

# A Review of Our Year

2024-2025



*We Are Beams impact goes beyond just care; we help reduce social isolation, promote friendships, enhance mental health and wellbeing, and provide families with the much-needed respite from the challenges of caregiving*



## Beams

Supporting disabled children & families

[www.wearebeams.org.uk](http://www.wearebeams.org.uk)

Allsworth Court, 38-40 St David's Road, Hextable, Kent BR8 7RJ



RCN. 1054129

## CASE STUDY

# Wendy's Story



**'Beams have given me a break from caring responsibilities; I do not need to worry about Wendy when she is at Buzz Club. She is able to go on days out and participate in different activities and visit new places, which I could not afford'** shares Linda, Wendy's mum

Wendy has Global Developmental Delay (GDD), a condition that profoundly affects every area of her life, yet she is happiest when she is outdoors on an adventure. She lives at home with her mum and is the middle of three siblings, which includes a younger sibling who also has a disability. Due to her extensive needs, 23-year-old Wendy requires continuous 24/7 care and full support for all activities of daily life to ensure her safety and well-being.

Wendy's strong need to be outside can create challenges for her family, especially during the school holidays. When they are unable to spend time outdoors, Wendy can become restless and agitated, making the home environment stressful.

Linda, Wendy's mum, first learned about Buzz Club through other parents who use Beams services. Buzz Club offers young people aged 18 to 25 years old, including those with severe and complex needs, a fantastic way to experience new activities like bowling, rock climbing, and trips to the beach. The club is a great way to develop independence, and for young people to make friends.

Because Buzz Club guarantees one to one support, young people like Wendy can participate safely, giving parents the opportunity to recharge and do things that are simply impossible when providing continuous care.

*'Wendy is able to meet new people, make friends and try new activities and not be glued to her phone all the time. She looks forward to coming to Beams'* shares Linda, Wendy's mum

**The Short Breaks Service provides essential support and connection for Beams families. Through our holiday clubs and family events, Beams offers an opportunity for parents and children to connect with others and realise they are not on this journey alone.**

## Dear Supporters and Friends,

We are proud to share the incredible difference our team at We Are Beams has made in the lives of disabled children and their families over the past year.

Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has supported this journey. Whether as a supporter, volunteer, trustee, or staff member, your contribution has been essential to our success.

Your kindness, commitment, and generosity enable us to continue inspiring hope and building brighter futures for the families we support.

Thank you

## The difference we make **OUR WORK IN NUMBERS**

**363**

ACTIVITY DAY PLACES OFFERED TO DISABLED CHILDREN

**1343**

OVERNIGHT STAYS AT DRAGON'S RETREAT RESPITE

**16,460**

HOURS OF CARE PROVIDED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT DRAGON'S RETREAT

**2680**

ENQUIRIES TO OUR FAMILY ADVICE TEAM

**89**

PARENTS ATTENDING CYGNET PARENTING PROGRAMME

**570**

PARENTS SUPPORTED IN 1-1 CLINICS

BROKERAGE SUPPORTED

**34**

CLIENTS TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS

PROFIT FROM PAYROLL SERVICE  
**£121,159**

**500**

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SUPPORTED AT ANY ONE TIME

## Another year of challenge and change at We Are Beams.

Sadly, we ended the year, knowing that the Direct Team would be leaving us. We were unsuccessful in retaining the contract after 17 years and the team were transferred over to the new provider. This was a very difficult time for all involved. Two members of the team stayed with Beams in other roles and one chose to retire.

As always, the role of the Fundraising team to secure income that allows us to deliver our services is vital.

We have started to implement the 5-year strategy for the development and sustainability of the Charity. We have recruited a new post of Commercial Delivery Manager. This role looks for opportunities for us to deliver services for others using our existing skills and staffing. Our Beams Payroll Service is part of this and we have now secured contracts to provide payrolls for other Charities, reducing their costs whilst adding income for us. We continue to pursue other opportunities.

The Trustees with me completed our Annual Governance Review day. The outcome of this was that again, our Governance is strong and the Trustees can be confident that we are robust in our practice. It is important to note that our



CEO AND HEAD OF CHARITY

## Katrina Adams

Trustees are volunteers who give their time to ensure that we are an effective Charity.

