

A Review of Our Year

2022-2023

SUPPORTING 450 DISABLED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES AT ANY ONE TIME



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Beams

Supporting disabled children & families

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KATRINA ADAMS - HEAD OF CHARITY



Where has yet another year gone? Life at Beams is never dull and it has been a great year to start moving forward following lockdowns and pandemics.

We were able to return to our normal service delivery during the year and our face-to-face work was able to return fully. It has been wonderful to see our full range of activities back on the agenda. The children and parents attending events at Allsworth Court is always a great joy to me, with the accompanying fun and laughter that brings.

Following the success of the Plant a Smile Appeal, work started on the new garden in September 2022. It was quite a task to allow some outdoor space for the children alongside the work, but we did it. The garden team were amazing with the children and much fun was had with hard hats and diggers. We formally opened the Garden at the end of March and we featured on ITV Meridian news to show it off. It has been a great source of pleasure to the young people and we are very pleased with the finished work.



As you will see Beams has continued to grow and with the development of new services, it was agreed that a new post for a Deputy Head of Charity would be recruited for and in May 2022, Paul Kennedy joined us and has taken on much of the Operational management of the Charity. This has enabled me to take on some longer term projects and to work with the Trustees on the Strategic future and development of the Charity.

A key objective is to secure a facility to work with 18-25 year olds and to develop Income generating services that will help underpin the finances of the Charity into the future. Charities will always rely heavily on fundraising, but it is essential that we can contribute to this from our own services and expertise.

It would be remiss to not thank our supporters for their commitment, generosity and help to us that allows us to provide all that we do. The ways in which we are supported is incredible and the challenges that people take on leave me in awe. We are fortunate to receive a number of Grants, and donations from different funders and these enable us to be there when needed.

Those who know me are aware of how proud I am of Beams and all that we achieve. Team Beams, who include, our Staff, volunteers, trustees, children, families and supporters make an incredible difference.

Incredible people make up our management team and I thank them for their commitment and dedication to the Charity. Our Board of Trustees who are all volunteers and give their time and commitment to ensure that we are a robust Charity. The role of a trustee is not easy and they all give their time whenever it is needed.

As we end another year, it is a privilege for me to continue as Head of Charity at Beams and express my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed, supported and encouraged Teams Beams over the year.

Katrina

Family Advice

TRACEY SAMS - FAMILY ADVICE MANAGER

On the whole it has been a steady year, with us being able to deliver all the planned services. In total the team processed 2532 enquiries. Families were supported through the telephone helpline, email, social media, drop in advice clinics, home visits, office meetings and with meetings held with other statutory services.

Additionally we facilitated 7 Cygnet Courses-55 families accessed the 6 week Cygnet program. This helped parents develop their understanding of their child's autism diagnosis. It helped them look at how their child communicates and how to help them communicate more effectively.

131 parents accessed a support group session – giving opportunities for peer to peer support, sharing challenges and successes and reducing feelings of isolation.

We only managed 2 small workshops last year, 10 parents attended, both looking at internet safety, especially the growing use of social media and how problematic this can be for disabled children, especially neuro diverse young people who struggle to understand social relationships. This can mean they are particularly vulnerable on these platforms, often revealing too much information and/or become a victim of cyber bullying.

Our drop in advice sessions remained very busy, with cases growing in complexity

180 parents received 121 advice and support in Dartford, 150 in Gravesend and 87 in Sevenoaks, with support often continuing outside of the drop in session. Main topics for support remained education and disability benefits. More parents were coming to us for advice and support in relation to education and benefit appeals and how to complain when things have not gone well.



In our evaluation and monitoring feedback 47% of parents cited that without our help their mental health would have deteriorated significantly.

This very much reflected the conversations we were having with parents over the year. We definitely could see an increase in parents feelings of despair and our helpline was flooded with calls from very distressed parents where it took a lot of patience and expertise to calm them to try and get to the route of their concerns. Our evaluation data also showed comments where parents said their relationship/marriage may have broken down had they not got support or they may have lost their job for example.

