



# PLAYSKILL

Skills for play, skills for life

**Annual Report  
2023**



# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Chair's foreward	1-3
Impact Report	4 - 22
Legal & administrative information	23 - 24
Independent examiner's report	25
Statement of financial activities	26
Balance sheet	27
Notes to the accounts	28 - 35

# Chair's Foreward



Playskill started operating 17 years ago, since then our charity has grown and become a leader in the field of early specialist intervention, supporting children with physical disabilities/difficulties and their families.

We are highly respected as a contributor to society in Hertfordshire.

What follows is a review of key events in 2023 and our view of the future.

I am pleased to report that we are financially sound, well managed, and focussed. The Playskill team has kept us up-to-date with all the changes which have happened since then. They look at innovations and where we judge outcomes will be improved, we research and trial.

There is much development which is exciting. The Playskill team has the vision, imagination, determination, and the will to do the best possible for our children and parents.

The best realistic view of our financial performance is to take a two-year view of the 2022 & 2023 period. We operated at near to break-even over these two years. For financial and accounting reasons income is shown in the years of receipt not of expenditure. This resulted in a deficit in 2022 of almost £30k, which was balanced by a surplus in 2023 of almost £21k, producing a near break-even result over the two years. Considering the changes during this period I consider this a good result.

However, our reserves are below where we would like them to be at £134,278 (2022, £193,457) and their restoration over the next few years is planned to be achieved by the actions described later in the action plan for 2024 and beyond.

Inflation being at a higher level than envisaged has affected us in the same way as everybody else. With total spend for the organisation exceeding £500k for the first time and is why fund raising and efficient operation is such a priority.

We are excited that in 2024 we open our seventh group, Maylands, which will be based in Adeyfield, Hemel Hempstead. This will allow us to increase by eight, +16%, the number of children we treat and families we support.

We have a very close relationship with our families to make sure that we are aware of the problems they face. We keep ourselves up-to-date with changes in the provision of services and benefits so that we can provide guidance and communicate with them in the media they use. As just one example you can now choose to attend our powerful and popular AGM's in person or via a link which brings us live into your home.

We talk with and listen to our parents and what they tell us is that the parent support we give to them is just as important as the other services we offer to their children. Our support covers many different activities, from the mums/dads chats over coffee during the treatment break, to the parents' social events, to signposting their way to the assistance they are entitled to from social services, local and national government. We plan to increase the support programmes we offer in the future.

We keep our long term strategy under continuous review and summarise it as:-

Maintaining established core values which are continuously improved with new thinking.

We are proud that we support our families very well, our resolve for the future is to do this even better and in more locations.

To achieve this, we decided that Playskill needed a full time CEO to lead our development plan. We appointed an external specialist recruitment company to manage the search.

Niki Michael took on the permanent role of CEO in December 2023, having been in the interim role since March, and Head of Fundraising for four years prior. We congratulate her on the appointment.

This review of 2023 has to include Andrea. Andrea Clarke was the founder, creator, and driving force behind Playskill for 17 years. It has been my pleasure to work with her as Chair for the last nine years. I have worked with and managed many talented people but I have never before found her combination of drive, dedication, determination, vision, technical skill, and compassion. To our regret Andrea decided that the time had come for new challenges. We all thank her for what she achieved and we promise her that we will continue her work and that Playskill will continue to flourish.

The Trustees team recognise that our role is first and foremost the care, development, and welfare of our children and their parents.

We have a clear strategy for the future, however we know that we live in a fast changing world where the unexpected seems to have become the norm. At the end of each year we review and discuss where our strategy might need refreshing. We discuss if the rate of development continues to look correct for the next year, what lessons we have learned during the year, and how should we maintain and improve the outcomes we achieve for treatment and support.

After our review of 2023 we made these decisions for 2024 and beyond which were formulated in to our plan for the year.

THERAPY - we reconfirmed our commitment that therapy and support will remain free.

TO EXPAND at the pace which operational and financial capabilities allow.

THERAPY and SUPPORT STANDARDS - we achieve high quality standards of therapy and parent support now. Our team will research and trial innovations so that our work is continuously improved so that we achieve and beat our SMART targets and remain a leader in our field.

WORK SMARTER - we will establish a team to examine and improve the operational efficiency detail of the way we operate.

FUNDRAISING income is the engine room of Playskill. Our team have done great work to beat our 2023 target. They are charged with continually refreshing and innovating so that existing donors are cherished and new supporters are welcomed to see and support our work.

At the AGM we said goodbye and gave a sincere thank you to three of our Trustee team, Judy Cansdale, Dina Corcoran, and Gill Waceba. My personal thanks go to them all.



Judy Cansdale joined as a Trustee in 2014 and we will miss her wise voice and down to earth common sense. Her nursing and family experience coupled to her warm and reassuring approach has always been appreciated by parents during her frequent visits to sessions. Her smiling and self-deprecating views provided me with an appreciated gentle restraining hand when it was necessary.

Dina Corcoran joined us in 2020. She has had a long association with Playskill as a parent. She was enthusiastic to give back as a Trustee where her experience as a speech and language therapist, a businesswoman, and a mum was invaluable to the work of our team as she championed the cause of our children and their parents.

Gill Waceba agreed to stand as a trustee in 2020. For ten years we had a close working relationship whilst she was head of Woodfield School for special needs during the period when Woodfield was Playskill's home in Hemel. Her experience of school management and working with children with special needs and their parents brought us new insights and wisdom. She has been a tower of strength providing invaluable support to me and the Trustee board.

We also elected and said hello to Vicky Greig, Vinay Lalsodagar, Vimal Parmar, and Emma Shumake. We also agreed for Lucy Sharpe to stay on for an additional two years despite having served for the maximum recommended by the Charity Commission. The backgrounds of our new Trustees cover education, finance, marketing, and technology. Of particular value is that two of them are current Playskill parents. Each has personal experience appropriate to our operation and we look forward to the new wisdom and ideas they will bring

Re-invigoration with new people and ideas is essential to maintain a successful charity and I am pleased to report that Playskill is starting 2024 with a new CEO, many new senior members of the management team, and four new Trustees.

