Water Space

Opening the Water for Children with Complex Needs



Impact Report 2025-2026

Craighalbert
Enabling Children to Achieve

turtle tots
Bring on the smiles

The Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments (known as Craighalbert) is a Scottish charity, SC008428, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). A Company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland No. 129291

Introduction



For most children, learning to swim is a normal childhood experience. For babies and young children with complex neurological conditions, this opportunity is often inaccessible.

Water Space was created to change this.

Delivered through a partnership between Craighalbert and Turtle Tots, Water Space combines specialist therapy expertise with early years swimming instruction to create safe and inclusive swimming opportunities for children aged 0-5 years with complex needs.

"I love attending Water Space with my daughter. It is so nice and unique to be able to do a normal, fun activity with my daughter while still having the support of the amazing team."



Water Space in Numbers

194
Individual sessions

11
Delivery Days

24
Children supported

34
Parents Involved

6
Grandparents attending

7
Siblings Participating

Water Space sessions are delivered in Craighalbert's hydrotherapy pool, providing a safe environment where children can explore movement and play.



Impact for Children

100%

Parents reported improvements in their child's confidence, enjoyment and movement in the water

100%

Parents reported Water Space helped their child work towards their developmental goals





"I have learned to hold my son in the correct position to get the best support for him without hurting him and for him to experience the water in a safe secure way."

"It's only a few places you get to meet other parents with children who are medically complicated and it is such a lovely part of the experience."



Impact for Families



80%

Parents reported a better understanding of their child's needs and abilities

Water Space helps families build confidence and practical skills to support their child in the water, including safe handling, positioning and communication.

By encouraging siblings, grandparents and wider family members to participate, the programme creates opportunities for families to enjoy a positive, shared activity together.

"I was nervous about taking them swimming before, but the team showed me how to support them safely. Now I can simply enjoy being a grandparent and having fun together in the water."



A Programme Fathers Can Attend



Water Space creates rare opportunities for families to participate in everyday childhood activities together.

Parents report increased confidence supporting their child's development and better understanding their child's needs.



"As a dad I miss out on most weekday sessions, but because Water Space runs on Saturdays we can attend together as a family."

Reducing Isolation for Families



Families of children with complex needs often experience isolation due to barriers accessing activities.

Water Space creates a welcoming environment where families connect, share experiences and build supportive networks.



"Meeting other parents and children in similar situations and sharing knowledge is a valuable part of Water Space."

Extending Impact Through Partnership



Our partnership with Turtle Tots is helping build wider community capacity for inclusive swimming.

By working alongside Craighalbert therapists, Turtle Tots instructors are developing the skills and confidence to support children with complex needs in community swimming classes.

This means more families across Scotland can benefit from inclusive swimming opportunities.



Demand for Water Space continues to grow and the programme now has a waiting list of families keen to attend.

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For more information please contact

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