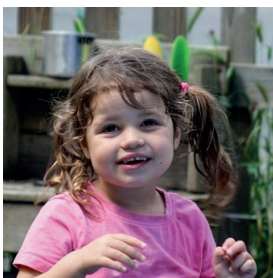


Annual Impact Report 2021-22





Transforming the lives of children and families



Driving positive change around SEND in the Early Years



Promising the best start for every child



Welcome

Following two tumultuous years, the 2021/2022 year has been one of rediscovering and redefining our “new normal”. A true highlight of this process was being able to welcome everyone back into our Centres and to start offering our direct support programmes again. Now more than ever, there exists a clear need for an increase in specialist provision for children with SEND, not just in Berkshire but across the country.

Last year, I spoke about how we managed to continue to build our brand on the national stage by further extending our Training Programme and had continued to play an active role in the debate around Childcare and Early Education as part of the APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group). These types of engagements are crucial for Dingley’s to continue, and it has been very rewarding to hear Dingley’s Promise described as a “national charity” for the first time.

As Trustees, our role is to support the Dingley’s leadership team to the best of our abilities, providing advice and support where we can, whilst focussing on the long-term vision and strategy of the Dingley’s Promise. I am therefore very pleased to report that together with the Dingley’s leadership team, we have been able to develop a new strategic plan, focussed on expanding our service offering, centre development, and financial stability. This strategic plan will be a guide for both the senior management team and Trustees and will allow us to continue to build our excellent direct work activities across Berkshire and beyond, as well as further expanding our national training and consultancy programmes.

However, despite the best laid plans, new challenges are never far away, and now with the cost-of-living crisis becoming ever more present, charity fundraising is more important than ever. Thankfully our incredible team at Dingley’s has organised everything from visiting celebrities to exciting skydives, making sure to get our name out there, front and centre. We are all incredibly thankful to all our individual supporters, local businesses and Trusts and Foundations who continue to support Dingley’s Promise.

On behalf of all Trustees, I would also like to thank our dedicated staff and volunteers for their incredible efforts and the passion they bring to their roles each and every day. Keep on being awesome!

Michael Scheepers
Chair of Trustees

Our Reach and Impact 2021 - 2022



We reached **278** children directly through our Centres and Family Support Service



The total number of children we directly supported increased by **40%** since the previous year, we are now reaching more children than ever



We reached **3188** children indirectly through training



65% of our children transitioned to mainstream education



92% of families feel more positive about the future since starting with Dingley's Promise



100% of families feel that we promote equality, diversity and inclusion effectively



87% of families feel less isolated since starting with Dingley's Promise

Reflections on the year from Catherine McLeod, CEO

This year has been one of recovery as we return our services to pre pandemic levels, supporting our children and families to overcome the challenges faced in recent months and years.

We have always had a goal to reach as many children and families as we can, and over the past year we directly supported an amazing 278 children – an increase of 40% on the previous year and the most in our history. Much of this increase is due to the work of our incredible family support workers, who are now supporting not only the families whose children attend our Centres, but also children and families in our communities.

As a result of the continuing impact of the pandemic, this year the needs and complexity we see in our children has increased significantly. 33% more children need 1:1 support and there has been a 68% increase in the number of children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Whilst other factors clearly contribute to these numbers, there is a clear pattern of increased need in our children, leading to a consistent increase in demand for our services. This year has seen longer waiting lists than at any time in our history.

We remain committed to driving change, helping children and families across the country via our national work. This year, our Changemakers programme has grown to reach more local authorities and trainees than ever before, our voice

on the All Party Parliamentary Group for Childcare and Early Education has grown stronger, and we have contributed to national research and conferences ensuring that children with SEND are not forgotten when discussing the importance of development in the early years.

Throughout all of this, we have worked hard to support our teams, and are so grateful for their ongoing efforts in the face of challenges and increased demand. We have the most committed and skilled team and as always I want to thank them for everything they do day to day to transform the lives of the children and families we work with.

Finally, I want to thank all of our supporters who contribute to what we do in so many ways. All of this is impossible without them and we are forever grateful to all of them.

Catherine McLeod MBE
Chief Executive of Dingley's Promise





This Year at Reading Centre

As I reflect on another year at Dingley's Promise, I am so grateful for the amazing work of our staff and volunteers. One of the biggest challenges we've faced has been around recruitment, which is something that is unfortunately impacting the whole early years sector. Having a team of bank staff to support us has ensured that we have not had to cancel any children's sessions due to staff numbers, which we are very pleased about. Our focus this year is to make sure as many children as possible have access to our services; our waiting list keeps growing and there is a lot of demand for our provision.

