while nursing, paramedic and medical students take part in shorter placements focused on building Deaf awareness.



Heriot-Watt students arrive with existing BSL skills, allowing them to engage directly with our community. Their reasons for studying the subject differ: one chose the degree to keep career options open in interpreting and translation, another, who is Hard of Hearing, was drawn to the course through personal experience. And a third was influenced by their sister, who uses BSL.

During their placements, students observe and support various MSDP teams and also attend coffee mornings, presentations and community events. These activities give them opportunities to meet Deaf people of different ages and backgrounds, and to encounter a range of signing styles, vocabulary, and cultural experiences.

Dr Gary Quinn at Herriot Watt University commented that “MSDP is an excellent place for students to learn from the Deaf community. Liverpool’s distinctive sign variation is vital for aspiring UK BSL interpreters.”

Community Engagement Manager, Janice Connolly, commented that the placements offer more than just shadowing. Students get to see the full picture of what working in a Deaf organisation involves and the daily barriers our communities



Lucy Reading (student), Rachel Hayes and Rachel McDonald (MSDP Supporter Workers)

experience. Staff and community members have responded positively to the students’ involvement. They provide a link between academic study and the workplace, giving students a deeper understanding of the Deaf community. We are proud of what our placement students have achieved, and we look forward to hosting others in the future.



*After spending a full week in MSDP I have been so well educated on the deaf community and the different ways of communication between people of hearing and deaf. The staff are so helpful in answering questions I had about the community, and I really felt a sense of belonging throughout the week. As a medical student I believe ... that educational seminars would highly benefit not just future students and professionals, but also the public. I have been inspired to learn BSL and implement it in my studies and future career. - **Tiarnán McGivern, Paramedic student, Liverpool John Moores University***

Launching our new

Children & Families

project



In November 2024, MSDP launched the Children & Families project to reintroduce dedicated support for children, young people, and families affected by hearing loss. The project focuses on reducing isolation, building confidence, and creating a space where families can meet, share experiences, and take part in activities together.

Open to families with children from birth to 18, the service welcomes d/Deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing parents, as well as children with any level of hearing loss. This mix has helped create an inclusive environment.

So far, 30 families have taken part, and attendance continues to grow. Positive feedback and word-of-mouth have encouraged new families to join, with some becoming regular participants.

One of the most popular events has been a visit to Croxteth Park Farm. Although the trip was designed to be self-led, families naturally stayed together, feeding animals and exploring the grounds as a group. A notable early moment came during the project's first cooking session. A young boy with moderate hearing loss and sensory needs attended with his Mum, who was unsure how he would cope with people he didn't know. He thoroughly enjoyed the session and asked to return - we have been very glad to welcome them back to further events.

Activities have been varied, with sessions designed for both children and adults. Family cooking sessions have been particularly well received. A multi-sport activity, originally aimed at children, soon involved parents and staff, especially during a lively game of dodgeball. The most significant impact has been the sense of connection developing among families. Many stay after events to talk, children enjoy meeting new Deaf friends, and a growing sense of community is evident.



The project is led by MSDP staff and volunteers, with support from the Deafness Resource Centre and BSL interpreters. We are also very grateful to have received seed funding from the **Forrester Family Trust** for a Children and Family's Officer to develop our project in the first 12 months. A dedicated webpage was launched with information on upcoming events and a page with free BSL resources for families: msdp.org.uk/children-families

Future plans include some festive celebrations and a family sign language course. Our aim is to secure further funding, enabling us to expand into practical support services and become a central resource for families ensuring that no family navigating hearing loss feels isolated.

Getting to know



MARC BOLAND

My name is Marc Boland and I am the current Support Services Manager at MSDP. I am profoundly Deaf and have a Deaf partner and two Deaf children.

I attended MSDP youth service as a child and at 17 I was given the opportunity to become a staff member within the youth/play services teams, where I worked for four years until sadly the funding for the service ended. I then moved over to the support services team as a Support Worker where I worked until being promoted to Support Services Manager in 2024.

I believe that services should be accessible for all and it is important for me that MSDP continues to provide quality services to the Deaf community for many years to come. As a member of a Deaf family I know we would struggle to access the required services and information if it were not for organisations like MSDP.

