

# STEPPING STONES DS

England & Wales · Charity number 1182787

## Details

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Other names	SSDS, STEPPING STONES
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2019-04-04
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

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Address	Stepping Stones D S Sentinel House Harvest Crescent Fleet GU51 2UZ
Phone	01252417014
Email	<a href="mailto:admin@steppingstonesds.co.uk">admin@steppingstonesds.co.uk</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk">www.steppingstonesds.co.uk</a>

## Activities

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**Objects:** THE OBJECT OF THE CIO IS THE RELIEF OF THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME, THEIR FAMILIES, HELPERS, CARERS, AND PROFESSIONALS WITHIN ENGLAND BY PROVIDING FACILITIES, SERVICES AND OTHER SUCH CHARITABLE SUPPORT AS THE TRUSTEES MAY FROM TIME TO TIME DETERMINE.

**Activities:** Stepping Stones DS supports children and young people with Down Syndrome in North Hampshire, South East Berkshire and West Surrey. The group provides a wide range of support, activities and services for members and their families. All of these are designed to build confidence and support our members in reaching their potential.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities

## Geography

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- Bracknell Forest
- Hampshire
- Surrey

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-08-31	£210,807	£160,784	-	-
2023-08-31	£129,496	£161,230	-	-
2022-08-31	£116,455	£131,210	-	-
2021-08-31	£56,904	£90,466	-	-
2020-08-31	£55,713	£92,041	-	-

## Trustees

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Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Diane Marie Walters</b>	Chair	2024-11-13
Elizabeth Phillipou		2019-04-01
Josie Rice		2025-11-01
Rebecca Daly		2024-11-13
Rebecca Hitch		2020-04-01
Robert Barton		2024-10-14
Tara Dibble		2025-03-03

**STEPPING STONES DS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182787

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# Accounts

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Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to *fulfil their potential.*



**BACK TO  
SCHOOL  
2023-24**

**Amy**  
Year 10



Supporting children & young people with Down syndrome to *fulfil their potential*

# Annual Report

2023 - 2024

Charity number 1182787

# Board of Trustees



As part of our effort to ensure our leadership reflects the community we support, we aim for around half of our Board of Trustees to be family members of individuals supported by Stepping Stones DS. Their lived experience provides essential insight into the real-world challenges faced by the community we serve.

Equally important is the strategic input offered by trustees from outside our immediate network, which brings valuable external perspectives and broadens our collective understanding. Our Board reflects a wide range of professional backgrounds and skill sets, contributing to well-rounded and informed decision-making.

## The 2023/24 Stepping Stones DS Board of Trustees

Chair	Irene Arthur
Vice-Chair	Josh McCormack / Diane Walters
Treasurer	Rebecca Hitch
Secretary	Laura Bryant
Others	Despina Papadimitriou Jacky McKenzie Liz Phillipou Mike Wainhouse



Address: SSDS, Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park,  
Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ

Website: [www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Bank: Cooperative Bank

Charity number 1182787



@Stepping\_Stones\_DS



@steppingstonesds



@steppingstonesds



@Steppingstonesds

# Report summary



We remain dedicated to empowering children and young adults with Down Syndrome to reach their full potential.

Through our tailored programmes and inclusive activities, we create opportunities for personal growth, learning, and joyful experiences.

At the heart of our work is our network of families and carers. Together, we form a family of families.



## SSDS works in:

- North Hampshire
- West Surrey
- South West Berkshire

## Our Key Values

- Community
- Opportunity
- Independence
- Inclusion

“Huge thank you to all those behind the scenes for helping to make all of this possible for our children and families.”

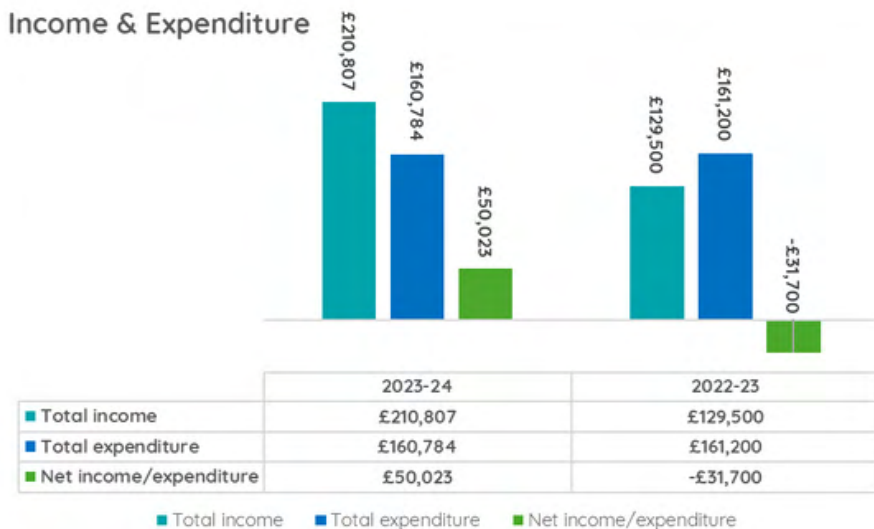
SSDS parent

Stepping Stones DS leads by example.

By providing meaningful support to children with Down Syndrome and their families, we aim to demonstrate how compassion, encouragement, and practical assistance can help individuals surpass expectations and thrive.

We remain politically neutral and are not a campaigning organisation.

### Income & Expenditure



@Stepping\_Stones\_DS



@steppingstonesds



@steppingstonesds



@Steppingstonesds

# Report from our Chair and CEO



## *“Progress is impossible without change”*

It could be said that 2023–24 has been a game of two halves for Stepping Stones DS. The first half of the year went well with all our regular activities and services such as Dance, Tennis, and Stay and Play taking place as planned with fantastic community attendance across all services.

Our early development groups, schools outreach services, and 16+ communications groups also continued their vital work with our children and young people, and the wider Stepping Stones community was ably supported by the amazing Vik Ralfs as part of the Family Advisory Service. Fundraising was steady during this period with a number of new grants being awarded to Stepping Stones DS, and some fantastic community events and matched funding campaigns taking place.

However, the second half of the year was a little trickier as Stepping Stones DS faced a period of upheaval and change as we said goodbye (in different ways) to two important and beloved figures in our community, Alex Brewer, our previous CEO, and Irene Arthur, our Chair of Trustees. Alex’s appointment as a Member of Parliament for North East Hampshire in July 2024, and Irene’s sudden passing in the Summer of 2024, meant that as a Charity we had to navigate a period of uncertainty as we sought to appoint a new leadership team.

During this time, as we worked to appoint a new leadership team, our existing staff and trustees went above and beyond behind the scenes to ensure that all our activities, services, and events continued to run smoothly. Thanks to their efforts, the children, young people, and families we support were not affected by the changes taking place.

As we reflect on the past year, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our staff and trustees, and in particular, Michelle Slater and Josh McCormack, for their hard work, commitment, and dedication. Without their unwavering support and belief in the continued success of Stepping Stones DS, the transitions we experienced in the second half of 2023–2024 would have been far more difficult for both the charity and our community to navigate. They deserve a very big round of applause!

Though change can be difficult ultimately it can also be beneficial - bringing about growth through new ideas, opinions and innovation. As the new CEO and Chair of Trustees, myself and Diane are excited to take up our new roles and as team we are committed to ensuring that Stepping Stones DS is able to provide the vital educational, physical and social activities and services that are needed to support to our children and young people and their families for many years to come.

**Diane Walters**  
Chair

**Kirsten Williams**  
CEO

*In Loving Memory*

## Irene Dzifa King Arthur



1976 - 2024



Our beautiful Chair and SSDS mum, Dzifa (Irene) Arthur very sadly and unexpectedly passed away in August 2024. Irene, beloved wife to Dominic, devoted Mum to Cerys and Cruz, and a pillar of our Stepping Stones DS family; Irene's presence touched us all deeply, and her sudden departure has left a profound impact on everyone fortunate enough to have known her.

Irene was a remarkable woman; intelligent, professional, and compassionate. Despite her already full schedule, she gave generously of her time and energy to lead our Board of Trustees with unwavering dedication. As Irene once expressed, "I lead the Board to ensure that decisions made are in the best interests of Stepping Stones DS and that they promote good governance."

Irene's commitment to our community was deeply rooted in her personal journey as a mum to Cruz, who is 7 and has Down syndrome. Irene found great fulfilment in "serving, offering my member perspective, and leading the Board of Trustees towards a growth-oriented future that maintains the interests of our children and young people."

Reflecting on the charity she so passionately led, Irene once said, "Thanks to Stepping Stones DS, we have and continue to enjoy incredible support ranging from crucial therapies for our son, learning opportunities for our family, enviable social activities to healthy and valuable friendships. They are an Earth Angel." This was the charity Irene championed, the one she nurtured, and the one that continues to support countless families.

# In Loving Memory

## Irene Dzifa King Arthur

1976 - 2024



Our community came together to honour and celebrate the life of Irene and to leave heartfelt messages especially to Dominic, Cerys and Cruz:



“ Such a beautifully kind and selfless woman. We are incredibly saddened to hear of her passing. Our love and thoughts are with Dominic and the children. ”

“ In my memory, Irene has always been friendly and warm, especially towards new faces like us! We are sorry to hear this news. Sending prayers and comfort during this tough time. ”

“ This is such desperately sad news, Irene was a ray of light that brightened a room. My heart goes out to Dom, Cerys and Cruz. ”

“ Such a shock to hear a lovely family dealing with such a tragedy please pass on our love and let Dominic know we are thinking and praying for them all. ”



Irene's legacy of kindness, leadership, and love will forever remain in the heart of the Stepping Stones DS family.

# A year in figures

Stones DS parents  
rated our services

# 4.76

out of 5

We were pleased to note that our services remain highly rated, with the average rating of our services being 4.76 this year.

**"We have only been members of Stepping Stones DS for a year, but already feel welcomed and supported by the charity - thank you!"**  
- SSDS parent

We welcomed

# 9

new families to  
Stepping Stones DS

# 130

families attended our  
social events  
throughout the year

We supported

# 77

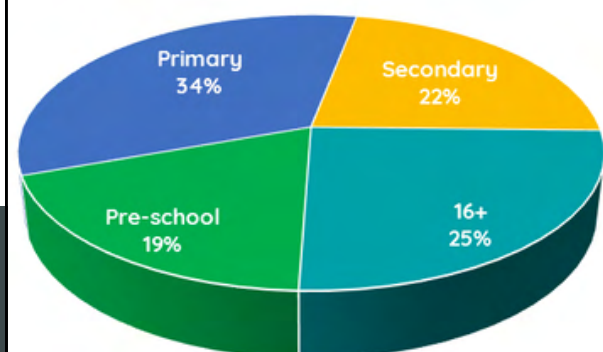
pupils in both  
mainstream and special  
schools

# 31

young adults attended  
fortnightly  
communication groups

**"It's just nice to meet other families that are on the same page we are. It's also great to talk with parents further along in their Down syndrome journey and the activities are always fun for our daughter."**  
- SSDS parent

% in each age group



The mainstream outreach service was rated an average of 4.98 out of 5 by our families.

# Our families



## New Families

This year, we welcomed 9 new families to Stepping Stones DS. We are delighted to expand our community, supporting families with individuals under 25 who have Down syndrome in our region.

By providing our services free of charge, we strive to ensure that everyone with Down syndrome, along with their siblings, parents, carers, and professionals, can access the necessary support to fulfill their potential. This approach promotes equality within our community, and we are thrilled to witness its ongoing growth.

**“So lovely meeting with other parents and children and finding a safe space to share our joint experiences.”**

**-SSDS Parent**



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## Stay and Play

With so many new families, our much-loved Stay and Play coffee mornings have been buzzing. This monthly meet-up was where we began and continues to be at the heart of Stepping Stones DS.



**“These are my favourite, a relaxed friendly atmosphere and an opportunity to be able to vent and really be heard, as well as get and give advice and reassurance to others.”**

# What we do:

## Early Development Groups



### Early Development Groups

This year 29 of our pre-school children attended monthly Early Development Groups.

Delivered by LETS Go!, Early Development Groups are designed to empower our children with Down syndrome, providing them with the tools and skills they need to thrive.

These groups are one of the first steps in our little ones' educational journeys - covering a range of key areas including communication, speech, language, reading, memory & play.

Groups also provide an opportunity for our parents to form a support network, sharing their experiences, joys and concerns.



**"We really value this service as it's such an opportunity for our daughter to learn and practice new skills.."**  
- SSDS Parent



**"I love that it's small groups so not too overwhelming. It's helped us understand more on how to help our son learn and hopefully start talking."**  
- SSDS Parent

Age range	4 months to 4 years
Number supported	29
Frequency	monthly

**"The groups have been a brilliant opportunity to meet with other parents in a small group and share openly the highs & lows. Plus receiving useful tips, advice and reassurance. It has given us additional activities to practice at home."**  
- SSDS Parent

# What we do:

## Social Communication Groups



### Social Communication Groups

The young adult groups, run by LETS Go! enable our young adults to explore all aspects of social communication in a safe and inclusive environment.

Groups have a speech and language focus and target understanding of what makes a good communicator, how individuals can help the listener to understand, and how to advocate for yourself. We use a range of methods in the group to build confidence and success in fun and motivating activities.

These groups provide an opportunity to extend friendships out of school through activities designed to practise and develop social conversation skills.



Our Stepping Stones DS young adults, Sam and Austin, interviewing their friend & superstar TCS London Marathon runner, Lloyd!

Age range	16 to 24 years
Number supported	31
Frequency	fortnightly

**"The comms group is very important. It helps with social skills in everyday settings. They cover a large number of topics and learn ways to interact and communicate."**  
**- SSDS parent**

# What we do: Get Moving



## Secondary+ Age Tennis

The ever popular fortnightly tennis club, run by coach Andy Warry, was attended by 37 young people in Year 7 and above. Classes help our children to build strength, coordination and confidence while having a lot of fun.

**"Great opportunity to socialise and good for coordination and exercise."  
- SSDS parent**



**"Many years ago our son was reluctant to participate. Now he speeds in, loves coming and encouraging others to join in. "**

## Secondary+ Age Dance

36 young people join our fortnightly dance classes for those in Year 7 and above run by Stopgap Dance. Highly popular, these classes encourage creativity and self-expression as well as fitness and coordination.



# What we do:

## School Outreach



### Mainstream Outreach

We fund the provision of support, advice, and evidence-based learning strategies to staff and parents, ensuring schools have the tools to create inclusive environments for children with Down syndrome. Outreach, delivered by the LETS Go! team, empowers teachers and pupils. It serves to foster confidence and equip educators to support children with Down syndrome alongside their typically developing peers.

40 pupils were supported via the mainstream outreach programme.

**"The Let Go support for our daughter has been one of the main reason's she's settled in so well. The help has been invaluable to both her and the teaching staff. It's provided a fantastic foundation for our daughter to thrive."**  
- SSDS parent

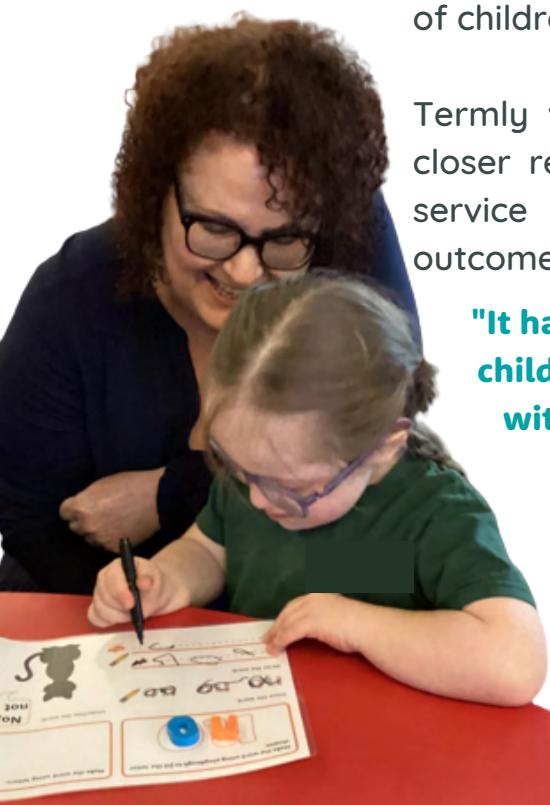


### Special School Outreach

The Special School Outreach Service continues to grow in the number of children we support and remains one of our core offerings.

