



# Annual Report

## 2025

CHY 23074  
RCN 20206465  
Company Registered No 717523



# Message from the CEO

As we reflect on the past year at Neurodiversity Ireland, I am proud of the progress we have made and deeply grateful to the community that have made it possible. Our work continues to be guided by a simple but powerful belief: that neurodivergent children deserve to be understood, supported, and empowered to thrive in all aspects of Irish society.

We have strengthened our impact across advocacy, education, and engagement. We expanded our outreach to allied health professionals, service providers and educators. We have supported children and their families, in real-time, pragmatic and practical ways and we continue to amplify neurodivergent voices in national conversations.

None of this work happens in isolation. I want to acknowledge our staff, volunteers, experts by lived-experience, our allies and our partners. Without the commitment of our supporters, none of what we do would be possible. Our work is firmly grounded in real experiences; we are driven by and for neurodivergent children and families.

Central to our vision for 2026 is collaboration. Real change happens when individuals, organisations, employers, and policymakers work together. We will continue to build strong partnerships that challenge assumptions, deconstruct unjust and ableist systems and create communities where neurodivergent children and their families are valued.

We work to create an inclusive and neuro-affirming Ireland.

Nessa Hill  
Chief Executive

# About Neurodiversity Ireland

Neurodiversity Ireland was founded by neurodivergent parents driven by a need for more inclusive and supportive services for their neurodivergent children. Frustrated by the limitations of the traditional medical model of disability, a **neuroaffirmative** approach was envisioned, that celebrates neurodiversity and empowers neurodivergent individuals.

Neurodivergent people are those whose brains work differently from the majority of people. This can include autistic people and children with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, language development differences, tourettes, OCD etc.

We are committed to creating a society where neurodivergent children and their families thrive. We

- **Provide community-based supports**
- **Advocate for systemic change**
- **Promote a greater understanding of neurodiversity.**

Every neurodivergent child deserves to take part in life, without limitation. For that to happen, the systems around them must be built to support their needs, honouring their strengths and ensuring their views are amplified and respected.

**Children are the heart of our charity** and our most important work is in ensuring they thrive with the right support.



# Our Vision

An Ireland where neurodivergent children and their families have the freedom to live the life they choose, fully supported by and at the centre of their community.



# Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure an equitable future for all children by supporting neurodivergent children and their families, educating the community and advocating for systemic change.



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# Our Values

**Neuroaffirmative:** There is no right way to be. Being neurodiversity affirming means properly understanding and valuing all ways of being and thinking. Diversity of human “being” is not only necessary but vital and we support and celebrate unique thinkers!

**Playful:** Play is the occupation of the child, therefore our supports are grounded in play-based activities, encouraging young neurodivergent minds to have the confidence to develop into their authentic selves.

**Respect:** With a focus on safety for children and families, we provide a child-led, safe and respectful environment for our children, our communities and each other.

**Learning:** We take pride in our work and in delivering operational excellence and we keep learning how we can improve the support we provide to neurodivergent kids and their families, most importantly by centring their views and voices in everything we do and striving for disability justice.

**Collaboration:** We create communities. We network parents and carers. We seek out collaboration with like-minded service providers, bodies and agencies in our field and beyond, ensuring knowledge is shared and spread. We give communities the support they need to become inclusive of children with additional needs.

# Making a Difference

As neurodivergent parents supporting neurodivergent children, **we understand how and why the current services for neurodivergent people in Ireland do not work.**

We have firsthand experience of the lack of understanding, the waiting lists, the delays and the frustrations that families face every day. Our approach raises neurodivergent views meaning that we create the supports children and families need and want. Children thrive when they are placed at the centre of their community; their parents are supported and when schools, and activities and spaces are designed with them in mind.

## Occupational Therapist-Guided Group Play Sessions

Our core mission focuses on eliminating the routine exclusion of neurodivergent children from social activities. Our Occupational Therapist-Guided group play sessions provide a child-led, demand-free, and inclusive extracurricular environment. We promote authentic play and offer children a vital opportunity to make friends and be their authentic selves.

By March 2025, our pilot centre in Blackrock was supporting up to 200 children per week. Our pilot centre in Blackrock was made possible by the generosity of Aviva plc.



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# Making a Difference

## **Support Group for Parents & Carers**

We facilitate information sharing, referrals and peer mentoring for neurodivergent children and their families via a WhatsApp Support group

## **Neurodiversity Ireland Lanyards**

We provide Neurodiversity Ireland lanyards to individuals throughout Ireland and beyond which can be used to help empower neurodivergent people to request assistance or support in their daily lives and is accepted at a wide range of Irish events and at Irish airports, which can help to make outings and travels as stress free as possible.

## **Assistive Technology**

We support parents and children with assistive technology, as well deliver school and community trainings and were delighted to be awarded an AIB Community Award to support 4 schools with Assistive Technology.

## **Regulate: Participate! Programme for Schools**

This programme works at a whole-school level to create accessible and inclusive classrooms, driving the societal and cultural change central to the Neurodiversity Ireland movement. We provided schools with practical tools strategies encompassing:

- Sensory-supportive environmental adaptations.
- Flexible teaching methods.
- Communication strategies responsive to individual needs.

