

Our Impact in 2024 and our Strategic Plan for 2025



Supporting
bereaved
children and
young people
across Exeter,
East and Mid
Devon





FROM OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

I was delighted to have been appointed as Chair of the Balloons Board of Trustees in 2024. Having fundraised for Balloons for several years, I am now very happy to be working directly with Nicky, the team and our amazing volunteers.

Balloons provides a vital service of supporting young people who have suffered a bereavement, and the figures in this Impact Report provide great testimony of what has been achieved over the past year.

But things never stand still, and we are now planning on how we can extend the range of services we can provide to more children and young people at a hugely difficult time in their lives. This includes a review of our fundraising strategy, which both recognises the generosity of our current donors, and considers how we can bring more people and businesses into our funding family.

We are also very proud of our growing team of Grief Support Workers, and our wider team of volunteers, who support us in so many ways.

How can you help?

Charles Pallet



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from our Chair of Trustees	02
Our strategic plan	04
Priority 1 - Supporting bereaved children and young people	05
Priority 2 - Sustaining and developing our services	08
Priority 3 – Our people	11
Contact us	13





OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

We are entering into the third year of our three-year plan. The trustees and staff have agreed targets and a work plan against our strategic priorities which we'll be focussing on this coming year.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To support bereaved children, young people (CYP) and families and improve their outcomes

To generate income to sustain and develop our services

To grow our people (staff, volunteers and trustee board)

HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE THEM

Delivering direct and indirect support to CYP and their families pre and post bereavement

Diversifying income streams in the short, medium and long term, developing and delivering on an annual fundraising strategy

Supporting and investing in our people

To develop our infrastructure and systems to enable us to deliver on the strategic priorities

This report takes you through each of these three priority areas, sharing some highlights from the last year, as well as some of our plans for the year ahead.

PRIORITY 1 - SUPPORTING BEREAVED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Sent out
194
care packages to
bereaved children
and young
people

Supported
129
children and young
people by delivering
424
one-to-one grief support
sessions

Trained
83
professionals in
bereavement
support



5
Activity Days attended
by
212
children, parents and
carers

Trained
19
new volunteer
Grief Support
Workers taking our
team to 45!

Over
2000
hours of
volunteering time
given to Balloons

Supported
30
children through our
new programme of
group work

Enabled
33
local individuals to
volunteer as Grief
Support Workers, giving
their time to support
bereaved children and
young people



Responded to
680
calls from families,
schools and other
professionals

Delivered support
in over
54
local schools and
colleges

Indirectly supported
220
children through offering
advice, information and
phone calls to
parents/carers and
professionals



PRIORITY 1

SUPPORTING BEREAVED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We love to hear from those we have supported, their families and their schools about the impact that our support has made. We gather feedback, outcome information and stories from those we support.



THE DIFFERENCE WE HAVE MADE

In April, Radio 1 DJ Mollie King came to hear about our work as part of her Comic Relief Challenge. She met with Abbie, a young person who we had supported through 1:1 sessions and activity days. This video is a great insight into the way we work and difference we can make.

You can watch it here

<https://www.balloonscharity.co.uk/comic-relief-time/>

2024 IN QUOTES FROM OUR SERVICE USERS

"The sessions have really helped them process their grief and talking about those we have lost has become more frequent and more easy as a result" (Parent)

"I found it difficult at times to be open but it has been very helpful to understand my emotions and manage my anger." (Young Person)

"X really loved the sessions. She was really engaged in the art and craft work. X struggled to attend school but would come in just for these sessions as benefited so much. Thank you!" (Teacher)

"The grief package he received prior to his sessions, with the sensory toy, booklet etc went a long way to help X feel cared for and supported." (Teacher)

"I enjoyed the sessions because I spoke about daddy. I will miss Y because I liked the things we spoke about and I liked to be able to talk about things without crying and getting upset". (Child)

"I liked my meetings and was excited every Wednesday to have them" (Child)

"Z was in a very dark place before grief support. Since his sessions with M I have seen a noticeable change in his demeanour and outlook on life. He is a more positive person." (School)

"It's given her the skills to attempt to open up about her feelings and helped me understand where I can help her too" (Parent)



THE YEAR AHEAD

We will be continuing our support and advice line, running 1:1 sessions, activity days and completing our group work pilot, to make group work part of our regular offer. Given our success in growing our team of volunteer Grief Support workers to 45 over the last 12 months, we will be able to reach more children and young people, more quickly this year!