Termly visits by Down syndrome expert, Vik Ralfs, have fostered closer relationships between the schools and our community. This service equips teachers with strategies to enhance the learning outcomes and school experiences for children with Down syndrome.

**"It has not only given us an independent insight into our child's school day, but also really supported his teacher with ideas for how the team can help him access the curriculum."**  
-SSDS Parent



In Sept we delivered a training day in supporting children with Down syndrome in primary schools.

37 pupils were supported via the special school service this year.

# What we do:

## Family Advisory Service



### Family Advisory Service

This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of our Family Advisory Service, delivered by Vik Ralfs.

The Family Advisory Service is designed to offer practical and emotional support to our parents, grandparents, and adult siblings of children and young adults with DS. This more formal service sits alongside our informal network of families and is designed to complement the peer support networks that Stepping Stones DS has fostered since day one.



Topics families sought Vik's advice on included:

Feeling overwhelmed

Emotional advice

GCSE options

Finding a new nursery

Transition to college

Power of attorney

Communication

School selection

Behaviour

Occupational therapy

EHCPS

Bereavement

Puberty

Transition to adulthood

Disability Living Allowance

Relationships



# What we do:

## World Down Syndrome Day Event



Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

**“Never will I ever allow others to make a judgement of the ability of a person with DS.”**

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

Never will I ever...

pass GCSEs and entry level exams.

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Stepping Text S5DSGIVE10 to 70470 to donate £10  
Texts will cost £5 plus one standard network rate message.

Never will I ever...

Compete in Swimming Championships

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Stepping Text S5DSGIVE10 to 70470 to donate £10  
Texts will cost £10 plus one standard network rate message.

Never will I ever...

Complete work experience at Co-op

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Stepping Text S5DSGIVE10 to 70470 to donate £10  
Texts will cost £10 plus one standard network rate message.

Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

**“Never will I ever let comparison be the thief of joy.”**

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

Our World Down Syndrome Day 2024, held at the Lismoyné hotel in Fleet, on March 21st, was our biggest one yet! All of us at Stepping Stones DS were overjoyed to welcome nearly 100 amazing individuals, including Stepping Stones DS families, supporters, school staff, healthcare professionals, councilors, and members of our local community.

The highlight of our event was undoubtedly the remarkable presentations from three of our outstanding young adults in conversation with our specialist DS advisor, Vik Ralfs. Frankie, Lloyd, and George each shared their unique journey and accomplishments, reminding us all that with the right support and determination, anything is possible.

Stopgap Dance teacher, Nicky Norton, shared with us how classes empower our young people, enhancing physical skills, confidence, and social skills through dance.

We also had the privilege of hearing from Charlotte and Katharine, two of our parents, who shared their personal experiences of raising children with Down syndrome.

Our theme for the day, "Never Will I Ever", aligned with this year's global theme to #EndTheStereotypes. In the lead up to our event, we ran a hugely successful social media campaign where we shone a spotlight on the milestones our children and young people are reaching, and how they are dispelling the stereotypes.

Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

**“Never will I ever discourage people with Down syndrome from fulfilling their dreams.”**

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

Never will I ever...

ride a bike with confidence.

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Stepping Text S5DSGIVE10 to 70470 to donate £10  
Texts will cost £5 plus one standard network rate message.

Never will I ever...

Hear without hearing aids, talk and sing!

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Stepping Text S5DSGIVE10 to 70470 to donate £10  
Texts will cost £10 plus one standard network rate message.

Never will I ever...

successfully breastfeed my daughter Lila

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

World Down Syndrome Day

Stepping Text S5DSGIVE10 to 70470 to donate £10  
Texts will cost £10 plus one standard network rate message.

Pledges from our community

Never will I ever...

**“Never will I ever assume that someone with DS can't do things other people can.”**

Stepping Stones DS Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.

# What we do: World Down Syndrome Day Event



## The event made news headlines:



### Outstanding achievements of three young people with Down Syndrome celebrated

Fleet-based charity Stepping Stones DS held an event to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day on March 21 – supported by many Farnham businesses

By Daniel Gee | Peeps Into The Past | Thursday 28th March 2024 12:00 pm

SPREAD THE NEWS



Whilst the primary goal of the event was to raise awareness and celebrate WSDS, all attendees were invited to take part in our 100 box raffle. Each box was £10 to play and winners were chosen at random from a tombola. With thanks to all the amazing prizes, kindly donated by local businesses, we were thrilled that the **raffle helped to raise over £800 at the event**. The support and generosity of the community mean the world to us.



**“Was great to attend the World Down syndrome day and meet other families - It was an excellent day filled with love and inspiration!”**

# Social Activities



**“We love going to the pantomime and attended the summer picnic for the first time. Always good to connect in person with other SSDS families who are now friends.”**

## Social activities

Over 130 families registered for this year’s social events, including our annual trip to the pantomime, our Christmas parties, and our summer picnic. Thank you to all the volunteers who help make these events such a huge success.

**Summer Picnic and Secondary+ at Camp Mohawk**

**Mad House Christmas Party**

**Bowling Christmas Party**

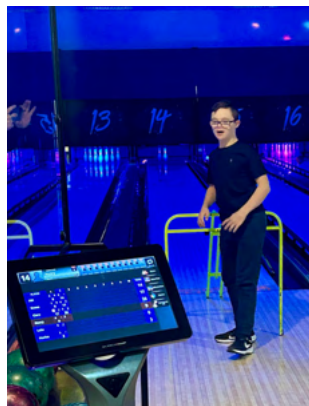
**Pantomime**



**“Love the social activities. Meeting other families is such a support especially those further in their journey” - SSDS Parent**



**“Christmas and summer parties are a highlight. Knowing they are safely contained is such an anxiety relief and I feel able to relax and enjoy these events too. I also love all the activities. - SSDS Parent”**



# Thank you!

With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



**The Baily Thomas**  
Charitable Fund



**The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund: £10,000 towards school outreach**



**Garfield Weston**  
FOUNDATION



**Garfield Weston Foundation: £15,000 Core Costs (May 24 onwards)**



**Global's Make Some Noise: £15,000 - 1st of 4 instalments towards our Get Moving Programme**

**The Payne-Gallwey**  
Charitable Trust



**The Payne-Gallwey Trust: £3,000 for core costs**



**Hampshire**  
County Council



**Hampshire CC: £500 Adrian Collett - Training, £500 Alex Crawford- school outreach and £1,000 Elaine Still & Kim Tayloe summer parties**

**The Sir James Roll**  
Charitable Trust



**The Sir James Roll Charitable Trust: £1,250 towards school outreach**



**The Syder Foundation: £2,000 towards 16+ Comms Groups**

# Thank you!

With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



BERKSHIRE  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



**Berkshire Community Foundation:**  
£5,000 towards school outreach,  
£5,000 Early years services



Stronger Starts

TESCO  
Every little helps



**Tesco Stronger Starts and  
Groundwork: £4,625 towards school  
outreach**



LOSELEY PARK

The Losely Christian Trust



**The Losely Christian Trust: £3,000 -  
Unrestricted funds**

**PGCT**

Payne-Gallwey  
Charitable Trust



**Payne-Gallwey Charitable Trust:  
£3,000 for core costs**



Yateley & District  
Lions Club



**Yateley & District Lions Club: £610  
towards school outreach**



**Hiscox Foundation UK: £6,000  
unrestricted**

Sydney Black  
Charitable Trust



**Sydney Black Charitable Trust: £500  
towards Get Moving programme**

# Thank you!

With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



**Surrey CC: £1,100 David Lewis - 16+ Comms Groups, £10,133 Richard Tear - I.T, website, uniforms**



**Masonic Charitable Foundation: £5,000 unrestrictions**



**BBC Children in Need: £7,000 -core costs**



**National Lottery Awards for All: £20,000 16+ Comms groups to 2026**



**Marjorie Jayne Charitable Foundation & the Peter Harrison Foundation via the Community Foundation for Surrey. £10,000 towards Early Years Services**



Local Community Fund



**Co-op Community Fund: £736.21 for 16+ Comms group**

# Thank you!

Thank you to our corporate partners and local businesses for supporting Stepping Stones DS.



- **Bracknell Forest Council** donated £235 from their Good Causes Recycling scheme.
- **Henderson Scott** raised £1,368 in donations as their chosen charity.
- **Rosemount Financial Services** for their ongoing support.
- **T&P Equestrian** 2 day Russell Pearson Memorial Show 2024 - donation from raffle across the 2 days. Raising £1,220.
- **Redfields Home of Garden & Living** for their santa's grotto tickets and donations from santa's grotto totalling £3108.50.
- **Groundworks, Tesco, and Tesco shoppers** for their votes and donations towards our school outreach services. Totalling £4,625
- **Aqua Compliance** held an internal lots of socks competition that raised £500.
- **Waitrose and Partners** for £1,000 towards Christmas parties.
- **Hogs Back Brewery** for raising £600 through their quiz night and raffle.
- **Knights of St Columba, Farnborough Council** chose to support us as 1 of 2 charities to receive £1,635 of funds raised during their annual country walk.
- **Funtime Dance and Drama** 273 children visited their Grotto at The Harlington on 22nd Nov, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 9th Dec. The grotto raised £1,102.38.
- **Paragon Banking Group PLC** quiz team won first place in the 2024 AFPA Trust Big Quiz, and choose to donate £5,500 of their winnings to support SSDS.

Thanks to those who supported us via local and national purchasing schemes including **EasyFundraising, Rushmoor Community Lottery, & Give as you Live.**

# Lloyd Martin!



Guinness World Record breaking star and London Marathon running champion

At 19 years old, Lloyd made history by being the youngest person with Down syndrome to complete the London Marathon, his drive and determination for this mammoth challenge, has been truly inspiring. Lloyd smashed his £5,000 fundraising target and raised over £10,500 (plus Gift Aid) for Stepping Stones DS.

This phenomenal amount will make an incredible difference to the families we support.



Lloyd ran the marathon alongside his mum Ceri. He completed his marathon in six hours, 46 minutes and 10 seconds, securing a new Guinness World Records title for the youngest person with an intellectual disability to complete the event.

Lloyd didn't just run; he captivated the crowds with his infectious energy, cartwheels, dance moves and astounding enthusiasm, making every step of the marathon a celebration of determination and joy.



We are so proud of Lloyd, it's been wonderful to watch this amazing young man succeed in his London Marathon mission and become an inspirational role model for others.

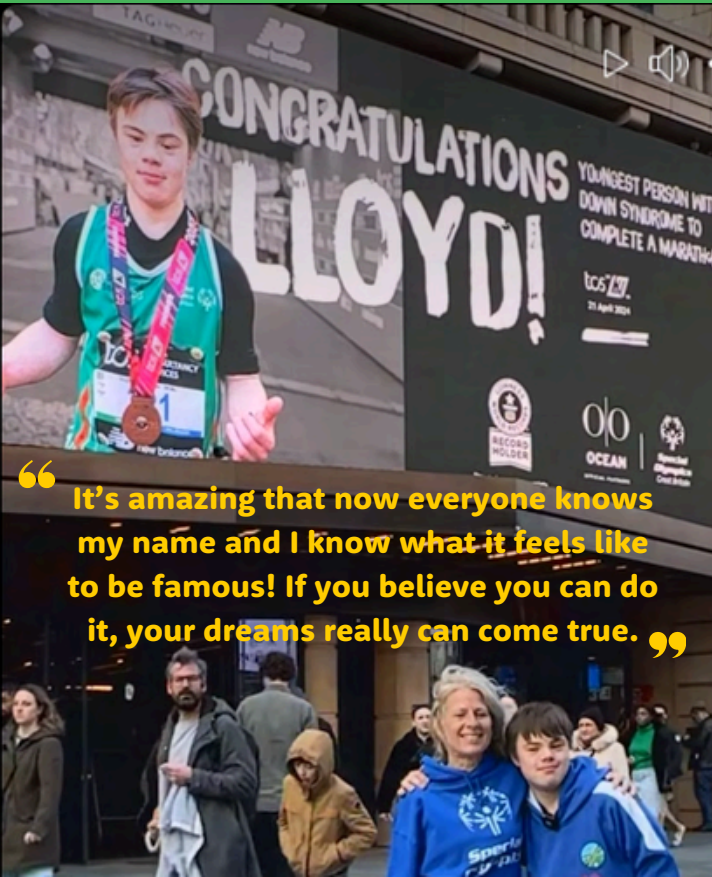
Lloyd's journey was met with awe and admiration from all who witnessed his remarkable feat. His boundless energy and unwavering spirit serve as a reminder that with passion and perseverance, anything is possible.



# Lloyd Martin!



Guinness World Record breaking star and London Marathon running champion



Lloyds success made national headlines, London billboards, and wide spread social media coverage



“It’s amazing that now everyone knows my name and I know what it feels like to be famous! If you believe you can do it, your dreams really can come true.”

“The response has been absolutely incredible - what it means to other parents who’ve got children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

When we set out to do this we had no idea it was going to turn out like this, it was just Lloyds own personal goal and we couldn’t be more pleased that it has hopefully inspired and helped so many people.

-Cery, Lloyds mum



# Thank you!

The Stepping Stones DS community went above and beyond again this year in their fundraising events.



The Brealey Family  
21 in 21 Challenge

To celebrate World Down Syndrome day on 21st March, Scott, Sarah, Sophie and Sienna took part in 21 challenges from 1st March until 21st March, a challenge each day. Together they raised £1,641

Lyn', Nanny to Jack, had a tea and cake sale that raised £1,002



Victoria Nye raised £410 with a coffee morning



Hannah Sampson held a birthday BBQ celebration and raised £66.50



Thanks to everyone who took part.

Thanks to everyone who supported.

# Thank you!

The Stepping Stones DS community saw some unique and fun fundraising ideas with support from friends and family.



## Thank you

to Katharine, and her friends and family, for raising **over £2500** for Stepping Stones DS in a “Down The Hatch” fundraiser.



Everyone enjoyed prosecco, tea and nibbles, as well as chat, fun and fundraising!

Thanks to everyone who took part.

Thanks to everyone who supported.

## Thank You Henry

who has utterly smashed his own sit up challenge raising over **£1000** for Stepping Stones DS



Henry's friendship with Chloe has inspired him to raise money for SSDS

# Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped at our community events, and to those who took part or donated.



Redfields Home of Garden & Living - Fleet welcomed our families to Santa's Grotto free of charge, plus Santa himself, in the spirit of giving, pledged to donate his appearance fees for the entire Christmas period to Stepping Stones DS. As if that wasn't enough, all profits from the Grotto were also gifted to Stepping Stones DS.

This overwhelming display of kindness and support is not just a gift to the families of Stepping Stones DS but a testament to the community spirit of Redfields. A heartfelt thank you to Redfields and Santa for making this magical experience possible.



37  
Stepping Stones DS  
families visited  
Santa's Grotto



In Nov 23  
SSDS  
Virtual Balloon  
Race  
raised  
£78.96



From the 1st to 7th Dec, SSDS held our first ever Virtual Balloon Race!

Members and supporters designed their own balloon and tracked its progress over the week long race - Real weather data was used to track the online balloon entries.

This race was shared with other causes and the overall winner had a chance to win £100 cash prize.

# Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped at our community events, and to those who shared their story for our campaign.



“  
From the initial shock in the early days when their stay and play sessions were priceless, to the monthly early development groups which we love going to.”

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED! That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Jack. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

Our social media Christmas campaign raised over £20,000 with a fund match donation from a truly generous individual.

