

New venue for Dartford Clinic

Our Dartford Clinic will be held at St Edmunds Church Living Well, St Edmunds Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5ND from Tuesday 16th April 2024 and will continue every Tuesday term time only 9.30am-2pm Attendance is free and no booking necessary.



Thank you to The National Lottery Community Fund for helping our disabled children to thrive!

We Are Beams have won two significant grants in 2024 totalling £174,000 from The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest community funder in the UK, for Short Breaks and Family Advice Service. The grant will provide support for 3 years.

Katrina Adams, Head of Charity said

"A very big thank you to all National Lottery players and to the National Lottery for supporting Beams."

We can now put on a great range of fun outings to support our children in the Dartford, Gravesham and Sevenoaks area during the Easter and Summer holidays. Often holidays are the worst time of the year for our families as there is no school or routine and they are exhausted from the 24/7 cycle of care.



Thankathon

The fundraising team recently spent the day visiting and calling supporters and Businesses to thank them for supporting We Are Beams. It was a day well spent showing our appreciation and gratitude to all our supporters!

Family Advice

It's always lovely to hear fabulous feedback from those who we have helped, this has included a number of young people finally accessing the specialist college places they needed, one being offered a prestigious university placement and another, a placement at a well-known performing arts school. We are very proud of one young person, who despite being out of education for

a considerable time is now back accessing his placement 5 days a week.

Our very popular Cygnet ASD Parenting Programme is getting a facelift. We are very excited to announce that from September 2024, we will be delivering the new and improved version. Also coming later this year we will be offering our two session ADHD-Tell me more workshops alongside a new Sensory Workshop. Please get in touch to register your interest.

Email familyadvice@wearebeams.org.uk

Support Brokerage

The Support Brokerage Service has been busy attending transition events at colleges across Kent. We have been talking to young people about how we can help them to think about their future and put their own wishes into a person-centred plan. They can use their plan to work out their next steps and build action plans that will help them progress toward their ultimate goals. Their plan will inform both family and professionals what they want for the future and how they can be supported to make their dreams come true. We are proud to be supporting an increasing number of young people to find and put forward their own voice and ensure those people who can help them to achieve hear this. Our clients have made some significant changes and opened up real opportunities, which have had such positive



effects of their lives.

We can support young people from 16-25 years old who need some help to work out what they want for the future and how to achieve their best life.

More information about the work we do can be obtained by calling Karen Dorling on 07918 706601 or by email to brokerage@wearebeams.org.uk.

Meet Beams Trustee Sue Crocker

It can be a bit fishy being a trustee for We Are Beams, especially if you attend the Beams Annual Charity Ball! After successfully bidding for a two night inclusive getaway to Cornwall staying at Rick Steins hotel and eating in his restaurants, I was certainly all fished out! However, I can highly recommend the experience and a win win for everyone involved with the ball raising over £22,000 to support our services.

On a serious note, being a Trustee is a tremendous opportunity for me to provide support the charity using experience gained throughout my career. As Trustees, we are responsible for the strategic direction, growth and future viability of Beams. We are legally responsible for making sure we meet all the statutory requirements as a company and charity.

As a Trustee, I like to get involved in all aspects of the charity, from volunteering at the afternoon teas as part of the fundraising team, joining the team supporting parents at the drop in centres, to networking to raise awareness of Beams in the community and with local businesses.



Being a Trustee is not just about attending Board meetings. We are always looking for Trustees who can complement our existing skills to broaden our areas of expertise.

If this sounds like something you might like to do, get in touch, I'd be happy to have a chat.

Get involved!

Diary of Events

Messy Dash

7th July
This year the event is even bigger and better with glitter, colour, slime and water!
Venue: Central Park, Dartford
Cost: £15 Adults £12 Child 12-17yrs
£8 Child 11 and under £40 Family (2 AD and 2 CH)



Freddy Mercury Tribute Night with Gary Goodmaze

16th May 7.30pm
Venue: Bexley Park Sports and Social Club
Cost: £20 per ticket



Tandem Skydive

Various Dates in 2024
Get the thrill of a lifetime with a 12,000 feet drop!



