Revealed to the second second



2023-24 Impact Report



I felt that I was really listened to & with support I hope we can achieve the greatest positive outcome for my child

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Message from Founder & CEO

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to share the profound impact Parenting Special Children has made in the lives of the families we support.

This year, we have reached more families than ever before, providing essential guidance, care, and understanding to 2,135 parents and carers, 340 children and young people, and 435 professionals who work alongside them. Our support is not just a moment in time; families turn to us at different stages of their journey, often returning when new challenges arise. On average, through the years, families engage with our services at least twice, a testament to the lasting relationships we build.

Lived experience is at the heart of everything we do. It enables us to offer authentic, compassionate services that truly resonate with the families we support. Our holistic approach is why so many families continue to place their trust in us, knowing we will be here for them, whenever they need us. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our team, volunteers, and all those who support Parenting Special Children.

Together, we are making a difference ensuring that every family feels seen, supported, and empowered.

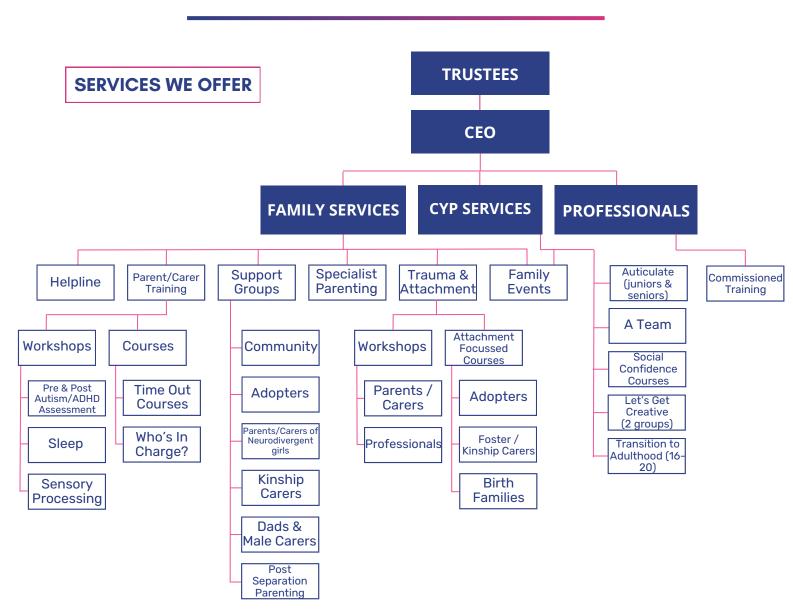
Pearse

Ruth Pearse, CEO & Founder www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Introduction

At Parenting Special Children, we bring our lived experience and professional knowledge to offer specialist information, expert advice and a compassionate listening ear.

Lived experience is at the heart of everything we do. At Parenting Special Children, 90% of us are parents & carers of neurodivergent children & young people, children with SEND or early life trauma and/or are neurodivergent ourselves.



Our Values

At Parenting Special Children, our vision is to build a community where every family and every child who is neurodivergent and/or has special needs and/or disabilities including early life trauma, is empowered, supported and no family ever feels alone.

EMPOWERING FAMILIES

Parenting Special Children empowers families whose children/young people are neurodivergent and/or have special needs and/or disabilities including early life trauma.

PREVENTING CRISIS

We hold our families, ensuring no one feels alone in their journey, 'Prevention before Crisis'.

PROMOTING WELLBEING

We support families, children/young people and professionals directly via a wide range of specialist services.

Who we support

At Parenting Special Children (PSC), we hold our families, ensuring no one feels alone on their journey. We support, signpost & empower all those who contact us, whatever stage of their journey.

