The Nerve

The Brain Charity

National support for all neurological conditions November/December 2024



Unwrap the magic of our Christmas cards

The Brain Charity

Ready to spread a little extra Christmas joy this year? Our 2024 Christmas card collection is here, offering the perfect way to send love and festive cheer to all your family and friends.

With a wide variety of styles and themes to choose from, you'll find something for everyone. Whether you're after traditional holiday scenes, contemporary designs, or something truly unique, we've got just the right card to make your season special.

And the best part? Prices are held from last year. Each pack of 10 cards is just **£3.50 + P&P** – a fantastic offer!

This Christmas, give more than just a card – give hope, joy and support to people affected by neurological conditions.

Head to our website now to browse the collection and start spreading the magic of Christmas in 2024: **www.bit.ly/TBCxmas**, order by post, or pop into our centre to pick up your favourite designs in person.



Winter Garden



Newborn King



Winter Wildlife



Peace at Christmas



Letters to Santa



Festive Recipies

Share your moments of joy: Neuro Noel 2024

We're proud to launch The Brain Charity's festive fundraising campaign for 2024: Neuro Noel. This year we want to focus on the moments of joy and hope that are happening around us, and we want to hear from you!

We're asking our community, clients and our supporters to share your moments of joy with us. Whether it's a special moment of hope during your time with us at The Brain Charity, or a positive memory of how we helped you on your journey, we would love to hear it.

Your stories will be featured as part of our Neuro Noel campaign, helping us to raise vital funds for The Brain Charity. Our goal is to raise £20,000 which will then be doubled by the Aviva Community Fund, raising £40,000 in total. This means every contribution has twice the impact. With your help, we can continue to support people living with neurological conditions.

You can share your moment of joy in whichever way you find easiest:

- Visit our centre to tell us in person (ask reception if you can speak to the fundraising team) or hand in a written submission to reception
- Email us at **hello@thebraincharity.org.uk**
- Call our fundraising team on **0151 433 3484**.

By sharing your experiences with us, you'll help us to raise awareness and spread hope to more people. Together, we can make this festive season brighter for everyone.
Join us in celebrating joy and making a difference.

Neurodiversity Arts Festival 2024:

A celebration of talent and inclusivity

Our Neurodiversity Arts Festival 2024 came to a close after a successful 10-day celebration of neurodivergent talent and creativity. At the end of September, the festival transformed Liverpool into a vibrant hub of artistic expression and showcased the incredible diversity within the neurodivergent community. We had hundreds of people attend across 13 venues.

The festival's lineup featured a variety of events, from artistic showcases and theatre performances to musical acts and activities for children. Highlights included the two comedy nights at The Brain Charity, a powerful theatre performance of The Boy King and the Meet the Artist event at Tate Liverpool.



Festival organisers Chris Beaumont (R) and Jo Dowd (L) with Johnny Vegas at the launch

Thanks to partnerships with major city institutions like National Museums Liverpool, The Bluecoat, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, we were able to broaden the festival's reach and provide a platform for neurodivergent artists to shine.

The Neurodiversity Arts Festival wasn't just about entertainment though, it aimed to increase awareness about understanding neurodiversity and accessibility.



The Boy King with Jordan Connerty – a play about a boy whose love of history transformed his life growing up with autism

Educational workshops and talks helped in breaking down barriers, while interactive events allowed our participants to engage directly with the artists.

Guests were also able to enjoy two evenings of comedy in The Brain Charity building, where under-represented voices took centre stage with Bliss Comedy and Disabilarity.



Our Meet the Artist event at the Tate featured (L-R) Pierce Starre, Sonia Boué, Becky Beasley and Prof. Claire Penketh



Flowers in the window. A display at Lush Liverpool with creator Tess Gilmartin
Credit: Brian Roberts Images



The Bliss Comedy show at The Brain Charity



Poet Gregory Kearns performing at our opening night



Blue Room inclusive arts takeover at Lush Liverpool

The feedback we received from our attendees at the festival included **"beautifully presented"** and **"relatable"**. We also received positive feedback about accessibility. The artists said **"We had an absolutely fantastic time with the Monster Disco and were incredibly happy to be part of the festival."** and **"The event at the Black- E was a huge success and a beautiful atmosphere."**

On behalf of everyone involved, we want to say a special thanks to the brilliant artists, the amazing venues, all of the attendees and our fabulous volunteers who provided the Neurodiversity Arts Festival with 21 days of volunteer time, which equates to 161 hours!



A year of life-changing support at the Neuro Gym

Since opening in November 2023, the Neuro Gym has become a key part of The Brain Charity and there can't be many visitors to our centre who aren't familiar with the sounds of exercise equipment or the friendly face of our Gym Manager Scott.