For more information and to sign up to any of these events visit www.wearebeams.org.uk/events-challenges/



CORPORATE CORNER

Bellway Kent

Bellway Kent recently donated £15,000 to We Are Beams and will ensure we can continue the vital care service to disabled children and families.

The money was raised at a charity golf day held by the house builder in Bearsted. Bellway Kent are currently building new homes at developments across the county.

Mark Hamop, Sales Director for Bellway Kent, said:

"It is a key part of our ethos as a house builder to help the communities in which we are building homes. We Are Beams provides a vital service to families in Kent and we wanted to show our support for the work the charity does"



It is thanks to the support of corporate partners such as County UK and Bellway Kent that We Are Beams can continue the vital care services for disabled children and their families. If your company is interested in sponsorship opportunities or would like to support Beams, please get in touch fundraising@wearebeams.org.uk

We would also like to thank the following businesses for recent donations and support. Bell Group, Magrock Ltd, My Purchasing Partner, UK Personnel Group Ltd, Oakland Care - Birchwood Heights, OO Group, Jackaman Insurance Services Ltd, Everyone Active, Care UK - Smyth Lodge, JB Autos, Classroom Support, Fox Estates, John Francis MEP, Specsavers - Swanley and Crayford, County UK, Bellway Kent Division, Kentec, Welham Jones Funerals & Memorials

We Are Beams, Allsworth Court, 38-40 St David's Road, Hextable, Kent BR8 7RJ
admin@wearebeams.org.uk | 01322 668501

RCN 1054129



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newsletter

SUPPORTING DISABLED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

EDITION 11 - SPRING 2024



Tishe's Story

Tishe is non-verbal so often gets frustrated when he cannot communicate his needs. As a result, he can hit out and often his sister and mum are caught up in this frustration.

Day-to-day life can be very challenging and unpredictable for Tishe's family; he needs lots of extra attention and support with his personal care. He is very clingy so consumes a lot of his parents time, affecting his sister's access to the same level of attention.

As a family, they are unable to take part in normal family activities such as going to a cinema or restaurant. Tishe is unable to sit still for long and has sensory processing difficulties so noise and crowds are overwhelming. The family had been searching for a suitable holiday club for Tishe. He is very active

Tishe is a vibrant, energetic 6-year-old boy who faces significant challenges due to his diagnoses of ASD, Global Development Delay, and ADHD. He is part of a loving family and lives alongside his twin sister and parents.

and enjoys being outdoors but sadly could not find a suitable placement that would accept him due to additional needs, until the family heard about We Are Beams through the school.

Beams set about quickly supporting Tishe and his family through the Family Advice, Short Breaks and Direct Payment Services

Our expert Family Advisors have been able to navigate the family through their rights of finding a suitable school plus providing access to training and parent support groups. These have helped the family feel less isolated and they have gained useful coping strategies and knowledge to understand more about Tishe's additional needs.

Beams have been able to make a real difference for Tishe and his family; he has joined the holiday clubs



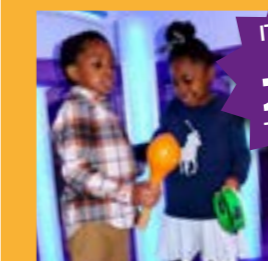
and experienced fun activities whilst building his socialisation and interactional skills.

Elizabeth Tishe's mum is so grateful her family found Beams.

"The support Beams has given my family, through helping us find a specialist school, and finding a Personal Assistant has been life changing. Beams has made our family feel like we are not alone and gives us confidence that Tishe will be able to reach his full potential"

The Beams Big Summer Raffle is a great way to support We Are Beams and every £2 entry will go towards making a difference to children like Tishe and their families

Win £1,000 AND A SUMMER TO REMEMBER!



IT'S JUST £2 TO ENTER

Enter our **Big Summer Raffle**

Supporting disabled children and their families in Kent

Help families facing significant challenges with their child's disabilities find hope and improvement with the right kind of support

ENTER NOW



Enter online at www.wearebeams.org.uk



Beams receive £63,500 grant from West Kent Freemasons

Thanks to a significant grant of £63,500 from West Kent Freemasons, Beams can continue to support hundreds of families with Family Advice Service.