We have not yet managed to develop the 18-25 service we had imagined. However, with the Supporting Independence Service we have developed a programme to maximise skills and independent living. We have done some pilot work with good results and hope to have young people signed up to this soon.

This work, alongside Dragon's Retreat and Beams Payroll Service and new opportunities will allow us to generate income that we can use to continue to support young people and their families. This is vital for the future of Beams. We must look to find opportunities to secure our sustainability and show that we are developing our own income resources, to support our fundraising team.

Whilst there has been some disappointments in the year, the end of the year has been about reflection and development. It is important that we look to use, the skills within the charity to secure income that can underpin our services for young people and families. This is how we will survive for years to come.

I would like to thank all those that support us in a variety of ways; we are so very grateful for all that, they do.

Team Beams, who include, our staff, volunteers, trustees, children, families and supporters make an incredible difference to the community we support.

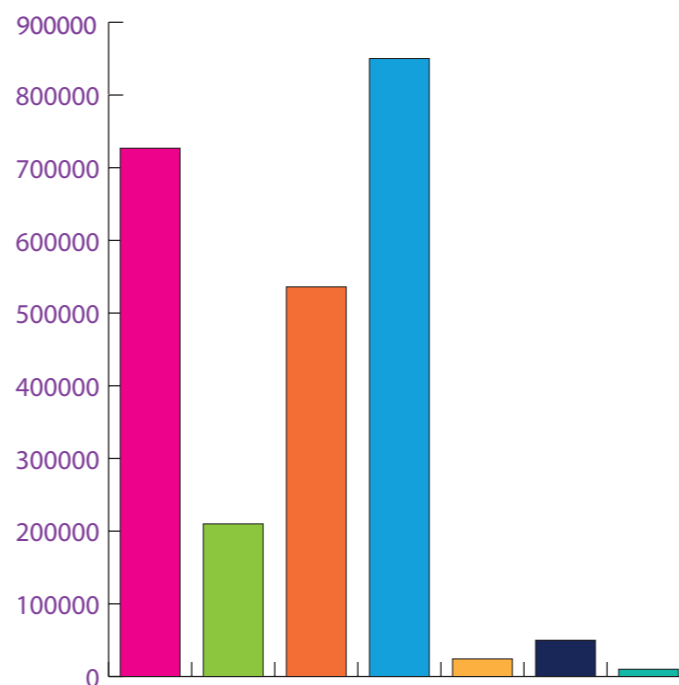
As always, I am so proud of our Charity, the staff team who deliver exceptional services with, skill, commitment and dedication.

Thank you to all those who contribute, support and encourage Team Beams.

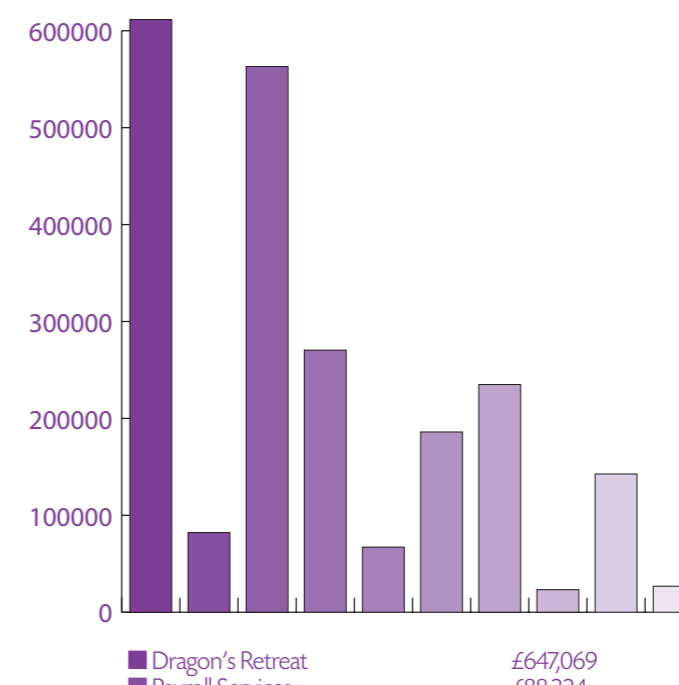
# HOW WE ARE FUNDED **Joanne Fenner** FINANCE MANAGER

This has been a very positive year for We Are Beams. Our financial strength reflects the commitment of our staff, trustees, fundraisers, and supporters – and most importantly, ensures we can continue delivering vital services to children and families who rely on us.