PRIORITY 2

SUSTAINING AND DEVELOPING OUR SERVICES

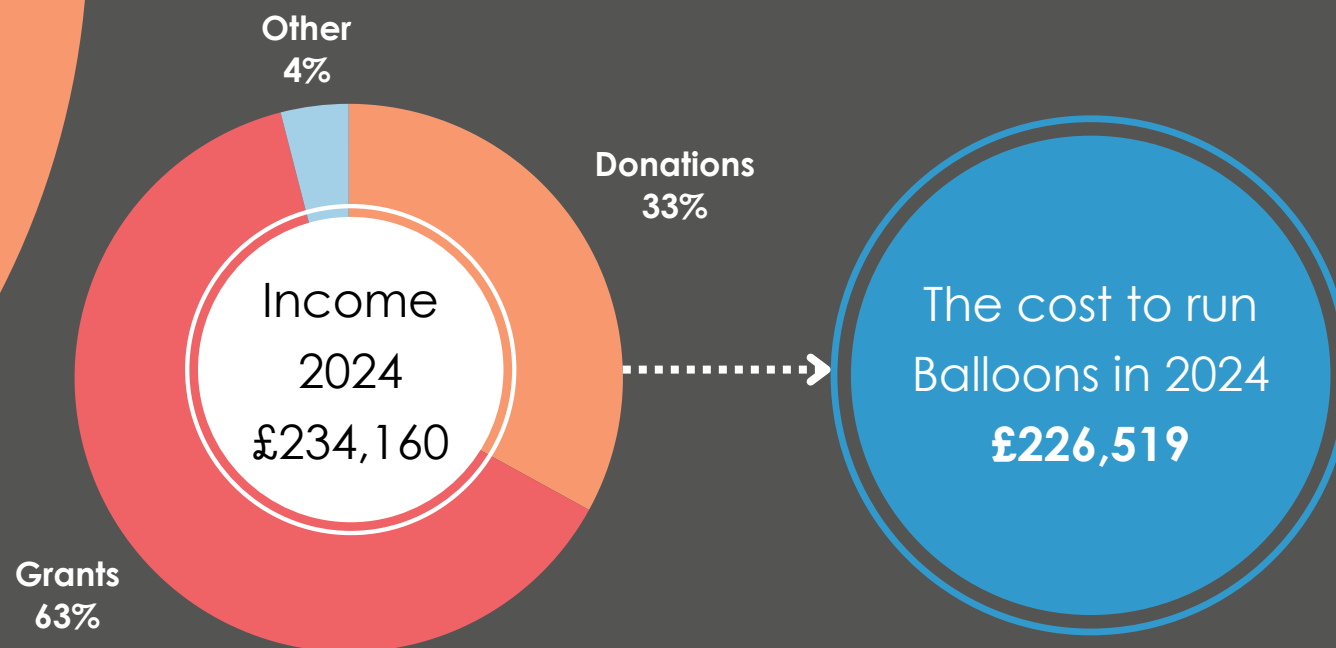
Balloons only exists due to the support of people who believe in the difference our work makes.

We don't receive any statutory funding and, therefore, we are extremely grateful for all those who fundraise, donate to us and support us with grants. See page 10 for a full list of those who have supported us this last year!

2024 FINANCES

Continuing to generate income to cover our costs is critical to keep Balloons running. Over the last few years with the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by the Cost-of-Living Crisis, it has been challenging to raise sufficient funds.

2024 however has been a really positive year for Balloons, with a new Fundraising Officer on board as well as some new grant successes has meant we have been able to cover all our in-year costs and make a small surplus for our reserves. In particular, a significant new grant from the Big Lottery will help us with service delivery over the coming few years.



2024 FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

We have had many wonderful donations and fundraising activities over the last year, here are just a few of the many different ways people have supported us:

SPREADING THE WORD

We want more people to know about our work and were very proud to feature on BBC Morning Live and BBC Radio Devon and Cornwall as part of Comic Relief coverage as well as BBC Radio coverage for our Sky Dive.



Cranbrook Arrows Netball tournament



Balloons staff skydive



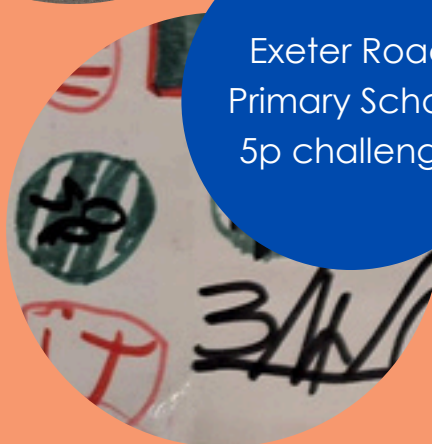
Cream Tea at Pynes Hill



Mark Khan and Sam Lees 100km Coastal Walk in 24 hours



5 year olds Esmée and Élise walking across Devon



Exeter Road Primary School 5p challenge



'Gifts in kind' donated from a range of business with a value of over £4500!



