



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)



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



[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

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



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



### 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

## - School Outreach



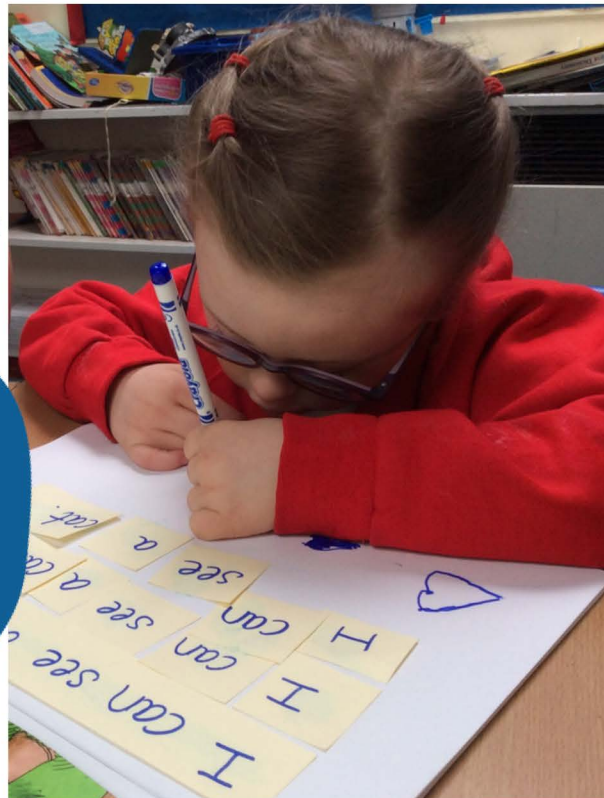
### Mainstream Outreach

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 Outreach service has provided invaluable to support the teaching team with strategies to enable our son to learn alongside his peers."

- SSDS parent

We supported 39 pupils in 32 Schools through our mainstream outreach programme this year.



### Special School Outreach



In its second year, our Special School Outreach programme has quickly become embedded as a core service in high demand.

Delivered by Down syndrome expert, Vik Ralfs, the Special School Outreach Service has been designed to respond organically through regular termly visits and the development of close partnerships between everyone around each young person with Down syndrome.

It's made transition into school so much easier, we can't thank you enough."

32 pupils in 13 schools participated in this service.

"My child goes to a 'special school' but there are different challenges the children face and the teachers cannot be expected to be experts in all disabilities. Therefore having the Outreach Service providing them with the best current advice and strategies to help my child reach her full potential is invaluable." - SSDS Parent



# 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



James Wise Charitable Trust



# Thank you!



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



Waitrose



Morrisons



**Maths For Life**  
A Differentiated Approach

MFL



**SURREY  
CRICKET  
FOUNDATION**  
Registered Charity N°1118770



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

Day Lewis

care  opportunities to live life to the full  
OPPORTUNITIES

*Fleet  
Scoop*  
EST. 2018

**TESCO**

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 (LET'S 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  
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

# 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>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</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>
	<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 ending 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>



# 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

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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 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)

<b>Address:</b>	Mansell Street
	London

**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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