



2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Medway Asthma Self Help

Registered Charity Number 1196597

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

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Medway Asthma Self Help **(MASH)**

Established in 1996, MASH supports people and families affected by asthma through provision of support and information relating to causes of asthma and its effective treatment, and by raising awareness of asthma in the general community of Medway.

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Acknowledgements

Dr Martin Farebrother
Alan Stockey
Cllr Chrissy Stamp
Emma Joy
Fiona Pender
Samantha Whybrow
Dr Paula Hamilton
Judith Pender
Julie Millest
Holly Avery
Kirsty Ferguson
Adam Spicer
Andrew McGoffog
Anir Manivannan
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Asha Saroy
Bridget Nightingale
Carole Coulthard
Clive Johnson
Diana Smith
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Isabella Boyle
Jessica Pender
Julie Critcher
Joanna Sloat
Katie Lowe
Mark Spicer
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Michaela Temperley
Nanili Manivannan
Peter Wearing
Sean Hanna
Wendy Plamer
Cllr Dan McDonald
Cllr Gary Etheridge
Cllr Hazel Brown
Cllr John Williams
Prof. John Dickinson
Chris and Christine Rogers
Dorte Gilry
Nicki Georgini
Asthma and Lung UK
Bedfont Scientific Ltd
Belinda @ Luci-Belle Crystals
British Lung Foundation
Ade Bimpy
Amy @ Tropic Skincare
Anne-Marie Moore
Barbara Smith
Belinda Baker
Canva
Central Theatre, Chatham
Charity Digital
Chloe-Anne Air Ambulance
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Co-op Community Fund
Charlotte @ Refind Glamour
Claire and Aidan @ Beyond
Beauty
Deborah @ Mid Kent
College
Diggerland, Strood
Dragonfly Crystals
East Medway University
of the Third Age (U3A)
EasyFundraising
Elite Kent Mobile Massage
Emma Vernon
Eureka Direct
Farmasi Beauty -Hannah
Fiona Mukhtar
Frank Whittaker
From Our Hands to Yours
Funding For All
Georgie Marian
Hannah Calvert
Healthwatch Medway
Heike Dardis
Historic Dockyard,
Chatham
Helen O'Neill
Iain Ferguson Carpentry
IONOS
Imprint Media Designs
Inter Medical
Kieran Poole
Kent Community
Foundation
In Kind Direct
Janet Cheeseman
Jennifer Sutton @ Wave Community
Bank
Julie Martin
Karen @ The Lotus Hair Room
Koko Tan and Brows
Kiki's Cakes
Kirstie Reynolds
Lauren Witham
Lisa Gibbs
Lisa Lee
Louise Peat
Louis Phillpot @ Medway Council
Maliwan Massage and Therapy
Margaret Smith
Microsoft
Mediclinic Pharmacy
Medway CCG
Medway Community
Healthcare
Medway Council
Medway Lottery Community Fund
Medway Park
Medway Voluntary Action
Melts By Lauren
Michelle Covill
Mini Maisie Makes
Munya Badze @ Medway Council
Nicola Kingston
Nucleus Arts
Omni Osteopathy
PayPal Giving Fund
Rachel Turner
Rainham Eco Hub
Rainham Nutrition Club
Robyn Mapp
Rochester Cathedral
Rochester Eco Hub
Roko Health Club
Sarah at Scentsy
Sally Anne
Spensley's Pharmacy,
Twydall
St Augustines Church
St Margaret's Millennium Centre
Sue Patey @ Colour 4 Confidence
Sylvia Ottway
Tesco Stores throughout
Medway and in particular
Gillingham and Rainham
Tesco Community Fund
Tina Ullah
Tilly's Treasure Box
Terri Rhodes
The Department for Digital,
Cultural, Media and Sport DCMS)
The Gary Bush Foundation
The Growth Place
The Millennium Centre, Rainham
The Transformation Academy
The Whitehead Monkton
Charitable Foundation
Terri Rhodes
Universal Stores, Lower Stoke
University of Greenwich
University of Kent
Watling Street Post Office
Waitrose, Longfield

Chair of Trustee's Report

It has been 15 months since the last AGM in November 2024. Since then there have been two periods for MASH. For the first 9 months, up to July 2025 MASH achieved a great deal, with increased activity and strengthening of services. However in the last 6 months there have been major difficulties with the clinic service, as explained below. This has been very challenging.

