

# 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.

*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

## 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.

## 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 braintrust 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**

*braintrust* 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**

*braintrust*, 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 braintrust.*

### **Will Jones**

*braintrust* 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 *braintrust*, 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.*

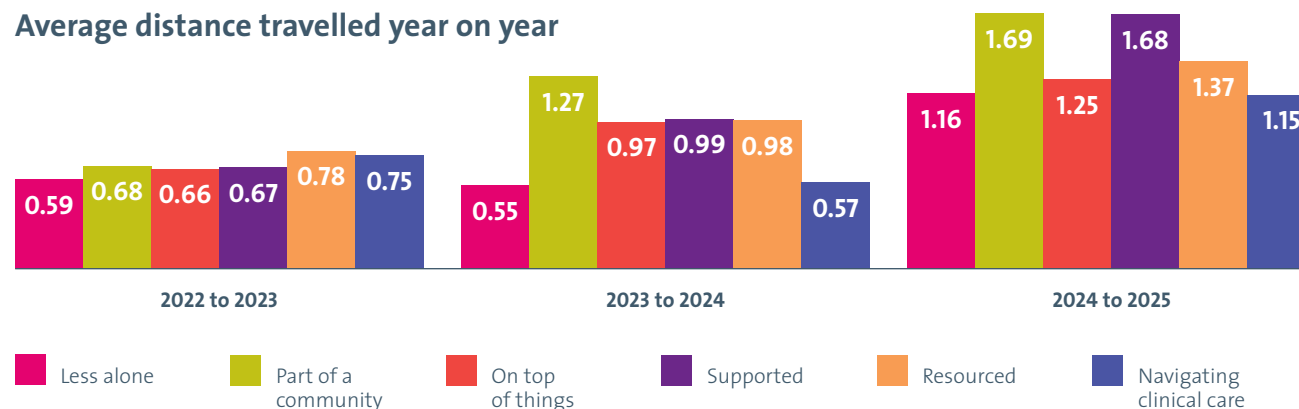
**Caregiver**



# Our impact in 2024

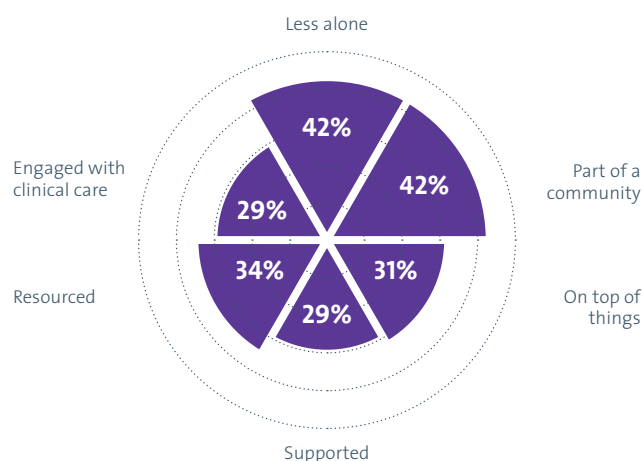
The year 2024 saw us achieve the highest average distance travelled yet for the people we've helped. This is based on how people told us they felt when they first came to us and after receiving our support. On average against our six indicators, we helped people to improve by 35%, or 1.38, from their 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.

Average distance travelled year on year



## Our year, April 2024 – March 2025

Improvement since contacting *brainstrust*



*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

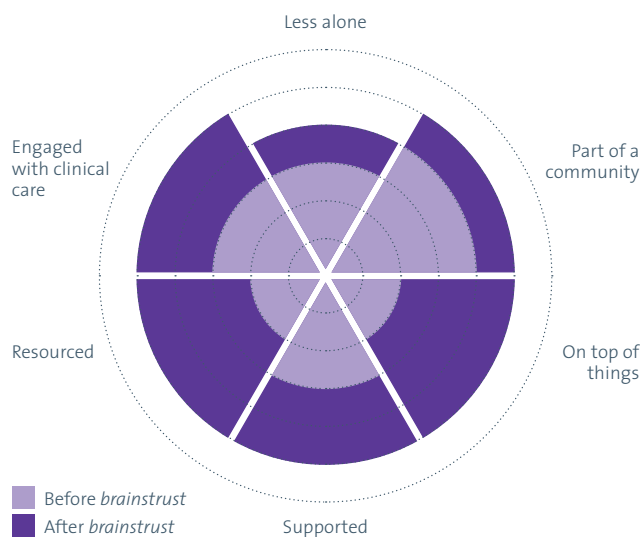
*I now feel better equipped to deal with things  
and I remember to park the things that I have no  
control over and only deal with the things I can control.*

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 *braintrust*

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 *braintrust* 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.