My thanks go to all our Trustees, management, and volunteers for their continued support and efforts which have this year gone far beyond what might be expected from them.

As a team we work together to make the lives of our children and their parents better.



**Stuart Soloway**  
Chair of Trustees



# Impact Report 2023



Playskill is a local charity supporting pre-school children with physical disabilities & delays in Hertfordshire, and their families.

The unique one-stop-shop service offers a free term-time specialist playgroup with expert physical therapies; vital support and training for parents; an all-important network of fellow parents; and respite events for the whole family all year round.

Playskill relies on grants and donations in order to keep its valuable and much needed services running.



A. c/o Adeyfield Free Church Centre, Maylands Avenue,  
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 4GZ

Registered charity number (CIO) 1198233  
(formerly no: 1122745, established 2006)

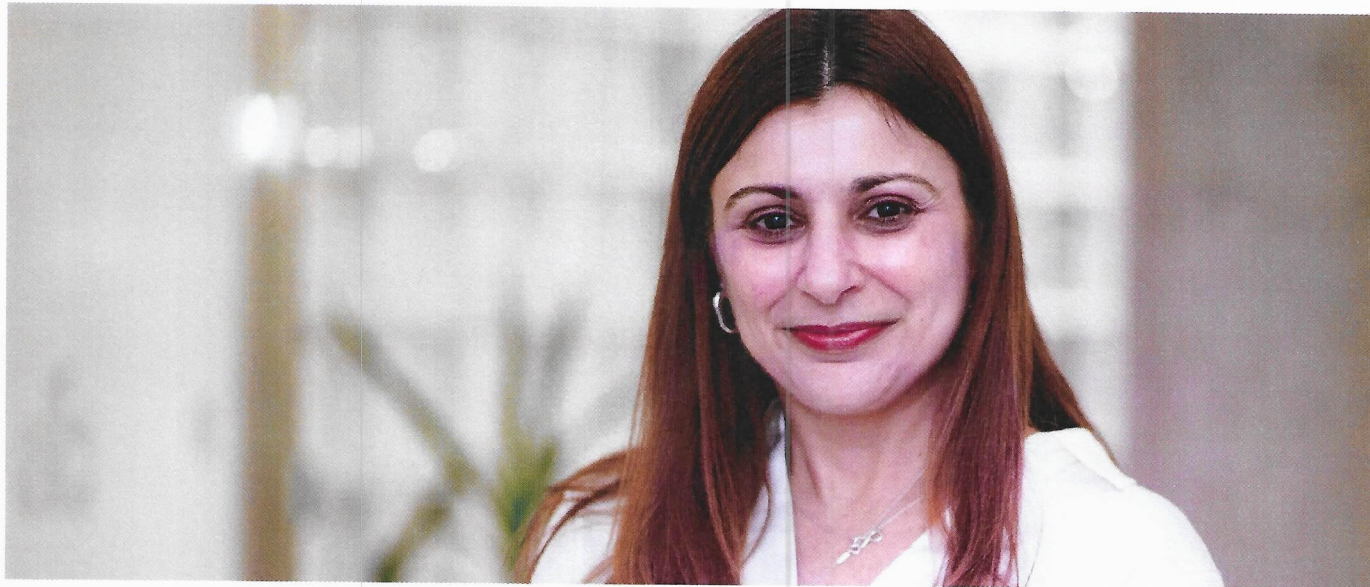
## Welcome

In 2023 we were not only proud to have supported 100 children and their families over the year, but to have also achieved a record income for the Charity, for the first time exceeding £500,000.

I am hugely privileged to be able to see the impact of the work we do with families every day. Each time I walk into one of our group sessions I am filled with pride. The warmth resonates from the room as I watch the children learning new skills, making friends, demonstrating to us all that where there's a will there's a way. The families come to us at a time of great challenge but leave us more resilient, filled with hope for the future and with an arsenal of skills, friends and knowledge to help guide them on their forward journeys. Being even a small part of that is what sustains all of the staff here and drives us to continue to provide the best specialist early intervention service we can.

We secured our highest number of corporate and community partnerships, **demonstrating just how impactful our service is.** From high profile media support as one of the Global Make Some Noise charities, to partnerships with major names - Barratt Homes and The Grove, to the largest ever single donation from a community group in the charity's history from Moor Park Golf Club. We've accomplished this during a challenging time for the fundraising sector, whilst receiving no statutory funding and relying entirely on donations to keep services free to families.





Changes to Playskill's management team were made to meet the increased demands on our infrastructure and governance as the charity moved from a small to medium size charity. Playskill recruited its first CEO, addressing these needs and the charity's long-term development. I am proud to have been in this role permanently since December 2023, having been in the interimpost since the Spring and part of the charity as Head of Fundraising for some five years. A new Head of Family Services role brings together all elements of our frontline support – from group therapies to training, one to one support to respite events. Along with a newly created Head of Development role focusing on collaborating with other essential services to promote our work, seek out new innovation and signpost for a wider offering of support to our families.

2023 also saw the sad departure of the charity's Founder, Andrea Clarke MBE, whose extraordinary work has changed the lives of hundreds of Playskill children and their families over the past 17 years. The team continues to drive Playskill forward, maintaining Andrea's vision and supporting more families than ever before. **We will forever be in her debt for setting us on this path.**

During the Summer the charity's office moved from Watford to Hemel Hempstead, now operating from the same location as the Hemel based groups. Still based firmly in Hertfordshire, **the charity continues to be the only service of its kind in the county.**

Four new Trustees joined the board, bringing both lived experience of having and working with children with physical disabilities, and a broad range of professional expertise across a variety of sectors. With several trustees standing down after a long tenure at November's AGM, the board remains at full capacity, strong and focused on the challenges that lay ahead.