As members will know, MASH has for more than 30 years provided an outreach and information service to asthma sufferers, their relatives, and others. Also for 28 years MASH has provided a clinic service, offering advice to those with asthma or possible asthma about diagnosis and management of their condition. This service is provided by an Asthma Specialist Nurse (ASN), who makes recommendations for patients and for their GPs. We know from feedback from patients, from GPs, from Medway Maritime Hospital, and from Medway Council, that this service is highly valued, and provides advice to many asthmatics that is not at present available elsewhere.

The first half of the year was overwhelmingly positive. With support from various funders including Tesco Community Grants and The Gary Bush Foundation, MASH undertook a full programme of outreach and fundraising – working in partnership with various other organisations including MCH and School nurses. Also with Medway Breathes, which particularly increases awareness and resources in schools. This is linked to the campaign to reduce car engine idling near schools. Our Coordinator Kirsty Ferguson strengthened her fundraising experience and skills through various training courses.

MASH invested in and developed our clinic service, with help from several funders including Whitehead and Monkton Charitable Foundation and Medway Lottery Community Fund, Medway Councillors Ward Improvement Funds and Bedfont Scientific Ltd. In May the clinic went digital with new clinic management software. The present Asthma Specialist Nurse, Holly Avery, who took over from Julie Millett in Autumn 2024, completed her training. A new spirometer was purchased. With the help of funders additional clinics were undertaken and the waiting list was significantly reduced.

During the first half of 2025 the Trustees were greatly assisted by Katie Lowe, who as a project reviewed and updated most of the important MASH policies. This was an important improvement in governance. MASH was also fortunate to be helped by another volunteer, Mark Spicer, an IT Specialist in business, who acquired free or at low cost better computer equipment and software, and implemented the new clinic management system. He is also now Data Protection Officer (DPO) for MASH. We are indebted to both Katie and Mark.

With great regret MASH was forced to suspend the clinic service in July 2025. One reason was the appearance of mould in the MASH premises, adjacent to the clinic room. This was traced to water penetration from a leaking gutter on the floor above. This has been repaired by the landlord, and the premises are drying out.

The other reason for the suspension is that it became apparent, in relation in particular to the restoration of a spirometry service, that some MASH clinic activities require registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Since then, MASH has made considerable progress towards a CQC application. MASH trustees and volunteers have been working hard on the governance and budget implications, which will increase considerably associated with CQC registration. Good progress has been made and most major things are now in place to be able to submit an application.

The main outstanding requirement is to assure the CQC of funding to provide the clinic service. For many years, MASH has received NHS funding. This has now been terminated because the clinic service is not being provided, but the CQC application requires this, or equivalent funding guarantees, to be successful. The NHS funding met the major part of the expenses of the clinic. The Trustees think that a way forward has been found to re-instate at least part of the clinic service, partly using donated funds, and we hope that the CQC application can be submitted very soon.

MASH is largely a volunteer-led self-help group and without the support of our many volunteers and members we would not exist. In addition to Katie and Mark, already mentioned, we thank Andrew McGuffogg, for help with the accounts, and Bridget Nightingale and Peter Wearing. Also to Chris Harvey, for again examining and certifying the accounts. And particular thanks to Kirsty Ferguson, Administrator. Coordinator and Fundraiser, for her hard work and continued enthusiasm.

I would personally like to thank the Trustees for their help and hard work during this difficult year. Thanks to Emma Joy and Samantha Whybrow, who stood down during the year. We have been joined by Fiona Pender, formerly Administrator at MASH and now manager of a larger charity, and Chrissy Stamp, Councillor for Watling Ward. And especial thanks to Alan Stockey, who is standing down at the AGM. He has been Secretary, and took on the role of Treasurer in addition last year. He is also our main link to Medway Breathes, and the schools programmes, and will continue this link as a volunteer. Finally to Judith Pender, who has soldiered on despite a major injury, and is a founder member of MASH.

We desperately need more trustees to be able to continue MASH and we urge anyone who can help us to come forward to speak to us as soon as possible. We also need your ideas and feedback. Your views will help feed into the direction MASH will take at this challenging time. We need to know how we have helped so we can strengthen our case for support. We appeal to all to please respond to the survey which is soon to be circulated..

So we enter 2026 hoping to reach more people in the community than ever with outreach activities, and to re-instate the much-needed clinic service. I hope that there will be more news on some of these matters to report at the AGM.

Martin Farebrother
Chair of Trustees

Could you be a MASH Trustee?

We are always looking to expand and strengthen our trustee board, to help us continue to support people and families affected by Asthma in Medway.