We are so proud to be able to offer secure, free, high-quality exercise opportunities to our community. Since opening with just a few pieces of donated equipment, over the year we have added a THERA-bike, a fully accessible treadmill and a Boditrax body composition analysis machine — the only gym space in Liverpool where this state-of-the-art equipment can be accessed for free.

"I wouldn't do without it," said Mary. **"I think it's a fantastic resource, especially because it's free, I couldn't afford a paid gym. I've noticed a difference already; my legs aren't as stiff as before."**

Overall gym visits 4602 (Jan to Sept)



The impact of our Neuro Gym

In our first year, the Neuro Gym has seen some remarkable achievements. So far, 206 members have been registered and inducted, with the gym receiving an average of 105 visitors each week. People have been able to take part in a wide range of activities in the gym, including new age kurling, chair-based yoga, boccia, tai chi and seated dance classes. We have also introduced dedicated women-only and men-only slots for exercise through the week.





"It's lovely to be able to have the freedom of the Neuro Gym because I can't go to an abled body gym," said Donna, who has found herself more motivated than ever to exercise. "On the THERA-bike I started on a resistance level of 1 and have just gone up to 2, so I feel like I'm improving."

THERA-bike
4,201 Km in 14,738 mins

Cardio bike
4,412 Km in 12,573 mins

Our Neuro Gym users have a healthy competition to see who can run or cycle the furthest each month. In fact, so far this year they have covered the equivalent distance of travelling from Liverpool to Tokyo!

Cross trainer
684 Km in 2,416 mins



Gym photographs Credit: James Speakman Photography

If you want to improve your health at a pace that suits you, email our Gym Manager Scott at **gym@thebraincharity.org.uk**

Corporate fundraising roundup

This year, The Brain Charity was proud to work with numerous businesses committed to supporting the 1 in 6 people living with neurological conditions. We wanted to take the time to look back on the highlights of their corporate fundraising this year and to say a huge thank you for their support.

Continuing our established relationship, hotel brands **Malmaison** and **Hotel du Vin** employees scaled Snowdon, raising £4,794, while Hotel du Vin Glasgow participated in the Kilt Walk. Malmaison Belfast raised £1,000 through a golf day and General Manager Eamonn Elliot tackled the off-road Tollymore Trail marathon.

New supporters also got involved. **Frasers Property UK** entered the JLL Property Triathlon, raising over £2,500.



Malmaison and Hotel du Vin employees summit Snowdon

Oxford Aunts held bucket collections at local carnivals, and **The Good Care Group** raised over £1,000 at Tough Mudder. Care manager Nichola Proctor ran the Yorkshire Marathon, her first ever marathon!



Good Care Group Tough Mudder team

Longworth Building Services raised more than £7,000 through an Inflatable 5k run and an overnight Snowdon trek.
There will be more events this festive season, including Santa Dash fun runs, Christmas craft fairs, and bake sales.



Longworth Building Services Inflatable 5k runners

We're also thrilled to announce two new partnerships with **AT Superstore**, an online assistive technology retailer, and **Deer Shed Festival** 2025, a creative festival held in North Yorkshire.

We want to say a big thank you to all our corporate supporters for all their efforts this year – we can't wait to see what 2025 brings!



Neurodiversity trainer Snoof

Navigating neurodivergence

A Q&A with Snoof

Many people are diagnosed with autism or ADHD later in life, which can lead to new ways of understanding themselves and their experiences. Here, we chat with Snoof, a trainer at The Brain Charity, about their experiences of being diagnosed as an adult and the unique challenges faced by neurodivergent people.

Q **What are the benefits of getting an autism or ADHD diagnosis as an adult?**

A A diagnosis gives people access to a community of people who share a neurotype. Many of us find out why we experience the world the way we do by talking to others and finding common ground. It's easy to grow up thinking something is wrong with you but seeing traits you share in others helps you recognise those traits can be wonderful.

Q **Are there risks in the diagnosis process?**

A It can be tricky and traumatic. You're asked to focus on your struggle, not strengths. Some people do still see you as less-than – I've seen attitudes shift when people learn I'm neurodivergent. Neurodiversity is in its infancy and can make it difficult to advocate for yourself.

Q **What's your advice for someone who thinks they might be neurodivergent?**

A Seek out materials about the condition you're researching, by people with that condition. It's important to remember the way you experience the world, and what others see, are two different things.

But my most important piece of advice is to be kind to yourself and go easy. You can't hate yourself into being someone other than yourself. Read the full interview here: **www.bit.ly/SnoofQA**

Jumping Hurdles



This is a groundbreaking children's book that introduces Bea, a young girl recently diagnosed with dyspraxia, which is a condition affecting motor coordination. As she faces her first Sports Day after the diagnosis, Bea wonders if she can still take part and do her best.

The story is heartwarming and empowering, showing how Bea learns to navigate her new reality and approach the challenges ahead. Through Bea's journey, the book provides representation for the 6% of people in the UK living with dyspraxia, a group that's severely underrepresented in both adult and children's literature.