“  
Sami is so lucky to be part of Stepping Stones DS. Over the years, she has had massive support – from early years groups to activities promoting physical development, and now help in reaching her educational goals. Thank you!”

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED! That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Sami. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

## #TwiceAsNice

Christmas Appeal Grand Total:



This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

### Theo & Michelle's Story

Theo is our cheeky, loving & determined 3 year old who made our family complete in 2020!  
Our journey started with the unknown, a fear of the future & feeling overwhelmed.

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Theo. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

Theo has absolutely loved his monthly speech sessions which have given us so many ideas to be able to help Theo progress with his listening and communication!

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Theo. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

Here's how a donation from you can help:

**£35** will become **£70**

and could pay for Theo and one of his friends to attend an early development group - the first steps in their educational journeys.

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Theo. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

The 10th of September 2021 was a day that changed our lives in the most amazing way.  
Arabella Grace Knight, our third grandchild, was born at 18 minutes past 3 in the morning.

### Diane's Story

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Arabella. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

We have struggled as a family to find out the information needed to ensure that Arabella is getting the best support possible.

Make this Christmas #TwiceAsNice

Without the support & help of Stepping Stones DS we would be clueless. They don't have all the answers but what they do have is the ability to help you find them.

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome like Arabella. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

**10 days to go** This Christmas your generosity has the power to go twice as far! Every £1 you donate before 31st December will be DOUBLED!

“  
Without Stepping Stones DS we would still be floundering with no idea where to turn for help.  
They were the light at what seemed like a very long tunnel two years ago, & they remain our go-to today.”

**66%**  
**£6,695**  
raised of £10,000 target

That's twice the joy & twice the support for children with Down syndrome. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/twiceasnice>

# Thank you!

We would also like to thank all the local community groups who fundraised for us this year:



## Day Lewis Pharmacy



Thank you to Laura Norton's mum Adele for having a lucky dip in her pharmacy and raising £173.30 in donations.



**Thank You**  
to St Mary's Church  
Coffee Shop in  
Send, Woking  
for raising  
**£310.70**  
at their coffee  
morning on  
17th June.



Thank you for  
choosing SSDS.

Thank you to the many **schools and nurseries** who have fundraised for us.

## FRIMHURST ENTERPRISES

Thank you Frimhurst Enterprises for your £300 donation to Lloyd Martin's London Marathon Fundraiser.

We love the ethos behind Frimhurst Enterprises' drive to create quality supported work for adults with learning disabilities within the community, providing career opportunities for people like Lloyd and his friends.

Following his incredible Guinness World Record Achievement Lloyd visited the team at Frimhurst Enterprises to show his World record for his London marathon and his gold medal from British Gymnastics Championships.

Lloyd showed off his cartwheels and splits, before joining the team in a short run to tea break.



# Thank you!

## Gifts In Kind



A huge thank you to UBC for the provision of our Fleet office space worth £60,000 in the past year.

Thank you to Water Babies for offering free of charge swimming lessons to some of our toddlers.



Thank you Farnborough 360 for giving 100 free family tickets to enjoy their soft play centre for the afternoon.

## TONYHARTPHOTO

Thank you to photographer, Tony Hart, who beautifully captured the magic of our World Down Syndrome Day in some wonderful shots. He gave his time and donated all the copy right digital images of the day.



Video-Cameraman.co.uk  
Mike Clarke

Thank you to videographer, Mike Clarke, who created Nicky Norton's video presentation for our World Down Syndrome Day event.

## Thank you to our volunteers who have:

- Written birthday cards to all our children and young adults
- Coordinated our extra-curricular activities
- Provided specialist services free of charge
- Helped run our events



Stepping Stones DS  
Sentinel House,  
Harvest Crescent,  
Fleet, Hampshire,  
GU52 7ST  
01252 417014  
[www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
[enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Charity number: 1182787

“ We have been members for nearly 15 years and the services have been invaluable. Thank you.

SSDS parent

“ Thank you! The groups and activities make a huge difference to my daughter's life, progress, health and well-being.

SSDS parent



# Financial review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £210.8k (2022/23: £129.5k). The increase from the previous year was due to an increase in Grants. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Baily Thomas Foundation, BBC Children in Need, Berkshire Community Foundation, Coop Community Fund, Garfield Weston Charitable Trust, Global's Make Some Noise, Hampshire Country Councillor Discretionary funds, Hiscox Foundation, James Roll Charitable Trust, Losely Park, Masonic Charitable Foundation, National Lottery Awards for All, Payne-Gallway Trust, Surrey Community Foundation, Surrey Country Councillors Your Councillor Community Fund, Syder Foundation, Sydney Black Charitable Trust, Tesco/Groundwork Stronger Starts Trust, Yateley Lions.

Total expenditure reduced slightly from the prior year to £160.8k (2022/23: £161.2k). The small reduction comes from cost of charitable activities.

Overall, there was a Net Income in the year of £50.0k (2022/23: deficit £31.7k). This demonstrates a significant turn around in our financial stability and is a result of the investment over the last 2 years in generating new income streams.

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

### Reserves policy

Stepping Stones DS reserves policy states that an emergency reserves fund held by the charity should be 3 months of the resources expended based on the next financial year expenditure budget.

Stepping Stones DS operates a flexible cost model, at this level the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding while necessary action is considered to replace such funding or identify the activities that should be changed.

### Going Concern

Our consolidated balance sheet remains strong. The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that, at the current time, adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees, therefore, take the view that the charity is a going concern.



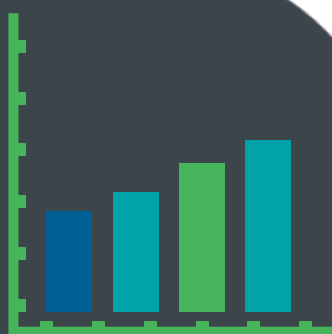
# Financial review



## Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2024

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>				
Donations	76,544	75,987	46,620	41,882
Grants	127,454	48,716	64,183	10,010
Charitable Activities	4,441	4,584	5,177	4,601
Investments	2,367	209	475	2,510
<b>Total income</b>	<b>210,807</b>	<b>129,496</b>	<b>116,455</b>	<b>59,003</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	25,613	24,770	18,819	6,668
Charitable activities	99,900	101,126	82,682	57,476
Support costs	35,271	35,334	29,709	26,324
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>160,784</b>	<b>161,230</b>	<b>131,210</b>	<b>90,469</b>
<b>Net income /(expenditure)</b>	<b>50,023</b>	<b>-31,735</b>	<b>-14,755</b>	<b>-31,466</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>				
Total funds brought forward	103,142	134,877	149,632	181,098
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>153,165</b>	<b>103,142</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>





# Financial review

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2024

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	£	£	£	£
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
<b>Funds:</b>				
Restricted funds	64,277	4,933	41,397	6,937
Unrestricted funds	<u>88,889</u>	<u>98,210</u>	<u>93,479</u>	<u>142,694</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 August 2024

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
	£	£	£	£
Net Cash used in operating activities	47,656	-31,943	-15,230	-33,976
Interest from investments	<u>2,367</u>	<u>209</u>	<u>475</u>	<u>2,510</u>
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>	50,023	-31,735	-14,755	-31,466
Cash at beginning of the year	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>	<u>181,098</u>
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>	<u>153,165</u>	<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>



# Financial review

## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Accounting policies

#### a) Statutory Information

Stepping Stones DS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England. The registered office address and principal place of business is Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Cres, Fleet GU51 2UZ.

#### b) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Account and Reporting for Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been presented in Pound Stirling as this is the functional and presentational currency of the charity.

#### c) Public benefit entity

Stepping Stones DS meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

#### d) Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and all operations are continuing. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charities ability to continue as a going concern.

#### e) Income and Interest receivable

Income and Interest receivable are recognised when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity.

#### f) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probably that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.



**Section A Independent Examiner's Report**

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
Stepping Stones DS

On accounts for the year  
ended

31/08/2024	Charity no (if any)	1182787
------------	------------------------	---------

Set out on pages

29-32  
(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/08/2024.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:  Date: 15/06/2025

Name: Victoria Radford

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Fcpfa, Maat, Cert-itmPF

Address: 7 orchard Mews, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2RJ


**Section B****Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

No matters of material concern to report

**STEPPING STONES DS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182787

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# Accounts

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Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to fulfil their potential.



# Annual Report

2022 - 2023

Charity number 1182787

# Board of Trustees



We strive to have approximately half of our Board of Trustees comprised of Stepping Stones DS family members. This ensures that our board possesses first-hand experience of the challenges Stepping Stones DS seeks to address. Equally important is the direction and input we receive from individuals outside our immediate community.

Our board members contribute a diverse range of skills and experiences from various backgrounds. However, we are continuously seeking additional trustees to further enhance our diversity and ensure we fully represent the communities we serve.

## The 2022/23 Stepping Stones DS Board of Trustees

Chair Josh McCormack

Vice-Chair Irene Arthur

Treasurer Rebecca Hitch

Secretary Laura Bryant

Others  
Despina Papadimitriou  
Jacky McKenzie  
Sarahjane MacAlinden  
Liz Phillipou  
Mike Wainhouse



Address: SSDS, Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park,  
Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ

Website: [www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Bank: Cooperative Bank

Charity number 1182787



@Stepping\_Stones\_DS



@steppingstonesds



@steppingstonesds



@Steppingstonesds

# Report summary



Continuing our mission to support children and young adults with Down Syndrome to achieve their goals.

The support and services provided boost their confidence by providing a space to have fun and learn.

Our community of families and carers is integral to our mission; we are a family of families.



“Thanks for everything you do to provide amazing opportunities for our young people, ourselves, and our families.”

SSDS parent

## Our Key Values

- Community
- Opportunity
- Independence
- Inclusion

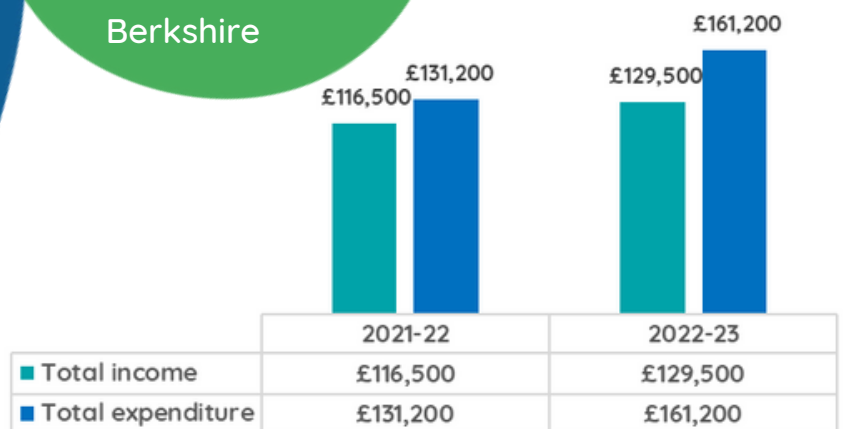
## SSDS works in:

- North Hampshire
- West Surrey
- South West Berkshire

Stepping Stones DS tries to live by the example we set.

By supporting families and their children who have Down Syndrome we try to model how offering a supporting hand can help exceed expectations.

We remain politically neutral and are not a campaigning organisation.



■ Total income ■ Total expenditure



@Stepping\_Stones\_DS



@steppingstonesds



@steppingstonesds



@Steppingstonesds

# Report



## Report from our Chair and CEO

### **This year, we were Flying and Soaring!**

We have so many new families joining us and our services are in such demand, that this year, we added a third class to our dance, tennis and young adult communications groups.

Stopgap Dance, which runs our secondary+ dance programme, has named our three groups Steps and Strides, Leaps and Bounds and now... Flying and Soaring. And it feels like this is an apt metaphor for our journey as a charity.

On average, we have one family joining us every month and this year saw exactly that. Stay and Play has been packed out every month with so many new pre-schoolers and babies enjoying a play while parents have chance to relax with a cuppa and have a chat.

And our young adults have been honing their social communication skills and making friends in their groups, while their parents have been hearing about independent living from local supported living provider Care Opportunities.

Our families tell us that one of the most valued aspects of the service that Stepping Stones DS provides is the family of families, the peer support networks that are developed, starting at Stay and Play and continuing throughout the lives of our young people. We know that lifelong friendships are formed.

But we recognised as well, the need for more formal support, especially as the after-effects of the pandemic continue with increased mental health and social communication challenges. In response to this, and following consultation with our families, we launched a 12-month pilot Family Advisory Service, run by one of our DS experts, Vik Ralfs.

Fundraising too has also been in a post-Covid recovery stage, but increasing year-on-year and we continue our strategy of diversifying income streams to ensure protection against unforeseen circumstances.

We still have more families in the younger cohorts, meaning we will continue to grow even without increasing services or our catchment area, for several years yet. Our business planning reflects this as we work to secure our future with a strong community and sufficient funding.

Our particular thanks go to our amazing team of volunteers, to Rich and Donna Paterson for their extremely generous donation, to our grant funders and corporate partners. And, of course, to all our family and community fundraisers, and our team of professionals delivering our services and running our office.

**Josh McCormack**  
Chair

**Alex Brewer**  
CEO

# A year in figures

Stones DS parents  
rated our services

# 4.66

out of 5

We were pleased to note that our services remain highly rated, with the average rating of our services being 4.66 this year.

**"A big thank you to everyone for helping to support SSDS families. It makes such a positive difference to our lives."  
- SSDS parent**

We welcomed

# 12

new families to  
Stepping Stones DS

# 56

families came to our summer  
picnic at Camp Mohawk

We supported

# 74

pupils in both  
mainstream and special  
schools

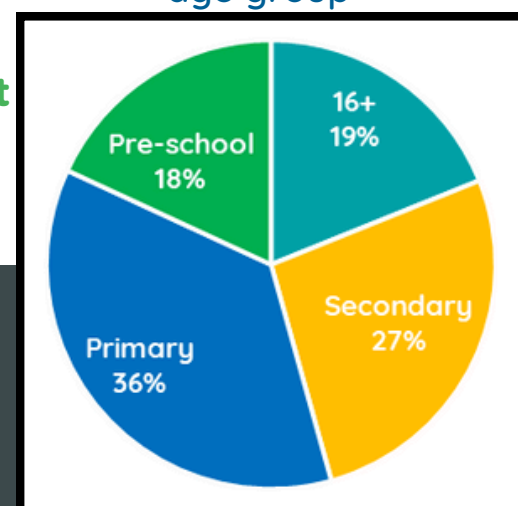
We delivered

# 6

training courses to  
professionals, parents  
and carers

**"Thank you so much for all you do for our children - SSDS is such an important lifeline and your contribution to our childrens' and their families' quality of life cannot be under-estimated."  
- SSDS parent**

Percentage in each  
age group



In October 2022 we launched a pilot Family Advisory Service. This service received **40** self-referrals in the first 9 months.

# Our families



## New Families

This year, we welcomed 12 new families to Stepping Stones DS. We are delighted to expand our community, supporting families with individuals under 25 who have Down syndrome in our region.

**“Great to hear everyone's story and know that you're not the only one on this journey. Feel safe to talk to everyone without being judged.”**



By providing our services free of charge, we strive to ensure that everyone with Down syndrome, along with their siblings, parents, carers, and professionals, can access the necessary support to fulfill their potential. This approach promotes equality within our community, and we are thrilled to witness its ongoing growth.

---

## Stay and Play

With so many new families, our much-loved Stay and Play coffee mornings have been buzzing. This monthly meet-up was where we began and continues to be at the heart of Stepping Stones DS.



**“I love these sessions and highly value them. Having a safe space to ask questions and seek validation and advice has been so important for me. I’ve loved meeting other families and little ones too.”**

# What we do:

## Sensory Suite



### Sensory Suite

We were pleased to return to the Sensory Suite at Parkside, Mencap, this year.

As well as provide a safe, fun environment for our little ones, the Sensory Suite also offers parents and carers an opportunity to chat and share with each other.

Sensory Suite session relied entirely on parent volunteers, thanks to everyone who organised or ran sessions this year.