We have two rooms at Reading Centre, Rainbow Room and Butterfly Room. Children both with, and those waiting for, a diagnosis of autism access Butterfly Room. Rainbow Room accommodates all other children with SEND, including those with complex needs. Over the last academic year, we changed our session hours in Rainbow Room to mornings and afternoons, with children accessing 5 mornings or afternoons instead of 2.5 days over the week. We observed that this worked really well with some of our children.

We have seen incredible progress as a result of targeted interventions, helping the children in areas of development most affected by the pandemic. We have needed to place more focus on social and emotional development to ensure our children are calm, engaged and ready to learn. Children have been seeking more sensory play and the social and outdoor experiences and play they were deprived of during lockdowns.

We are very excited about the year ahead, and have a strong team of practitioners in place who are equipped with the skills and patience to gain the best understanding of each child and their needs. We are privileged to share the early years experience with our families, seeing the children that access our setting happy and making good progress in their development makes us incredibly proud.

Louise White
Centre Manager, Reading



"What a transformation I've seen in my daughter. We were very nervous about bringing her to Dingley's Promise initially, but when we came here the first day, it was amazing. It's not just having fun, it's learning, improving her development, and every single day she will do things that amaze us. It's so heartwarming to know that our daughter is looked after, supported, and developmentally doing really well now. Coming to Dingley's Promise allowed her to have her own independence, and also gave me a bit of my independence back as well."

Shahida, Aizah's mum



Shahida and Aizah



Emilia

"Dingley's Promise has been an amazing support for us. Even before Emilia started the nursery in January, they supported us at the family support sessions where they were always happy to listen and answer any questions I had. We often would attend the stay and play sessions which gave Emilia the opportunity to run around and explore safely and I felt surrounded by people in similar situations which helped me to feel less alone. Now Emilia is at the nursery I can already see progress in certain areas of her development. We are so grateful for Dingley's Promise and the patience and care that Emilia is given."

Charlotte, Emilia's Mum



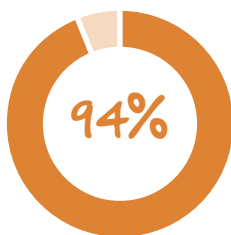
Family Support Expansion

This year the Family Support Service has played more of a key role than ever in helping families in Dingley's Promise and in the community to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

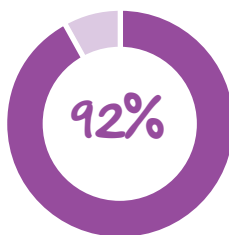
Our support has evolved in line with the changing needs of families; focusing on reducing isolation, increasing parental confidence in understanding their children's needs and signposting and support to access appropriate services. The range of ways our family support work team have worked with families has expanded to meet their needs and includes 1:1 support, group support, online and in person information sessions.

Over the pandemic our waiting list has been significantly longer and the Family Support offer has provided a crucial link between families and centres. This has been particularly useful for children who are on long waiting lists for many different services but who are in need of immediate support.

We have been able to develop trusting relationships between Dingley's Promise staff and families, as well as link families together to create a community who understand and support each other. We aim to create a safe and nurturing environment for families, where they feel they can ask for help and be supported without judgement. The connections created by families during their time with us continue long after they leave Dingley's Promise.



rated our Family Support Workers excellent or good



rated our workshops for families excellent or good



“Dingley’s Promise have made a massive difference to my son, he has limited speech and is trying to say new words now and he also has a very limited diet and with the patience of the staff he is slowly trying new snacks. The support I get from them is amazing.”

“Dingley’s Promise has given our child confidence, a safe, fun environment to play and learn and excellent support from the wonderful, caring staff.”



National Impact

This year is the first year that we are hearing Dingley's Promise described as a 'national charity'. While our direct work remains focused on Berkshire, our training and consultancy is now nation wide, and we continue to use our voice to influence national policy and decision making.

Through our sponsorship of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Childcare and Early Education, we presented the financial case for better supporting children with SEND in the early years to Her Majesty's Treasury. As a result there were increased requests for information before the Spending Review, showing that the issues were being considered at the highest levels. We also presented to MPs, Lords and other stakeholders at a later meeting focusing specifically on SEND in the early years – a session we had requested to raise further awareness.

Something that has always concerned us is the lack of linkages with other organisations that do similar work to us. This year, we established the Early Years SEND Specialist Providers Forum to bring together those organisations, to better support each other and to amplify our voices. Currently we lead the group, and have held meetings to get to know each other and our models. In the future, we will coordinate to respond to government consultations and lobby for change more widely, with the understanding that by working together we can achieve more.

Finally, we have supported the campaigns of the Disabled Children's Partnership and ensured that children in the early years are considered in planning. This included supporting a campaign launch with MPs, and appearing on ITV news to speak about the challenges facing children with SEND due to a lack of sufficient funding.