The latter part of the year finalised plans for a seventh group ready to open its doors at the start of the new year, another milestone for the charity.


We recognise the part that each and every one of our staff, donors, volunteers, trusts, foundations and fundraisers play in Playskill's success. The stories and quotes in this report demonstrate the difference we make. **We thank everyone for enabling this small but mighty charity to keep changing lives.** I remain honoured to lead it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Niki Michael". The script is fluid and cursive.

**Niki Michael, CEO**



# 2023 in numbers

100 

children with physical disability/difficulty and their families supported in groups and through Springboard

87% 

of children's SMART targets (in the areas of gross-motor, fine-motor, and communication) were achieved in groups

92% 

of parents/carers said they had **learnt skills** to carry on with their child; and **increased confidence** in how to support them

57 

families assisted by our Parent Support Team

93 

parents/carers attended **29** training sessions

16 

social/respite events, attended by **334** family members

**Since Playskill began in 2006 we have supported more than 450 children and their families.**

In 2023 our work was made possible by:

35 

dedicated members of part-time staff (11 full-time equivalent)

41 

volunteers, who generously gave an estimated

**2,431** hours of support

a skilled Trustee and Leadership team, with more than

44% 

having lived experience of disability/caring

# Owen's Story

**“ Owen is nearly three and has been attending for almost two years. Owen's NHS physiotherapist recommended I get in touch with Playskill when I asked what other support was available locally. At that time we were just confirming Owen's diagnosis of cerebral palsy so things felt very uncertain.**

Owen and his twin brother were born extremely prematurely and we'd always been told they would catch up in time. But after they'd been home from hospital a few months it became clear that Jamie was starting to meet his milestones but Owen was still not able to sit up, wasn't really crawling and rarely used his right arm. We still don't know what the future will look like and whether he'll walk on his own at all, but we're putting the support in place for him to have a happy life regardless and Playskill has been a big part of that.

Outside of Playskill, Owen has NHS physio and occupational therapy sessions. We have also done some private physiotherapy but it is very difficult to find adults that Owen trusts and builds a rapport with. At Playskill the team are endlessly patient and reassuring with him and he is now confident in sessions with the people he knows. This

building of confidence is a huge thing for Owen - it's hard for him to engage when playing with his peers in a lot of settings as he can't run around with them, but Playskill gives him a chance to interact with other children.

As a parent, coming to Playskill every week is a lifeline. It's very hard to find activities suitable for twins with very different physical abilities and I love that both boys are welcomed in the sessions. It's helped me build a network of friendly parents facing similar challenges and being able to talk to them over coffee while the kids carry on with the session has given me access to lots of information that I didn't know I was missing. The parent advisers have also given me some really helpful support through the process of getting Owen's EHCP - I don't know how I would have navigated it on my own.

Playskill is an amazing resource that we are so lucky to have. The therapists and volunteers get excited with us about things that others wouldn't understand, like Owen learning to open a container or do up a zip! It's so encouraging to have this community cheering us on.

**– Natasha, Owen's mum**





# Playskill Groups

Children attend our free term-time groups with their parents/carers where they receive expert support from a physiotherapist, as well as an occupational therapist and speech and language therapist. Each group session uses play as a tool for development (including messy play, sensory activities and soft play) helping children to gain key skills, confidence and independence. Parents are trained to replicate the therapies at home to maximise impact.

“We’re so grateful for the huge changes we’ve seen in our son’s development.”

## Across our six groups:

65

children and families were supported in group sessions

26

new children & families in 2023

87%

of children’s SMART targets set were achieved

## Our end-of-term parent questionnaires showed:

Parents who ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the following statements:

### Over this term at Playskill:

I have seen changes in my child’s ability to **communicate**:



74%

I have seen changes in my child’s ability to **use their hands to play**:



81%

I have seen other **physical signs of progress** in my child:



86%

## Playskill helps my child to:

Improve emotional  
and/or mental wellbeing:



76%

Be more independent:



75%

In addition to helping the children directly, Playskill also supports parents and carers through hands on modelling and advice from therapists and specialist workers in the weekly sessions.

**92%**

of parents/carers had  
increased confidence  
in how to support  
their child

**91%**

felt they had  
learnt skills to  
carry on with  
their child

**70%**

said they would  
implement the skills  
they had learnt on a  
daily basis

**“ It’s sad that groups like Playskill aren’t more widely available. It can be scary joining a new group but you’ll wonder why you didn’t join sooner. It will open your eyes to your child’s progression and give you hope, which we all need.**

**“ Gives me  
encouragement  
to keep fighting  
when you feel like  
you are running  
on empty.**





# Supporting parents and families

Parents tell us of the struggle they face trying to find information and access services and support they need, and are entitled to. This can cause stress and anxiety and leave some families in financial hardship.

Our **free Parent Support Team** and **parent training** are key to helping parents/carers navigate a range of health, education, care, financial, legal and emotional challenges. **Parent Support** offer free personalised advice on a range of often complex and confusing matters. In addition there are **remote and face-to-face training sessions** delivered by experts in their field, aimed at developing parent/carers knowledge, skills, resources and confidence to support their child.

**57** 

families were helped by our Parent Support Team, many on multiple issues and across multiple terms

The most common themes for support were:

1. EHCPs
2. Health
3. Monetary and benefits
4. Housing
5. Family related

**30** 

training sessions were attended by **180** parents/carers

**98%** 

of parents/carers said they had gained skills to help their child\*

Training topics and content are based on the needs of children/families attending groups. In 2023 courses included **starting school; EHCP applications & assessments; managing behaviour; signing; toileting; reading; physiotherapy; sensory processing; young carers; wills, trust & power of attorney** and more.

“The support we’ve had is priceless. All families like mine need a Playskill in their lives.