Age range	Birth to 4 years
Number supported	23
Frequency	monthly



**"Quiet groups which meant plenty of space for everyone on each section. My baby loves all the lights and he is clearly stimulating for his development."**

**- SSDS parent**



# What we do:

## Early Development Groups



### Early Development Groups

This year 20 of our pre-school children attended monthly Early Development Groups.

Delivered by LETS Go!, Early Development Groups are designed to empower our children with Down syndrome, providing them with the tools and skills they need to thrive.

These groups are one of the first steps in our little ones' educational journeys - covering a range of key areas including communication, speech, language, reading, memory & play.

Groups also provide an opportunity for our parents to form a support network, sharing their experiences, joys and concerns.



**"We both love going to the EDG groups. Ellie has made vast improvement since starting and I can ask any questions with no judgment."  
- SSDS Parent**



**"Amazing groups! Gives us activities to do with Lilly that have such a positive outcome on her development & social skills."  
- SSDS Parent**

Age range	4 months to 4 years
Number supported	20
Frequency	monthly

**"Very helpful service, where we feel supported and where we learn how we can best support our daughter. Essential service, particularly as so many of us struggle to get the right services in place."  
- SSDS Parent**

# What we do:

## Social Communication Groups



### Social Communication Groups

The young adult groups, run by LETS Go! enable our young adults to explore all aspects of social communication in a safe and inclusive environment.

Groups have a speech and language focus and target understanding of what makes a good communicator, how individuals can help the listener to understand, and how to advocate for yourself. We use a range of methods in the group to build confidence and success in fun and motivating activities.

These groups provide an opportunity to extend friendships out of school through activities designed to practise and develop social conversation skills.



Age range	16 to 24 years
Number supported	28
Frequency	fortnightly

**"This is Austin's favourite activity. I think it is because he is interacting with young people who are older than him. He is treated like a young person and not a young child."**

**- SSDS Parent**

# What we do: Get Moving



## Secondary+ Age Tennis

The ever popular fortnightly tennis club for our young people in Year 7 and above is run by coach Andy Warry. Classes help our children to build strength, coordination and confidence while having a lot of fun.



"It has increased his confidence and skills so much, he now plays at school without any assistance, thank you so much!"

- SSDS parent



## Secondary+ Age Dance

35 young people join our fortnightly dance classes for those in Year 7 and above run by Stopgap Dance. Highly popular, these classes encourage creativity and self-expression as well as fitness and coordination.

"Zack thoroughly enjoys these sessions. It gives him a creative outlet and also builds his social skills."



# What we do: School Outreach



## Mainstream Outreach

We provide support, advice, and evidence-based learning strategies to staff and parents, ensuring schools have the tools to create inclusive environments for children with Down syndrome. Outreach, delivered by the LETS Go! team, empowers teachers and pupils. It serves to foster confidence and equip educators to support children with Down syndrome alongside their typically developing peers.

**"Absolutely invaluable service. The knowledge these specialists passed on to the school staff has enabled my daughter to make huge leaps in her learning."  
- SSDS parent**

39 pupils were supported across 32 schools via the mainstream outreach programme.



## Special School Outreach

The Special School Outreach Service has quickly become one of our core offerings, even though it is only in its third year. Termly visits by Down syndrome expert, Vik Ralfs, have fostered closer relationships between the schools and our community. This service equips teachers with strategies to enhance the learning outcomes and school experiences for children with Down syndrome.

**"An absolutely brilliant service that we have been so thankful to receive. Vik's skills and experience have given us a real insight to how Zoe is REALLY doing at school. She has given us great suggestions for how we can support Zoe and her school setting. She champions Zoe and her progression with gentle honesty, which as her parents, is exactly what we need."**

**"Vik has been amazing at supporting the school to help them understand our son and also in his transition to his next placement."**

33 pupils were supported via the special school service this year.



# What we do:

## Family Advisory Service



### Family Advisory Service

October 2022 saw the launch of our pilot Family Advisory Service, delivered by Vik Ralfs.

The Family Advisory Service is designed to offer practical and emotional support to our parents, grandparents, and adult siblings of children and young adults with DS. This more formal service sits alongside our informal network of families and is designed to complement the peer support networks that Stepping Stones DS has fostered since day one.



This service received **40** self-referrals in the first 9 months. Topics families sought Vik's advice on included:

**Behaviour**

**Emotional advice**

**Transition to adulthood**

**EHCs**

**Transition to college**

**Disability Living Allowance**

**Relationships**

**Puberty**

**GCSE options**

**Bereavement**

**Feeling overwhelmed**

**Power of attorney**

**Occupational therapy**

**Finding a new nursery**



# What we do:

## Training



### Training Courses

This year we ran 5 training courses delivered by our Down syndrome specialists.

Training helps to open doors for our children and young people. We view training as an investment in their future through sharing knowledge, information and support. Our workshops are open to families, schools, medical professionals and anyone with a desire to learn more about Down syndrome.

Thanks to Care Opportunities, parents also attended an information session looking at supported living options for our adults.



**Early Number**

**Behaviour & Friendships**

**Supported Living Information Session**

**Supporting students with Down Syndrome in Year 5 and above**

**Responding to children with Down syndrome**

**A positive start: Choosing an education setting, getting the transition right & a guide to the EHCP process**



“ I came out of the session feeling like a weight had been lifted. I certainly feel miles more confident about supporting my student (and the others in their class) and went in to work for the first time this term with a big GENUINE smile on my face feeling **“I CAN do this!”**.

I also loved how friendly everyone was - I'm not usually one to speak up in training sessions but the 'safe space' was so well established that I found myself contributing a reasonable amount, including my concerns.



# Social Activities



**“We attended the summer picnic and it was so wonderful. It gave us and our children a chance to socialise in a safe environment.”**

## Social activities

Over 120 families registered for this year’s social events, including our annual trip to the pantomime, our Christmas parties, and our summer picnic. Thank you to all the volunteers who help make these events such a huge success.

**Summer Picnic at Camp Mohawk**

**Mad House Christmas Party**

**Bowling Christmas Party**

**Pantomime**



**“Really well planned and brilliant seeing other parents. Knowing we're not alone is so important when you feel alone.”**



**“We attended the pantomime in January which was a brilliant event and so nice to do something suitable for the whole family.”**

# Thank you!

With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



**THE  
COLEMAN  
TRUST**  
HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE OBTAIN  
THE SKILLS THEY NEED

**Coleman Trust: £2500 towards 16+  
Social Communication Groups**

**Shanly Foundation: £3000  
towards Special School Outreach**



**Garfield Weston: £15000  
towards core costs**

**Berkshire Community Foundation/  
Lexicon: £5000 towards school  
outreach in Berkshire**



**Clay Hill Charitable  
Trust**

**Clay Hill Charitable Trust: £8000  
towards education services**

**Payne-Gallwey Charitable Trust:  
£4000 towards the Family  
Advisory Service**

**PGCT**  
Payne-Gallwey  
Charitable Trust



**The Dan Maskell Tennis Trust:  
£1000 towards Tennis classes**

# Thank you!

Thank you to our corporate partners and local businesses for supporting Stepping Stones DS.



Community Grants



- **Inigo** for their incredible £8000 donation towards our #DoubleThePotential match giving fundraiser.
- **Day Lewis Pharmacy** for their community donations
- **Living Stones Bookshop** who donated £1000
- **The Masonic Charitable Trust** for their continued donations
- **Rosemount Financial Services** for their substantial support of our 16+ Groups
- **PH Water staff** for running the Farnborough Winter Half Marathon and the Rushmoor Half Marathon raising £1646
- **Redfields Home of Garden & Living** for their £164 donation from their Christmas jumper day
- **Groundworks, Tesco, and Tesco shoppers** for their votes and donations towards our school outreach services.
- **Turtle Tots Surrey** for their donations.
- **Terracycle** for their donations.
- **Pabulum** for their donation of £1171
- **Surrey County Councillors** for awarding grants totaling £5416 towards School Outreach, Early Development Groups & the Family Advisory Service.
- **Hampshire County Councillors** for awarding grants totaling £2800 towards Early Development Groups & the Family Advisory Service.

Thanks to those who supported us via local and national purchasing schemes including **Amazon, EasyFundraising, Rushmoor Community Lottery, & Give as you Live.**

# Thank you!

The Stepping Stones DS community went above and beyond this year in their fundraising events. Thank you so much to everyone who took part in an event, and to all of your generous supporters



Sarah & Scott Brealey ran the Fleet Half-Marathon. Scott then also ran the London marathon! Together they raised £3,874



Tim and Robin cycled from London to Brighton raising £385



Frankie raised £2,137 by completing his Bronze DofE



James ran the New Forest Marathon and raised £1,285



Kian donated £100 of his 7th birthday money



Eight year-old Cerys organised a bake sale for World DS Day raising £638

We would like to extend enormous thanks to Rich and Donna Paterson who supported us this year with a tremendous donation of £10,000.



David, Lilly, & Kevin cycled 315km raising £5,500



# Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped at our community events, and to those who took part or donated.



This we attended the Fleet Jubilee Celebrations, the Fleet Christmas Market, and the Rushmoor Park Run. Thanks to everyone who helped at these events and came to support us.



## Rushmoor Reindeer Parkrun



# Thank you!



We would also like to thank all the local community groups who fundraised for us this year:

 BRADFIELD COLLEGE

Thank You to Bradfield College for supporting us at their summer Jazz Concert, raising more than £4,000 for our services.

Thank You to St Mary's Church Coffee Shop in Send, Woking for raising **£333.70** at their coffee morning.



Thank You to Hook Fun Run & Road Races for donating £100 to Stepping Stones DS from the proceeds of this year's event.



Thank You to the **W.I. Farnborough** for inviting Stepping Stones DS to talk at one of their recent meetings and for holding an auction to raise funds for us.



**TILLY WIDGETS**  
**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN  
FARNBOROUGH



Thank you to the many **schools and nurseries** who have fundraised for us.

Finally, there are many **individuals who give regularly, make one-off donations or hold fundraising challenges.**

Throughout the year you gave generously, and in the summer you went above and beyond in our

**#DoubleThePotential** match giving fund resulting in an incredible total of **£25,118**. Your involvement is what makes all this possible. Your generosity is creating brighter futures for children and young adults with Down Syndrome, enabling them to fulfil their true potential.



Thanks to Church Crookham and Fleet Men's Shed for their fundraising support.

**£25,118**

# THANK YOU!



**#DoubleThePotential**

# Thank you!



## Gifts In Kind



A huge thank you to UBC for the provision of our Fleet office space worth £60,000 in the past year.

Thank you to Water Babies for offering free of charge swimming lessons to some of our toddlers.



**Thank you** to our volunteers who have:

- Written birthday cards to all our children and young adults
- Coordinated our extra-curricular activities
- Provided specialist services free of charge
- Helped run our events



**We have been members for nearly 15 years and the services have been invaluable. Thank you.**

SSDS parent

**Thank you! The groups and activities make a huge difference to my daughter's life, progress, health and well-being.**

SSDS parent

Stepping Stones DS  
Sentinel House, Harvest Crescent  
Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 7ST  
01252 417014  
[www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
[enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Charity number: 1182787



# Financial review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £129.5k (2022: £116.5k). The increase from the previous year was due to an increase in donations. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Garfield Weston Foundation, Clay Hill Trust, Surrey CC, Berks Community Foundation, Payne-Gallwey Trust, Shanly Foundation, Hampshire CC, Coleman Charitable Trust, and Dan Maskell Tennis Trust.

Total expenditure increased from the prior year to £161.2k (2022: £131.2k). The increase is driven by increased focus on fundraising and increased demand on our charitable activities.

Overall, there was a deficit in the year of £31.7k (2022: deficit £14.6k). The deficit this year is due to our increased focus on fundraising and an increase in demand for our charitable activities.

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

### Reserves policy

This year Stepping Stones DS was required to use reserves to bridge the gap between spending and the income received to cover increasing expenditure. Stepping Stones DS reserves policy states that, in addition to free reserves for day-to-day expenditure, an emergency reserves fund held by the charity should be at least 3 months of the resources expended based on the next financial year expenditure budget. This equated to £56,459 for the financial year 2022/23.

Stepping Stones DS operates a flexible cost model, at this level the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding while necessary action is considered to replace such funding or identify the activities that should be changed. The free reserves currently available equate to just over 7 months running costs.

### Going Concern

Our consolidated balance sheet remains strong. Covid-19 has significantly hindered our ability to fundraise in recent years and a fourth in-year deficit has reduced our available reserves. While action has been taken to address this issue, which has assisted in reducing the deficit this year, demand for services and the costs of providing those services are both increasing.

The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that, at the current time, adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees, therefore, take the view that the charity is a going concern.



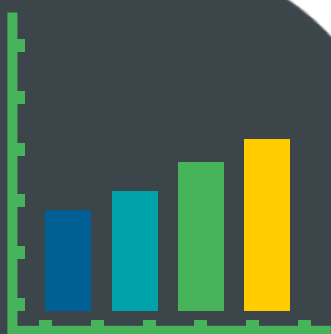
# Financial review



## Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2023

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2022</i>
		£	£
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations	2	75,987	46,620
Grants		48,716	64,183
Charitable Activities	3	4,584	5,177
Investments		209	475
<b>Total income</b>		<b>129,496</b>	<b>116,455</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		24,770	18,819
Charitable activities		101,126	82,682
Support costs		35,334	29,709
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>161,230</b>	<b>131,210</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>(31,735)</b>	<b>(14,755)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>			
Total funds brought forward		134,877	149,632
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>103,142</b>	<b>134,877</b>





# Financial review

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2023

	<i>Note</i>	2023	2022
		£	£
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		103,142	134,877
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<u><u>103,142</u></u>	<u><u>134,877</u></u>
<b>Funds:</b>			
Restricted funds		4,933	41,397
Unrestricted funds		98,210	93,479
<b>Total Funds</b>		<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 August 2023

	<i>Note</i>	2023	2022
		£	£
Net Cash used in operating activities		(31,943)	(15,230)
Interest from investments		209	475
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>		<u>(31,735)</u>	<u>(14,755)</u>
Cash at beginning of the year		134,877	149,632
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>		<u>103,142</u>	<u>134,877</u>



# Financial review

## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Accounting policies

#### a) Statutory Information

Stepping Stones DS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England. The registered office address and principal place of business is Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Cres, Fleet GU51 2UZ.

#### b) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Account and Reporting for Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been presented in Pound Stirling as this is the functional and presentational currency of the charity.

#### c) Public benefit entity

Stepping Stones DS meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

#### d) Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and all operations are continuing. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charities ability to continue as a going concern.

#### e) Income and Interest receivable

Income and Interest receivable are recognised when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity.

#### f) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probably that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.



**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

Report to the trustees/  
members of

SteppingStones DS

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 August 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1182787

Set out on pages

21-24

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 /08 / 2023.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: vworsfold

Date: 13/06/2024

Name: Vicky Worsfold

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

FCPFA, MAAT, Cert-ITM-PF

Address:

7 orchard mews, knaphill, woking, surrey, GU21 2RJ


**Section B****Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Queries raised on the % of cost of raising funds/grant v income received change from previous years

Interest on cash was also low given the high interest rate environment.

Consideration into the level of cash in the current account also raised

All queries were answered thoroughly and with consideration,

**STEPPING STONES DS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182787

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# Accounts

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Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to *fulfil their potential.*



# Annual Report

2021 - 2022

Charity number 1182787

# Report summary



Our mission is to help children and young adults with Down syndrome fulfil their potential.

We do this by providing a range of services that help them to be social, have fun and learn.

We support families, carers and professionals with social events and training.

"Absolutely outstanding and invaluable support. Thank you. These services are amazing :)"  
Sarah, SSDS parent

## SSDS works in:

North Hampshire  
West Surrey  
South West Berkshire



## SSDS Values

Community  
Opportunity  
Independence  
Inclusion

At Stepping Stones DS, we try to lead by example. We aim to be kind, show compassion and not under-estimate others' skills. We provide specialist support to families so that their children with down syndrome can thrive.