## INCOME TOTAL: £2,480,058



## EXPENDITURE TOTAL: £2,307,330



Our total income of £2.48 million was generated across a diverse range of services:

- **Fundraising and Grants: £843,884**  
An unprecedented year for fundraising, with the team generating **£844k** – a remarkable achievement and a vital contribution to our sustainability.
- **Dragon's Retreat: £744,126**  
Delivered through spot purchase agreements with local authorities, providing essential respite care for children with a range of neurodiverse needs and disabilities.
- **Direct Payments: £530,746**  
Supporting families in receipt of direct payments.
- **Payroll Services: £209,484**  
A key support service enabling families to manage personal assistants and care provision. Operating as payroll or managed accounts.
- **Short Breaks Family Support: £61,479**  
A long-standing service, supported in part by fundraising income to ensure continued delivery.
- **Brokerage: £34,437**  
Still in its infancy, this service is steadily growing and demonstrating clear demand.
- **Interest / DBS / Transport: £55,902**

**It was an excellent year for the team, as we all worked hard to secure new donors whilst developing existing loyal supporters. This is a great result and is a 25% increase on last year's total income**

We were delighted to see event income increase this year again. We held a total of 18 events over the financial year.

Our headline events continued to impress with Messy Dash generating an incredible £18.5k with over 650 participants The Gala Ball was attended by members of the community and companies raising £18k. Both of these events saw new supporters joining us, and in some cases for the first time!

The corporate community came out in force again this year, with £75k generated from businesses. Local challenges, large corporate events and everything in-between ensured that corporates of all sizes could get involved and support us in their own way.

Gift Aid increased by 30%, with a concerted effort to engage with supporters about the value of gift aid permissions.

Mental health and wellbeing became a key focus, aligning with major funder priorities. Highlights included a Wellbeing Day for parents, which received overwhelmingly positive feedback, and coffee

mornings to help isolated families. Our "Inspired Expressions" art campaign engaged over 100 contributors, parents, children, and artists through workshops and creative sessions. The campaign raised £3,290 and provided a meaningful outlet for families to connect, and express themselves.

Media & Publications This year we published:

- An Annual Review
- Two supporter newsletters
- An Impact Report for Family Advice
- Three internal staff bulletins
- Numerous case studies

We have significantly increased media exposure, including a double-page spread in Kent Life magazine covering our Gala Ball, boosting visibility and delighting our corporate sponsors. Kings Hill Magazine has also provided valuable exposure, directly generating donor interest and enquiries.

Recognition & Impact We were proud to be named Best Children's Charity in the Kent Charity Awards 2024, a testament to our ongoing impact and innovation.

Income for the year was  
**£843,884**

Our Power BI dashboard is now fully integrated with our ACT CRM system, providing detailed insights into donor behaviour, geographic reach, and income trends. This tool allows us to make data-driven decisions and tailor our approach more effectively.

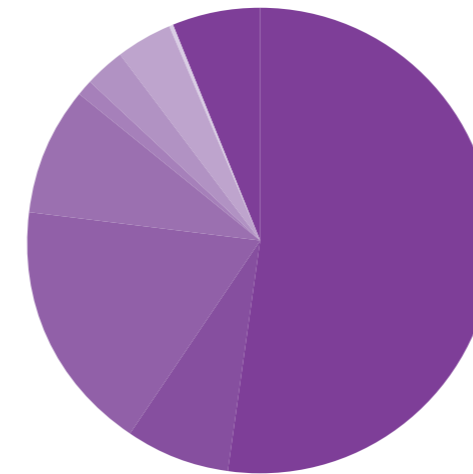
The outlook for Trusts and Foundations funding is becoming increasingly challenging. Many foundations have tightened their eligibility criteria, with a stronger focus on supporting smaller charities. Additionally, there is a growing list of trusts and foundations that are set to close in 2025/26, which will further limit the availability of funding opportunities for charities.

Looking ahead, we are excited about new campaigns and enhanced reporting through Power BI to track progress more efficiently.