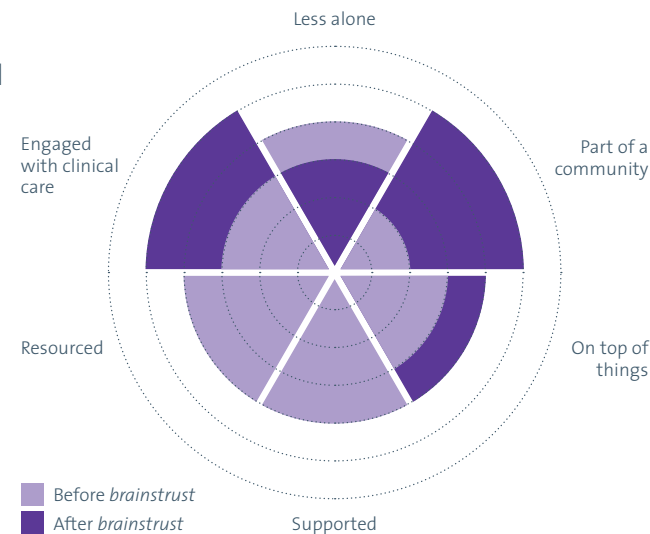
A total of 8,035 people accessed and downloaded 12,540 online resources.

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



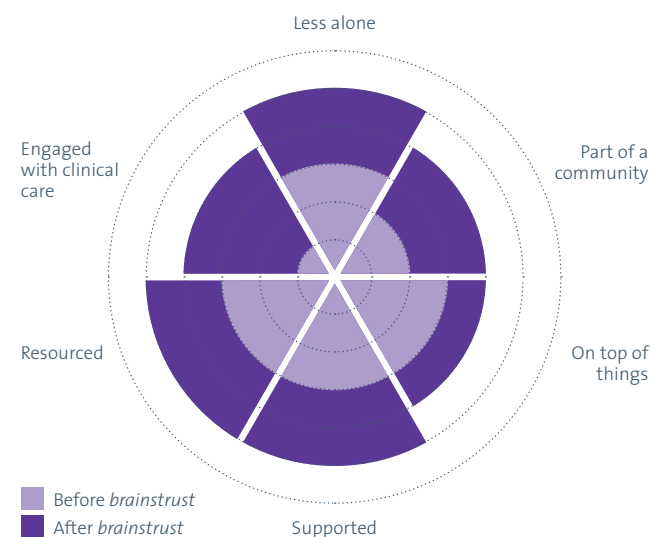
The *braintrust* brain box remains popular. In 2024 we were able to send 357 of these vital toolkits to people, helping them to find a way forward following their diagnoses.

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 *braintrust* 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**

*braintrust* 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**

*braintrust* 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 *braintrust* 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 *braintrust*'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 *braintrust* 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**

*braintrust* 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.