Parent Quotes from the 2022/23 Family Advice survey

"I can honestly say I could not have managed without Beams. I was going round in circles trying to find help and support until a friend recommended Beams the help and support has been amazing. They have eased so much stress within our family I cannot thank them enough."

"Being able to contact someone that we know for help has had a huge impact on our wellbeing by alleviating some of the stress that goes with fighting the local authority at every step of the way to receive what each member of our society should be entitled to, like an education."

"My child and I are not alone. Mentally, emotionally and physically."



Short Breaks Service

TRACEY RILEY - SHORTRBREAKS MANAGER (ACTIVITIES)

Holiday playschemes have continued to grow with over 500 places offered over the year for children aged 4 -18years.

KIDSCAMP

Kidscamp is our school holiday play scheme for children and young people with severe and complex needs who will need 1-1 care from staff. There were 246 places taken up for this service for 5-25yrs over the last year with 123 individual young people taking part in the activities. Activities provided included drama workshop, canoeing, pedal cars and disc golf. Also trips to the seaside and Wingham Wildlife park.

Our 18+ group enjoyed horse therapy at the Kent Equine Centre and driving around on Quad bikes at Lower Grange Farm.

BEAMERS

Our Inclusive play schemes, give disabled children and young people who do not require a 1:1 support the opportunity to access mainstream provision with some additional support from our Beams staff. We have partnered with Fairfield Leisure centre to offer an under 8's a provision which are very limited. 276 places taken up during the past 12 months. Some new activities were enjoyed this year including Ninja Warrior assault course. Horse therapy, Tag Active trampoline, swimming and skiing and snow tubing.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Our Family support service offered 1,728 hours to 9 young people over last year. We continue to develop and support our young people with independent living skills, at Allsworth Court and access to the community.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

Our big rascals and little rascals after school clubs re opened at St Peter Church Hextable this year arts and crafts board games and sport games were some of the activities that were provided. 16 young people took part over the last year.

FAMILY WORKSHOPS

Families enjoyed two themed workshops one for Halloween and one for Christmas. Arts and craft, non-cooking activities were provided along with a silent disco which everyone seemed to enjoy.



CHRISTMAS EVENTS

A Christmas pantomime was arranged at the Woodville Halls in Gravesend 142 people watched a performance of Aladdin.

Our annual Christmas party at the Alexander Suite in Swanley attracted 125 people all young people met with Santa and received a gift. Everyone was entertained by JOJO with her magic tricks, balloon modelling and so much more.

120 people were given the opportunity to go to the Cyclopark Gravesend Christmas Extravaganza which included seasonal Christmas stalls Food and Drinks, Village Wonderland Play Park, Walk and Light Show, Entertainment, Fun Fair Rides, and Santa's Grotto

NEW YEARS ACTIVITIES

100 tickets were given to our families an opportunity to see Circus Starr's at The Mick Jagger Centre.

We provided a private screening of Puss in Boots the last wish at Bluewater Showcase cinema 80 people got the opportunity to feel comfortable with other families who did not mind a little noise or that young people got out of their seats. We had the opportunity to have the lights up a little and the sound turned down slightly. All young people received a crew box containing popcorn a drink and small packet of chocolate stars.

Dragon's Retreat Respite Unit

ROBIN ADAMS - SHORTBREAKS MANAGER (DRAGON'S RETREAT)

At the start of the year we had our full inspection from Ofsted, we were very pleased to be given a good overall and good in all areas.



In January 2023, Tracey Riley stepped down as the Registered Manager and Robin Adams took the position as Manager, and has been confirmed with Ofsted as Registered Manager from April 2023.

The young people have continued to work hard building their independent living skills, with many mastering making their beds, loading the dishwasher and cooking some excellent meals. Staff have worked hard to provide young people with lots of different activities whilst the garden was being redeveloped, many of the young people enjoyed chatting to the builders, some were lucky enough to sit on the digger!

Once the garden was complete the young people and staff have been amazed with it and made great use of all the new features.