My background

I have more than 10 years of experience as a Support Worker and a vast knowledge of the clients and their individual needs within our service. I am committed to ensuring the best for both the support services staff team and the service users to make sure that MSDP support service continues to thrive and deliver a high level of service.

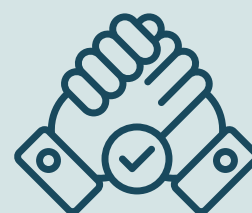
My aim is to raise the awareness of the services available at MSDP and ensure that we are there to support those who need us most. We are proud of our team who are all either Deaf/native BSL users or hold BSL and Deaf-blind Manual qualifications, so that our clients do not have to face any barriers in communication and can communicate in their preferred language.

I am hopeful that with the growing knowledge of MSDP support services, we can continue to develop our service

to support more individuals to ensure that each person's needs are being fully met and the best interest of the clients remains at the centre of everything we do.

Our staff

MSDP staff support individuals in their homes or within the community, empowering them to complete everyday tasks, such as shopping, translating letters, arranging and attending health care appointments, making phone calls, paying bills, attending community events and encouraging social inclusion, ensuring interpreters are booked for any appointments and much more. We are person centred and clients are encouraged to participate in their own support plans to ensure that they get the best out of their support hours.



If you, or a friend / relative feel that we may be able to support you, please contact us:
supportreferrals@msdp.org.uk

Promoting our Deaf Awareness e-learning



With an estimated 11 million people in the UK experiencing hearing loss, the need for Deaf awareness has never been more apparent. This is why we developed our Deaf Awareness e-learning, with a specific module for those working in the health and social care sector.



Since launching our e-learning in September 2024 we have been working to promote our training module in Merseyside and beyond, with the aim of helping a wide variety of people to improve how they interact with people with all levels of deafness. Sometimes the smallest changes in behaviour, like remembering to make direct eye contact when speaking to a customer, can have a massive impact.

Over the last year we have been introducing the Deaf Awareness modules to our stakeholders and providing trial accounts to enable them to try out the module.

We have also been promoting the e-learning to a wider audience, and in April 2025 were featured in the **Get Connected** magazine from the **Liverpool Chamber of Commerce**.

We have had a lot of positive conversations around the e-learning and so far Wirral Citizens Advice, Spire Hospital Liverpool and KDC North are a few of the organisations to have implemented our e-learning in their organisations.

The e-learning content was developed by our Training team and Julie Ryder at Hear First; alongside consultation to ensure the lived experience of our community members and volunteers shaped the content.

ADVERTISEMENT

BOOST YOUR BUSINESS'S ACCESSIBILITY WITH DEAF AWARENESS TRAINING

In today's competitive market, accommodating all customers is crucial. However, many businesses are not equipped to engage the 11 million potential customers in the UK with hearing loss, or with their own Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff. Investing in Deaf Awareness training creates a supportive workplace and can help you to reach the 20% of adults in Liverpool with hearing loss.



Staff at Costa Coffee in Queens Drive put their sign language skills into practice

Adults in Liverpool

385,171

18%

have some form of hearing loss

Why Businesses need to be Deaf Aware

- 1. Improve customer service:** Small changes, like reducing background noise or ensuring clear communication, can result in less misunderstandings, less time wasted and a better experience for the customer.
- 2. Promote inclusivity and diversity:** Show your commitment to creating a welcoming environment for everyone.
- 3. Enhance your reputation:** Positive experiences for people with hearing loss could lead to increased customer loyalty and word-of-mouth referrals.
- 4. Better understand client needs:** For many Deaf individuals British Sign Language (BSL) is their first language. As BSL has no written form, Deaf people can often struggle with written English, meaning businesses should not solely rely on letters to convey important information. Another common misconception is that everyone who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing can lipread. However, it is actually very difficult, and speaking slowly can make it much harder to lipread. Deaf Awareness training equips staff to better understand these types of challenges and adapt their communication style.