We are looking to expand the board with a range of skills, expertise and interest in the following areas (including but not limited to)

- People with asthma
- People who care for or work with people with asthma
- People with Human Resource experience
- People with Accountancy experience
- People with Social Media experience
- People with IT experience



If you could give a few hours each month to support your local asthma charity, please get in touch to discuss on admin@medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk or call 01634 855844

Volunteering with MASH

MASH volunteers are an essential part of our charity. They help support our clinics, outreach, fundraising events and also help in the office. We are always looking to increase our number of volunteers, meaning we can increase our reach and services within the local community. Any amount of time that you are able to spare to help us, will be very gratefully received.

We would also like to hear from you if you have any fundraising ideas.

We are pleased to be part of the Medway Time Tempo Credit Scheme, allowing volunteers to earn Time Credits for their time contributed to MASH. These can be spent on accessing activities across a nationwide network, as well as within Medway.

You can email us on admin@medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk or call 01634 855844 to find out more.

We  our
Volunteers

Coordinator Report

What a year we have had! With many ups and downs over the last 12 months, here are some highlights!

With an ever increasing waiting list, enquiries and calls for information, MASH has continued to serve the people of Medway who need us.

We further increased our clinic capacity with thanks to a successful funding application to The Whitehead Monkton Charitable Foundation, allowing us for 2 extra clinic sessions a month for 6 months. This helped us to reduce our waiting list from 18 weeks to 8-10 weeks. It was wonderful to be able to help many of our clients and we were so pleased to be able to reduce their waiting time. The majority of our appointments have been face to face, with very few being carried out via telephone. This ensures everyone can have a thorough examination from Holly, our Specialist Asthma Nurse. We thank everyone for their patience for the ever growing waiting list, we will be with you as soon as we can.

With that said, we have had a few difficulties within our Centre and sadly had to temporarily close our clinics due to maintenance in the latter half of the year (please see Chair's Report on page 5) . This has taken longer than expected resulting in the waiting list now hitting 25 weeks.

We have also been very busy with our outreach events. We visited All Saints Church supporting Carers First, we also set up a stall at The Pentagon Centre, Chatham and spoke to many lovely visitors being able to give out advice and information to those in need. We visited Medway Schools as part of the Asthma Friendly Schools Scheme, informing staff about our services. We visited GP surgeries, speaking to the people who refer our clients to us and discussing asthma care. We also visited some of our regular events including The Medway Mile at Medway Park, The Rochester Eco Hub Christmas Fayre and The Salvation Army Christmas Fayre. We also spent some time in Medway Maritime Hospital during #AskAboutAsthma week speaking to both Healthcare Professionals and the general public.

We did an answer and question session, where we asked our clients for questions about asthma that they wanted answered. All of these can be found on our social media pages. We had questions that included 'Can children outgrow asthma', 'What is something you wish people understood better about living with asthma', 'What are signs of poorly controlled asthma in my child', 'How do I know if my child has asthma', 'What is the difference between a reliever and preventer inhaler', 'Can asthma be life threatening', 'Should I be using a spacer' and 'How much is too much of my reliever inhaler'. Please take a look on our social media pages on Facebook, Instagram and X to see the whole display of questions.



Via our outreach we visited several children and young peoples groups including Brownies, Beavers and Preschools, talking to them about how they can manage their own asthma and also how to support their peers if they have asthma too. The children were so engaged with what we was talking about and went away full of information and excitement.

We have partnered with the Medway Breathes project in supplying over 40 schools with Emergency Asthma Inhaler Kits too. This is a great initiative and with so many schools now having an emergency inhaler, meaning the children of Medway with asthma are even safer!

Our fundraising events have also been very successful with several quizzes, a Pamper Evening and a Christmas Market. All these events raise much needed funds for us. We also attended the Funding For All Makers Market, where we was kindly donated some beautifully baked goods and cushions from volunteers and a small local business to sell and raise some funds!

We have also been very busy submitting applications for bids, with several being successful and some still going through the shortlist process. It is increasingly more difficult, each year to be triumphant in bid applications, with only 1 in 6 bids being awarded. The competition is very fierce with so many worthwhile charities bidding for the same pot of money!

We have been fortunate to increase our volunteers pool with new recruits helping us with our IT system, bookkeeping and clinic sessions as well as our outreach! We are so grateful for all of our volunteers that give up their time to help us. Without you we would not be able to carry out the work that we do, so thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers!

Our trustee board has seen a few changes in the last 12 months, with us saying goodbye to Emma and Sam, and hello to Fiona and Chrissy. Thank you to all of our trustees for their continued hard work, enthusiasm and dedication to MASH!