We remain politically neutral and are not a campaigning organisation.

	2022	2021
Total income	116,480	56,904
Total expenditure	131,235	90,466

Charity number 1182787



[www.facebook.com/steppingstonesds](https://www.facebook.com/steppingstonesds)



[@Stepping\\_Stones\\_DS](https://www.instagram.com/Stepping_Stones_DS)



[@Steppingstones](https://twitter.com/Steppingstones)



[linkedin.com/company/steppingstonesds](https://www.linkedin.com/company/steppingstonesds)

# Report



## Report from our Chair and CEO



We had a year with almost every activity running in-person, and what a joy it was to be back! With record sign-ups for our extra-curricular activities and social events, and a bumper year about to start school, we have been busy with all our age groups.

16 new families joined us this year, some moving to the area with young adults and some coming to Stay and Play with a baby bump. For everyone's circumstances, we know that our community of support is vital and we are privileged to be part of the journey.

In the Autumn, we launched our updated brand, designed to reflect our mission and the full age-range of the young people we support. And in March we held a World Down Syndrome day networking event, at which guests heard from speakers including our very own Bella and professional partners LETS Go! and Vik Ralfs, who work with us.

Our long-standing corporate partner, Rosemount Financial Solutions, was able to hold its fundraising ball in September, which was a delight to attend.

We started the year in September with Waterbabies kindly offering a pro-bono class for Stepping Stones DS pre-schoolers. And we ended it in style with our much-missed summer party, with the addition of archery for older children and young-at-heart adults to have a go.

Fundraising continues to be competitive and we are working hard to diversify our income streams to make us more resilient. This year, we increased our income from grant funding and are hugely grateful to Sophie, one of our younger children who scooted 100 lengths of her road to raise more than £3,000.

We would like to extend our enormous gratitude to everyone who has donated time or money (or both) so that we can continue our vital work. It really wouldn't be possible without you.

Josh McCormack  
Chair

Alex Brewer  
CEO

**"Thank you for your assistance. Please continue to be amazing."  
-Jay, SSDS parent**

We welcomed

16

new families to  
Stepping Stones DS

# A year in figures

We supported

71

pupils in schools with  
specialist knowledge,  
training and coaching for  
their teachers

In May 2022, we surveyed our families to find out how we were doing.

Average ratings of our services went up to 4.72 out of 5 this year. There was a palpable sense of relief to be back 'in the room' in a consistent way.

We delivered

9

training courses to  
professionals, parents  
and carers

"Just so wonderful to  
have someone else  
really 'see' our  
daughter and  
her potential."  
- SSDS parent

**Sarah B - Stepping  
Stones DS parent said:**

"Stepping Stones DS provides life-changing skills wrapped up as a big fun activity for children and young adults with Down syndrome. It's an absolutely invaluable service for our daughter and for us as parents, and has enabled Sophie to make huge leaps in her learning."

Stones DS parents gave  
an average of

4.72

out of 5 for our services

56

families came to our summer  
picnic - the first in three  
years.

Our young adults got the chance to try out some new sports this year. In September, we held a cricket taster day and our summer party featured an archery session, both of which were very popular.

# Our families



## New Families

We welcomed 16 more new families to Stepping Stones DS this year - more than our average. Anyone with Down syndrome who is under 25 and lives in our catchment, and their family, can join.

We do not charge for the vast majority of our services, to enable as many people as possible to participate.

We support young people with Down syndrome, their siblings, parents, carers and professionals to help them fulfil their potential.



## Social activities

We were very sad to have to cancel our Christmas party once again, but many of our families came to our first trip to the Panto in 3 years. And our summer party in July 2022 was a day to remember with glorious weather, activities including archery, swimming and, of course, ice cream.



The unknown journey ahead doesn't seem so scary when I know we always have the support of so many wonderful individuals, both staff and fellow parents... So, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all you do."

- Chantelle, SSDS Parent

# What we do

## - Early Years



### Early Development Groups

These are the first step in our little one's educational journeys and help prepare them for starting school.

Groups are delivered by LETs Go! and target a range of development including communication, speech, vocabulary and language, number, memory, reading, play and cognition.

"Having this service helps me to keep developing my child's skills at home knowing how to do it & keeping at it. It's good for my child to interact, meet & be guided by people other than myself." -  
SSDS Parent



"It's a learning curve not only for baby but for family too. It is invaluable."  
- SSDS Parent

Age range	4 months to 4 years
Number supported	22 children
Frequency	monthly



### Stay and Play

Our monthly Stay and Play coffee mornings have been very busy this year with a packed-out room every time, lots of chatter and play between friends and siblings. This is how Stepping Stones DS began and it's wonderful to see it so popular still.

# What we do

## - young adult Groups



### Young Adult Groups

These groups aim to build confidence, friendships and communication skills for a wide variety of settings, such as work, social and community. But most of all, they have fun.



Age range	16 to 24 years
Number supported	17 young adults
Frequency	fortnightly

"Brilliant! Oliver loves it. He feels like he has new friends and can't wait to get to group." - SSDS parent



The expert team at LETS Go! facilitates these groups which are extremely popular among our young adults.

They provide an opportunity to learn valuable life skills, make friends and practice communication in a safe and supportive environment.

"I like the groups because I love chatting to Becky, Kim, Michelle and my lovely friends."

- Will H



# What we do

## - Get Moving!



### Primary Dance and Drama



Dance and Drama for primary age began back in person in September with 23 attendees throughout the year. These classes are held fortnightly during term-time and help to develop confidence, coordination and strength. Huge thanks to our parent coordinators who ensure everything runs smoothly.

My son loves the groups and enjoys seeing his friends and we also get to see the parents and talk about how our children are progressing."  
- SSDS parent



### Dance and Tennis for 11-24 year-olds

For our older children and young adults, we run fortnightly tennis classes with Special Needs coach, Andy Warry; and dance which is delivered by Stopgap Dance.

Both groups help develop strength, coordination and confidence through practice, self-expression and fun.

"Our son loves the sense of belonging and purpose that he gets from going to these classes with his friends and peers, as well as the fun and enjoyment of the movement itself."

- SSDS parent



# Thank you!



With huge thanks to our Grant and Trust supporters



Foundation

**TESCO**

Bags of Help



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

**SHANLY**  
**FOUNDATION**



LOTTERY FUNDED



United Way United Kingdom

James Wise Charitable Trust

# Thank you!



With huge thanks to our corporate partners, local businesses and branches for supporting our work.



Local and national purchasing schemes: Amazon, EasyFundraising, Give as you Live.

# Thank you!



We were thrilled to be back in the room for our 2022 World Down Syndrome Day networking event. Speakers included our very own Bella, alongside SSDS professionals Vik Ralfs and Sarah Horton (LETS Go!).

Amazing 5 year-old Sophie raised more than £3,000 by scooting 100 times up and down her road. We are so proud of her!



We would like to extend enormous thanks to Rich and Donna Paterson who supported us this year with a tremendous donation of £10,000.



We love working with local groups and this year in particular were so grateful to:

- Hook Fun Run and Road Races
- Overton Black Arrows

And the many schools and nurseries who have fundraised for us.

Finally, there are many individuals who give regularly, make one-off donations or hold fundraising challenges. Without these small but mighty gifts, Stepping Stones DS would not be able to provide the services it does. **Thank you.**

# Thank you



## Gifts In Kind

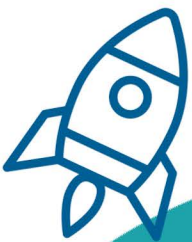


A huge thank you to UBC for the provision of our Fleet office space worth £60,000 in the past year.

EMMA SEANEY  
P H O T O G R A P H Y

Thank you to Emma Seaney for her fantastic photography of our World Down Syndrome Day Event.

Thank you to Water Babies for offering free of charge swimming lessons to some of our toddlers.



"SSDS activities have been vital in encouraging motor skills and social skills and have been a lifeline for us as parents from an early age. Thank you so much."  
- SSDS Parent

Thank you to our volunteers who have:

- Written birthday cards to all our children and young adults
- Coordinated our extra-curricular activities
- Provided specialist services free of charge
- Helped run our events



Stepping Stones DS  
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Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 7ST  
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[www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
[enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Charity number: 1182787

# Board of Trustees



## The 2021/22 Stepping Stones DS Board of Trustees

Chair Josh McCormack

Vice-Chair Irene Arthur

Treasurer Rebecca Hitch

Secretary Mike Wainhouse (until Nov 2021)  
Laura Bryant (from Nov 2021)

Others Despina Papadimitriou  
Jacky McKenzie  
Sarahjane MacAlinden  
Liz Phillipou

We aim to have around half our Board of Trustees from Stepping Stones DS families. It is important that our board has lived experience of the challenges that Stepping Stones DS seeks to address, but equally important that we have direction and input from outside our community.

Our board members bring a range of skills and experience from diverse backgrounds. However, we are always looking for more trustees and to increase that diversity to ensure that we are fully representative of the communities we serve.



Address: SSDS, Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park,  
Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ

Website: [www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Bank: Cooperative Bank

Charity number 1182787



# Financial review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £116.5k (2021: £59.0k). The significant increase from the previous year was due to an increase in grants. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Foyle Foundation, Hampshire Country Council, National Lottery, Surrey County Council, Co-Op, Tesco, United Way & Costco, Community Foundation For Surrey, Sport England, Shanly Foundation, James Wise Trust, Albert Hunt Trust, Syder Foundation and Arnold Clark Community Fund.

Total expenditure increased from the prior year to £131.2k (2021: £90.5k). The increase is driven by increased demand on our charitable activities and increased focus on fundraising.

Overall, there was a deficit in the year of £14.8k (2021: deficit £31.5k). The deficit this year is lower than the previous 2 years due to our increased focus on fundraising and in particular grant funding received.

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

### Reserves policy

This year Stepping Stones DS was required to use reserves to bridge the gap between spending and the income received to cover increasing expenditure. Stepping Stones DS reserves policy states that an emergency reserves fund held by the charity should be 3 months of the resources expended based on the next financial year expenditure budget. This equates to £56.5k for the financial year 2022/23.

Stepping Stones DS operates a flexible cost model, at this level the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding while necessary action is considered to replace such funding or identify the activities that should be changed. The free reserves currently available equate to just over 7 months running costs.

### Going Concern

Our consolidated balance sheet remains strong. Covid-19 has significantly hindered our ability to fundraise in recent years and a fourth in-year deficit has reduced our available reserves. While action has been taken to address this issue, which has assisted in reducing the deficit this year, demand for services and the costs of providing those services are both increasing.

The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that, at the current time, adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees, therefore, take the view that the charity is a going concern.



# Financial review

## Consolidated Statement of financial activities

For the year ending 31 August 2022

	<i>2022</i>	<i>2021</i>
	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>		
Donations	46,620	41,882
Grants	64,183	10,010
Charitable Activities	5,177	4,601
Investments	475	2,510
<b>Total income</b>	<b>116,455</b>	<b>59,003</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>		
Raising funds	18,819	6,668
Charitable activities	82,682	57,476
Support costs	29,709	26,324
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>131,210</b>	<b>90,469</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>(14,755)</b>	<b>(31,466)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>		
Total funds brought forward	149,632	181,098
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.



# Financial review

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2022

	<i>2022</i>	<i>2021</i>
	£	£
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	134,877	149,632
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<u>134,877</u>	<u>149,632</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u><u>134,877</u></u>	<u><u>149,632</u></u>
<b>Funds:</b>		
Restricted funds	41,397	6,937
Unrestricted funds	93,479	142,694
<b>Total Funds</b>	<u><u>134,877</u></u>	<u><u>149,632</u></u>

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ending 31 August 2022

	<i>2022</i>	<i>2021</i>
	£	£
Net Cash used in operating activities	(15,230)	(33,976)
Interest from investments	475	2,510
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>	<u>(14,755)</u>	<u>(31,466)</u>
Cash at beginning of the year	149,632	181,098
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>	<u><u>134,877</u></u>	<u><u>149,632</u></u>



# Financial review

## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Accounting policies

#### a) Statutory Information

Stepping Stones DS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England. The registered office address and principal place of business is SSDS, Sentinel House, Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ.

#### b) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting for Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been present in Pound Sterling as this is the functional and presentational currency of the Charity.

#### c) Public benefit entity

Stepping Stones DS meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

#### d) Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and all operations are continuing. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

#### e) Income and Interest receivable

Income and Interest receivable are recognised when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity.

#### f) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.



## Financial Review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £116.5k (2021: £59.0k). The significant increase from the previous year was due to an increase in grants. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Foyle Foundation, Hampshire Country Council, National Lottery, Surrey County Council, Co-op, Tesco, United Way & Costco, Community Foundation Surrey, Sport England, Shanly Foundation, James Wise Trust, Albert Hunt, Syder Foundation and Arnold Clark Community Fund.

Total expenditure increased from the prior year to £131.2k (2021: £90.5k). The increase is driven by increased demand on our charitable activities and increased focus on fundraising.

Overall, there was a deficit in the year of £14.8k (2021: deficit £31.5k). The deficit this year is lower than the previous 2 years due to our increased focus on fundraising and in particular grant funding received.

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

### Reserves policy

This year Stepping Stones DS were required to use reserves to bridge the gap between spending and the income received to cover increasing expenditure. Stepping Stones DS reserves policy states that an emergency reserves fund held by the charity should be 3 months of the resources expended based on the next financial year expenditure budget. This equates to £56.5k for the financial year 2022/23.

Stepping Stones DS operates a flexible cost model, at this level the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding while necessary action is considered to replace such funding or identify the activities that should be changed. The free reserves currently available equate to just over 7 months running costs.

### Going Concern

Our consolidated balance sheet remains strong. Covid-19 has significantly hindered our ability to fundraise in recent years and a fourth in-year deficit has reduced our available reserves. While action has been taken to address this issue, which has assisted in reducing the deficit this year, demand for services and the costs of providing those services are both increasing.

The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that, at the current time, adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees, therefore, take the view that the charity is a going concern.



Statement of financial activities  
For the year ended 31 August 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
<b>Income from:</b>		
Donations	46,620	41,882
Grants	64,183	10,010
Charitable Activities	5,177	4,601
Investments	475	2,510
<b>Total income</b>	<b>116,455</b>	<b>59,003</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>		
Raising funds	18,819	6,668
Charitable activities	82,682	57,476
Support costs	29,709	26,324
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>131,210</b>	<b>90,469</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>(14,755)</b>	<b>(31,466)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>		
Total funds brought forward	149,632	181,098
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.



## Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2022

	<i>2022</i>	<i>2021</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	134,877	149,632
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>
<b>Funds:</b>		
Restricted funds	41,397	6,937
Unrestricted funds	93,479	142,694
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 August 2022

	<i>2022</i>	<i>2021</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Net Cash used in operating activities	(15,230)	(33,976)
Interest from investments	475	2,510
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>	<b>(14,755)</b>	<b>(31,466)</b>
Cash at beginning of the year	149,632	181,098
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>	<b>134,877</b>	<b>149,632</b>



## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Accounting policies

#### a) Statutory Information

Stepping Stones DS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England. The registered office address and principal place of business is SSDS, Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Cres, Fleet GU51 2UZ

#### b) Basis of Preparation

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The financial statements have been presented in Pound Stirling as this is the functional and presentational currency of the charity.

#### c) Public benefit entity

Stepping Stones DS meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

#### d) Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and all operations are continuing. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

#### e) Income and Interest receivable

Income and Interest receivable are recognised when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity.