Deaf Awareness with Merseyside Society for Deaf People
MSDP is a leading charity with over 160 years of experience supporting individuals with hearing loss in the Liverpool area. For over

25 years we have provided Deaf Awareness training to businesses and organisations across Merseyside, and in the last 12 months alone have worked with the cast of Hollyoaks, Liverpool Football Club and The Beatles Story Museum. Contact our training team to find out more about our face-to-face sessions: training@msdp.org.uk

Deaf Awareness e-learning: Cost-effective staff training with minimal time
We are also proud to promote our high-quality, low-cost, Deaf Awareness e-learning, which has been developed by Deaf professionals, with significant input from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities in Liverpool.
The e-learning is an engaging and practical tool that will educate your staff on how to better interact with individuals with all levels of hearing loss, particularly in customer-facing environments. This comprehensive e-learning is also a low time commitment, so you can upskill your staff without impacting your business.

What is included in the e-learning
Currently we have two options:
Option 1 - Deaf awareness for everyone - This module helps users understand the barriers faced by Hard of Hearing, Deaf, and Deaf-Blind individuals in accessing services and how to address them.
Option 2 - Deaf awareness for the health and social care sector - This module covers everything above, but provides additional material specific to people working in frontline health and social care.

Try the e-learning for free
Use the group code **BeDeafAware0A3** to create a free, temporary account: deafaware.msdp.org.uk/group-code-registration
For more information on the course details, pricing, and how to get started, please go to deafaware.msdp.org.uk

Support a local cause in Liverpool
Purchasing our e-learning module also supports the important work that MSDP does in Liverpool and the surrounding area. The profits from the sales will help us expand our services, providing vital support to individuals with hearing loss and their families across Merseyside. Find out more about our work msdp.org.uk
You can also support us directly. Fundraise for us or partner with us as your Charity of the Year. Get in touch to find out how we can work together: deafaware@msdp.org.uk

Together, we can make your business more accessible to the 20% of Liverpool's population with hearing loss.
Get in touch today to get started!
deafaware@msdp.org.uk



MSDP also provide: Interpreters, building accessibility audits, BSL courses and other bespoke training. Find out more: msdp.org.uk



I thought the training was excellent - I really enjoyed the videos and hearing from real people and their experiences, as well as learning how we can improve our accessibility for Deaf People in and outside of the work place, I loved the examples such as the GP surgery.



Our goal this year is to continue promoting the e-learning to existing stakeholders and to introduce it to new customers, to continue to raise much needed funds for MSDP. Try the module by creating an account with the code BeDeafAware - deafaware.msdp.org.uk/group-code-registration

If you would like to discuss your e-learning needs, or to arrange a walk-through of the modules, then please do not hesitate to get in touch - deafaware@msdp.org.uk

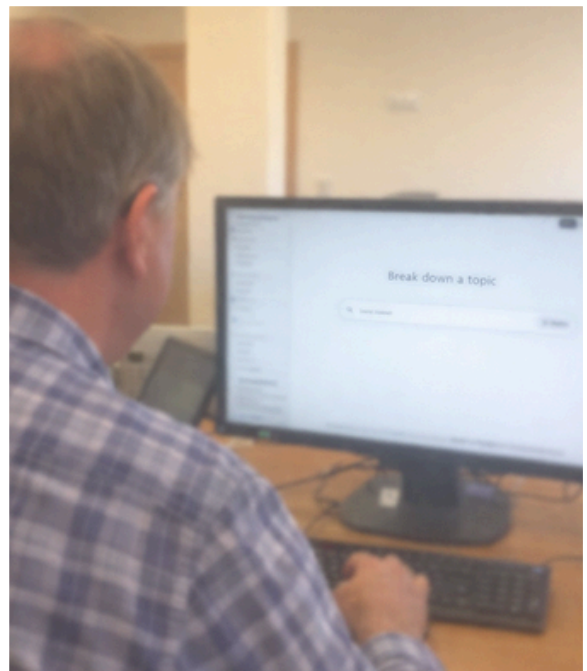
Fundraising

Free IT course

Thanks to generous funding from Burbo Bank Extension Community Fund, in 2025 we launched a 10-week IT training programme for Deaf adults in the local community. Held at the A&K Community Hub in Birkenhead, the course helped address the digital divide experienced by many Deaf individuals.