The fundraising landscape still remains uncertain. Many Trusts & Foundations, Corporate Companies and other giving organisation continue to reduce their donations to charities. The cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures continues to have an impact

on the regular giving donations. As always, the hardest funding to secure is unrestricted, with many funders wanting tangible projects rather than funding core costs.

We remain optimistic for the years ahead and thank all those who have contributed to our fundraising over the years. We could not do any of it without you!



Trusts & Foundations	£441,074.31
Events	£61,167.86
Community	£149,068.22
Corporate	£74,989.66
In Memory	£9,026.54
Regular Giving	£22,605.08
Gift Aid	£32,407.83
Major Donors	£3,000
Other	£50,545.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>£843,884</b>



## Marketing highlights

Social media statistics

- Facebook 7,030
- Instagram 1,572
- Linked In 1,504
- Tik Tok 204

Website:

Page views: 104,638  
Unique visitors: 56,245



# FAMILY ADVICE

**Tracey Sams** FAMILY ADVICE MANAGER

*“The constant dread that I was failing my child because I didn’t understand her or could help her with things she finds difficult was affecting my mental health. I now feel confident that I know my child and I can help her with the challenges she will face in her life”*

Parent quote 2024

**This year our support activities have been delivered across Dartford, Gravesham and Sevenoaks. Most term weeks we have facilitated an easy access, no prior booking, drop in advice session in each of these areas. Support group sessions have been delivered in a similar way. Both through our own facilitated sessions and those we have been asked to support in local schools. Delivering access to support directly in the communities we serve remains an important aspect of our work.**

Not surprisingly the main topics of concern for parents has remained educational provision for children with SEND and benefit queries. These still make up approximately 80% of our enquiries.

We are now supporting more young people over the age of 16 (alongside their parents) and have been dealing with more enquiries about this subject in relation to those young people still receiving some educational input and those that are NEETS ( Not in education, employment or training).

*‘We could not have got through the maze of EHCPs and getting our children extra support without Beams, it is an invaluable service to have access to and we know how fortunate we are to have access to this! Thank you’*

Parent quote 2025



## Activities for 2024/2025

- Enquiries – 2680
- Drop in advice sessions 105 with 570 attendees
- Support Group sessions (internal and external) 25 with 169 attendees
- 7 Cygnet parent programmes with 89 attendees
- 2 workshops with 18 attendees
- 1-2-1 meetings outside of drop ins 237



# SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE SERVICE

**Karen Dorling**

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE SERVICE MANAGER

**The Supporting Independence Service continues to provide vital management support to clients in receipt of a Direct Payment or Personal Health Budget as well as developing new opportunities for independence to young people aged 16+**

The Supporting Independence Service is made up of two distinctly separate offers.

Our Brokerage Management offer continues to provide support to those in receipt of a Direct Payment. We have developed this service to now support those with a Personal Health budgets also.

We provide support to recruit staff, carry out safe recruitment checks, manage staff, payroll, insurance and compliance with all employment requirements. It remains challenging to recruit Personal Assistants (PAs) for clients with rates of pay being agreed by the Local Authority remaining low.

Without brokerage management support, these groups of clients would not be eligible to access a direct payment or personal budget and have the flexibility to receive support that works best way for their family.

**We have supported 34 clients this year, with 27 clients currently receiving ongoing support.**

We now also carry out person facing DBS checking as well as ongoing support for our NHS clients which speeds up the recruitment process.

Using the experience gained from the person-centred planning service, we have been working hard to develop our new **Empower-Me** service which not only provides a full person centred plan, but the support to fulfil the outcomes identified.

**Empower-Me** is a unique learning provision which helps young people to develop their independence skills, preparing them for their future life.

Young people with disabilities, or who are neuro-divergent, often need additional support to fulfil their ambitions and aspirations to achieve as much independence as possible. For many young people with disabilities, functional skills and learning how to cope with everyday situations overrides any conventional qualifications.

Often these skills will not be realised, or adequately embedded, within a traditional school or college setting. **Empower-Me** is designed to enable a highly personalised independence journey, allowing them to achieve their self-empowerment goals.