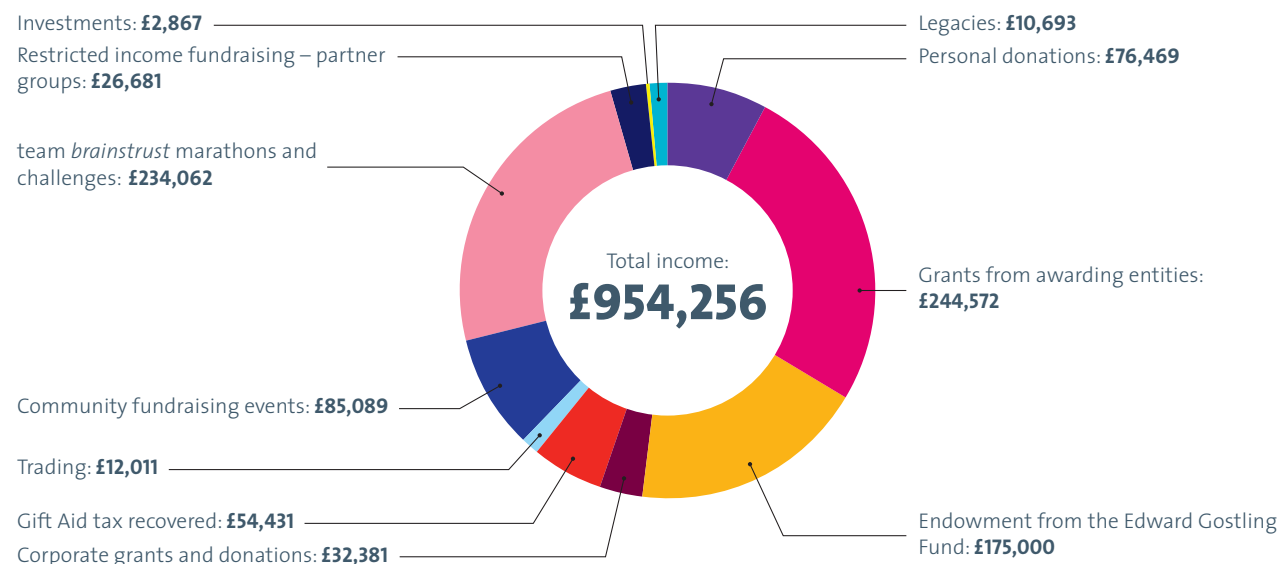
# Your support

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

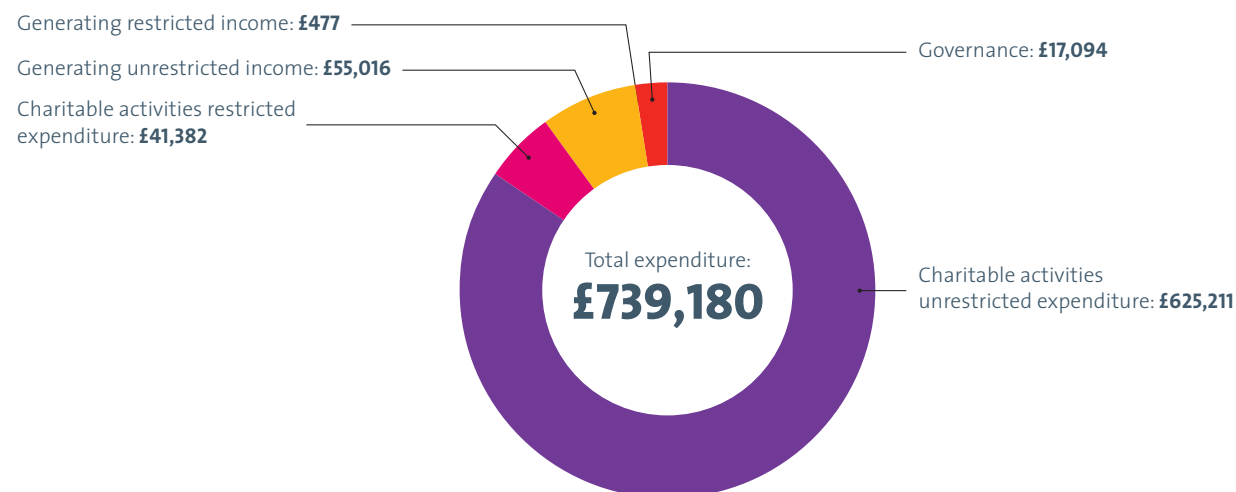
Our funding is derived from:

- 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.



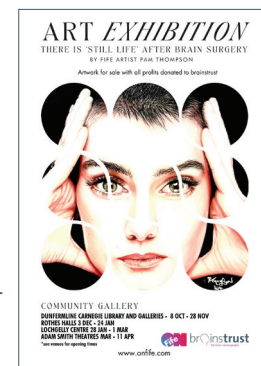
## Wonderful memories: Suzanne's journey to honour her father June 2024