“**Absolutely fantastic. I am not over stating when I say what we learnt on the training session could be life changing for us.**

“**Parent support is wonderful at Playskill. We feel part of a family, cared for and supported.**



## Sara's story

Sara was born prematurely at 24 weeks and is now two years old. Being born so early impacted her gross motor skills development so our health visitor recommended Playskill.

“ Before joining, Sara seemed reserved and unsure, lacking awareness and simple reactions, enjoyment, and movement. **Once we started Playskill I gained valuable insights in to how to communicate with my baby and teach her essential skills.** It has made managing and nurturing her development much easier for me. She is learning a lot and there are noticeable changes in her behaviour as she becomes more aware of things. I was initially quite anxious about my baby but thanks to Playskill, I feel much more at ease and comfortable. My fears have completely dissipated, and I've learned how to handle different situations effectively. **Playskill is incredibly important for children's development,** and it's heartening to know that your baby, who may have special needs, is benefiting from what they offer. Play is not only a fun and enjoyable activity for kids but also a vital way for them to learn and grow. It encourages

imagination and creativity while assisting with the development of their social, cognitive and physical skills. Playskill's commitment to providing a positive and enriching experience for these kids is truly commendable, and it's wonderful to see the progress and happiness they're experiencing through these classes. Keep up the great work of supporting our child's development through play!” – **Hina, Sara's mum**





# Bringing families together

Playskill brings families together through the groups and training sessions, but also by organising inclusive family outings, social and respite events.

## Support networks

Connecting with other parents in a similar situation can be a great source of **practical and emotional support**, helping families cope and **reducing feelings of isolation**.



64%

of parents/carers said they do not attend any other playgroups in the area

“Thank you supporting not only Playskill children but the entire family.”

## Social activities and respite events

A host of **free family and social/respite events** for both current Playskill families and graduate members (past families), provide **opportunities to have fun with the whole family**, enjoy new and shared experiences, or give parents and siblings **a chance to recharge**.

**365** family members joined **16** events organised by Playskill  
(**78** Playskill children; **84** siblings; **203** parents)

Being able to meet up with fellow Playskill families socially helps me:

Create friendships and support networks



100%

Have a break and help my mental health



100%

Benefit from other Playskill parent's knowledge and experience



100%

Events included **whole-family** accessible **outings**, in a safe and inclusive environment, such as farm, boating and theatre trips. **Respite activities** for parents/carers, including mum's pamper evening, parent meals and dad's golf trip, and **sibling events** from go-karting to mini-golf and more.



“ It’s great to spend time with other dads who understand the day to day of looking after a child with extra needs.

“ I feel more confident and less alone.



“ Playskill parents do not judge each other, do not compare, and do not comment on what your child can’t yet do. They truly understand what we are going through and the different hurdles we have to overcome.

## Long term engagement & support

Once children graduate from Playskill, families can become Graduate Members (for a nominal £20 annual subscription), enabling them to continue to access parent support, training and social/respite events.

46 

graduate members continue to be involved in our work



# Cara's story

Cara is nearly five years old and has attended Playskill since she was two.

**She has a rare disorder called CDG, which means there is an error in the way that sugars attach to proteins in her metabolic system. This leads to gross and fine motor skill, and speech & language disorders. There are around 10,000 people diagnosed with CDG worldwide, and although research moving forward at pace, there is no cure.**

“ Cara was diagnosed at 13 months, after we started noticing a range of issues, particularly with her gross motor skills, at 6 months. It was like living in a bad dream – like all parents in this situation, we were initially in state of shock and disbelief. We also had a ten-year-old child who was old enough to be aware of all the complex emotions and, with all the attention on their new sister, it was very difficult time.

We threw ourselves in to working out what support we could find, and where from. We didn't know what would be best for Cara so we just learned as much as we could about what was out there.

Playskill was mentioned pretty early on, by a speech and language therapist we spoke to on the phone. It's a really supportive collective of expert practitioners who really know what they're doing and who blow me away with their determination to support children with additional needs. We were particularly lucky to have Playskill's support via Zoom during Covid, when all other services shut down. Once the face to face sessions re-opened, meeting and chatting to other parents and professionals was invaluable. We get anecdotal expertise and a chance to exchange advice, tips and contacts.

The therapists have always understood Cara, taking the time to tailor to her needs. Being flexible if she's felt upset, clingy, or has difficulty communicating. Their perseverance has paid off and it's heartwarming to see her development.