Learning is delivered by fully trained Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), backed up by qualified tutors, in the person’s own home and community. Learning in the context of their everyday life, makes learning totally functional and supports them to take their learned skills into new environments. A full curriculum means we can cover everything from looking after themselves at home, travel, communication, preparation for work up to supporting them into their first job.

No other educational model provides the flexibility and contextual learning opportunities presented by **Empower-Me**,



with 1:1 support and comprehensive assessments mapped to the Core Skills Curriculum and meeting the criteria for RARPA (Recognising and Recording Personal Achievement) means this service can be accessed via an EHCP or social care funding.

**Empower-Me** is the perfect stepping stone between attending a school or college and accessing work or independent living.

Following an extremely successful pilot, this service is now working with a number of clients seeking to commence their training with us. We are also working with other organisations to build reciprocal partnership agreements which support young people.

We have attended a number of transition events at schools and colleges in Kent, Medway and Bexley with significant excitement around Empower-Me being shown by potential clients, social work staff and educators alike.

*"If we did not have access to Beams, we would become very isolated, there isn't enough provisions for children requiring personal care and full time one to one."*

## Kidscamp

This is our 1:1 service for disabled young people with severe and complex needs including learning difficulties. The activities are to promote young peoples, social development and independence, make friends and try new things and provide personal care, have fun and be safe.

Some of the places we visited and activities we took part in include, Rare Breeds Centre, Your Pottery Barn, Bowles Activity Centre, Scouts Activity Centre Lower Grange Farm, Hollywood Bowl, Mr Mulligans Dino Golf, Curlys Farm, Margate seaside, Wingham Wildlife Park, Swanley Park.

**We provided 21 sessions over the Easter and summer holidays with 217 places requested and 210 places provided.**

Feedback from parent/carers

*"We are indebted to KidsCamp for helping our son meet friends, play; go out to places and to have fun. It also gives me a short respite from caring during the holidays so I can do 'normal' things that are so difficult when he is about - food shopping, hoovering, cleaning etc."*

## Beamers

Beamers is our service for children that are more able and do not require 1:1 support.

Activities enjoyed included White Oak Leisure Centre, swimming tag active and trampoline, Bowles Activity Centre high ropes and kayaking, Timbertop's pony day, MSE, paintball and laser tag, Lower Grange Farm, circus skills, cave bus pedal cars and water rockets and a taster cricket session.

**We provided 13 sessions over the year and 127 places were provided.**

*"Play schemes allow us some downtime, a break from our son's needs, which takes prominence in our lives.": "It gives opportunities to my son that mainstream providers cannot help with."*

## Buzz Club 18+

Buzz club is for our over 18-25yrs activity days funding permitting. We provided 2 days in the summer holidays and the young people enjoyed climbing, water rockets rifle shooting, they also had the opportunity to go to the pottery Barn painting plates, and other items to take home.

**19 places were provided.**

## Family Events

These events give families the opportunity to all go out together and meet other families in similar circumstances to their own,

Some of the events included private screening of Paddington 3 and Despicable Me 4.

Comments from families

*"We can just be ourselves and not worry about our son getting up or making a noise"*

*"I feel relaxed and can enjoy the film with my children"*

We also provided a Christmas Party, pantomime an art workshop, summer party a trip to the theatre.

**710 places were provided for these activities.**

## Harrys Hydro Pool

One of our families kindly offered other families the use of their hydro pool, we managed to secure funding and 18 families and 144 sessions were provided.

**Family support our 1:1 service gave 13 young people support throughout the year with 2,006.5 hours being provided.**



# DRAGON'S RETREAT RESPITE UNIT

**Robin Adams**

SHORT BREAKS MANAGER  
(DRAGON'S RETREAT)

## We are officially **OUTSTANDING!**

Following our most recent Ofsted inspection, we were awarded the highest grade possible, **OUTSTANDING**. This is an amazing achievement and showcases just how hard the team have worked throughout the year. I am so very proud of our team in achieving this for the first time.

Quotes from the report – *“Children benefit from receiving exceptional high-quality care from staff who have an in-depth understanding of their needs.”*

*“The registered manager is ambitious and aspirational for what children can achieve”*

We have continued to welcome many new faces to the service and ensured that all who access the service build up their independent life skills. Our team works hard to promote young people making positive choices and learning skills that are transferable. We have some wonderful relationships with the young people. We continue to access the local community to make lots of memories with regular trips to the seaside, farms and local parks.