#### f) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
Steppingstones DS

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 August 2022

Charity no  
(if any)

1182787

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 / 08 / 2022.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date: 27/06/2023

Name:

Victoria Worsfold

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

FCPFA – Fellow Chartered Institute Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA)



**STEPPING STONES DS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182787

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# Accounts

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Supporting children & young people with Down Syndrome to *fulfil their potential.*

# Annual Report

2020 - 2021



Charity number 1182787

# Board of Trustees



## The 2020/21 Stepping Stones DS Board of Trustees

Chair	Josh McCormack
Vice-Chair	Rob Barton (resigned Oct 2020) Irene Arthur
Treasurer	Rebecca Hitch
Secretary	Mike Wainhouse (joined Sept 2020)
Others	Despina Papadimitriou Jacky McKenzie Sarahjane MacAlinden Nick Bourne (resigned Apr 2021) Liz Phillipou Laura Bryant (joined Jan 2021)

The Board of Trustees is broadly 50% members of Stepping Stones DS and 50% non-members. It is important that our board has lived experience of the challenges that Stepping Stones DS seeks to address, but equally important that we have direction and input from outside our community.

Our board members bring a range of skills and experience from diverse of backgrounds. However, we are always looking for more board members and to increase that diversity to ensure that we are fully representative of the communities we serve.

"During the last 18 months, the Stepping Stones DS team has been a huge source of support to our local DS community."  
- SSDS parent

Address: Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park,  
Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ

Website: [www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Bank: Cooperative Bank

Charity number 1182787

# Report summary



Our mission is to help children and young adults with Down syndrome fulfil their potential.

We do this by providing a range of services that help them to be social, have fun and learn.

We support families, carers and professionals with social events and training.

"I can't thank this charity enough. You are all those guardian angels we were so desperately praying for in first diagnosis conversations with the doctor, worrying what the future will bring for our precious baby girl. So, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all you do."  
- Chantel, SSDS parent

## SSDS Values

Community  
Opportunity  
Independence  
Inclusion



## SSDS works in:

North Hampshire  
West Surrey  
South West Berkshire

At Stepping Stones DS, we try to lead by example. We aim to be kind, show compassion and not under-estimate others' skills. We provide specialist support to families so that their children with down syndrome can thrive.

We remain politically neutral and are not a campaigning organisation.

	2021	2020
Total income	56,904	55,713
Total expenditure	90,466	92,041

Charity number 1182787



[www.facebook.com/steppingstonesds](https://www.facebook.com/steppingstonesds)



[@Stepping\\_Stones\\_DS](https://www.instagram.com/Stepping_Stones_DS)



[@Steppingstones](https://twitter.com/Steppingstones)



[linkedin.com/company/steppingstonesds](https://www.linkedin.com/company/steppingstonesds)

# Reports



## Chair's Report

Stepping Stones DS has faced many challenges over the past year and I am so proud of the way we have weathered them, continuing to provide services and support for our families both online and in person.

We continue to provide almost everything without charge, ensuring that all of our families can access the support they need regardless of their financial position.

We have lived under the shadow of COVID-19 again this year; although we have maintained online services, the impact of not having face-to-face services was keenly felt. I have to pay tribute to our team who worked tirelessly to ensure that we could reopen our services in the safest way possible.

As well as adapting to our ever-changing external environment, we have this year re-focused on our mission, ensuring that we are meeting the needs of our families. We are very grateful to the pro-bono support of NICE Thinking Strategy whose excellent workshops started us on the path to our rebrand.

Our end of year survey showed us that we are on the right track, with families rating our services an average of 4.37 out of 5. The vast majority also agree that we live our values - an endeavour we are committed to continuing and improving.

It has been a very challenging year for fundraising, but an absolute pleasure to see our community come together for the #321 March for World Down Syndrome Day and finally be able to hold our Singing Hands event after a year's delay.

I would like to extend a great number of thank yous to the team of staff, service providers, supporters, volunteers and the board who give their time, effort and most importantly their passion to supporting our families.

Josh McCormack  
Chair

# Reports



## CEO's Report

As I watched the children during our first Stay and Play of the year in May 2021, I realised that something was different. Our wonderfully interactive, energetic children were on their own, not playing with each other; instead upset by the noise of the room and nervous about the numbers of people.

One year in, this was Covid damage.

The effect was the same across all of our services. A parent of a young adult in our Communication groups voiced their concern that their son probably can't go to college now because he has lost the ability to communicate.

Down syndrome is often called a communication disability because of two challenges, both of which have been negatively affected by the pandemic. Firstly, the learning disability means children with DS take longer to learn than their typically developing peers. Secondly, weak muscle tone makes creating the right speech sounds difficult. Both require practice to enable the best outcomes.

Practice, though, has been nearly impossible in a year with so many disruptions.

In November 2020, it was declared that adults with Down syndrome fall into the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable category and we consistently took a covid-cautious approach to our planning. But when we returned all our in-person activities in May this year, we noticed a huge surge in demand. We had parents far more worried about the effect of missing out on our services than about the significant risks of this new virus.

Seeing our value in this new light has been heart-warming. I am so very grateful to our talented service providers, many of whom have enabled us to keep on going, online and offline, throughout all of the disruption. Their dedication is second-to-none and their efforts not nearly rewarded enough.

I am also immensely proud of all that Stepping Stones DS does and determined that we will continue to do everything we can to provide our children and young adults with services that help them fulfil their potential.

Alex Brewer  
CEO

# 10

new families joined  
Stepping Stones DS

## A year in figures

# 74

pupils were supported by  
our School Outreach  
Programmes

In July 2021, we anonymously surveyed our families to find out how we were doing.

Here are some of the results:

In-person services were rated higher than online, although both did well. Online services were rated an average of 4.18 out of 5. In person was 4.37 out of 5.

It became apparent that our sense of community, which has always been such a strong part of our organisation, has suffered enormously under the strain of the past 18 months.

We are still working hard to reinstate recently closed services and repeat the success of our siblings course, demand for all of which was clearly high.

# 8

online training  
courses delivered in  
2020-2021

"SSDS is a great support in so many ways from social to academic to advice."  
- SSDS parent

**Sarah S - Stepping  
Stones DS parent said:**

"My daughter would not be where she is today without the help and support of Stepping Stones DS. The fact that she is going to mainstream secondary school is, in a large part, due to the Mainstream Outreach service she has received all through primary."

# 4.37

Average rating out of 5 for  
our services by Stepping  
Stones DS parents

This year saw us able to hold our first ever course for siblings, thanks for the wonderful work of another local charity, Swings and Smiles. The course was our first ever 'hybrid' event with some sessions in-person and some online.

# 176

hours of early development  
groups delivered, during and  
despite the lockdowns

# Our families



## New Families

We welcomed 10 more new families to Stepping Stones DS this year. Anyone with Down syndrome who is under 25 and lives in our catchment, and their family, can become a Stepping Stones DS member.

We do not charge for membership, or for the vast majority of our services, to enable as many people as possible to participate.

We support young people with Down syndrome, their siblings, parents, carers and professionals to help them fulfil their potential.



## Stay and Play

Our monthly Stay and Play coffee mornings finally resumed in May 2021 in a new venue. New families who had joined us during lockdown were finally able to come out and meet others in a relaxed setting. The young children were noticeably playing together less than they used to, but quickly got back into the swing of things.

## Social activities

We were devastated to have to cancel the vast majority of our social and recreational activities during the year due to the pandemic. Even where restrictions allowed events to take place, logistics were often working against us. But we are optimistic for the year ahead!



## A Stepping Stones DS parent said:

“You and your team are lifesavers! My son is thriving thanks to the support, training, help and fun you all provide for us, thank you so much”

# Services - Groups



## Early Development Groups

These are the first step in our little one's educational journeys and help prepare them for starting school.

As the Covid crisis continued, LETS Go! provided an adapted online service to ensure our member families still received monthly support. The online service was delivered from September 2020 until mid March 2021.

Age range	4 months to 4 years
Number supported	24 children
Frequency	monthly

Groups target a range of development including; communication, speech, receptive vocabulary and language, expressive vocabulary and language, number, memory, reading, play and cognition.

Groups finally returned to in-person delivery from 30th March 2021.

"We have attended early development groups. We have only been twice but it's been amazing and given me lots of ideas!"  
- Michelle, new SSDS parent

# Services - Groups



## 16+ Communication Groups

These groups aim to build confidence, friendships and communication skills for a wide variety of settings, such as work, social and community.

Age range	16 to 24 years
Number supported	14 young adults
Frequency	fortnightly

This year, much of our social and community work was around social distancing and understanding the new dynamics of living in the pandemic.

All our young adult groups ran in person throughout the year and were delivered by LETS Go!



"They have always been there to guide us throughout Lloyd's life, but it takes a pandemic to really test just how important that help is."  
- Ceri; SSDS parent

# Services - Outreach



## Mainstream Outreach

We had a lot of success with Mainstream Outreach, despite much of it being held remotely.

We were able to help several year 6 pupils transition to secondary schools, some of whom are the first pupil with Down syndrome ever to attend their mainstream secondary school.

Mainstream Outreach helps both pupils and schools to be more confident in their journey together, equipping staff with the knowledge & skills to support our children alongside their typically developing peers.

“The School Outreach service has been an essential part of Sophie’s hugely successful transition and progress in mainstream Reception. We, and the school, are hugely grateful that this termly service is available to us. Thank you.”

- Sarah B; SSDS parent

We supported 40 pupils in 33 Schools through our mainstream outreach programme this year.

## Special School Outreach

September 2020 saw the online launch of our new service for pupils in special schools, after introductions in the previous summer term.

The Special School Outreach Service has been designed to be a bespoke service that responds organically through regular termly visits and the development of close partnerships between everyone around each young person with Down syndrome.

Services ran online in the Autumn and Spring terms, with in-person finally beginning in the Summer term of 2021.

34 pupils in 14 schools are participating in this new service.



# Services - Active



## Autumn and Spring terms

Dance and Movers continued to run online during the Autumn and Spring terms, giving our young people the opportunity to see their friends and keep active in the comfort of their own homes.



## Summer Term

It was with great relief, however, that our active services could resume in-person in the summer term. Tennis and Drama also resumed.

Our wonderful Movers coach, Jen Hansford, has decided to move on to new projects after 12 years working with Stepping Stones DS families. We will miss her and the service is paused... for now.

"SSDS activities have been vital in encouraging motor skills and social skills and have been a lifeline for us as parents from an early age. Thank you so much."

- SSDS parent

# Fundraising



## With huge thanks to our Grant and Corporate supporters

We were very fortunate this year to be selected by the Coop Community Fund as one of their local causes to support. This raised £3,395 this year and fundraising continues until October 2021.



The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund helps those affected by learning disability and we are very grateful to them for the £2,000 grant they awarded us this year. This and the funding from the Coop have helped to pay for our Mainstream Outreach programme.

Sport England and Energise Me extended their funding by £1,360 to keep us active in lockdown, ensuring our online Dance and Movers sessions continued even when our in-person activities could not.



Our recycling scheme picked up, with £7,186.17 being raised from waste such as Tassimo discs, baby food pouches and Pringles tubes. A big thank you to our Wombling team who work extremely hard to make this happen.

Fleet Rotary made a generous donation of £600 towards our Dance, Drama and Movers classes.



Staff from InterSystems took part in a Christmas Cake Decorating Competition and raised £1,255

We would also like to extend our thanks to the following for their valuable contributions this year:

- Hampshire and Surrey County Councillors
- White Stuff Foundation
- Rosemount Financial Solutions
- Local and national purchasing schemes: Amazon, EasyFundraising, Give as you Live.

# Fundraising

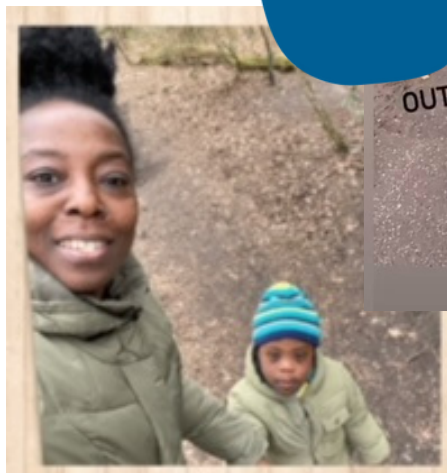


## With huge thanks to our community fundraisers

To celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, many of our families took part in our #321March event, where we travelled virtually from Lands End to John O'Groats throughout the month of March. The event was a celebration of what our community can accomplish and raised more than £6,500.

This year we had a number of siblings raising money and awareness for a brother or sister with Down syndrome. In particular, our thanks and admiration go to:

- Charlotte Sutton who ran a marathon in a month in September, raising £2,400.
- Yaz Garcia and 4 friends walked a marathon in November, raising more than £1,500.
- Miles Weston ran 5k a day for the 30 days of the November lockdown, raising more than £1,000.



We love working with local groups and this year in particular were so grateful to these organisations for keeping on keeping on:

- Sandy Lane Primary School
- Hook Fun Run and Road Races
- Overton Black Arrows

Thank you to everyone who attended our Christmas online quiz night and who took part in or donated to our Christmas and #321March appeals.

Finally, there are many individuals who give regularly, make one-off donations or hold fundraising challenges. Without these small but mighty gifts, Stepping Stones DS would not be able to provide the services it does. Thank you.



Over 30 households, with teenies to teens, came together to celebrate WSDS raising almost £1300.

Thank you Singing Hands - it was great!  
The event was postponed from May 2020 and held online, finally, in March 2021.

# Thank you



## Gifts In Kind



A huge thank you to UBC for the provision of our Fleet office space worth £46,800 in the past year.

Our appreciation goes to NICE Thinking Strategy for their pro-bono brand workshops



Thank you to Care Opportunities for sharing their expertise in an online seminar for parents of our young adults



Our siblings had a wonderful time at a course run just for them by Swings and Smiles



Thank you to our volunteers who have:

- Written birthday cards to all our children and young adults
- Collected and sorted recycling
- Coordinated our extra-curricular activities
- Provided specialist services free of charge
- Helped run online events



"The services are excellent and a great help and support to us as a family." -  
SSDS Parent

Stepping Stones DS  
Sentinel House, Harvest Crescent  
Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 7ST  
01252 417014  
[www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
[enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)  
Charity number: 1182787



# Financial review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £56.9k (2020: £55.7k). The small increase from the previous year was due to an increase in Grants received partially offset by reduced donations. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Hampshire Country Council, Surrey County Council, Fleet Rotary, Sports England and Baily Thomas Foundation.

Total expenditure reduced slightly from the prior year to £90.5k (2020: £92.0k). The small decrease is due to savings in Rent driven by the closure of the Acorn Centre.

Overall, there was a deficit in the year of £33.6k (2020: deficit £36.3k). This deficit is a result of a reduction in income compared to pre-pandemic levels. (By comparison, the financial year 2018/19 saw an income of £89,846.)

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

### Reserves policy

This year Stepping Stones DS were required to use reserves to bridge the gap between spending and the income received to cover the reduction in income. Stepping Stones DS reserves policy states that an emergency reserves fund held by the charity should be 3 months of the resources expended based on the next financial year expenditure budget. This equates to £41.8k for the financial year 2021/22.

Stepping Stones DS operates a flexible cost model, at this level the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding while necessary action is considered to replace such funding or reduce expenditure. The unrestricted reserves currently available equate to just over 10 months running costs.

### Going Concern

Stepping Stones DS continues to operate with reduced but sufficient reserves. Covid-19 has significantly hindered our ability to fundraise in the normal way and a third in-year deficit has significantly reduced our available reserves. While action is being taken to address the issue, demand for services and the costs of providing those services are both increasing.

The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that, at the current time, adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees, therefore, cautiously take the view that the charity is a going concern.



# Financial review

## Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2021

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
		£	£
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations	2	41,882	39,815
Grants		10,010	8,600
Charitable Activities	3	4,601	5,842
Investments		411	1,456
<b>Total income</b>		<b>56,904</b>	<b>55,713</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		6,668	1,652
Charitable activities		57,476	62,298
Support costs		26,321	28,090
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>90,466</b>	<b>92,041</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>(33,562)</b>	<b>(36,328)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>			
Total funds brought forward		181,098	217,426
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>147,536</b>	<b>181,098</b>
All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.			