Over the coming year, we will be actively involved in responding to the government's Green Paper aiming to build a better and less adversarial system for children and families. We will consult with the government on the content of the level 3 qualification for early years practitioners to ensure it includes content on supporting children with SEND, and work with Ofsted and other professionals to adapt the new EYFS guidelines to relate more to children with SEND.





Our current Newbury centre



Planning for the Future

Seeing the need for increased specialist provision across the country for children with SEND, we are committed to sharing our knowledge and skills. We are looking for opportunities to work with local authorities nationally to provide a Dingley's Promise provision and it is our aim to achieve this over the next few years, ensuring that more families with SEND have the support they need and that more children with SEND have the best start in life.

We are always seeking new ways to develop our existing centre provision, ensuring that our staff have the necessary space and suitable environment to provide the best support possible to our children. We are currently securing a new West Berkshire Centre, which has the space we need to grow and develop. We are excited about being able to offer even more children with SEND and their families in and around Newbury with an amazing new centre in the coming months.

Our Training Programme

“What a year we’ve had in the development of the Dingley’s Promise training programme!”

This year has seen us develop our portfolio of training courses designed to support early years practitioners working with children with additional needs.

Our NCFE accredited Level 3 programme in Inclusive Practice, Introduction to Inclusive Practice and Early Years Transitions courses are now available nationally through our website.

We’re achieving our aim of providing impactful training that empowers early years professionals to deliver the best possible outcomes for children with SEND.

Continuing the fantastic work that we started last year with the Early Years SEND Partnership (a group of national charities delivering training and consultancy across the country funded

by the Department for Education) we have added a new Early Years Transitions course to our portfolio. The course focuses on transitions for children with SEND from the early years into school. We have reached another 316 learners across 12 local authorities and secured an extension of our work through to April 2023.

We were delighted this year to be one of 20 organisations in our category selected to receive funding through Comic Relief to launch the ‘Dingley’s Promise Change Makers Early Years Inclusion Project’; a project which aims to tackle the UK’s shortage of early years SEND places and drive widespread change by empowering early years practitioners, through training, to work more inclusively.

The project

- Running for 5 years from July 2021
- Partnering with 30 local authorities
- Delivering a suite of 10 training courses
- Reaching more than 30,000 early years professionals





To date our work through this project has seen us engage with 10 enthusiastic and proactive local authorities, supporting them in developing and delivering inclusion strategies with effective tools for measuring and tracking inclusion. We also saw 978 early years professionals sign up for our training programme between launch at the end of February and financial year end.

Alongside these two exciting projects, we have grown our reach and are engaging with new local authorities and early years professionals - providing consultancy and access to our training. Feedback tells us that local authorities love working with us and that our learners benefit from our training through increased knowledge, skills, and confidence.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we aim to grow our reach and reputation

further by proactively engaging with new local authorities, we want to increase our learner base through the strengthening of our online and social media presence, and the development of new training courses.

Amanda Brown
Training Programme Manger



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

At Dingley's Promise we believe that inclusion is wider than just inclusion of children with SEND. In 2020, we created our Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plan, which continues to guide our work today.

Our first key focus was on race and making sure that our organisation is actively anti racist so that we not only welcome, but also celebrate the cultures of our staff, children and families. We are very happy to report that we have seen a rise in diversity in our staff teams, especially where we have the most diverse families. This means our team reflects our families more than ever before, improving the quality of the service we can offer them.

This year we worked more with the incredible Liz Pemberton, who is a leading voice on anti racism in the early years. Not only have we benefited from more of her training for our teams, but we were hugely grateful when she joined our Advisory Board to help support our continued development.

We have taken part in discussions and podcasts about anti racism, and are committed to sharing our experiences with others wherever it is useful to drive further positive change.

In our centres our resources are more diverse than ever, with toys, books and visuals representing the wide range of families that we welcome.

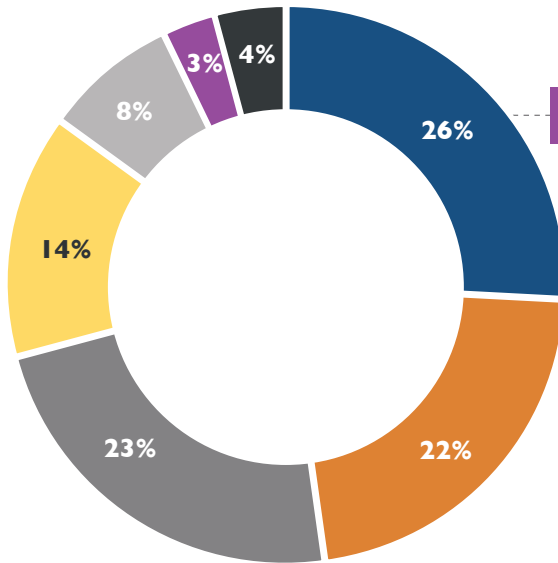
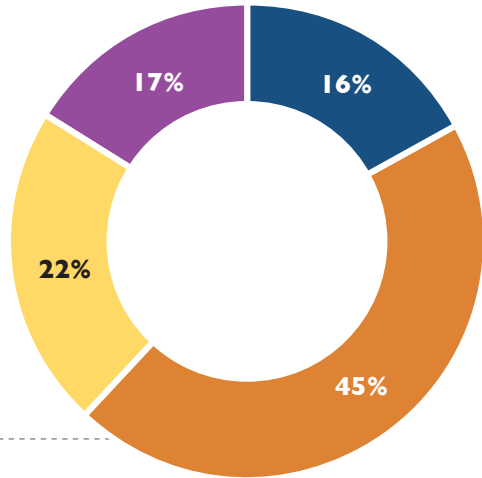
We were delighted that in our Family Survey 100% of families felt that we promote EDI effectively. We are committed to ensuring that this is embedded in our ongoing systems and plans.