Deaf people are often excluded from digital learning - not due to lack of ability or interest, but because training is rarely accessible or delivered in BSL. The programme provided full BSL interpretation and support. Participants learned in a Deaf-aware environment where they felt comfortable and understood.

Course content was shaped by the community and covered essential skills such as managing emails, using NHS apps, budgeting tools, and exploring AI tools like ChatGPT. The focus was not only on using a device but on building confidence, independence, and the ability to participate fully in modern life.



For many, this was the first time digital learning had been truly accessible. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting greater confidence and motivation. This project would not have been possible without the Burbo Bank Extension Community Fund. Their support created meaningful, lasting change for Deaf people in Merseyside.

Inner Wheel's Charity of the Year

In November 2024, MSDP CEO Joanne Parr attended an Inner Wheel District 18 meeting, where it was announced that MSDP had been chosen as District 18's Charity of the Year.

During the meeting, Joanne and MSDP's Community Engagement Manager, Janice Connolly, spoke about the barriers Deaf people face and the importance of BSL access. Janice shared her experience growing up as the only Deaf person in a hearing family - a powerful reminder of how early communication support and Deaf awareness can make a difference for families and communities. Inspired by these stories, members of Inner Wheel District 18 organised the Walk of Friendship in May 2025. In glorious sunshine, clubs and friends from across the district took part in the sponsored walk, raising an impressive £855 for MSDP. The individual branch groups also held fundraisers with some making and selling craft items to raise funds.



MSDP is grateful to everyone who walked, donated, and supported the charity throughout the year. In total an incredible **£1,271 was raised**. Their generosity and friendship have made a real difference - strengthening connections, raising awareness, and championing equality for the deaf communities across Merseyside. The funds raised helped MSDP create and distribute new BSL learning

resources for families with Deaf children - resources designed to break down communication barriers and help young Deaf people feel more included and understood. They have also been utilised to cover some costs for our family events.

Community Events

In 2024/25 we arranged a wide range of events that brought our community together, provided valuable information, and supported the well-being of Deaf people. Here are some of the highlights:

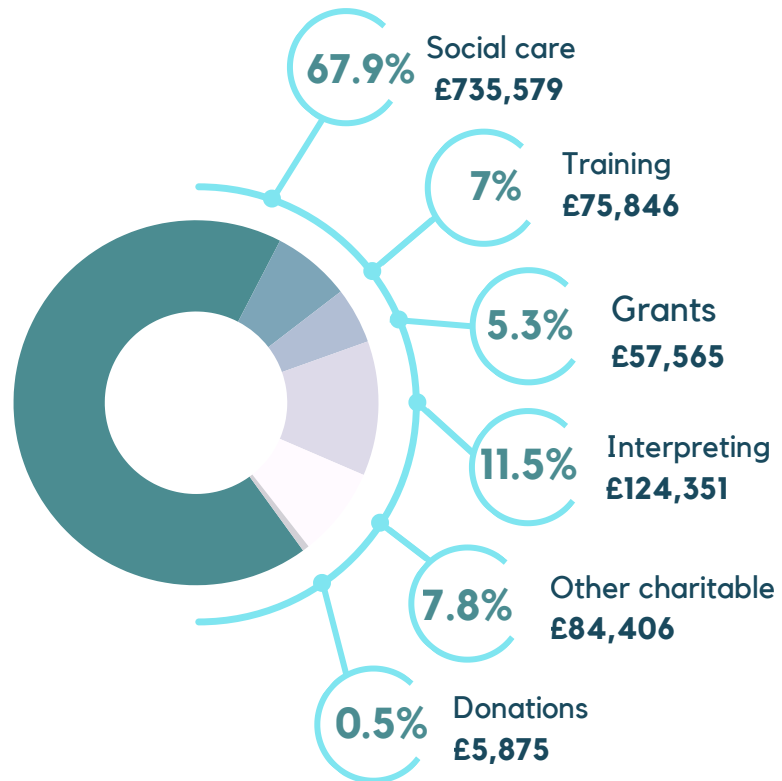
- Children's Halloween celebration
- Liverpool FC community event featuring Peter Beardsley
- Community consultation on gynaecology & maternity services
- Accessible session on recognising fibromyalgia
- Deaf at Work national survey promotion
- Energy efficiency & Pension Credit info session
- Recognition as Charity of the Year by Inner Wheel District 18
- Collaboration with Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on Deaf patient experience survey
- Children's Christmas Party
- Participation in Safer Internet Day
- Promotion of NSPCC safeguarding resources
- Ticket giveaway for Liverpool Legends vs Chelsea Legends match
- Guided tour of the Royal Liver Building
- BSL Walking Group at Calderstones Park
- BSL Walking Group at Birkenhead Park
- Deaf-led guided tours at the Museum of Liverpool
- BSL-accessible tour of Anfield Stadium
- Attendance at Liverpool Disabled Supporters Awards
- Participation in Wirral Commitment to Carers Conference
- SEND Local Offer Live event in Liverpool
- Visit to Aintree Fire Station
- Summer Fair for the community
- Attendance at British Deaf Association Conference
- Tour of Everton Football Club
- Deaf children & family trip to Croxteth Park