4 Schools successfully took part in the initial pilot programme funded by Rethink Ireland and the programme was delivered to 15+ primary schools in the Dublin area, reaching all teaching staff.

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# Making a Difference

## Extensive Outreach and Training Delivery

We established a key partnership with Trinity College Dublin's School of Occupational Therapy, where six OT students contributed their time to support our groups as part of a core module. This collaboration actively encourages the future generation of occupational therapists to develop the neuroaffirmative approaches essential for supporting neurodivergent children.

We are committed to removing financial barriers to vital knowledge, using online formats to ensure nationwide accessibility, including for those in rural or under-served areas.

We reached tens of thousands of individuals through webinars and specialized training sessions including:

- **FORSA:** Access to talk for 89,000+ FORSA members.
- **INTO:** Access to talk for 55,000+ INTO members
- **Healthcare Professionals** Live webinar for 450 doctors, OTs, and SLTs
- **Educational Professionals** Live and recorded webinar for 300 education professionals
- **Social Prescribing Link Workers** In-person session for 60 to support engaging with neurodivergent clients
- Corporate talks
- Planned Ireland's first **Neurodiversity Summit** taking place in Trinity College Dublin in May 2025 with a panel of leading international speakers



# Making a Difference

We **partnered with leading institutions** to embed neuroaffirmative practices in critical sectors:

**Children's Health Ireland (CHI)** Trained 15 Occupational Therapists on neuroaffirmative practices in healthcare settings

**RCSI & St John of Gods:** Consulted to create neuroaffirmative patient information for ADHD medication for children, which won a Gold Award at the Irish Health Care Awards 2025

**Tallaght A&E:** Consulted on creating a more accessible emergency department, collaborating on a guidance document nominated for an Irish Health Care Award in Dec 2024.

**UCD School of Architecture:** Consulted on designing Sensory Gardens on-campus (Oct 2024) to support student wellbeing

**Dublin City Council:** Collaborated to create the first-ever neurodivergent-only family festival, Sensoria (2024 and 2025).

We actively participate in discussions and events, and hold key positions on advisory bodies, including:

- Panel membership for Dyslexia awareness.
- DCDE's Autism Innovation Strategy Oversight and Advisory Board.
- Active membership in the Children's Rights Alliance.

# Testimonials

*Thank you for a brilliant presentation and education session today with the Forsa Skills Academy*

*You do wonderful work, it's great to have you visiting schools and spreading the word about neurodiversity and neuro-affirming approaches*

*Calls the sensory centre "home"*

*Thank you for welcoming, embracing and respecting L. and for providing him with an amazing and accepting environment of fun and friendship. It is clear to see how much it has positively benefited him and us all as a family*

*Keep doing whatever you're doing - it's working!*

*The best thing is the complete acceptance of neurotypes and not having to worry that they will be misunderstood or othered in any way. It is a massive relief to have a safe place, actually, thanks so much.*

# Governance, Risk & Compliance

The Board is responsible for the strategic direction, financial management and legal compliance of the organisation. It is ultimately responsible for the overall management of the organisation but delegates the day-to-day running of the organisation to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Senior Management Team.

The Board of Directors ensures the effective implementation of the organization's strategy and oversees management through regular Board meetings. Clear policies formally define the distinct roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and the Company Secretary. The Matters Reserved for the Board policy provides explicit guidance on the delineation of authority between the Board and CEO.

The Board held 9 full meetings in the financial year ended 31 March 2025.

The Board rigorously enforces a Conflicts of Interests & Conflicts of Loyalty which clearly defines what constitutes a conflict and outlines the mandatory procedures for managing such conflicts should they arise. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest or Loyalty are a standard and required agenda item at every Board meeting.

Neurodiversity Ireland continues to meet its regulatory obligations, including Charities Regulator compliance, safeguarding, and GDPR. The Board maintains a Risk Register which is reviewed annually.



# Financial Overview

KSI Faulkner Orr prepared the financial statements of the charity for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 on the going concern basis and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102". We maintain a prudent reserves policy.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)  
for the financial year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2025 €	Restricted Funds 2025 €	Total Funds 2025 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €
<b>Income</b>							
Donations and legacies	5.1	456,908	-	456,908	359,403	-	359,403
Charitable activities - Grants	5.2	-	50,798	50,798	-	60,300	60,300
<b>Total income</b>		<b>456,908</b>	<b>50,798</b>	<b>507,706</b>	<b>359,403</b>	<b>60,300</b>	<b>419,703</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Charitable activities	6.1	505,445	66,675	572,120	294,926	36,423	331,349
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>(48,537)</b>	<b>(15,877)</b>	<b>(64,414)</b>	<b>64,477</b>	<b>23,877</b>	<b>88,354</b>
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds for the financial year</b>		<b>(48,537)</b>	<b>(15,877)</b>	<b>(64,414)</b>	<b>64,477</b>	<b>23,877</b>	<b>88,354</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>							
Total funds beginning of the year	17	230,032	23,877	253,909	165,555	-	165,555
<b>Total funds at the end of the year</b>		<b>181,495</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>189,495</b>	<b>230,032</b>	<b>23,877</b>	<b>253,909</b>