Little Lens Baby Photography raffle

2024 THANK YOU!

We are extremely grateful to all the organisations, clubs and societies (listed below) that have raised funds or supported us 'in kind' this last year. A huge thank you also to those many individuals who give generously to our cause. Without your support, we would not have been there to provide much-needed support to children and young people.

Albert Hunt Trust	Devon & Cornwall Concrete Society	Lidl	Seaton PCC
Armada Asset Finance	Devon Community Foundation	Lions Club Sidmouth	Sedel Collings Trust
Audify Ltd	Dunelm	Little Lens Baby Photography	Shaldon Leisure Rowers
Baby Panda Theatre	East Budleigh Community Shop	Love to Make	Sidford WI
Bargain Buys	Exeter Chiefs	M. Sillifant and Sons	Sidmouth WI
Beaverbrooks	Exeter Choral Society	Moose International	Simple Media and Advertising Limited
Bird and Blend Tea Co	Exeter Eyewear	National Grid	Sir Walter Raleigh Community Pub
Bloss Family Foundation	Exeter Golf & Country Club	National Lottery	St Thomas All Souls event
Boost Your Business	Exeter Houseplant Enthusiasts	Nexus	Stephens Scown
Bradninch Music Festival	Exeter Northcott Theatre	Northbrook Community Trust	Stuart Line Cruises
Broadclyst Victory Hall	Exeter Quilters	Parcelforce Exeter Depot	SUEZ
Brooks Macdonald Foundation	Exeter RAG	Pinhoe Jubilee Club	Teign Valley Masonic Widows Assoc.
Buckerell Community Association	Exeter Road Primary School	Players of Exeter Community Lottery	Tender Victory Limited
Cathedral Appointments	Exeter Round Table	Powderham Castle	Tesco
Children in Need	Exmouth Rotary	Practice Plus	The Duke of York Pub
Clare Milne Trust	Family Tributes via Much Loved	Primark Exeter	The Gibbons Trust
Clockwise Exeter	Fox School of Motoring	Princess Theatre Torquay	The Hendy Foundation
Comic Relief	Grumpies Kitchen	Princesshay Shopping Centre	The Kings School
Courtyard by Marriott	Hays Travel	Project Linus	The Maynard School
Cranbrook Arrows Netball	Jamieson Bystock Trust	Raymond's Hill Ladies Club	The Norman Family Trust
Cranbrook Running Club	Jet Set Concrete	Red One Ltd	The Works, Sidmouth
Crediton Dairy	John Lewis	Royal Devon University Healthcare	True Colours Trust
David Lloyd	KFC	NHS Trust	Waitrose
			Warrens Bakery