The grant will also fund Family Advice Clinics, where practitioners often refer families of children up to 19 years of age with multiple learning difficulties. Family Advice has seen an influx of families moving into the Dartford

area for example, many of whom have a high level of need. The parents reach out to Beams when they are feeling desperate and stressed. This grant will help to alleviate some of that stress.

The grant from West Kent Freemasons comes through the Masonic Charitable Foundation, which is funded by Freemasons, their families and friends, from across England and Wales.



A new space for relaxation at We Are Beams

Our sensory room is now complete and children are now enjoying the benefits of learning at their own pace and developing skills without any pressure.

The room is now fully equipped with colour and light columns, interactive wall carpet plus an amazing projector which was funded by the National Lottery Award for All. The Children are able to engage with the projected activities through touch, making their playtime truly immersive whilst improving motor skills and co-ordination

Children on the Autistic Spectrum may be hypersensitive to harsh lighting, strong odours, loud music and crowds of



people. This sensory room provides a safe environment where they can calm down and regain emotional control. It is also an essential tool for children and young people with Downs Syndrome, cerebral palsy, tic disorders, high anxiety and depression.



Research has proved that time in a sensory room will have a positive effect on their mental health and wellbeing.

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

Research has shown that many people are now choosing to leave a legacy to their favourite charity. National and larger charities do very well with receiving legacy gifts.

We Are Beams recently launched a "Love your Local Charity" and we would very much welcome a legacy gift. Such a donation would mean that you would contribute to the long-term sustainability

of Beams and ensuring our mission and impact endure for generations to come.

Many people choose to leave a gift to a charity that was important to a loved one, to keep their memory alive. So, for all of you that we have supported in the past. Please consider a legacy to Beams and support disabled children in the local area. Just 1% of your estate can make a difference and you can then leave 99% to your loved ones.



For more information, please contact Caroline Brinkman, Income Generation and Development Lead.

Are all your Ducks in a Row?

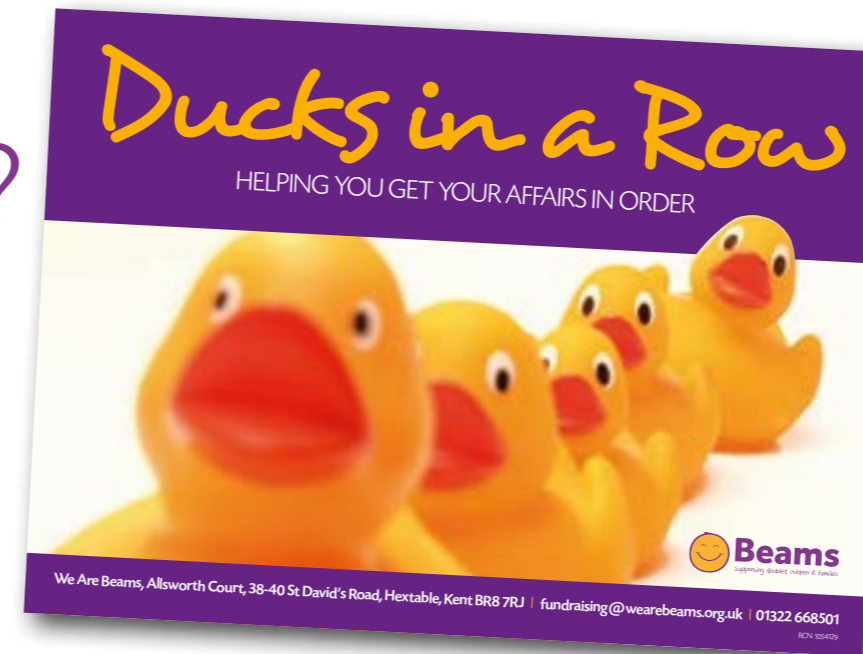
Living with uncertainty at the end of life can be challenging, especially when finding essential documents is a struggle. At Beams, we understand this is why we have created a simple guide, "Ducks in a Row," to help you organize and secure your key information in one easy-to-find place.