Throughout the year the team have had regular training and the team as a whole worked hard to make adaptations to their practice and systems to try and improve the overall running of the service. We have had regular monthly visits from our independent person which is part of the children home regulations, she has questioned and pushed the standards of the provision to assist with these improvements. Overall, we were very pleased with our inspection result in April 22, since then the team have worked hard to try and improve the service. The team ensured that the young people were busy whilst not being able to access the garden. Once it was finished both staff and young people have thoroughly enjoyed it. The service continues to grow and we are looking to further support more families in the future



- In total we provided 1089 beds across 234 nights
- 64 different young people used the service across the year
- When open we ran at a 77% occupancy level.
- 19 young people joined the service.
- 13 Young people left the service, the majority due to reaching the age limit.

How We are Funded

JOANNE FENNER - FINANCE MANAGER

We are Beams total income in this year was £2,027,694 a 16% increase on the previous financial year.

Our Funding comes from our commissioned services

- Direct Payment Support Service

Also spot purchase agreements from Kent County Council and other local authorities for

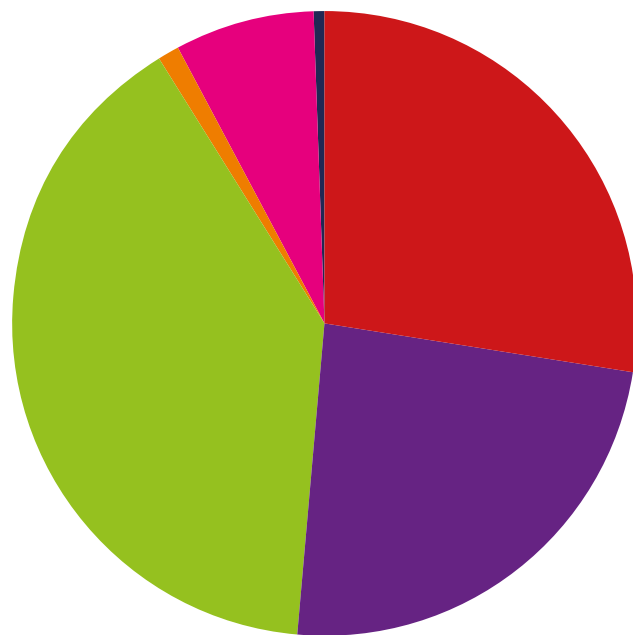
- Dragons Retreat Short Break Service
- Short Breaks Family Support

We also generate income from

- Beams Payroll Service used mainly by parent's in receipt of a Direct Payment

- Beams Brokerage Service .Whilst this is a new service it is proving to be something that meets a need within the disability community and there will be further growth.
- Fundraising has had an excellent year with a range of grants from trusts and foundations. Two significant grants came from the Big Lottery and Henry Smith Foundation. The fundraising team have achieved an income of over £808K to enable the work of the charity.

Income Breakdown

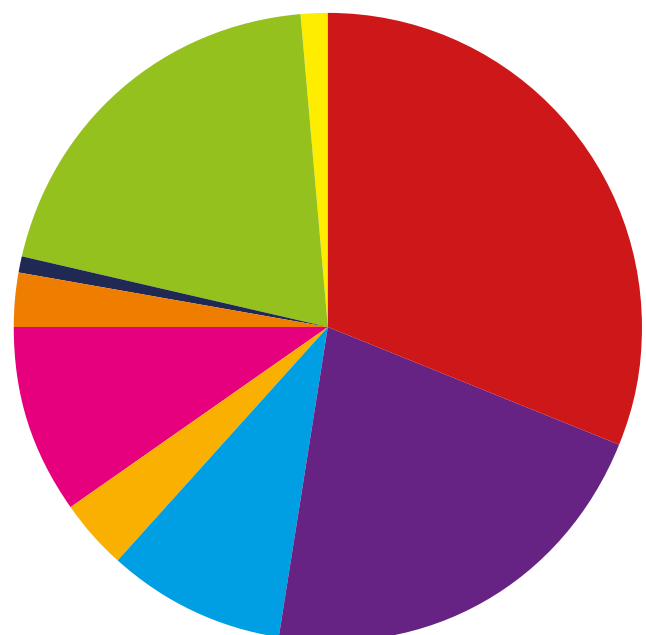


■ Dragons' Retreat	£559,493
■ Direct Payments	£484,129
■ Fundraising & Grants	£808,318
■ Brokerage	£23,022
■ Payroll Services	£144,681
■ Other	£8,051