Within our advice sessions, we have seen the implementation of some practice management software that allows us to digitalise our appointment system. It has proven to be very successful with emails being sent out to our clients upon booking an appointment and email reminders being sent via email and text on the run up to their appointment. It also allows us to pull data from it that we can easily analyse for our funding applications.

Kirsty Ferguson
Coordinator and Fundraiser

What is the MyAsthma App?

The my mHealth App (MyAsthma) is a self management app, that is designed to empower patients with comprehensive tools and information to manage their asthma more effectively. It offers

- Personalised Asthma Action Plans
- Medication List
- Weather Reports
- Education
- Videos

The app is free to download, and you can log in via your NHS login

Should my child be using their spacer?

YES! Everyone should be using a spacer with a metered dose inhaler, even adults. Without a spacer, most of the medication ends up at the back of the throat or is swallowed. With a spacer, the majority of the medication reaches the airways where it is needed (as per image below)

Can asthma be life threatening?

Unfortunately, yes it can be life threatening and over 1000 people a year die from asthma. This is why it is so important for asthma to be well controlled and for patients to understand when to seek medical help.

Clinic Report

Holly, our nurse has been busy seeing some wonderful clients this year. Please see what she has to say below . . .

'It has been a busy year, seeing approximately 226 children and adults between October and July.

The new NICE guidelines on asthma were published in November 2024 and the new recommendations have been very interesting, advising that adults start on MART or AIR plans. Many adults seen in clinic have found this to be life changing for their symptoms and quality of life so this seems to be a very positive change to practice.

We continue to be supported by our amazing volunteers and Kirsty our admin, as well as external companies such as Bedfont who support us with our FeNO equipment servicing and parts. We also have purchased new spiroometry equipment with support from the company, which will allow us to do additional testing in line with the NICE guidelines.'

Holly Avery
Specialist Asthma Nurse



Clinic Feedback

Here are the most common things our clients feedback to us ...



Treasurer's Report

In 2024-25, MASH recorded an income of £22,148, down from £28,406 in 2023-24. At the end of September 2025, available funds totalled £26,825, of which £10,441 was held in reserve, including £7,441 wind-up funds. At the end of the year restricted funds carried through to 2025-26 amounted to £4,184.

One of the main sources of income for the year was from the NHS. This has been in place for many years to provide clinic support at our one-to-one advice clinics. Income was significantly less than previous years as a result of the ICB service provider structure reviews, which resulted in only a partial year's funding being received within this financial year. This has been the main reason for the drop in income year on year. Subsequently, following the pausing of our clinic service, for reasons outlined in the Chairmans report, the contract has now ended.

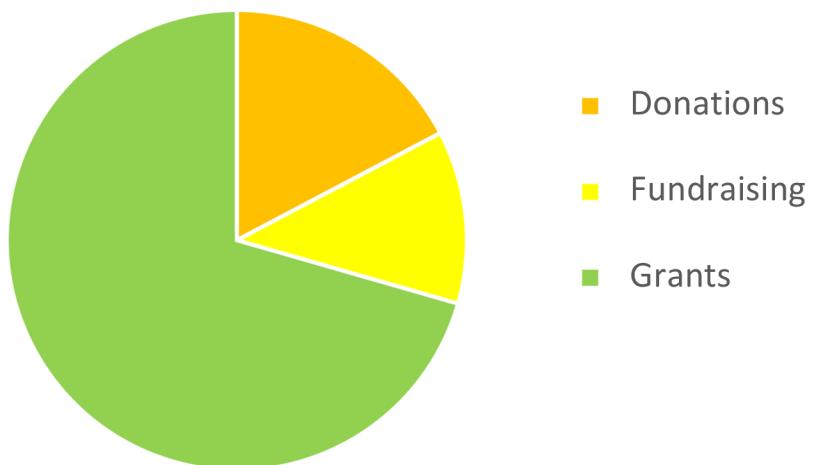
Other main sources of funds have included Ward Improvements Funds - Medway Councillors have been generous in remembering us in their allocations – these have been largely restricted to upgrades to our clinical operations. Since the clinics have been paused some of this has been carried over to 2026.

Other funders have included Tesco via their in store blue token votes, resulting in an award of £1,500 for clinics (£1,125 again carried forward, with a further £375 to be received at project end) and earlier in the year MASH secured a £2,500 grant from Whitehead Monckton which enabled us to add some additional clinics in order to address the waiting list and see more clients. The team have stepped up efforts to raise funds from trusts and foundations to help cover core costs as well as support of outreach projects. In 2026 MASH also aims to raise funds to reinstate our clinic service. We have had some success since the financial year end.