No more mounds of paperwork when you need clarity most! The booklet makes it easy to record, locate, and share vital details such as:

- Will storage location
- Energy supplier information
- Insurance details
- Key documents

"Ducks in a Row" is your personal roadmap, tailored to your preferences and needs.

Take control of your affairs with confidence and leave peace of mind to your loved ones.



Sponsored by Welham Jones Funerals and Memorials Swanley and Paula Florist. Only £3 per copy. You can purchase online at www.wearebeams.org.uk/our-shop/

Springtime fun at Dragon's Retreat!

We have been delighted to welcome some new young people to Dragon's Retreat, and everyone has had a great time getting to know each other.

A warm Beams welcome to our new staff members, Rebecca, Bridget, and Jack!

The new sensory room is a proving a firm favourite and with the warmer weather the young people have been spending lots more time in the garden. We have also enjoyed some trips to the Aquarium and Eagle Heights.

Mother's Day saw a heart-warming display of creativity as everyone made special gifts. We have also been busy creating a stunning display board, displaying our artistic talents.

We have not forgotten about life skills either, with lots of cooking and even some hoovering!



Direct Payments

The Direct Payment Service provides a range of information and support for disabled children and families in receipt of a Direct Payment within Kent, which is not means tested. The assessment is completed by a Social Work professional, and is based on the needs of the individual child.

We have experience a reversal of recent growth this year, and have reported a total of 235 new referrals which is a level that is more typical for the service.

Beams DP Service are currently supporting the equivalent of 1,138 families across Kent to access a Social Care or Education Direct Payment.

In a recent Survey, some parents said the team are: "Making difference to people's lives in a positive way, increases control and the service supports people in achieving a better outcome

for their needs" "Helping sort through the complexities of the DP scheme"

"The support I have had is second to none. It has made my life a lot more manageable and less stressful"

If you want for your child to be considered for direct payment funding, to access support for their needs, please speak directly to your social worker and request an assessment.

Short Breaks

Shortbreaks has had a jam-packed winter and spring, filled with unforgettable fun for the children and young people.

- Theatre Trips and Christmas Lights- 13 families enjoyed a relaxed performance of Mrs. Doubtfire in London and even experienced a magical Christmas lights tour on a red bus, kindly arranged by Barry Saunders.
- Festive Fun - Our children had a blast on a Santa Special train ride, we enjoyed the Snow White panto and everyone came together for a magical Christmas party with food, entertainment, and Santa himself!



- Making a Splash-Thanks to Angela's Swim School, we facilitated successful swimming lessons for families.
- Big Screen Adventures- We offered exclusive cinema screenings with the whole

screen to ourselves for "Trolls" and "Migration." This proved to be a hit, allowing families to enjoy the experience together in a supportive environment.



Easter Eggstravaganza

Easter was jam packed with trips to see spring lambs and chicks, trampoline sessions, abseiling, archery, swimming, arts and crafts, and making pottery. We also had fun at the Easter Workshop for all the family and eggs galore!

We are now planning the Summer activities and family events. Please look out on the website from the first week of June and register your interest as these are in high demand. www.wearebeams.org.uk

Delighted by success of Get2Swim

Get2Swim is the programme and fundraising campaign offering We Are Beams member's children with ASD or ADHD a full term of 1-2-1 swimming lessons run by Angela's Swim School. Classes are for children who would typically be excluded from mainstream school swimming lessons and would find group swimming classes a challenge.

Now in its third term, 14 Beams children have completed lessons so far, with another 10 ready to start this term. One parent replied when asked if her child enjoyed the lessons, "My daughter looks forward and is motivated to go every weekend."

This is the start to swimming Angela believes every child should have, hoping they stay on to complete their learn-to-



swim journey over future terms.

Angela Wilson attended Beams to award certificates to children completing their lessons. This initiative for the children was funded by Children's Alliance through We Are Beams.

Show your love

Remembering someone special with a gift in their memory

(Helping to raise funds for a cause close to a loved one's heart can be a very positive way to celebrate their life)

Giving In Memory to We Are Beams

- Donating in memory instead of flowers
- Funeral collections
- A regular in memory gift
- Leave a lasting legacy in your will

However you decide to support us, we will be happy to help fundraising@wearebeams.org.uk

www.wearebeams.org.uk