# Financial review

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2021

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
		£	£
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		147,533	181,098
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>147,533</b>	<b>181,098</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>147,533</b>	<b>181,098</b>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b>147,533</b>	<b>181,098</b>
<b>Funds:</b>			
Restricted funds	4	7,687	1,058
Unrestricted funds		139,846	180,040
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>147,533</b>	<b>181,098</b>

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 August 2021

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
		£	£
Net Cash used in operating activities		(33,973)	(37,784)
Interest from investments		411	1,456
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>		<b>(33,562)</b>	<b>(36,328)</b>
Cash at beginning of the year		181,098	217,426
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>		<b>147,536</b>	<b>181,098</b>



# Financial review

<b>2. Income from fundraising</b>		
	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
	£	£
Donations (including sponsorships)	27,581	21,689
Corporate Funding	800	17,623
Fund raising schemes (Amazon Smile, EF, GAYL, Lottery)	644	502
Community fundraising	11,570	0
Fundraising activities/events	1,288	0
<b>Total income from donations</b>	<b>41,882</b>	<b>39,815</b>
All income from Donations is unrestricted		

<b>3. Income from charitable activities</b>		
	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
	£	£
Training	4,546	4,064
Social activities	55	1,778
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b>4,601</b>	<b>5,842</b>
All income from charitable activities is unrestricted		



# Financial review

<b>4. Movement in Restricted Funds</b>	<i>At the start of the year</i>	<i>Incoming resources &amp; gains</i>	<i>Outgoing resources and gains</i>	<i>At the End of the year</i>
	£	£	£	£
<b>Restricted Funds:</b>				
HCC Grant: 16+ Comms Groups	353		(353)	-
Sports England: Movers/Dance/Drama	705		(705)	-
Sport England: Movers/Dance/Drama		1,360	(1,360)	-
Baily Thomas: Mainstream Outreach		2,000	(2,000)	-
Fleet Rotary: Movers/Dance		600	(595)	5
Hampshire CC: Mainstream School Outreach Grants		3,000	-	3,000
Surrey CC: Mainstream School Outreach Grants		750	-	750
Hampshire CC: Special School Outreach Grants		750	-	750
Training		2,200	(2,318)	(118)
Rebranding		4,000	(700)	3,300
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>1,058</b>	<b>14,660</b>	<b>(8,031)</b>	<b>7,687</b>



# Financial review

## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Accounting policies

#### a) Statutory Information

Stepping Stones DS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England. The registered office address and principal place of business is SSDS, Sentinel House, Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ.

#### b) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting for Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been present in Pound Stirling as this is the functional and presentational currency of the Charity.

#### c) Public benefit entity

Stepping Stones DS meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

#### d) Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and all operations are continuing. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern and have considered the impact of Covid-19 as part of this assessment.

#### e) Income and Interest receivable

Income and Interest receivable are recognised when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity.

#### f) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.



## Financial Review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £56.9k (2020: £55.7k). The small increase from the previous year was due to an increase in Grants received partially offset by reduced donations. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Hampshire Country Council, Surrey County Council, Fleet Rotary, Sports England and Baily Thomas Foundation.

Total expenditure reduced slightly from the prior year to £90.5k (2020: £92.0k). The small decrease is due to savings in Rent driven by the closure of the Acorn Centre.

Overall, there was a deficit in the year of £33.6k (2020: deficit £36.3k). This deficit is a result of a reduction in income compared to pre-pandemic levels. (By comparison, the financial year 2018/19 saw an income of £89,846.)

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

### Reserves policy

This year Stepping Stones DS were required to use reserves to bridge the gap between spending and the income received to cover the reduction in income. Stepping Stones DS reserves policy states that an emergency reserves fund held by the charity should be 3 months of the resources expended based on the next financial year expenditure budget. This equates to £41.8k for the financial year 2021/22.

Stepping Stones DS operates a flexible cost model, at this level the trustees feel that they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding while necessary action is considered to replace such funding or reduce expenditure. The unrestricted reserves currently available equate to just over 10 months running costs.

### Going Concern

Stepping Stones DS continues to operate with reduced but sufficient reserves. Covid-19 has significantly hindered our ability to fundraise in the normal way and a third in-year deficit has significantly reduced our available reserves. While action is being taken to address the issue, demand for services and the costs of providing those services are both increasing.

The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that, at the current time, adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees, therefore, cautiously take the view that the charity is a going concern.



## Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2021

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2021</i> £	<i>2020</i> £
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations	2	41,882	39,815
Grants		10,010	8,600
Charitable Activities	3	4,601	5,842
Investments		411	1,456
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total income</b>		<b>56,904</b>	<b>55,713</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		6,668	1,652
Charitable activities		57,476	62,298
Support costs		26,321	28,090
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>90,466</b>	<b>92,041</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>(33,562)</b>	<b>(36,328)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>			
Total funds brought forward		181,098	217,426
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>147,536</b>	<b>181,098</b>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2021

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2020</i> £	<i>2020</i> £
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>147,533</u>	<u>181,098</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b><u>147,533</u></b>	<b><u>181,098</u></b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b><u>147,533</u></b>	<b><u>181,098</u></b>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b><u><u>147,533</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>181,098</u></u></b>
<b>Funds:</b>			
Restricted funds	4	7,687	1,058
Unrestricted funds		<u>139,846</u>	<u>180,040</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b><u><u>147,533</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>181,098</u></u></b>

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 August 2021

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2021</i> £	<i>2020</i> £
Net Cash used in operating activities		(33,973)	(37,784)
Interest from investments		<u>411</u>	<u>1,456</u>
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>		<b>(33,562)</b>	<b>(36,328)</b>
Cash at beginning of the year		<u>181,098</u>	<u>217,426</u>
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>		<b><u><u>147,536</u></u></b>	<b><u><u>181,098</u></u></b>



## 2. Income from fundraising

	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Donations (including sponsorships)	27,581	21,689
Corporate Funding	800	17,623
Fund raising schemes (Amazon Smile, EF, GAYL, Lottery)	644	502
Community fundraising	11,570	0
Fundraising activities/events	1,288	0
<b>Total income from donations</b>	<b><u>41,882</u></b>	<b><u>39,815</u></b>

All income from Donations is unrestricted

## 3. Income from charitable activities

	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Training	4,546	4,064
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<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b><u>4,601</u></b>	<b><u>5,842</u></b>

All income from charitable activities is unrestricted

#### 4. Movement in Restricted Funds

	<i>At the start of the year</i>	<i>Incoming resources &amp; gains</i>	<i>Outgoing resources and gains</i>	<i>At the End of the year</i>
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Sport England: Movers/Dance/Drama		1,360	(1,360)	-
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Hampshire CC: Special School Outreach Grants		750	-	750
Fundraising training		2,200	(2,318)	(118)
Rebranding		4,000	(700)	3,300
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>1,058</b>	<b>14,660</b>	<b>(8,031)</b>	<b>7,687</b>



## Notes to the financial statements

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#### a) Statutory Information

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Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
Steppingstones DS

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 August 2021

Charity no  
(if any)

1182787

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 /08 /2021.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date: 09/04/2022

Name:

Vicky Worsfold

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

FCPFA

**Address:** 7 Orchard Mews, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2RJ

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

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**STEPPING STONES DS**

England & Wales - Charity number 1182787

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# Accounts

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# Stepping Stones DS Annual Report 2019/20

## ONE STEP AT A TIME

**Address:** Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park,  
Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ

**Website:** [www.steppingstonesds.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesds.co.uk)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/steppingstonesds>

**Email:** [enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk)

**Bank:** Cooperative Bank



Charity number 1182787

# Chair's Report

This report shows a year of two halves. The first with a highly successful networking event, Christmas party, pantomime trip and an influx of new families. The second half, one we all recognise, of online activities, new routines and immense change.

We recognised immediately that young people with Down syndrome would be at an increased risk of social isolation and disruption to learning and worked with our fantastic partners to ensure as many of our activities as possible continued online.

Finances were hit hard this year with all summer participatory events cancelled, the withdrawal of supermarket token schemes and several fundraising events postponed indefinitely. The full effect of this was mitigated by a reduction in outgoings, but we still ended the year with a £36,328 deficit which has been funded from our reserves.

The team has moved quickly to address the funding gap, taking part in online community events such as the 2.6 Challenge which was established in place of the London Marathon and other events last summer. Our thanks go to Sport England in partnership with Energise Me for their funding of our online Dance and Movers classes; to Tesco for their contribution towards our mainstream outreach service; and to the many Hampshire County Councillors who supported our online 16+ Communication Groups during lockdown.

We have been delighted to welcome three new trustees (including a new Treasurer) to our Board, who have been very supportive and dedicated, despite only attending one in-person meeting before lock-down.

I would also like to particularly thank our Board of Trustees who have had to make difficult decisions at short notice. As ever, they have put in many hours and been a great source of support.

Josh McCormack  
Chair of Trustees

# CEO's Report

Despite the immense operational challenges of this year, we have managed to continue most of our services throughout the year and introduce a completely new one:

Our brand new Special School Outreach service is designed to provide the kind of advice, training and support to special schools that our mainstream schools have been receiving for a number of years. We are very proud to have introduced this in July 2020, ready for a full roll out this September, despite all the constraints of the pandemic. Our provider, Vik Ralfs, is highly experienced working with children with Down syndrome and in providing training to professionals involved in their care. Our thanks go to her for her creative approach to introducing a new service online.

We have worked closely with our partners who have been instrumental in continuing provision throughout the year. Thanks to their hard work, our members have been able to access early development groups, mainstream school outreach, 16+ communications groups, dance, drama and movers, throughout the pandemic.

In a time before Covid, it was a pleasure to welcome some wonderful guest speakers and meet with so many supporters at our November 'Get to Know us' event. I was reminded of how strong and supportive our community is, with such a wide range of attendees including several of our families.

It has been a year full of challenges we were not expecting and we are extremely grateful to Rosemount Financial Services for their support of our Early Development Groups throughout the year. Our recycling programme was also successful despite lockdown, raising £2,880 in the year and our enormous thanks go to our team of dedicated Wombles for their hard work.

It was very sad to have to cancel several of our activities, including our much-loved summer party. The loss of these is certainly felt and we hope to have them back up and running again as soon as possible.

My personal highlight of the year was the 2.6 Challenge which saw our community come together, sharing stories and getting active with a common goal. Thank you to everyone who took part in this and our other activities and supported us this year.

Alex Brewer  
CEO

# Board

The 2019/20 Stepping Stones DS Board of Trustees is as follows:

Chair	Sarah Sutton (resigned Dec 2019) Josh McCormack (from Jan 2020)
Vice-Chair	Rob Barton
Treasurer	Jon Qualters (resigned Feb 2020) Rebecca Hitch (joined Feb 2020)
Secretary	Liz Phillipou
Others	Despina Papadimitriou Jacky McKenzie Sarahjane MacAlinden Irene Arthur (joined Feb 2020) Nick Bourne (joined Feb 2020)

The Board of Trustees is broadly 50% members of Stepping Stones DS and 50% non-members. Those who are non-members often (but not always) have experience of supporting a family member with a disability. It is important that our board has lived experience of the challenges that Stepping Stones DS seeks to address, but equally important that we have direction and input from outside our community.

Our board members bring a range of skills and experience from diverse of backgrounds. However, we are always looking for more board members and to increase that diversity to ensure that we are fully representative of the communities we serve.

## New Families

We welcomed many more new families to Stepping Stones DS this year. Anyone with Down syndrome who is under 25 and lives in our catchment, and their family, can become a Stepping Stones DS member free of charge. We do not charge for the vast majority of our services to enable as many people as possible to attend. We aim to support young people with Down syndrome, their siblings, parents, carers and professionals to help them fulfil their potential.

# Treasurer's Report

## Financial Review

Stepping Stones DS Income was £55.7k (2019: £89.8k trading under charity number: 1129201). The decrease from the previous year was largely due to a reduction in donations, this was partially offset by Grants. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Hampshire Country Council, Sports England and Rushmoor Rotary Club.

Total expenditure reduced slightly from the prior year to £92.0k (2019: £102.4k trading under charity number: 1129201). The decrease was due to the impact of covid-19 preventing activities from continuing in the Spring/Summer term. Where possible we moved activities to a virtual interaction including but not limited to 16+ Comms, Dance & Drama, and School Outreach.

Overall, there was a deficit in the year of £36.3k (2019: deficit £12.6k trading under charity number: 1129201). This deficient is a result of the reduction in income as outlined above.

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

Our consolidated balance sheet remains strong. The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees are of the view that the charity is a going concern.

# Educational Services

Our aim is to help every child with Down syndrome fulfil their potential by ensuring that all young people are fully included in their communities and educational settings. All our members have access to our educational services from 6 months to 24 years of age.

## Early Development Groups

Stepping Stones DS offers monthly Early Development Groups (EDGs) to all our children from 6 months, until they start school. These were delivered by Down syndrome specialist Speech & Language Therapist, Becky Baxter, of LETS Go! UK.

***“Excellent and well put together. Thank you all for your hard work.” – Parent.***

Groups target a range of development including; communication, speech, receptive vocabulary and language, expressive vocabulary and language, number, memory, reading, play and cognition. Activities are demonstrated for families to practice with their child to promote new skills and development.



Groups took place in-person as planned from September '19 until March '20. When the Covid crisis caused a national lockdown, LETS Go! created an adapted online service to ensure our member families still received monthly support. The online service was delivered from April to July 2020.

***“Was really helpful and great to continue to have support from Becky while we were all at home.” – Parent.***

## Mainstream School Outreach

Children with Down syndrome can and do thrive in a mainstream school setting. Supporting their inclusion has enormous benefits for all children in the school, building empathy and understanding as well as challenging expectations.

We have once again funded this service which is delivered by Becky Baxter, Sarah Holton, Millie Pollard and Sam Wood from LETS Go!



***"This service has been excellent. Becky was able to give me lots of ideas, reassure me and respond to areas where I was concerned about how to carry forward what had been happening at school." – Parent.***

42 children were supported across infant, junior and secondary schools with a termly visit providing advice and information on the child's development and inclusion to school staff and parents.

In response to the lockdown, LETS Go! created a remote outreach service to ensure schools and parents continued to receive support and advice.

***"Thank-you for devising the new look service, my son was delighted that he had not been forgotten and that someone was still thinking about him. It has really helped to re-motivate his learning at home." – Parent.***

Remote support focussed on the child's education whilst they were at home and was offered in the first instance to parents. Where pupils continued to attend school, staff were allocated the appointment instead.

The feedback for this adapted service was extremely positive from parents and schools.

***"The video guides are amazing. It's so easy to forget little details or miss the nuance of how to best structure a learning task, and the videos are just the right level of insight and boost."***

***"The feedback notes ... have given me a detailed checklist which I use as my lesson plan. Becky provided all the basic materials to support the targets, which has ensured I kept focussed... That makes a huge difference to efficiency and the amount we cover."***

***"The key message of no pressure was a helpful reminder to do what we can when we can."***

***"Amazing service. Felt very supported when school is not providing any adapted home learning resources. Would love more of these sessions in the future."***

***"We found this session so very useful and have been using all the resources Millie shared with us since the session. It came at just the right time...Thank you."***

## Special School Outreach

Launching a brand new service in the 2020 lockdown did present some challenges, but we are delighted to have achieved this for our children who attend a special school setting. Schools were introduced to Down syndrome specialist, Vik Ralfs, in the 2020 Summer Term, in order to plan the full roll-out in September 2020.

Vik has worked for the Down's Syndrome Association (DSA), Mencap and Symbol UK. She has a Schools Advisory Service and co-delivers the school outreach services. Vik's experience of working in partnership with special schools makes her an ideal professional to provide outreach support to Stepping Stones DS members.



The Special School Outreach Service has been designed to be a bespoke service that responds organically through regular termly visits and the development of close partnerships between everyone around each young person with Down syndrome.

24 pupils have signed up to the service across 14 special school settings.