How we fund our work

Total income: £852,205

- Fundraising & Donations
- Grants
- Earned Income
- Local Authority



Total expenditure: £851,879

- Reading
- Wokingham
- West Berks
- Training & consultancy
- Fund raising
- Central management
- Family Support Work

The largest part of our income is from non-statutory grants including large charities, trusts and foundations.

Earned income includes the Nursery Education funding distributed by local authorities on behalf of central government.

This is a summary of information extracted from the full audited and unqualified annual accounts of Dingley's Promise for the year ending 31st March 2022. Copies of the audited accounts and financial statement are available from our website, the Charity Commission and Companies House.

Fundraising

In a busy fundraising year for Dingley's Promise, we have seen celebrity visits, enjoyed community events, watched adrenaline fuelled fundraising challenges and received amazing donations from our wonderful supporters. Every penny received is needed to fund the work we do and every event raises much needed awareness in our communities, helping us to reach more families.

As a result of grant funding from Global's Make Some Noise, we welcomed Jamie Theakston, Amanda Holden and the Heart FM team to the Reading Centre. As well as a fantastic few hours showing them the work we do, Global's radio station coverage provided us with a national platform to reach families of children with SEND. The huge response has inspired our plans to extend the charity's national reach.





In these economically challenging times, many Trusts and Foundations have continued to support us and are helping us respond to the growing needs of our children and families. Your ongoing support is vital - thank you.

We are very lucky to have dedicated Friends of DP who donate monthly to our important work. We appreciate your continued commitment to improving the lives of children with SEND and value each and every one of you.

Local businesses have been integral to our fundraising this year. Supporting us at fundraising events, donating to our Big Give campaign, taking part in the Christmas Advent Calendar or holding fundraising events for us. With this amazing support & belief in the difference we make, you are helping us to transform lives.

As always, families of Dingley's Promise continue to be central to our fundraising efforts, whether supporting raffles or fundraising campaigns or using their own talents to raise funds. We thank you all so much for taking the time to give back to Dingley's Promise.

We hope to continue to grow our Dingley's Promise fundraising family over the coming months, inspiring and engaging more people than ever to help children with SEND get the best start!

Thank you

Here are some of the Trusts, Foundations, Businesses and Community Groups who have supported Dingley's Promise this year:

Action Coach Reading

Alpkit Foundation

Ammco Charitable Trust

Ascot Racecourse

Awards for All

Beaufort Financial

Beaverbrooks Reading

Berkshire Community Foundation

Berkshire Masonic Charity

Berkshire Nurses and Relief in Sickness Trust

Big Lottery

Brighter Futures for Children

CBZ Photo

Children in Need

Comic Relief

Cumber Family Charitable Trust

D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

Dynamic Media Solutions

Edward Gostling Foundation

Englefield Charitable Trust

Global Make Some Noise

Henry Smith Charity

Hilton Hotel Reading

Hobson Charity

Irwin Mitchell Solicitors

John Sykes Foundation

Matrix Causes Fund

Morrisons Foundation

Newbury Town Council

Omni Reading

onebite marketing agency



Oracle Shopping Centre
 Peter Baker Foundation
 Peter Harrison Foundation
 Provide Security
 Reading Abbey Rotary
 Reading Dispensary Trust
 Reading St Laurence Church Lands
 Shanly Foundation
 Softtalk Consultancy and Services
 Steven Bloch Image of Disability
 Charitable Trust

Stevenson Family Charitable Trust
 Syder Foundation
 The Brownlow Foundation
 The Good Exchange
 The Greenham Trust Ltd
 West Berkshire Council
 Wokingham BNI
 Wokingham Borough Council
 Wokingham Town Council

And a huge thank you to the many others who have supported our work in every way.



Dingley's Promise

Transforming the Early Years for children with SEND

www.dingley.org.uk



Dingley's Promise



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@Dingley



Dingley's Promise



@dingleygroup



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