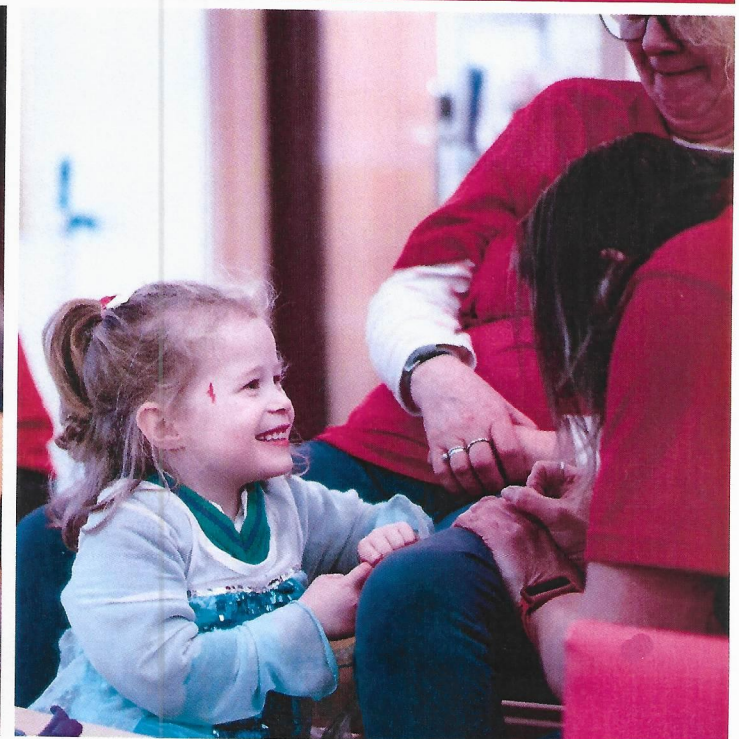
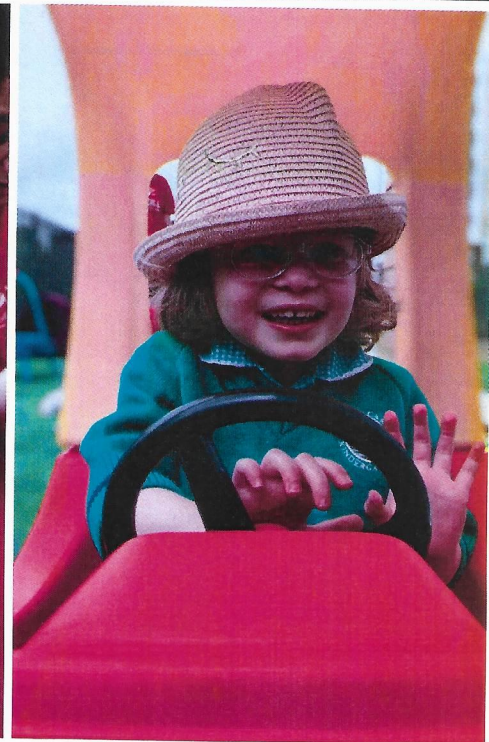
In addition to therapies and groups, Playskill's social events have a really friendly community feel. We've been able to meet staff and families outside of Cara's session, and meet children at different stages in their journey. Feeling ourselves to be part of this community has given us confidence and assertiveness to check in with expert practitioners, and a steer on where to focus our efforts when we discuss Cara's progress with other agencies – nursery, medical professionals at Great Ormond Street, NHS practitioners and the County's Children's Services.

The isolation and fear we felt in the early days has long gone and we feel more in control of our child's development with Playskill's expertise. Three years on, we continue to find all the support we can for Cara, to give her the best we can. We've learnt to celebrate the 'wins' when they come – and they seem to keep coming - whether it's Cara's dramatically increased mobility or the fact she is slowly beginning to use language. As a parent you're of course far too close to your child to notice the tiny changes every day, but every now and then we get a reminder. An old report, a photo or video from last year, or a relative who hasn't seen Cara in a while tells us how far she's come along. Playskill has been central to that process, and we're forever grateful.

– Tim, Cara's dad

“ A year ago, we couldn't have imagined she'd have come this far.







# Reaching more children and families

## Springboard

Families with disabled children are disproportionately affected by long waiting lists for vital healthcare appointments, referrals and therapies. It is vital that children with physical disabilities receive care during the crucial early intervention window (age 0 to five) when the brain is developing faster than at any other time. Through our remote Springboard support service, we rapidly assess children newly referred to Playskill, provide therapy input, advice and signposting, to help a greater number of children and families at the earliest opportunity.

Our Springboard project, introduced during the pandemic, is our early intervention tool. Through this remote support, we rapidly assess children newly referred to Playskill, provide therapy input, advice and signposting, to help a greater number of children and families at the earliest opportunity.

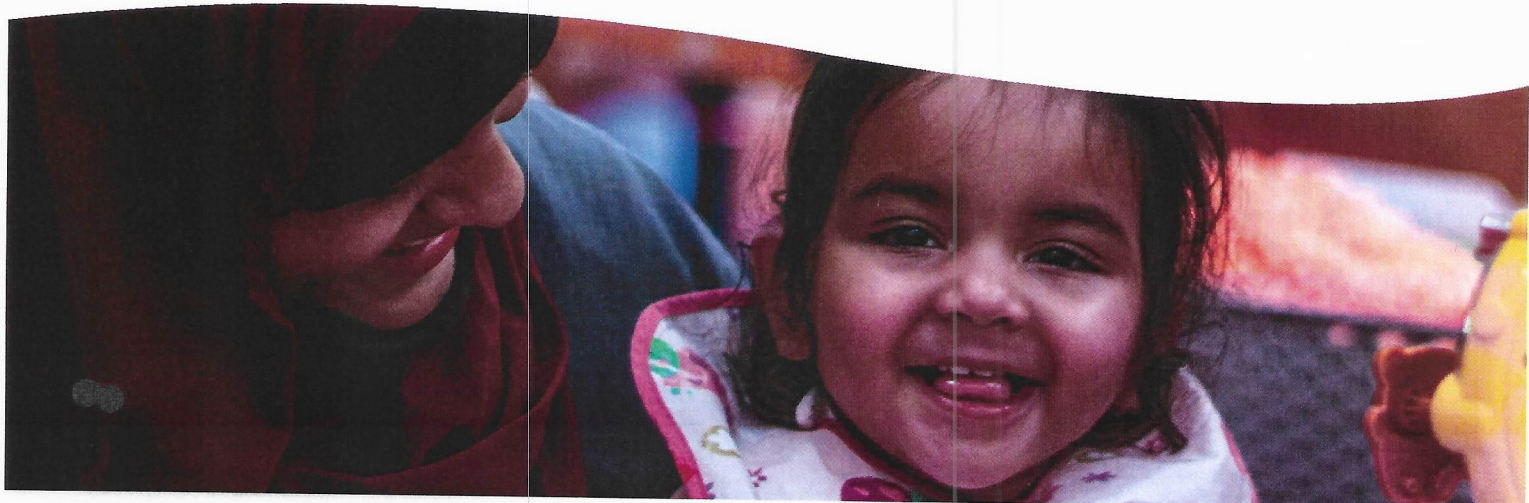
“Playskill has surpassed my expectations as I’m getting more than therapy. I’m making new contacts & friends, learning about therapies and other services, and feel part of a community.”