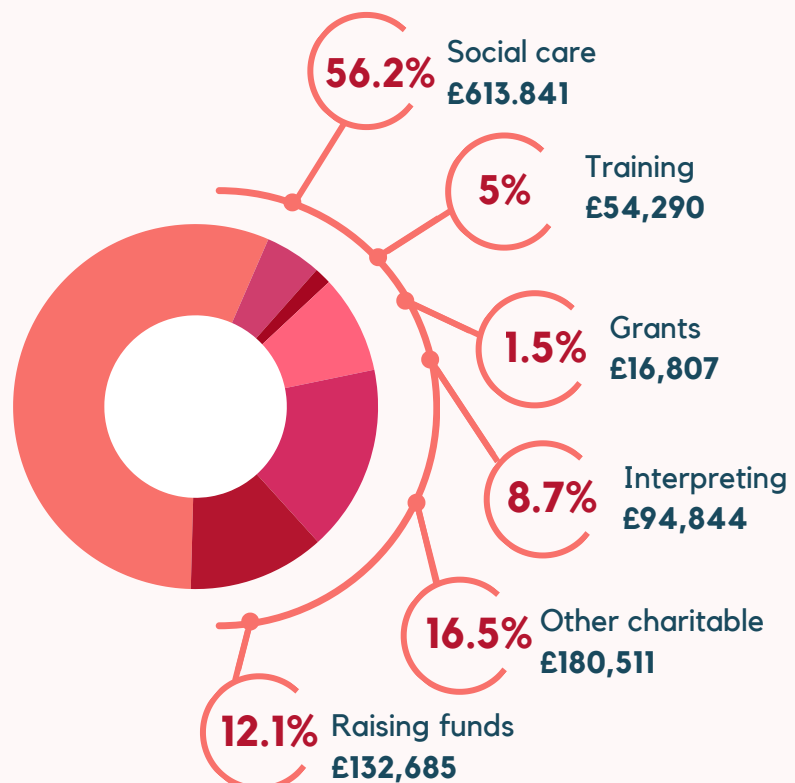


Finances

Money received



Money spent



Partnerships

A big thank you to all our partners and the organisations that have supported our projects and services this year. Working together makes a real difference, and we're excited to keep growing and achieving more in the years ahead.



Partners



Deaf Chief Officers Group



Supporting Organisations



Burbo Bank Extension Community Fund



Future plans

In the coming year we will continue to further the objectives in our Business Strategy and Plan 2024-2027 to:

- **Develop MSDP's position in the local community**
- **Increase revenue and develop the organisation**
- **Extend the customer base and increase participation in the wider community**
- **Enhance technology to improve service delivery**
- **Undertake a person-centred approach to all service provision**

We will **strengthen our organisation** and respond to the evolving needs of our communities. We will review our buildings and **community spaces** to ensure they are sustainable, well used and fit for purpose, enabling us to continue providing vital services. We will **invest in our people** through development and succession planning, while working with partners to help address the **shortage of Deaf tutors**.

We will continue to **improve how we use technology** to enhance services and efficiency, including exploring the responsible use of AI. We will **grow our family support** and **outreach services**, strengthen partnerships, and preserve our heritage by digitising our film archive for future generations.