In the 2023-24 academic year, PSC supported

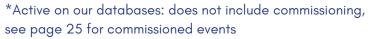


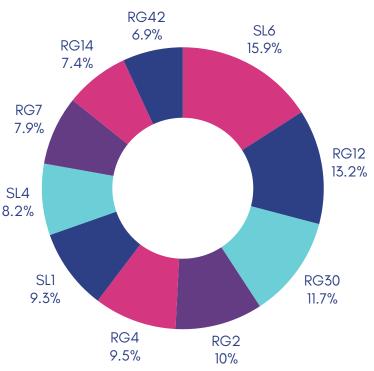
2135 Parents/ Carers



You were so friendly & understanding. I did not feel judged at all. It was like talking to a friend.

PSC support families in both Berkshire & non-Berkshire areas, but the 10 postcodes with the most referrals in 2023-24 were all in Berkshire.





435

Professionals*

www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Real Stories

Throughout this report, you will read case studies, which give an insight into the real stories of the families we support, & the difference our services have made to their lives.

> Wherever this symbol is used, it indicates a real story, or a link back to one of the stories on this page





When this symbol is used, it indicates a direct quotation from a parent/carer, child/young person or professional

Kele & Alex's* journey accessing PSC

Kele & Alex* attended a Community Support Group (CSG) in November 2023 and shared challenges that they were having with school & that they had started an assessment process with their child. Since then, Kele & Alex* have been supported by other members of the CSG & PSC within the group. Kele & Alex* have attended regularly since November 2023 to the present day & are an integral part of the group, supporting others, giving advice, sharing their own experiences & have fed back that have felt supported themselves. They have been a part of many different learning sessions including managing anxiety, conflict, sensory difficulties & sleep.

Kele & Alex* have also had support from PSC within these groups to understand applications for an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), accessing services for support & school difficulties. They have accessed telephone, text & email support from PSC community support since starting to attend the group.

Kele & Alex's* child Max* attended Social Confidence Course in April 2024. Max* then joined Auticulate in June 2024 & continues to attend to date.

Kele & Alex* contacted Helpline to discuss sleep difficulties. Helpline team completed a triage for 1:1 specialist parenting sleep support & completed a referral to this service & sent an email to parents with all information. Kele & Alex* started 1:1 specialist parenting in July 2024.

*All names changed to protect anonymity

Asha's family's story of Empowerment*

Before connecting with Parenting Special Children, my daughter was diagnosed but I had little idea of what it meant & how to help her. I was signposted to PSC during COVID & my daughter was invited to a six-week online Social Confidence Course which she engaged well with. From there, she was invited to join Auticulate.

The parent support evenings gave me insight into autism & the struggles autistic people had. It also allowed me to talk to parents with similar problems & understand how they worked through them. In the early days, I regularly went to the parent support evening events, it was useful to gain knowledge & meet with other parents who had the same problems and hurdles. Of particular use to me were the sessions on sensory processing & transition to secondary school.

Auticulate has been most helpful for my daughter in giving her a space where she can socialise & learn with children who are similar to her, her tribe. At school, she needs to fit in & adapt to a predominantly neurotypical world but Auticulate shows her that she is 'normal' in her autism & that there are others like her. She has also been able to take that a step further in volunteering in the junior group as a peer mentor. This allows her to develop leadership & interaction skills in a safe group that understands her before having to practice them in a neurotypical world that does not always understand neuroatypicals. My daughter is also starting the transition to adulthood sessions soon & I expect that they will help prepare her mentally for the next steps she will take towards independence. PSC has given my daughter a space where she can be open about her autism & not feel judged. This helps her cope better at school where children are not as understanding.

I would like to see my daughter living an independent adult life & succeeding. Auticulate gives her a space to learn ways of dealing with the outside world & practice those skills away from the safety of family (that may step in to save her a bit too quickly) but within a structure that will still keep her safe. PSC cares about neurodiverse kids & tries hard to help them in their difficulties. They try to help families through what can be difficult & trying times with knowledge & emotional support. They have good knowledge & experience in their field & share it openly. The main thing that PSC has brought into our family life is knowledge and understanding.