35 

children/families received early help, with remote assessment, advice and support

21 

children seen in Springboard fed in to Playskill groups, with others receiving advice & signposting





## Freddie's Story •

**“When our son Freddie was first diagnosed with a rare condition called Polymicrogyria at six weeks old, we were suddenly thrown into an isolated world of unknowns.**

We were told, due to Freddie's condition, he would be on his own developmental path, and would need a steady input of therapies to help and support him which we had slowly started to receive. However, it was our care co-ordinator Emma who first told us about Playskill who help support children with physical delays and disabilities.

At 15 months old Freddie started at Playskill and has now been there for more than a year. We honestly don't know what we would have done without it! Week in, week out, the amazing therapists support Freddie, encouraging him to develop and progress by setting targets and goals to help him,

and us, realise his potential. The advice, knowledge and kindness of the therapists has been incredible – they truly care about the children and every small gain feels like a family achievement. The group set up for parents is also great as it allows for a coffee break to talk to other parents in similar situations, to share experiences and knowledge to support each other.

The amount Playskill gives back to families is incredible. There is professional training for parents, days out, trips to the farm and even mums' and dads' nights out to give us some much-needed time out.

We feel so lucky to be a part of the Playskill family. They are a lifeline to support us all as we navigate the unknown and help us fight for Freddie and his needs. Thank you!

**– Amy, Freddie's mum**





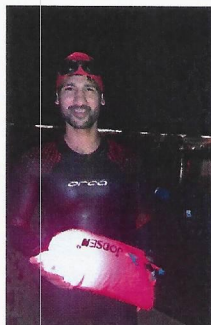
# Your support

Playskill receives no government funding and we rely wholly on donations to help transform the lives of children with physical disabilities/difficulties and their families. All our services are completely free to families attending our groups.

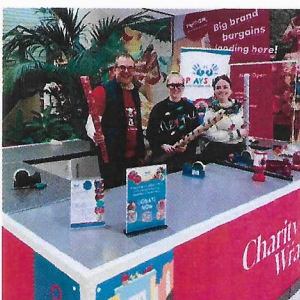
Our committed supporters took on a wide range of challenges in 2023 to raise money for Playskill, with sponsored treks, runs, swims, marathons and half-marathons, sponsored walks... including stars of the show, the Playskill children, who took part in our annual sponsored obstacle course.

With your amazing support, Playskill raised:

**£541,007**  
in **2023**



Our active fundraisers running, trekking, swimming and even yoga-ing!



Barratt David Wilson Homes (North Thames) charity of the year partnership raised more than £43,000.

Wear it Red, marking the charity's birthday each year.





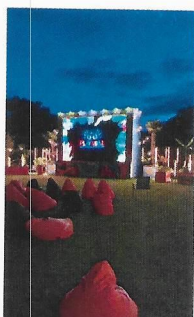
Team Playskill's second year at the Great Big Walk for Herts, part of the Helping Herts partnership, which raised more than £14,000.



Thousands of pounds raised when children took on the annual obstacle course in groups.



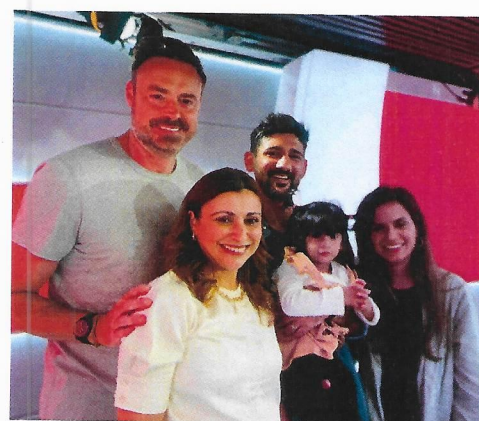
Privileged to be The Grove's first ever charity of the year for their 20th anniversary.



Christmas cheer raises almost £5,000 between gift wrapping, choirs, festive hampers and Watford's Mayor Christmas Card.



The cheques rolled in thanks to Watford Joggers, West Herts GC, Breakspear Park, CWRP, MCF, Rotary Clubs & many more.



Moor Park Golf Club Mens & Ladies Captains raised just shy of £59,000 during their centenary year - the largest ever single donation from a community group in the Charity's history.



Global's Make Some Noise supplemented their generous grant with awareness raising on Heart Breakfast and Heart Hertfordshire.





# Thank you

We are immensely grateful to the many trusts, foundations, community groups, corporate partners and individuals who have generously supported our work in 2023.

**To donate visit**  
[playskill.org/donate](https://playskill.org/donate)



## PLAYSKILL

### Legal & Administrative Information

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#### Trustees

S J Soloway [Chair]

N Parish

J Cansdale [Retired November 2023]

D Corcoran [Retired July 2023]

C Kohnhorst

C Neale

L Sharpe [Secretary]

G Waceba [Retired July 2023]

A York

V Greig [Appointed November 2023]

V Lalsodagar [Appointed November 2023]

V Parmar [Appointed November 2023]

E Shumake [Appointed November 2023]

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CIO number 1198233

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The Old Church

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#### Bankers

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Croydon 2

Leicestershire

LE87 2BB

#### The Co-operative Bank

Skelmersdale

WN8 6WT

#### Metrobank

113 High Street

Watford

WD17 2DQ



## PLAYSKILL

### **Objectives, Policies, and Activities**

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by 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 (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015).

### **Structure**

The Charity was established by a charitable trust deed on 12th February 2008 but converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### **Independent Examiner**

The Trustees appointed Freeman Baker Associates to review Playskill's financial statements and we thank them for their helpful comments during the execution of their duties. In setting our objectives and planning our activities the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. The main objectives of Playskill as laid out in the Constitution are:

- 1) To promote and protect the physical and mental health of children and young people in the United Kingdom with physical difficulties/disabilities through the provision of support, education and practical advice.
- 2) To advance in life and help children and young people with physical difficulties/disabilities through:
  - a) The provision of recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life and the life of their families;
  - b) Providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.
- 3) To advance the education and support of carers and siblings of children and young people with physical difficulties/disabilities and of the general public and other relevant professional staff in all areas relating to the well-being of children and young people with physical difficulties/disabilities and of their families.