Total £2,027,694

Whilst the overall year recorded a deficit of £103,306 this was planned for and funds were carried forward from the previous financial year for this. The Charity has a reasonable financial position with 3 months operating monies held in reserve.

Expenditure



■ Shortbreaks and Dragons Retreat	£662,678
■ Direct Payment Service	£460,370
■ Fundraising and Marketing	£190,142
■ Payroll Service	£77,733
■ Family Advice	£209,908
■ Brokerage	£59,568
■ Governance	£17,047
■ Central Support	£425,431
■ Professional Fees	£28,123

Total £2,131,000

Net Deficit -£103,306

Payroll Service

JOANNE FENNER - FINANCE MANAGER

The Payroll service generated income of £114,700 and a working profit of nearly £67,000 which has been used to support the wider work of the charity.

The Payroll service is largely aligned to the provision of Direct Payment agreements from the Local Authority and provides a vital part of the support infrastructure for families who find themselves becoming employers e.g. taking on a Personal Assistant.

The number of clients supported continues to grow at a pace and at the end of this period, Beams achieved a client base of 755 customers, made up of 489 standard payrolls and 266 managed accounts.

Managed Accounts are provided where a family needs additional assistance with their payroll or are unable to manage the budget themselves for a range of reasons. In these circumstances, the Local Authority will ask Beams will hold the budget on behalf of the family and we make all the necessary payments for staff and HMRC etc. on the clients behalf - keeping detailed records of all expenditure.

We currently offer the Payroll service across Social Care, Health and Education and it is becoming more commonplace for families to receive multiple streams of funding across these agencies. We also have some accounts operated as invoice only for families who do not employ any staff but use private services such as Tutors or Speech and Language Therapists. There are relatively small amount of these – 42 at the end of this reporting period.

In addition to the Payroll, the vast majority of these accounts require Workplace Pension compliance. This has to be completed on a rolling three-year calendar. We also make pensions payments to both NEST and Smart Pensions on behalf of employers,

We remain committed to providing the best possible support to families and growing our service accordingly.



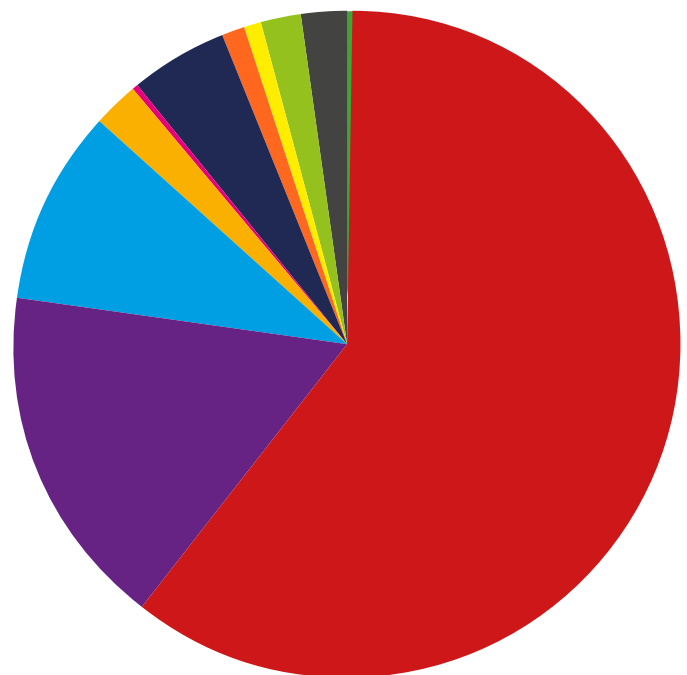
Fundraising

CAROLINE BRINKMAN - INCOME GENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT LEAD

We exceeded all expectations with an end of year income of £808,318 with 5587 donations.