Although many of the staff at PSC are very well educated in their field, they also bring a personal knowledge. The staff are friendly & want to help. They know a great deal about their subject & many have a lived experience, either in themselves or through their children. I remember a parent session where the two speakers were both mothers of neuroatypical children who then discovered that they themselves were autistic. Being able to give me a vision into what might be going on inside my daughter's head was invaluable. I need to understand a problem to be able to help and my daughter does not always have the ability to explain or even know that her thought processes are different from neurotypicals.

PSC has taught me what common needs & adjustments most autistic children need. It has allowed me to talk sensibly with the school SEN (Special Educational Needs) co-ordinator, understand her terminology & make recommendations for my daughter's specific needs. I'm still learning to allow her to self-advocate though.

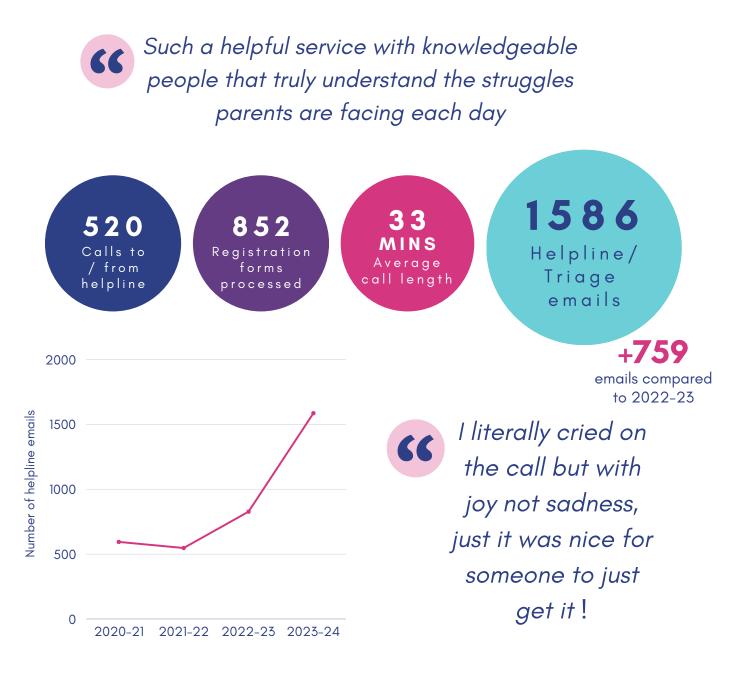
I have heard many stories of how it has gone wrong & how children have suffered emotional pain, specifically in teenage years, because they are different. [My daughter's] teen years are still tricky to navigate but the support she receives from Auticulate & her autistic peers has helped her find her unique path. She is making a success of her life and that makes me happy (& proud).

> *Name changed to protect anonymity All wording is the parent's own



Helpline & Triage

The Helpline is usually the first point of contact parents/carers & professionals have with the charity. From there, they are triaged to different services the charity depending on their need, and signposted to other organisations.



100% individuals said they felt listened to on their call to the helpline

Ali's journey accessing PSC through the Helpline*

Ali* came into the Helpline in September 2023 following a referral to from their social worker.

Helpline processed the referral & made telephone contact with Ali*. The telephone call lasted for 50 minutes & Helpline listened, supported & signposted to numerous other supporting services. Email sent following conversation with all information discussed & links to other services.

In November 2023 Ali* contacted Helpline to discuss workshops available to them. Helpline discussed workshops & which would be most beneficial. Ali* booked to attend ADHD workshop & attended all 3 sessions.

In March 2024 Ali* contacted Helpline by phone & discussed the challenges that the family were facing. Parent felt that they needed further support. Helpline listened, gave a supportive ear & completed a triage with parent in view to support with 1:1 specialist parenting support. Helpline spent 1 hour & 15 minutes speaking with Ali*. Helpline followed the call with an email sharing information discussed & details of 1:1 specialist parenting referral. Helpline completed 1:1 specialist parenting referral.