## 16+ Social Communication Groups

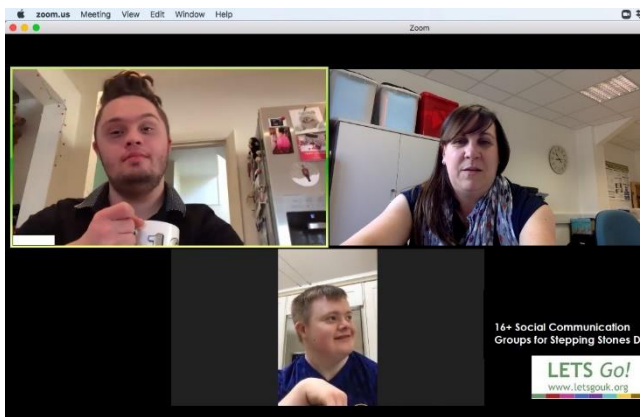
These groups aim to build confidence, friendships and communication skills for a wide variety of settings, such as work, social and community.

We continued our social communication groups again this year for young people aged 16-24. From September until December these were delivered by Leela Baksi of Symbol. Due to logistical issues, Symbol were unable to continue providing this service and as of January 2020 Becky Baxter and Jo Munt of LETS Go! took over the delivery.

***“Great to have the adapted service available and see my friends on zoom and have a good catch up with them.” – 16+ groups attendee.***

The LETS Go! groups continued to provide an opportunity to extend friendships out of school through activities designed to practise and develop social conversation skills including: talking about yourself; listening to and finding out about others; initiating and maintaining conversations; sharing concerns and worries as well as achievements and successes.

They also looked at communication for a range of audiences and how different language and social skills are used in different situations. Groups have a speech and language focus and target understanding of what makes a good communicator, how individuals can help the listener to understand and how to advocate for themselves. Understanding social communication and developing these skills was targeted using a range of methods in the group to build confidence and success in fun and motivating activities.



As of April, the groups moved to online delivery as in-person sessions were no longer possible due to the Covid crisis.

They continued to focus on the same topics covered in the face-to-face sessions and were well attended and positively received by the young people and parents alike.

***“We have seen our son regress into himself this year and we are so worried. We need him to continue his communication groups or we may not get him back.” – Parent.***

# Training

Stepping Stones DS organises a range of training workshops that help to open doors for our children and young people. We view this training as an investment in their future through sharing knowledge, information and support.



Our workshops are open to families, schools, medical professionals and anyone with a desire to learn more about Down syndrome. We are lucky to work with some of the world's leading speakers and trainers and we heavily subsidise the training workshops to make them accessible to all.

Between September 2019 and February 2020 we ran 11 courses in-person from our office, with 175 places booked across the sessions. Course titles & presenters included:

- Speech and Communication Skills - Becky Baxter of LETS Go!
- Self-Esteem & Inclusion - Vik Ralfs
- Moving to Adulthood - Julian Hallett - The Down's Syndrom Association
- Continence - Davina Richardson - Bowel & Bladder UK
- Early Number Skills in Pupils with Down Syndrome - Erica Ranzato - Happy Minds
- Language & Reading - Becky Baxter of LETS Go!
- Advanced and Functional Mathematics For Pupils with Down Syndrome - Erica Ranzato - Happy Minds
- Transition to Secondary School - Becky Baxter of LETS Go!
- Behaviour: Key Stage 2 and Beyond - Vik Ralfs
- Play, Cognition and Fine Motor Skills - Sarah Holton - LETS Go!
- Developing Literacy Skills for School Aged Pupils with Down Syndrome - Dr Kelly Burgoyne - LETS Go!

The LETS Go! team were able to adapt 2 of our planned sessions for online delivery, these were:

- Behaviour (Age 0-7)
- School Starters: An Introduction to Down Syndrome

The demand for online training places was very high with 25 attending the Behaviour course and 60 attending the School Starters session. Feedback was extremely positive.

***"Thank you again, it was all very helpful, and I'm pleased to have done the course as planned. In fact, doing it remotely gave me more time to go over it all and digest the information."***

# Recreational Activities

Stepping Stones DS has had another successful year with our recreation activities. We continue to provide a wide range of activities which help young people with Down syndrome develop key skills, provide opportunities to build friendships and for parents to get to know one another. We run our Recreational Activities for members from 6 months to 24 years.

## Stay and Play



We continued to run a monthly Stay & Play Sessions for our members which generally take place during the morning of the first Friday of the month during term time only at The Acorn Centre in Church Crookham. The sessions are informal play sessions for babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. They provide a great opportunity to meet other members and their little ones. Parents are welcome to attend with or without their pre-school children and just enjoy having a coffee and catch up.

Stay and Play took place from September until March, in December our young members enjoyed a Christmas Sing & Sign Stay and Play. From March onwards sessions were unfortunately cancelled due to Covid.



## Sensory Suite

Sensory Suite sessions are for our youngest pre-school members. Sessions were run by Vicki from September to February, after which they were cancelled due to Covid. We hope to resume this activity again during 2020-21.

## Mini, Mega & Mighty Movers



These are physical activity sessions aimed at building and developing gross motor skills, building confidence and independence, and motivating children to participate in an active lifestyle whilst having fun. Classes are for children from 6 months old up to the end of primary school. In addition to the benefit to our young members, classes are also a good place for new parents to meet and start building new friendships.

***"She really enjoyed the class and seeing her friends" – Parent.***

Classes this year were delivered in-person by Jen Hansford (Studio 24) from September to March.

Following lockdown, this service moved to online classes which enabled some people to join who would not have been able to attend in-person sessions due to other weekend commitments.



***" He really enjoyed himself. Thank you to you and all involved for making it happen, we really appreciate it!!"***

### **Primary Dance & Drama**

***"A is loving it, it's the most he's been engaged with an online session in the last 6 weeks!"***  
***- Parent***

These classes are intended to help develop skills in the performing arts, increase confidence and self-esteem, and help to develop social skills and friendships. In-person classes with Ruth and Leila took place from September until March.

From April until July, Leila was able to continue delivering Dance classes online with fantastic feedback:

***"It really gives Amy something to talk about and look forward to She loves it!"***

***"F enjoyed it. It was good that she joined in with no input from us."***



***"We enjoyed the session and would like to do it again, thank you."***

### **Tennis**

Our highly popular tennis classes give young people the chance to improve, not only their tennis skills, but also their ability to take turns, listen, take instruction and to help each other. Sadly classes from mid-March until the end of the summer term were cancelled due to Covid. We look forward to restarting classes as soon as possible.



### **Secondary Age + Dance**

Classes are run for us by The Stopgap Dance Company in Farnham. These classes and performances offer our young people the opportunity to express themselves through dance, improve fitness levels, stay active and a chance to socialise and meet up with friends. Members aged 11 and over are invited to join these sessions. Classes ran from September to March after which point members were able to access dance online.

## Social Activities



This year's Stepping Stones DS Christmas Party was once again held at The Mad House in Reading on 30<sup>th</sup> November from 3.30pm to 6pm. The party was open to all our children of any age. Father Christmas and his Elf were in attendance, and members were all given a little Christmas treat of a chocolate selection box.

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December, our 16+ members enjoyed their own Christmas party again this year with bowling followed by mocktails and a meal at Frenchie's Diner in Camberley. After eating, our young adults headed to the party room for some Karaoke fun!

We began 2020 with our annual pantomime outing to see Justin Fletcher in Cinderella at the Reading Hexagon on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January. Over 230 of our members, families and their friends joined us for a fun afternoon.

Sadly, our annual Summer picnic at Camp Mohawk was unable to take place due to social distancing restrictions.



## Community

### Get to Know us event

On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 we held our first ever "Get to Know Us" event. It was wonderful to welcome members of our local community, families and professionals to learn more about Down Syndrome and Stepping Stones DS.



This was a great chance for members to get together and share information and experiences with our community about the support and services we provide. Local businesses, trainers, volunteers, sponsors, charity trustees, authors, medical professionals, school staff, members, voluntary & community services, county council staff and community members joined the event.

Attendees heard talks from Sarah Sutton, Chair, about Stepping Stones DS and the services and activities we provide. Becky Baxter from LETS Go UK provided an overview of the learning profile of Down Syndrome and how we can make adaptations to support inclusion and learning, as well as giving an overview of the services LETS Go! provide for our families. Member Kathleen Humberstone, then took to the floor and told us about her life.

We were delighted with the opportunity to get to know so many members of our community.

### **Winchester University**

For many years now, Stepping Stones DS families have been supporting the team at Royal County Hospital, Winchester and Winchester University by sharing experiences and knowledge with their medical students. In October, a number of our families met with medical students to talk about life with a child who has Down Syndrome. The students were very interested and asked lots of questions. They were particularly interested to know about our families' experiences with medical professionals.



### **Down's Syndrome Association's "Tell it Right, Start it Right"**

In September we were delighted to be invited to provide some speakers at a training session for midwives and related health professionals. The objective was to give attendees up to date, accurate and balanced information about living with Down syndrome.



Three members Joanna (Mum to Grace, 12), Sarah (mum to Zoe, 9) and Kathleen (20) spoke with honesty about their journeys with Down Syndrome, from birth and diagnosis, to the present day which in Kathleen's case, included walking the catwalk at London Fashion Week! It is vital that parents have access to honest, real life stories at the point of diagnosis and we are grateful to our members for giving up their time to support this initiative.

# Fundraising

Once again, we are honored to have been chosen by Rosemount Financial Solutions Ltd to receive support from their fundraising activities this year. Having worked closely with them for a number of years, we know how hard they work to give back to charities and are delighted that they have selected SSDS to benefit from this. Our Early Development Groups have been entirely funded through their support this year.



Our recycling scheme continued well, despite lockdown challenges, with £2,880 being raised from waste such as Tassimo discs, baby food pouches and Pringles tubes. A big thank you to our Wombling team who work extremely hard to make this happen, and the local businesses who act as collection hubs for these items.



## LOTTERY FUNDED

Sport England and Energise Me understood immediately the importance of keeping young people active during lockdown. We are extremely grateful to their funding, which ensured our online Saturday morning Dance and Movers sessions continued even when our in-person activities could not.

Thank you to everyone who attended our first ever online quiz night and who took part in or donated to our 2.6 challenge. Fundraising took a change in direction in the second half of the year and the support we received was wonderful.

We would also like to extend huge thanks to the following organisations and people for their valuable contributions this year:

- Hampshire County Councillors
- Rotary Club of Easthampstead
- Overton Black Arrows
- Bentworth C of E Primary School
- Court Moor School
- Rotary Club of Fleet
- Hook Fun Run Committee
- CENTRONIC LTD
- Trefoil Guild Brownies
- Friends of The Vyne

- Personnel Selection Associates Ltd
- White Stuff
- Waitrose
- Hogsback Chapter UK
- Tesco Bags of Help
- Masonic Charitable Foundation
- Rushmoor Rotary Club
- Individual Fundraising Events: Louis' Locks, Woodlands Day Nursery Walk Around Fleet Pond, Facebook fundraisers
- Schemes – Amazon, EasyFundraising, Rushmoor Lottery

Finally, there are many individuals who give regularly, make one-off donations or hold fundraising challenges. Without these small but mighty gifts, Stepping Stones DS would not be able to provide the services it does. Thank you.

# Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2020

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>
		£	£
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations	2	39,815	
Grants		8,600	
Charitable Activities	3	5,842	
Investments		1,456	
<b>Total income</b>		<u><b>55,713</b></u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		1,652	
Charitable activities		62,298	
Support costs		28,090	
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<u><b>92,041</b></u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		<b>(36,328)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>			
Total funds brought forward		217,426	-
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<u><b>181,098</b></u>	<u><b>217,426</b></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

# Balance Sheet

As at 31 August 2020

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>
		£	£
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		181,098	217,426
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<u>181,098</u>	<u>217,426</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<u>181,098</u>	<u>217,426</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<u><u>181,098</u></u>	<u><u>217,426</u></u>
<b>Funds:</b>			
Restricted income funds	4	1,058	0
Unrestricted income funds		<u>180,040</u>	<u>217,426</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>		<u><u>181,098</u></u>	<u><u>217,426</u></u>

# Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 August 2020

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>
		£	£
Net Cash used in operating activities		(37,784)	-
Interest from investments		<u>1,456</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>		<u>(36,328)</u>	<u>-</u>
Cash at beginning of the year		<u>217,426</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>		<u><u>181,098</u></u>	<u><u>217,426</u></u>

# Notes to the financial statements

## 1. Accounting policies

### a) Statutory Information

Stepping Stones DS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and incorporated in England. The registered office address and principal place of business is SSDS, Sentinel House, Ancells Business Park, Harvest Crescent, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 2UZ.

### b) Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Account and Reporting for Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements have been present in Pound Stirling as this is the functional and presentational currency of the company.

### c) Public benefit entity

Stepping Stones DS meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### d) Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and all operations are continuing. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charities ability to continue as a going concern and have considered the impact of covid-19 as part of this assessment.

### e) Income and Interest receivable

Income and Interest receivable are recognised when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity.

### f) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probably that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

**2. Income from donations**

	2020	2019
	£	£
Donations (including sponsorships)	21,689	-
Corporate Funding	17,623	-
Fund raising schemes (Amazon Smile, EF, GAYL, Lottery)	502	-
<b>Total income from donations</b>	<b><u>39,815</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>

All income from Donations is unrestricted

**3. Income from charitable activities**

	2020	2019
	£	£
Training	4,064	-
Social activities	1,778	-
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b><u>5,842</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>

All income from charitable activities is unrestricted

**4. Movement in Restricted Funds**

	<i>At the start of the year</i>	<i>Incoming resources &amp; gains</i>	<i>Outgoing resources and gains</i>	<i>At the End of the year</i>
	£	£	£	£
<b>Restricted Funds:</b>				
HCC Grant: 16+ Comms Groups	-	5,650	(5,297)	353
Sports England: Movers/Dance/Drama	-	2,000	(1,295)	705
Rushmoor Rotary Club: Training School Starters	-	600	(600)	-
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>8,250</u></b>	<b><u>(7,192)</u></b>	<b><u>1,058</u></b>



# Stepping Stones DS

## Financial Review

**FY2019-2020**

Stepping Stones DS Income was £55.7k (2019: £89.8k trading under charity number: 1129201). The decrease from the previous year was largely due to a reduction in donations, this was partially offset by Grants. We are very grateful to have received grant funding during the year from Hampshire Country Council, Sports England and Rushmoor Rotary Club.

Total expenditure reduced slightly from the prior year to £92.0k (2019: £102.4k trading under charity number: 1129201). The decrease was due to the impact of covid-19 preventing activities from continuing in the Spring/Summer term. Where possible we moved activities to a virtual interaction including but not limited to 16+ Comms, Dance & Drama, and School Outreach.

Overall, there was a deficit in the year of £36.3k (2019: deficit £12.6k trading under charity number: 1129201). This deficient is a result of the reduction in income as outlined above.

## Principal Risk and uncertainties

Our consolidated balance sheet remains strong. The trustees have reviewed the circumstances of Stepping Stones DS and consider that adequate resources continue to be available to fund the activities for the charity for the foreseeable future. The trustees are of the view that the charity is a going concern.



## Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2020

	<i>Note</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>
		£	£
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations	2	39,815	
Grants		8,600	
Charitable Activities	3	5,842	
Investments		1,456	
<b>Total income</b>		<b>55,713</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		1,652	
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		£	£
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Interest from investments		1,456	-
<b>Change in cash in the year</b>		<b>(36,328)</b>	<b>-</b>
Cash at beginning of the year		217,426	0
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>		<b>181,098</b>	<b>217,426</b>



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Rushmoor Rotary Club: Training School Starters	-	600	(600)	-
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>8,250</u></b>	<b><u>(7,192)</u></b>	<b><u>1,058</u></b>



**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
Stepping Stones DS

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31/08/2020

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1182787

**Set out on pages**

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 08 / 2020**.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

26/06/2021

**Name:**

Victoria Worsfold

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

FCPFA, CertITM-pf

**Address:**

7 Orchard Mews, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2RJ

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

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