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

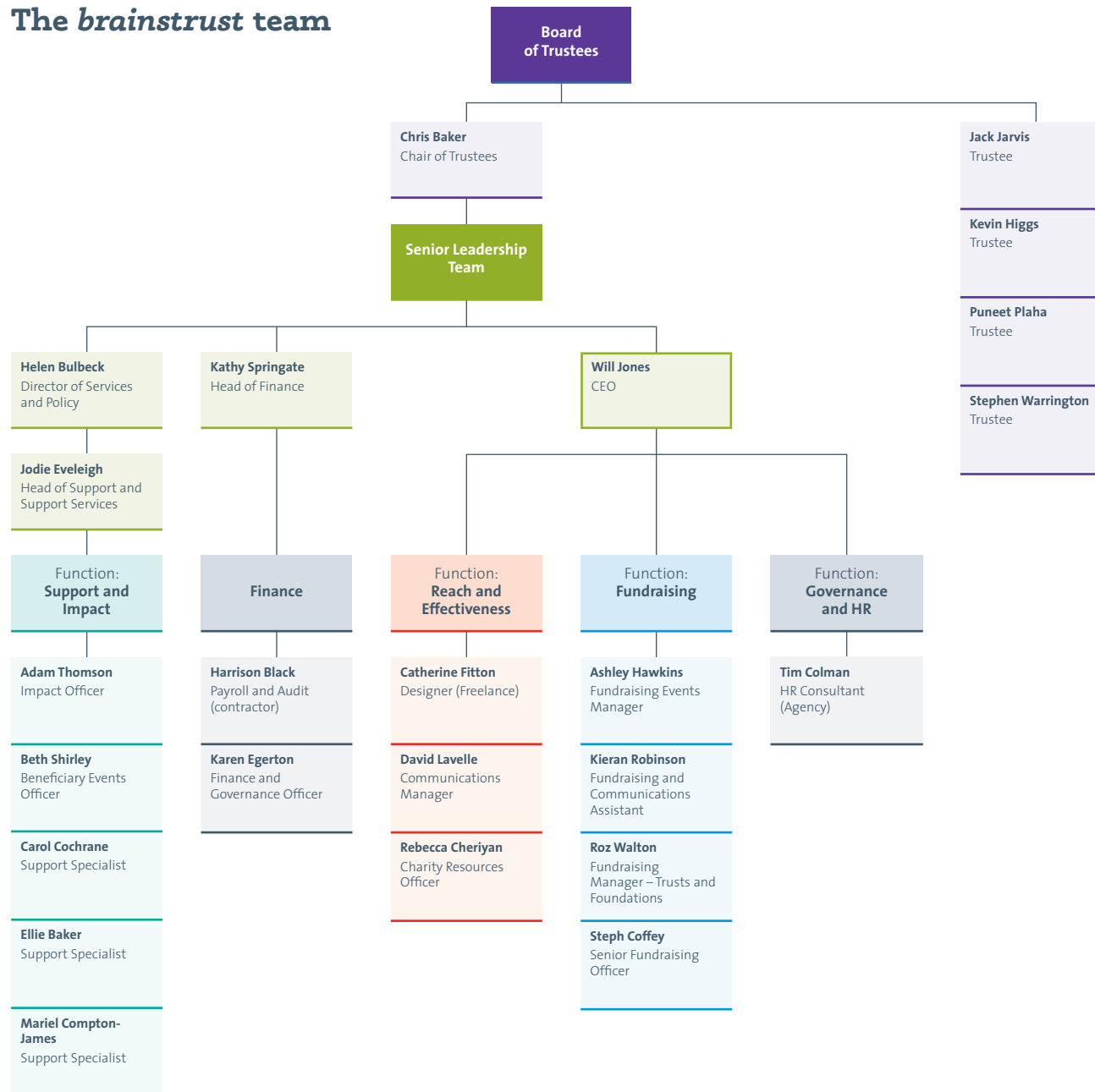
This leadership team and trustees have a clear mandate to:

- 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 *braintrust* team



## *braintrust* senior staff contacts

**Will Jones**, Chief Executive,  
will@braintrust.org.uk

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

**Kathy Springate**, Head of Finance,  
kathy@braintrust.org.uk

**Jodie Eveleigh**, Head of Support,  
jodie@braintrust.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







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

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 *braintrust*

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](http://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