In May 2024 Ali* started 1:1 specialist parenting sessions. 4 sessions were completed. Ali* continues to recieve on going workshop & support group support up to & beyond August 2024.

*Name changed to protect anonymity

85% individuals calling the helpline were signposted / referred to other services





individuals said they had gained new information to support their child / young person

I was feeling quite stuck & I feel in a much better position to move forward & understand the process much better.

Parents/Carers: Workshops & Courses

Courses

This year, we continued to run our **Time Out for Special Needs (TOSN)** & **Who's in Charge- Child to Parent Violence (WiC)** courses. We worked with an interpreter to deliver our TOSN course to Hong Kong families in Cantonese.

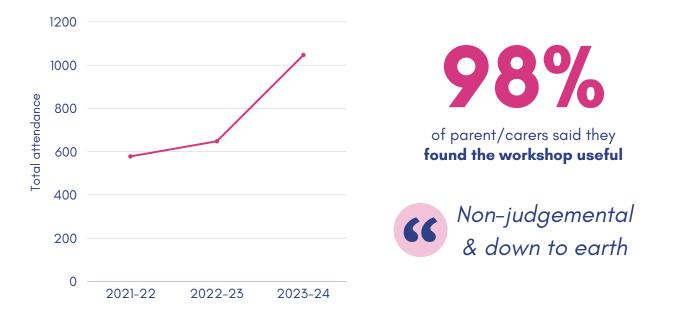
The course was very comprehensive & I have learned a lot

Course title	Courses delivered	Attendance
TOSN	3	21
WiC	2	20
Totals	5	41

I was not sure what next steps to take before the course but I now have direction

Workshops

Attendance at our parenting workshops has increased considerably over the past 3 years & we have continued to receive positive feedback





The workshop was enlightening especially to realise that what we experience with our special child is not unknown – we are not alone. **100%** would recommend the workshop to others

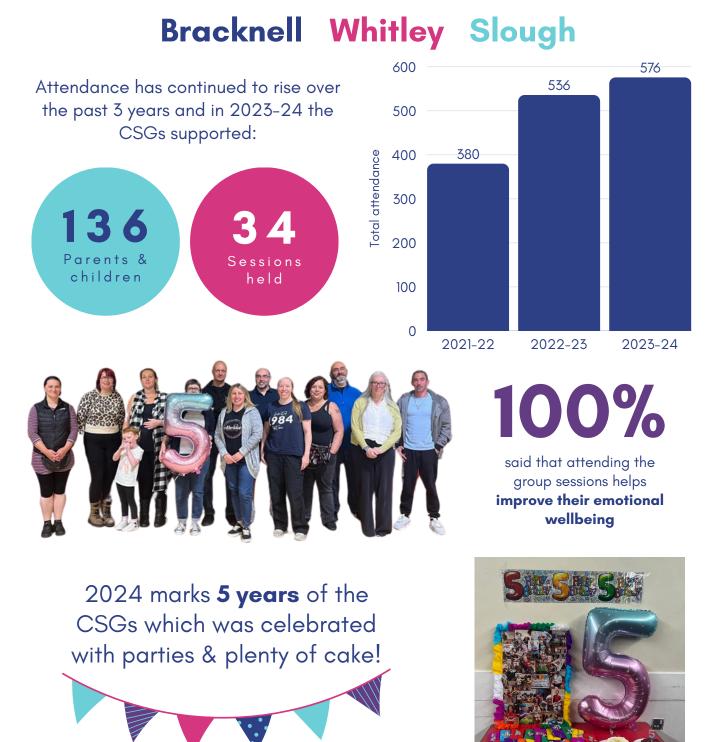
Workshop title	Workshops delivered	Total Attendance
Autism	11	177
ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)	16	354
ADHD: Medication, Treatment options & Outcomes	2	52
Sensory Processing (including Interoception)	11	187
Transition to Adulthood	3	37
Sleep	8	147
School workshops	10	93
Totals	61	1047