## Figures

- **1343** overnight stays provided throughout the year, **87%** capacity achieved throughout the year
- **16** young people started the service **69** young people accessed the service over the year.

## Surveys

- **100%** of parents agreed/strongly that the service provided is of an excellent standard
- **100%** of parents agreed/strongly felt their child enjoyed their time when at Dragon's Retreat
- **100%** of social workers agrees/strongly felt the service provided was valuable to disabled young people and their families

*“As a parent, I'm incredible grateful for the amazing support they provide to my family and the fun they create for my child”*

*“Dragons's has been invaluable for our family”*

*“Thank you Dragon's, you are all amazing!”*

*Social worker quote- “Dragon's is wonderful and fully catered to be able to meet the needs of the children”*

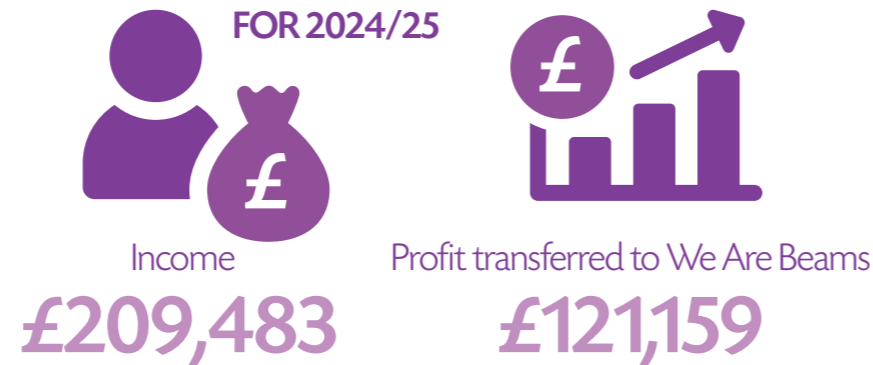


# PAYROLL SERVICE

**Tracy Woods** COMMERCIAL DELIVERY MANAGER

The Beams Payroll Service has continued to go from strength to strength this year, providing exceptional customer service to all users. Consolidating its status as a registered company wholly owned by We Are Beams, new clients have been secured alongside the pre-existing direct payment customers, allowing us to maximise profits returned to the charity.

Opportunities for further growth are being actively explored and the team remains fully committed to maintaining high service standards at the best cost possible for its users.



# TRUSTEE REPORT

**Rosie Neale** CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we are delighted that at the successes of We Are Beams in 2024/25. The achievements of all departments have been remarkable, showing the dedication of all staff and volunteers in ensuring we are able to support those that need our vital care services the most. This gives us immense pride and it is tremendous that all of the hard work and dedicated continues to be recognised locally and nationally.

Over the year, the Trustees have been keen to build resilience and develop the overall strategy and direction of the charity. The landscape for charities is difficult in the current environment and our mission is to ensure our services remain viable and robust for our families and disabled children.

Now more than ever, the community that we support needs us. Inevitably, there are challenges ahead, but we are increasingly well placed to meet these. We look forward to an equally successful 2025/26!

Kind regards, Rosie Neale - Chair of Trustees

Thank you to everyone who has supported us, we could not do it without you.  
Here are a few of our recent fundraising stories



**Magrock Ltd** has been an incredible supporter of We Are Beams, contributing more than **£6,000** in sponsorship for the Messy Dash event.



**Kentec** Annual golf day raised **£3,000!**



The team from **Puregym** sponsored Messy Dash and provided the warm up!



**County UK** has raised over **£10,000** for Beams at their Golf Day and our Gala Ball.



*"Supporting We Are Beams is something we're really proud of. Our annual golf day raises a huge amount of vital funds, thanks to the generosity of our customers and the team, we can make a real difference to the disabled children Beams support."* – **Kentec**

*"If we can make one child's life more bearable or help one family have respite, then why shouldn't we?"* **Angela, Lodge Manager, Burlington Lodge, Churchill Estates**



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# Beams

Supporting disabled children & families

**Ofsted**  
Outstanding  
Provider