Bea's determination and resilience shine as she discovers that having dyspraxia doesn't define her. This is a must-read for children with dyspraxia or anyone who wants to better understand the condition, offering an inspiring message of self-acceptance and perseverance.

We'd like to thank the author, Sarah Surgery, for including The Brain Charity in the support section of her book and for helping to raise awareness of dyspraxia.

A creative journey

At The Brain Charity, we believe art can make a big difference in people's lives. This was illustrated in the recent exhibition of gel prints at Crosby Library, which showcased the incredible work of participants from a 12-week project at The Brain Charity. During the project, attendees had the opportunity to explore the art of gel printing.

For many this was their first experience working with printmaking and throughout the project the group supported and encouraged one another to take risks, play with new techniques and embrace the joy of the artistic process.



Group leader Suze de Lee said:

"The creativity and passion that each attendee brought to the project was a constant source of motivation, and I feel incredibly privileged to have shared this creative journey with them. Their gifts are remarkable, and I have no doubt that success will follow them wherever their creative paths lead. "Wishing the gel printmaking artists all the very best on their artistic journeys!"

Social Activities November - December

Christmas coffee morning: 10.30 am till 12 noon on Monday 2nd December.

	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday
Mornings	Art for wellbeing 10am – 12.15pm	Knit and natter 10am – 12pm Craft Club 10am – 12pm	
Afternoons	Ukulele for all 12pm – 1pm	Drawing group 1.30pm – 3pm	Ukulele for all 12pm – 1pm
	Maths 1.30pm – 3pm	Aphasia social 2pm – 3pm	Gardening drop-in 12pm – 4pm
	Shared reading 3pm – 4pm	Sing and a social 4pm – 5pm	

Please note: Due to roof refurbishment work, all activities scheduled to be held in our meeting rooms are cancelled throughout the month of November.

Activities in the gym, including our ukulele group, will continue as planned and the café will remain open during this time.

Please visit **www.thebraincharity.org.uk/events** for the latest information.

What's on at the Neuro Gym

NEURO GYM

DAY	MORNING	AFTERNOON	Virtual Sessions
Monday	Open gym access 9.30am – 12.30pm	Boccia 1 – 2pm and 2 – 3pm if busy Open gym access 3 – 4.30pm	Seated gym 1pm
Tuesday	Open gym access 9.30am – 1pm	Tai chi 2.30pm	Boxing 9.30am
Wednesday	Open gym access 9.30am – 12.30pm	Women only workout 1 – 3pm Seated dance/movement 3 – 4pm	Seated exercise 10.30am
Thursday	Open gym access 9.30am – 12.30pm	New age kurling 1 – 2pm Men only Thursday 2 – 4pm Hand cycling session 2.15pm	Weekly support groups 11.30am
Friday	Open gym access 9.30am – 12.30pm Circuit classes 11am – 12pm	Yoga class 'move it or lose it' 1 – 2pm Gym inductions 2 – 3.30pm Table Tennis 2.30 – 3.30pm	Mindfulness 10.30am Strength & balance 11.30am High intensity training 12pm

Ways you can support us

We are very grateful for any support during these challenging times. Here are some of the ways you can help:

Donate online

Making a regular or a one-off donation will help The Brain Charity continue to do the amazing work it does on a daily basis.
Donating couldn't be simpler. Just visit:
www.thebraincharity.org.uk/donate
to give an amount of your choice today!

Give as you live

Give as you Live®

Give as you Live is a simple way for you to support The Brain Charity every time you shop with any of the major brands – at no extra cost to yourself.

Getting involved is easy – just register at **www.bit.ly/GAYLTBC** to start raising money for The Brain Charity today.

Donate by text

Give just £3 now by texting **BRAIN** to **70460**. Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message. If you'd like to give £3 but do not wish to receive any marketing communications, text **BRAINNOINFO** to **70460**.

Website shop

We offer all our charity-branded items for sale through our online store:
www.thebraincharity.org.uk/shop

Donate via QR code

Scan the QR code (right) on your mobile phone camera now to donate:

About The Brain Charity

The Brain Charity offers emotional support, practical help and social activities to anyone with a neurological condition and to their family, friends and carers.

For more information, contact the centre or visit our website:
www.thebraincharity.org.uk

If you wish to be added to our mailing list, to receive news and fundraising updates including The Nerve, please go to **www.bit.ly/signupTBC** or ask our information team (on the number and email address below) to add you to the list.

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The Nerve is available in large text on request and as a PDF on The Brain Charity website:
www.thebraincharity.org.uk

Connect with us: @thebraincharity

The Brain Charity is registered as a charity (No: 1114999) and a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No: 05741930)

The Brain Charity

Responsibly sourced paper

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