98% said that they had a greater understanding of the topic after the workshops This was an in depth analysis of managing anxiety, the facilitator was excellent

Parents/Carers: Support Groups

Community Support Groups

Parenting Special Children runs Community Support Groups (CSGs), which look at a variety of topics including Co-Parenting, Anxiety & the impact on CYP, and Managing Transitions, in 3 areas of deprivation in Berkshire:



14



Community Support Groups (continued)

"

There has never been a meeting of this group that I have not enjoyed. I learn just as much now as at the beginning. I am given the space to share my experiences with others too. Its the perfect safe space & much needed.



They make you feel welcome & that I'm not the only one going through this

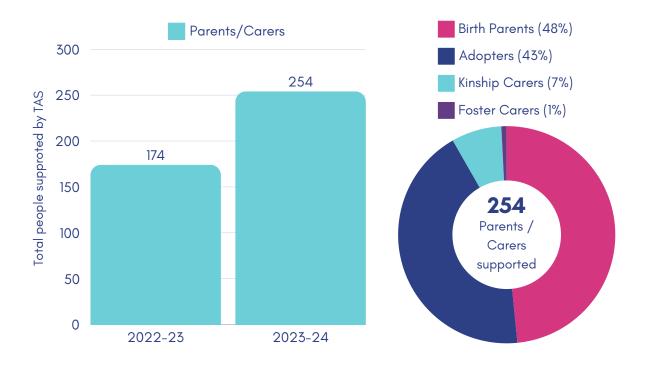
Parents/Carers of Neurodivergent Girls Support Group

A support group is facilitated to run alongside the A Team children & young people's group, for the parents/carers of those who attend.



Trauma & Attachment: Workshops, Courses & 1-1 Support

In 2023-24 the Trauma & Attachment Service (TAS) supported 254 parents/carers



TAS workshops for parents/carers



Fantastic training, really opened my mind & will add so much value to my care giving.

TAS courses for parents/carers



Many thanks for an exceptional course - the trainers know their stuff & are very good at communicating it ! More than a refresher, each session was strong & well worth attending.

100%

said they felt more confident to support their child with achieving their potential

10U said they would recommend

our courses & workshops to others

& Ali's story (page 12)

See Kele & Alex's journey (page 8)

1:1 Support

1:1 support

Sessions per family 00%

said they found the support from the practitioner **useful**

said their confidence in parenting had increased as a result

Working with PSC has been an absolute life safer for our family during a very challenging time. Thanks to their support, we felt less isolated. We felt understood & supported & it was a safe time & space to reflect as a family. As a result, we learned new techniques & - crucially - clung onto hope!

said it helped improve their overall wellbeing

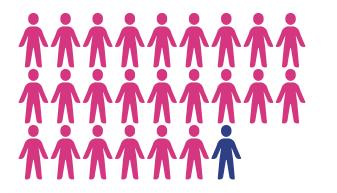
Trauma & Attachment: TAS Support Groups

The Trauma & Attachment Service runs Support Groups for:

Adopters Dads & Male Carers Kinship Carers Post-Separation Parenting



We like to come to the group. It gives me a chance to off load my problems to others going through similar problems. The kids like playing around with other kids like themselves.



97% said the group helps them **feel less isolated**

A fantastic lifeline for adopted parents! We come every month and can't imagine life without it.

Real Stories: Making a difference for the whole family

PSC has made a big difference & is the major source of support for our family, especially in the light of the lack of provision in most areas at the moment! We have attended multiple courses around sleep, attachment, autism & ADHD. We all attend the monthly Let's Get Creative Group, & my daughter & I attend the monthly A Team girls' group. The groups mean that our children get the chance to make friends with other children who have similar experiences & challenges to them, & as parents we get the chance to connect with other parents – sharing highs & lows & also supporting each other. My husband also attends the Dads' carers group which he finds really helpful.