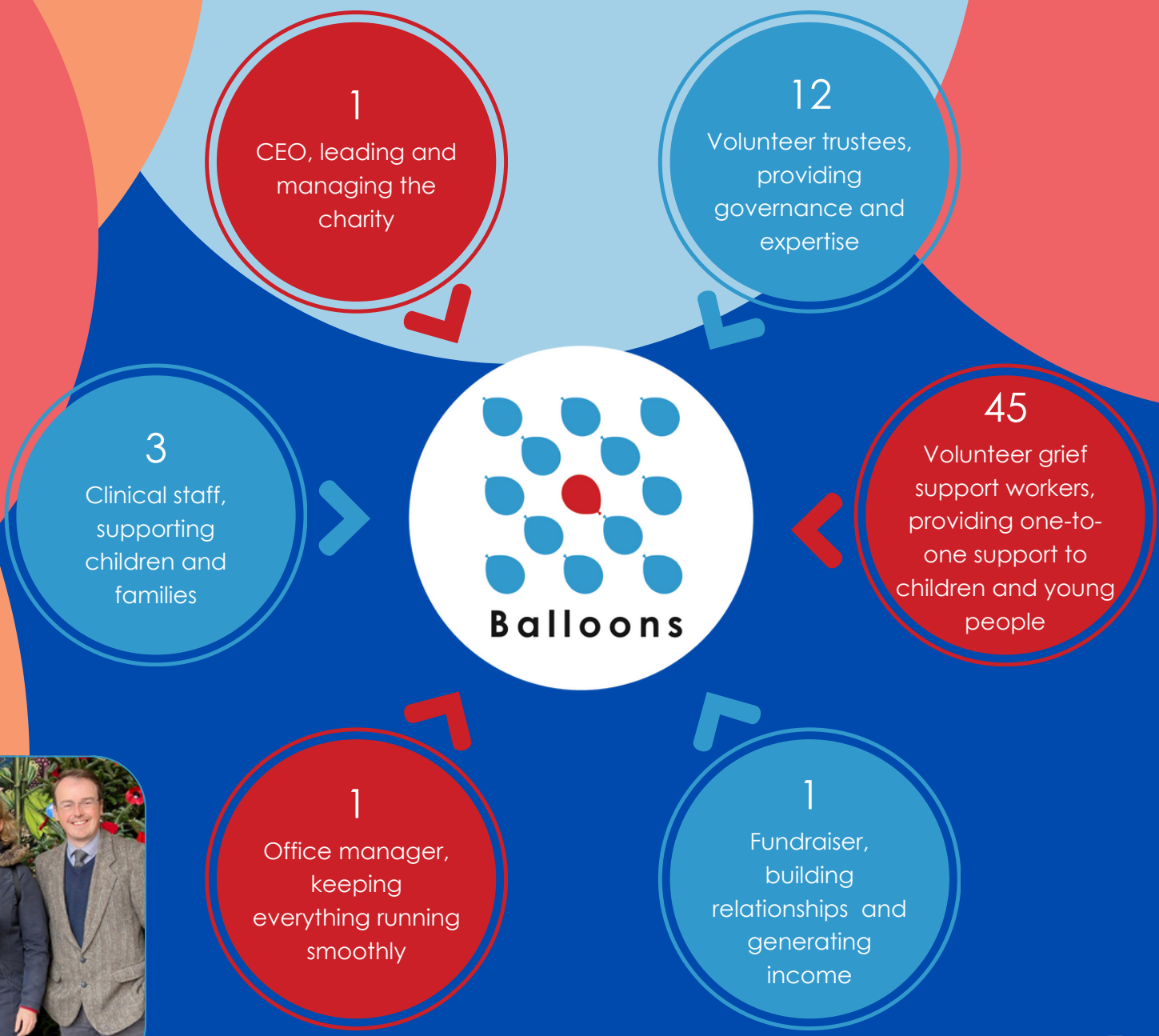
THE YEAR AHEAD

Our focus is to continue to raise our profile, grow our regular supporters and generate enough funds to cover our costs. If you want to get involved in any way – be it joining in a fundraising event, asking your company to support us, setting up a monthly donation, becoming a fundraising volunteer or having us come and talk at an event, we'd love to hear from you!

PRIORITY 3

OUR PEOPLE

Our people are at the heart of Balloons – making our work possible week in, week out.



1
CEO, leading and managing the charity

12
Volunteer trustees, providing governance and expertise

3
Clinical staff, supporting children and families

45
Volunteer grief support workers, providing one-to-one support to children and young people

1
Office manager, keeping everything running smoothly

1
Fundraiser, building relationships and generating income

OUR PEOPLE IN 2024 - A VOLUNTEER'S STORY

I wanted to volunteer for Balloons because having worked in the care sector I have always been drawn to helping others. Having personal experience of bereavement, Balloons seemed the natural choice. After much deliberation and a big push out of my comfort zone, I was fortunate enough to be accepted for training. The cohort I was in was very small & we soon got to know each other, sharing personal experiences & learning from one another. The training itself was very specialised & at times intense, delivered expertly with full support & never rushed. I remember feeling very much part of the Balloon's team from the beginning.

Each grief support case is unique & my own favourite part is getting to know the child or young person followed by the preparation for each session, although this doesn't always go to plan! Some cases are more challenging than others & an important piece of advice given in training was to 'follow the child' be guided by them. It's such a breakthrough when small signs of trust begin to appear & the child begins to open up & share aspects of their lives with you. It also feels joyous to see improvements in confidence & self-esteem. I believe what we do has a high value & is incredibly important. Hopefully, our work helps to provide coping tools & mechanisms that has a positive lasting effect with the child throughout their lives.

Personally, volunteering with Balloons has enhanced my life & well-being. We are well supported & there is always someone on hand should we need help. I am extremely proud to be part of the Balloons team.

Donna W - Volunteer Grief Support Worker

THE YEAR AHEAD...

Our priority in this area is to ensure our new Grief Support Workers (GSWs) feel fully supported as they take on their first cases. We will also continue to run our monthly GSW team meetings, an annual GSW conference and regular GSW newsletters to support our them in their work with children and young people. The Trustee board will continue to meet regularly, as we transition to our new chair and will also be setting up a new subcommittee to focus on fundraising. As a small staff team we will be working to keep developing and improving the ways in which we work and ensure staff are supported as they manage some difficult situations.



Thank you for your interest in Balloons. If you'd like to join us in helping to support more bereaved children, young people and their families in our area – we'd love to hear from you!

Get in touch

Phone - 01392 982570 | Email - admin@balloonscharity.co.uk | Website - www.balloonscharity.co.uk



Balloons (Devon) - Registered Charity No. 1158666