Just over £3,500 has been donated during the year, including £2,000 received from the Gary Bush Foundation with gratitude. Regular donations have equalled £255 - this is an area we see some potential to develop, starting with our appeal planned for January 2026.

Fundraising in the community was around the same level as the previous 2 years, largely from regular popular and well-established events including quizzes and pamper evenings. Moving forward MASH will be reviewing and strengthening its community fundraising efforts, while keeping well established events we will look for new ways to raise awareness of MASH in the community while raising much needed funds. MASH now aims to have at least one initiative each month

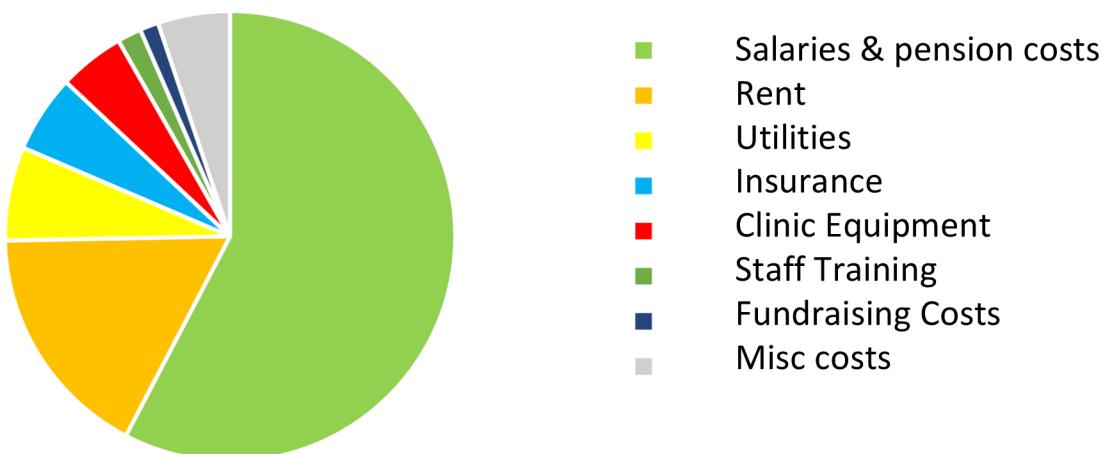
MASH Income 2024-25



MASH's 2024-25 expenditure was £35,217, broken down below. The largest outgoing was salaries of our two part-time employees and costs associated with our premises. The cost of running a weekly clinic, with an allocation of relevant costs is approximately £14,000 per year.

Costs have increased by almost 12% in 2024-5, largely as a result of investment in clinic operations and training, additional activities and obtaining specialist legal guidance associated with professional indemnity insurance.

MASH Expenditure 2024-25



With the income significantly lower than expenditure, MASH has seen a funding deficit of £13,069 in 2024-25, the deficit growing year on year in large part due to changes in the timing and allocation of NHS funding, previously paid on an annual basis and rising costs.

It has been a difficult six months at MASH; fundraising has been tricky with much uncertainty since July when we paused our clinics. Over the past six years our activities have been supplemented from a significant reserve, but the cushion has now largely gone. There is significant work to do to raise funds to cover operational costs into 2026-27, particularly in the light of the loss of the NHS funding that had been in place for many years. The trustees and staff are now working hard to address the shortfalls, seeking new sources of funding, massively increasing efforts with funding applications and community fundraising while looking for ways to streamline costs.

We are grateful to the organisations below who have helped our work with grants and donations.

I would also like to thank all individuals who have continued to support MASH and especially to Andrew McGuffog for his oversight of petty cash and credit card spending, and our independent examiner Chris Harvey for all the help and guidance he has given towards the preparation of the accounts.

Alan Stockey
Treasurer and Trustee

We are grateful to the following organisations who have supported our work with grants and donations



MASH - A Year In Photos



Medway Asthma Centre

Medway Asthma Self Help

Registered Charity Number 1196597

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01634 855844
admin@medwayasthmaselfhelp.co.uk

Facebook @Medway.SelfHelp
X @MedwayAsthma
Instagram @medwayasthma

Opening Times

Monday 9.00am -12 noon - Office Only
Thursday 5.00pm - 8.00pm - Phone Line Only
Friday 2.00-5.00pm - Clinic Only

Clinic Details

When the clinic service can be resumed, a 30-minute consultation with a specialist asthma nurse will be available on Fridays, by appointment only.