We look forward to our monthly support groups & it gives structure to our weekend. Knowing we are not alone & being around other families really helps us all as we can support each other. We often share ideas as well which can help add to the strategies we currently use. Having organised activities for the children so that the parents can have their own group at the same time is incredibly helpful (& rare to find elsewhere!). It is also good for their self-esteem to know that they are not alone in the challenges they face – they are not the only ones. It also means the parents can share freely as the children aren't present.

If PSC was not around, we would have had less understanding & probably therefore less strategies at our finger tips to help us. The children (& us) would have not had the friends & relationships they now benefit from, & we could have all felt more isolated.

We are always recommending PSC services to others. It is so hard to get support & understanding – there is a huge gap in this vital area which Parenting Special Children are plugging!

*All wording is the parent's own.

93%

reported an **improvement in their emotional wellbeing** due to being part of the group



said they would

recommend the group to others

Children & Young People: Courses & Groups

Social Confidence Course

Social Interaction Group was renamed to Social Confidence Course (SCC) in July 2024 and covers the following topics:

Making & maintaining friendships, Managing conflict, Self-esteem, Self-advocacy & Understanding neurodivergence



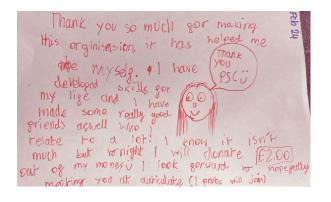
young people said they would recommend the course to others



they have learnt new social skills/techniques by attending the course



parents said their child had benefitted from attending the course



66

The team were fab, I can't thank you enough. Your help comes at desperate times & that is something I will be forever grateful for

of children attending SCC went on to attend Auticulate

Social Confidence Courses run



www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk



Auticulate

Auticulate continued to run fortnightly sessions for juniors & seniors covering topics & practical outings requested by the young people such as:

Emotional regulation, Peer challenges, Train travel, Team work, Self-esteem, Online safety & Time for fun!





Team work activity (junior session)

Transition to Adulthood Group

In the Spring of 2024, the Transition to Adulthood group was set up to provide a continuation of the support offered to children & young people (CYP) by PSC, post-16. The Transition to Adulthood group held sessions on a variety of topics & practical outings as requested by the young people such as:

Wellbeing & adulting, Special Interests, Bus travel & Board games **13**

attendance at Transition to Adulthood group

5

Transition to Adulthood sessions delivered

Children & Young People: Courses & Groups A Team

The A Team held monthly sessions for autistic/ADHD girls, doing a variety of activities & practical outings as requested by the young people including:

Craft & games, Quiz, Clip 'n' Climb, Yoga, Pottery painting, Trampolining, & Summer games





Siblings supported



session they attended









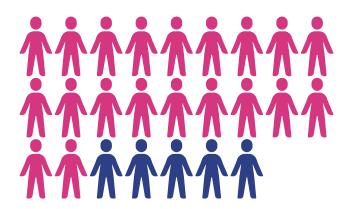


Let's Get Creative

Let's Get Creative (LGC) runs two monthly groups, one for children in Kinship/Connected Care & one for adopted children. A play therapist, music therapist & CYP practitioners provide a variety of activities including:

Making music to express emotions, Sensory activities to alert, organise & calm, Slime making & messy play