## *braintrust* – Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>					
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
<b>Total</b>		<b>752,577</b>	<b>26,679</b>	<b>779,256</b>	652,450
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>					
Raising funds	5	96,398	477	96,875	82,745
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Charity activities	6	586,466	41,382	627,848	633,493
Other		14,457	–	14,457	14,287
<b>Total</b>		<b>697,321</b>	<b>41,859</b>	<b>739,180</b>	730,525
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		<b>55,256</b>	<b>(15,180)</b>	<b>40,076</b>	(78,075)
Transfers between funds	18	9,039	(9,039)	–	–
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>64,295</b>	<b>(24,219)</b>	<b>40,076</b>	(78,075)
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
Total funds brought forward		121,593	404,439	526,032	604,107
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>185,888</b>	<b>380,220</b>	<b>566,108</b>	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 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	12	5,700	–	5,700	1,089
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
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
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	(29,781)	(175,000)	(204,781)	(32,403)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		183,080	380,220	563,300	538,252
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		188,780	380,220	569,000	539,341
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due after more than one year	15	(2,892)	–	(2,892)	(13,309)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		185,888	380,220	566,108	526,032
<b>FUNDS</b>	18				
Unrestricted funds				185,888	121,593
Restricted funds				380,220	404,439
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>				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 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
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)
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
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
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Loan repayments in year		(10,170)	(9,920)
Net cash used in financing activities		(10,170)	(9,920)
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>		206,637	(71,788)
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period</b>		515,920	587,708
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>		722,557	515,920

The notes form part of these financial statements



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

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)</b>	<b>40,076</b>	(78,075)
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
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)
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operations</b>	<b>220,263</b>	(62,443)

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.24 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.25 £
<b>Net cash</b>			
Cash at bank	515,920	206,637	722,557
	515,920	206,637	722,557
<b>Debt</b>			
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)
<b>Total</b>	<b>492,689</b>	<b>216,807</b>	<b>709,496</b>

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

**brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 – 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
	<b>418,546</b>	<b>335,021</b>

**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
	<b>357,843</b>	<b>316,127</b>

continued ...

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

**4. Investment income**

	2025 £	2024 £
Deposit account interest	<b>2,867</b>	1,302

**5. Raising funds**

**Raising donations and legacies**

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

**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
	<b>34,946</b>	<b>28,321</b>
Aggregate amounts	<b>96,875</b>	<b>82,745</b>

**6. Charitable activities costs**

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

continued ...

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

**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 ...

continued ...



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

**11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities**

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

continued ...

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

**12. Tangible fixed assets**

	Fixtures and fittings £	Website £	Totals £
<b>COST</b>			
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
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
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
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
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
	<b>45,524</b>	<b>54,735</b>

continued ...

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

**14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	5,506	9,831
Other creditors	199,275	22,572
	<b>204,781</b>	<b>32,403</b>

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
	<b>29,044</b>	<b>55,855</b>

*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 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General fund	121,593	55,256	9,039	185,888
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
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
	<b>404,439</b>	<b>(15,180)</b>	<b>(9,039)</b>	<b>380,220</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>526,032</b>	<b>40,076</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>566,108</b>

*continued ...*

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

**18. Movement in funds – continued**

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

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	752,577	(697,321)	55,256
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
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
	<u>26,679</u>	<u>(41,859)</u>	<u>(15,180)</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>779,256</u>	<u>(739,180)</u>	<u>40,076</u>

continued ...

**brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 – 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 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General fund	205,029	(85,436)	2,000	121,593
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
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
	<u>399,078</u>	<u>7,361</u>	<u>(2,000)</u>	<u>404,439</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>604,107</u>	<u>(78,075)</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>526,032</u>

continued ...



**brainstrust – Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2025 – 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 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	632,913	(718,349)	(85,436)
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
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
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	652,450	(730,525)	(78,075)

**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 position is as follows:

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.25 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General fund	205,029	(30,180)	11,039	185,888
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
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
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	604,107	(37,999)	–	566,108

continued ...

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 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>			
General fund	1,385,490	(1,415,670)	(30,180)
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
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)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>1,431,706</b>	<b>(1,469,705)</b>	<b>(37,999)</b>

### 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 £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS</b>		
<b>Donations and legacies</b>		
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
<b>Other trading activities</b>		
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
<b>Investment income</b>		
Deposit account interest	2,867	1,302
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>779,256</b>	<b>652,450</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Raising donations and legacies</b>		
Fundraising fees	16,094	14,745
Promotional expenses	45,835	39,679
	61,929	54,424
<b>Other trading activities</b>		
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
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
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 £
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
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
	<b>625,211</b>	630,834
<b>Support costs</b>		
<b>Governance costs</b>		
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
	<b>17,094</b>	16,946
Total resources expended	<b>739,180</b>	730,525
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>40,076</b>	(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**