A very big thank you to all of our donors who have made a huge difference to disabled children and families this year and to my team who worked so hard to make this happen. We are still recovering from the pandemic with many local business still working from home so that makes the corporate fundraising an additional challenge as it is much harder to get a hold of key people other than by e-mail. Our big corporate supporters were Ruxley Manor and Graces Day Nursery who had a team of staff really committed to raising awareness and funds for Beams. Thanks to FLR who hosted an amazing golf day and to the team from Principle Asset Management that organised their own London to Paris Bike ride that generated £31K for our children’s holiday playschemes and our new sensory room. I would like to thank the Big Lottery, Albury Foundation and WH & A Hawkins Trust who have supported us for a few years now on core costs which is vital to our survival. The last of the income arrived for the garden makeover and we generated over £200K with donations from The Story of Christmas, Percy Bilton, Gravesend and Meopham Rotary, Wooden Spoon charity, Screwfix Foundation, Provincial Grand Lodge of East Kent and Kent Community Foundation.

Event highlights were Colour Dash with £14K, our first Comedy night was a barrel of laughs and generated £2K and our afternoon teas are a sell out each time generating £7K income in total.



The breakdown of our appeal performance is

Legacies	£2000
Trusts and Foundations	£488,854.16
Community Fundraising	£135,150.43
Corporate Fundraising	£76,251.18
Regular giving	£16,895
In memory	£3742.55
Events	£38024.99
Major Donors	£7700
50/50 Lottery	£6262.50
Gift aid	£15696.32
Other	£17741.04
Total	£808,318



Marketing and Communications

CAROLINE BRINKMAN - INCOME GENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT LEAD

We started the year with a website re-fresh to make our user journey easier. We are delighted to report that the parents surveyed said the website was much improved and easier to navigate. Our visitor numbers are 89,000 which is an increase on last year's total. We also now have a blog section with all the latest news.

Our social media channels remain a quick way of communicating with our beneficiaries and extended families and we are pleased to have grown our followers to;

Facebook 5300, twitter 747, Tik Tok 119, Linked in 443, and Instagram 947. We have been producing short reels on the impact of our work and the difference our funders have made. A significant amount of work has gone into keeping our socials lively and engaging. We have also raised in excess of £4000 with online platform donations with Facebook birthdays, our Jumps for June and the summer online raffle.

We were very proud to have opened our new garden at the end of March to a huge audience of funders and it was filmed by Meridian TV and featured in a 15 minute slot that evening. We were particularly proud that they used our real time

filming of the garden in progress to showcase the amazing work that went into this project. We were delighted to have received The Special Project Award at the Kent Charity Awards 2023 and Best Marketing Campaign at Dartford Business Awards for this capital project. The end result has made a huge difference to the mental health and wellbeing of our children at Beams.

We are very lucky to have the photographers working with us on a voluntary basis and a special thank you to Pete Bresser www.bresserphotos.com who has supported our many events for some time now. We rely on our photos of the children as evidence of our evaluation against promised outcomes for funders.



The screenshot shows the Beams website homepage. At the top left is the Beams logo with the tagline 'Supporting disabled children & families'. To the right are navigation links: 'Our Services', 'About Us', 'Support Us', and 'Contact Us'. A 'DONATE' button is visible on the right. A large banner image features a smiling child in a yellow shirt and blue cap. Below the banner, the text reads 'We support disabled children, young people and their families.' There are two buttons: 'HELP & ADVICE' and 'SUPPORT US'. Below this are four content cards, each with a photo and a 'LEARN MORE' button: 'I Am A Parent', 'I Am A Young Person', 'I Want To Fundraise', and 'I Work With Young People'. In the top right corner of the website screenshot, there is a badge for 'KENT CHARITY AWARDS 2023 WINNER SPECIAL PROJECT'.