# Financial Overview

## Income

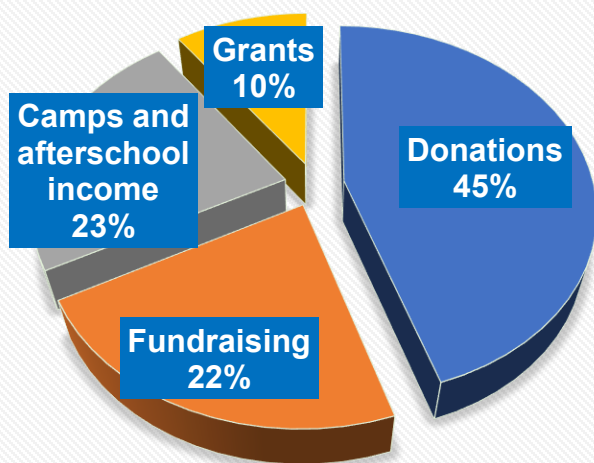
Our total income for the year ending 31 March 2025 was €507,706 of which 10% (€50,798) was restricted. This income directly funds our range of charitable activities.

## Grants

We received grants throughout the year including Parent Peers Support Fund (Pobal Ireland) supporting our webinar programme, AIB Community Fund supporting an assistive technology programme in local schools and Rethink Ireland which funded our Regulate Participate and OT Camps.

## Fundraising

We depend on fundraising and donations to support our activities. We are deeply grateful to those who donate and organise events for us, particularly our flagship fundraiser, the Infinity Ball.



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# Our plans for 2026 and beyond...

Our Strategy sets out our goals for 2026 and beyond and clearly defines what we hope to achieve. We will finally move to our permanent home, a **Sensory Centre of Excellence** located in Sandymount. Here we will continue to build our team of neuroaffirmative professionals.

In the face of ongoing crisis faced by so many families who cannot access supports, we continue to **advocate loudly** for systemic change, engaging with Government Ministers, Department Officials the HSE and Tusla.



# 1

## THRIVING CHILDREN

1. **Move into our new Sensory Centre** which will allow us to triple our capacity and expand our range of community-based supports, designed by and for neurodivergent children and their families.
2. **Expand the type of support we offer** to include more group and intensive therapies, parent consultations and family supports, neuroaffirmative assessments and mental health supports made for neurodivergent children and young people.
3. **Extend our current neuroaffirmative education programme** to reach more students, early-career professionals, schools, parents and community members, ensuring greater understanding and inclusion.
4. **Build a strong, expert team of future health and allied professionals.** We partner with universities to teach occupational therapy, speech therapy and health and social care students about strengths-based, inclusive, neuroaffirmative practices and values and to advocate for removal of practices that are harmful.
5. **Build a scalable model.** We are developing a full blueprint for Neurodiversity Ireland that will guide others on how to implement our supports in their local communities.



## 2

## CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

1. **Use our influence to ensure policy catches up with real life.** We're building strong relationships with government and key national policymakers, major service providers and educational institutions, helping to embed neuroaffirmative values in policy.
2. **Help people understand who we are and what we stand for.** We host the annual Neurodiversity Summit which brings together experts aligned with our mission and values and which gives support and education to parents, educators, professionals and caregivers.
3. **Provide support for communities and local groups** to help them adopt universal design when they plan activities, events and systems, embedding neuroaffirmative values at grassroots.
4. **Evolve and invest in our language guide.** We'll continue to lead on neuroaffirmative language, building on the success of our Language Guide's widespread adoption. We will evolve the guide, shaped by feedback from our community and ensure it becomes part of everyday language across Ireland.



# 3

## BRIGHT FUTURES

- 1. Educating the Educators.** We'll continue our work helping schools to become more neuroaffirmative by delivering practical support at multiple levels; directly in schools, through undergraduate programmes in universities, and as part of Continual Professional Development (CPD) for teachers. We will advocate for neuroaffirmative education to be formally embedded in all teacher training frameworks.
- 2. Providing Support for Schools and Parents on assistive communication** We help schools and families understand how alternative communication including assistive technology can support children by modelling implementation and providing advice and resources that can be scaled nationally.
- 3. Supporting children and teens who cannot access school.** We will increase the support we provide to young people at our Centre including providing an alternative space for education, that suits children who are not able to access traditional schooling.
- 4. Contributing to Research.** We will help close the loop between academic research and real-world application. We centre lived experience and the views of our neurodivergent children and families and ensure their rights are upheld in all of our work. We advocate for total removal of ABA and other behaviourist practices and we promote understanding of Gestalt language development as another means of natural language acquisition.

# Acknowledgements

Our staff and volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. We model the type of inclusion for which we advocate.

We are incredibly grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partner organisations and the families and children who have participated in our programmes.

We are also grateful for the donations and grants we received which allowed us to expand our supports.





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