### **Treatment Free of Charge**

Playskill provides its services free of charge to children with special needs aged one to five years at the point of need, irrespective of colour, race, gender or creed.

### **Reserves policy**

Playskill is totally reliant on charitable funding thus ideally, unrestricted reserves of at least six months operating costs are held to allow for the necessary lead in time to securing funding and planning for future expansion. Current levels are below this but are being closely monitored in conjunction with restricted reserves as noted in the Chair's Foreward.



**PLAYSKILL  
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT  
TO THE TRUSTEES OF PLAYSKILL**

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I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on pages 26 to 35.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

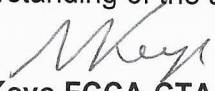
- (i) examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (ii) to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (iii) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Independent examiners statement**

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- (i) the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- (ii) the accounts do not accord with the accounting records; or
- (iii) 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.

  
**N J Keye FCCA CTA**  
Freeman Baker Associates  
Accountants & Registered Auditors  
The Old Church  
48 Verulam Road  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL3 4DH

Date:



# PLAYSKILL

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and Legacies	(2&3)	154,493	380,603	535,096	394,703
Charitable activities		91	-	91	672
Investments	(4)	820	-	820	187
Surplus on disposal of Van		5,000		5,000	-
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>160,404</b>	<b>380,603</b>	<b>541,007</b>	<b>395,562</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Raising funds	(5)	37,958	49,027	86,985	88,206
Charitable activities	(6&7)	181,625	251,554	433,179	337,100
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>219,583</b>	<b>300,581</b>	<b>520,164</b>	<b>425,306</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		<b>(59,179)</b>	<b>80,022</b>	<b>20,843</b>	<b>(29,744)</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
Total funds brought forward		193,457	69,006	262,463	292,207
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>134,278</b>	<b>149,028</b>	<b>283,306</b>	<b>262,463</b>




## PLAYSKILL

BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2023

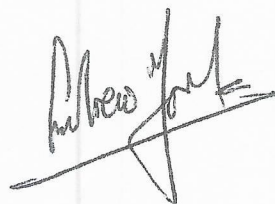
	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	(11)	7,020	7,800
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	(12)	1,246	1,747
Bank		294,725	277,712
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	(13)	295,971 (19,685)	279,459 (24,796)
<b>Net current assets</b>		276,286	254,663
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		283,306	262,463
<b>Income funds</b>			
Restricted funds		149,028	69,006
Unrestricted funds		134,278	193,457
		283,306	262,463

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on

S J Soloway  
Trustee



A D York  
Trustee



24/4/24  
Any small addition errors or differences are due to rounding.



# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

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### 1. Accounting policies

#### **Basis of preparation**

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with The Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by 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).

#### **Incoming resources**

Donations, legacies and other forms of voluntary income are recognised as incoming resources when receivable, except insofar as they are incapable of financial measurement.

Revenue grants are credited to the income and expenditure account as received, unless related to a specific period, when they are shown as accrued or deferred income until the relevant period occurs unless specifically agreed otherwise with the funder.

#### **Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Fixtures, fittings & equipment	over 3 years
Shed/Store cupboard	over 10 years
Motor vehicles	over 4 years



# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

### 2. Donations - Unrestricted

	2023 £	2022 £
A Pearce	-	500
A Clarke	907	-
AM Foundation	5,000	-
Breakspear Park	1,000	-
Charities Aid Foundation	10,698	7,996
Charities Trust	-	529
Christmas Raffle	123	787
Cream Tea Event	692	950
D Kohnhorst	701	770
Downing LLP	2,033	-
Income via Facebook	147	3,577
Helping Herts	21,652	5,357
Herts Freemasons	550	1,650
Hospital Satur	2,000	-
Josef Pieterse	-	500
Just Giving	22,611	51,039
Maybrook Properties	1,000	1,000
Moor Park Golf Club	50,586	-
Nicola Hood	787	-
Rachel Ledson	-	840
Simon Hughes	8,963	4,350
Sissel Parish	-	420
Sunnyside Church	1,500	1,300
The Grove Hotel	1,100	-
Watford Borough Council (Mayor's Christmas Cards)	2,500	-
Watford Classic Vehicle Club	800	-
Watford Joggers	1,725	-
William Tannett	625	500
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>137,700</b>	<b>82,065</b>
Other smaller donations	16,793	9,847
	<b>154,493</b>	<b>91,912</b>

**Justgiving** income includes the following events:

Royal Parks half marathon

Helping Herts

Cotswold Way Challenge

Thames Bridge Trek

Obstacle course

Many thanks to all who raised these funds – both those taking part in the events & those who gave.



# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

### 3. Grants - Restricted

	2023	2022
	£	£
Archer Trust	3,000	-
Bartle Family Trust	500	500
Berkhamsted Rotary Club	1,500	2,000
Card Factory	-	2,000
Charlie's Gift	-	5,700
Children in Need	33,804	31,698
Children's Welfare Trust	10,000	-
Childwick Trust	10,000	-
Dacorum Borough Council	-	5,000
Downing LLP	2,033	1,499
E M Souter	3,000	-
Edward Gostling Foundation	-	10,000
February Foundation	5,000	5,000
Fence Club	-	1,912
Garfield Weston Foundation	25,000	25,000
Hadley Trust	13,000	22,787
Health Education	-	500
Hertfordshire Community Foundation	9,742	10,000
Hertfordshire County Council	2,500	3,810
LIV Golf	100,000	-
T&D O'Brien	10,000	-
Mencop	-	5,000
National Lottery	100,524	135,939
National Lottery – Awards for All	20,000	9,946
Postcode Places Trust	25,000	-
Shanly Foundation	4,000	-
St James' Place	-	2,500
Sylvia Adams	-	10,000
TK Maxx	500	2,500
Watford Community Housing Trust	-	2,000
Watford & Three Rivers Trust	1,500	7,500
	<u>380,603</u>	<u>302,791</u>



# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

### 4. Investments

	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest Receivable	<u>820</u>	<u>187</u>

### 5. Costs of Raising Funds

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Costs of raising donations & legacies	12,388	777	13,165	5,934
Salary costs	25,570	48,250	73,820	82,272
Total	<u>37,958</u>	<u>49,027</u>	<u>86,985</u>	<u>88,206</u>

### 6. Expenditure of Charitable Activities by fund type

	2023 Total			
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Direct Costs	145,730	205,805	351,535	274,520
Support Costs	35,895	45,749	81,644	62,580
Total	<u>181,625</u>	<u>251,554</u>	<u>433,179</u>	<u>337,100</u>

### 7. Expenditure of Charitable Activities by activity type

	2023 Total			
	Direct costs	Support costs	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Main group sessions	305,563	50,262	355,825	269,011
Parent Support & Events	37,386	31,382	68,768	64,043
Governance	8,586	0	8,586	4,046
Total	<u>351,535</u>	<u>81,644</u>	<u>433,179</u>	<u>337,100</u>

### 8. Analysis of support costs

	2023 Total				
	Fundraising	Main group session	Parent Support & Events	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	12,364	32,559	5,339	50,262	33,903
Governance costs	7,720	20,329	3,333	31,382	28,677
Total	<u>20,084</u>	<u>52,888</u>	<u>8,672</u>	<u>81,644</u>	<u>62,580</u>



# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

### 9. Governance costs

	2023 Total			
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Independent Examiner's fee	715	455	1,170	978
AGM Expenses	363	75	438	368
Professional Fees	4,893	1,990	6,883	2,700
Trustee Expenses	95	0	95	0
Total	<u>6,066</u>	<u>2,520</u>	<u>8,586</u>	<u>4,046</u>

No Trustees were paid or reimbursed for travelling expenses (2022 Nil).

### 10. Staff costs

	2023 Total			
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£	£	£	£
Wages and salaries	128,423	231,484	359,907	310,674
Social Security costs	3,017	12,431	15,448	9,950
Employer contributions to pension plans	2,881	3,490	6,371	6,632
Total	<u>134,321</u>	<u>247,405</u>	<u>381,726</u>	<u>327,256</u>

There were no employees whose annual emoluments were £60,000 or more.

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Part time	36	38
Full time	1	-
	<u>37</u>	<u>38</u>



# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

### 11. Tangible fixed assets

	Motor Vehicle £	Store Cupboard £	Shed £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>				
As at 1st January 2023	5,000	7,800	663	13,463
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	(5,000)	-	-	(5,000)
As at 31st December 2023	0	7,800	663	8,463
<b>Depreciation</b>				
As at 1st January 2023	5,000	-	663	5,663
Charge for the year	-	780	-	780
Disposals	(5,000)	-	-	(5,000)
As at 31st December 2023	0	780	663	1,443
<b>Net Book Value</b>				
As at 31st December 2023	0	7,020	0	7,020
As at 31st December 2022	-	7,800	-	7,800

### 12. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Other debtors	1,246	1,747
	1,246	1,747

### 13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Creditors	3,978	7,560
Accruals	15,707	17,236
	19,685	24,796

# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

### 14. Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balance of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes.

	As at 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources Expended £	As at 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2023 £
National Lottery	1	100,524	100,404	121
National Lottery Awards 4 All	5,061	20,000	5,061	20,000
Archer Trust	310	3,000	3,310	-
Bartle Family Trust	-	500	500	-
Berkhamsted Rotary Club	1,179	1,500	1,207	1,472
Card Factory Foundation	880	-	288	592
Charlie's Gift	5,700	-	5,700	-
Children in Need	1	33,804	33,721	84
Children's Welfare Trust	-	10,000	850	9,150
Childwick Trust	-	10,000	10,000	-
Downing Foundation	-	2,033	2,033	-
DWF Foundation	524	-	524	-
Edward Gostling Foundation	10,000	-	10,000	-
E M Souter	-	3,000	3,000	-
February Foundation	-	5,000	5,000	-
Fence Club	370	-	-	370
Garfield Weston Foundation	15,000	25,000	23,351	16,649
Greggs Foundation	670	-	162	508
Hadley Trust	6,116	13,000	19,116	-
Herts Comm Foundation	5,000	9,742	7,767	6,975
Herts County Council	2,287	2,500	3,354	1,433
LIV Golf	-	100,000	31,293	68,707
T&D O'Brien	-	10,000	5,000	5,000
Postcode Places Trust	-	25,000	8,675	16,325
Robert Clutterbuck	215	-	-	215
Shanly Foundation	-	4,000	4,000	-
Skipton Foundation	240	-	-	240
Sylvia Adams	10,000	-	10,000	-
TK Maxx	500	500	1,000	-
Watford & Three Rivers Trust	4,362	-	3,175	1,187
Watford Community Housing Trust	590	-	590	-
Watford Rotary	-	1,500	1,500	-
	<b>69,006</b>	<b>380,603</b>	<b>300,581</b>	<b>149,028</b>

Each of the restricted funds are to pay for Playskill agreed general expenses.



# PLAYSKILL

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

### 15. Analysis of Net Assets between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Fund balances at 31 December 2023 are represented by:			
Tangible fixed assets	-	7,020	7,020
Current assets	153,963	142,008	295,971
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(19,685)	-	(19,685)
	<u>134,278</u>	<u>149,028</u>	<u>283,306</u>