Direct Payments

TRACY WOODS - DIRECT PAYMENT MANAGER

The Direct Payment Service received 292 referrals from KCC to support new families so that they can access an allocated Social Care Direct Payment during this past year, which is further growth of around 17% from the previous year when we already had more referrals than ever before.

We received 16 referrals from KCC to support new families to access an Education Direct Payment for allocated provisions in EHC plans, which is around the same number as we would usually expect.

Currently we are working with 1,060 families accessing a Social Care Direct Payment, and 62 families accessing an Education Direct Payment in Kent. The Team have had to grow so that we can meet this increased demand, and we recruited three new members of staff this year resulting in us now being a Team of 14 workers for the first time ever.

We regularly ask families to share their experience of accessing a Direct Payment with support from us, and this year the feedback from parents has again been positive. Parents have shared with us that the Team are good at communicating, and they find us helpful.

Direct Payment funding offers the opportunity for children to try new things. Having the support has, for many families, lead to the parent having more time for other family members. The children awarded a Direct Payment have been able to access more social opportunities now that they have a Personal Assistant (PA) to support them.

Some families continue to find managing their Direct Payment confusing or overly demanding of their attention, and we are working hard to improve this for them. We also know that many parents have struggled to find a suitable PA. We regularly identify the challenges we know about to KCC in a bid to remove some of the barriers to successful outcomes for the children who have a Direct Payment.

Support Brokerage

KAREN DORLING - SUPPORT BROKER MANAGER

The Support Brokerage Service continues to provide two distinct areas of support, Brokerage Management and Person-Centred Planning and has supported 21 clients this year.

Brokerage Management provides the practical day-to-day support that some people need to manage their personal budget or direct payment, including help to recruit staff, comply with all employment requirements, manage staff, payroll and insurance. Without brokerage support, these clients would not be able to access a direct payment and enjoy the opportunity to employ their own choice of staff to work with their child. We have supported 21 clients this year, and have been able to empower one to be able to manage their own direct payment moving forward. It is very important that we do not create a dependency but build skills and confidence to manage independently where this is possible. We have been successful in sourcing PA's for clients who had previously not been able to recruit by using a variety of advertising mediums, although it remains very challenging when the rate of pay being agreed is insufficient to attract good applicants. This cost of this

area of our work is covered by the local authority through the direct payment funding and is agreed where the client either has a disability themselves, does not speak English as their first language, has no time due to a very poorly child or another substantial reason.

Income for the year 2022-23 was £23,162.12.

Person-Centred Planning

We received a grant of £45,000 from Colyer Ferguson to enable us to commence working with young people between 18-25 years who required a person centred plan. Planning work is very time consuming which makes it expensive and unaffordable for most people. As a result of the funding, we have had the privilege of working with 10 amazing young people this year, supporting them to write plans which enable them to voice their dreams and aspirations for the future, build action plans and give them clear, specific and achievable goals

Trustee Report

JASON JARVIS - CHAIR



You will have read in these pages, reports from each of the teams that provides the services that are so important to the families that Beams support. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank all the staff, seasonal workers and volunteers for all of their fantastic work.

At the last AGM, a number of parents came forward to talk, often quite emotionally, about how the services that Beams provides are so vital to supporting their families. When I hear these testimonials, I am tremendously proud of our work and as Chair of the Board of Trustees, to be able to play a small part in what we do.

The role of the Board is of course to provide oversight and ensure that the charity is properly run to meet its objectives. But it is also to provide strategic direction and to ensure that the charity continues to increase its financial sustainability and

remains strong.

It is with this in mind that the Board has been reviewing our 5 year strategy, with a particular emphasis on developing new services where there is currently a gap and leveraging our capabilities to generate new income. We have some very ambitious plans, but I am confident that with a strong management team and Board, we are in a good place to deliver them.

I would like to extend my thanks to my fellow trustees for their continued service and commitment.





We Are Beams kindly supported by



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