82%

said the group helps their child **feel less isolated**

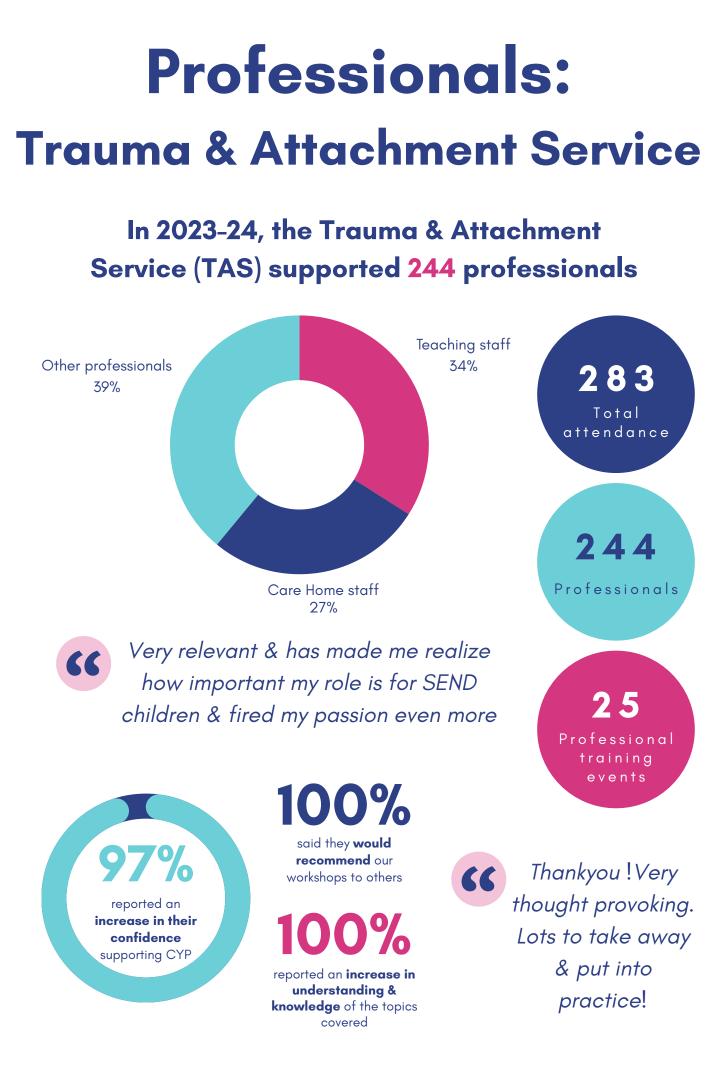


of parents said the group helps their child to **make new friends**



said the group helps **improve** their child's social/emotional wellbeing

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Commissioning

PSC is regularly commissioned to provide face to face or online training on a range of topics linked to parenting or working with children with a range of additional needs and/or disabilities, including developmental trauma.



I have had such positive feedback from the staff that attended your session.

Session felt very interactive & maintained interest throughout.



The facilitator had a thorough knowledge of the subject area

Fundraising

Thank you to our amazing fundraisers who raised much needed vital funding in a variety of ways!

Fundraising ranged from a young person writing and selling his book, to a team climbing Everest to many running Marathons to Skydiviing out of 50 planes in 50 weeks!





www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Thank you to all the amazing local businesses and corporates that support us in a variety of ways from fundraising, tickets for your families and donating their skill set and volunteering with us!

Special thanks to BNI Ascot members.







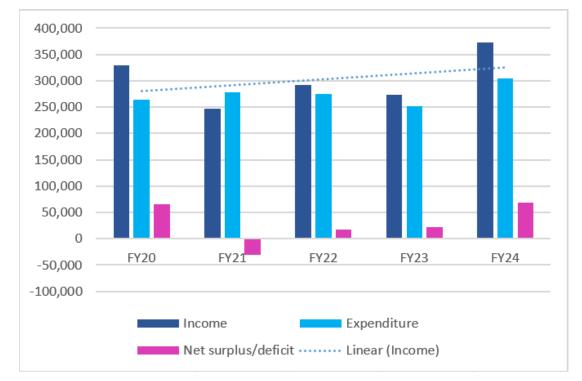


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Finances

Key points:

Financial Year (FY) 24 successful funding for new website and logo
Continued expansion of all income streams – commissioned services plus new services
Reserves going forward to FY25 of 9.4 months, a strong and sustainable position
Focus for FY25 building a longer term pipeline of income to ensure sustainability
Looking ahead to new office move in FY25









Funders

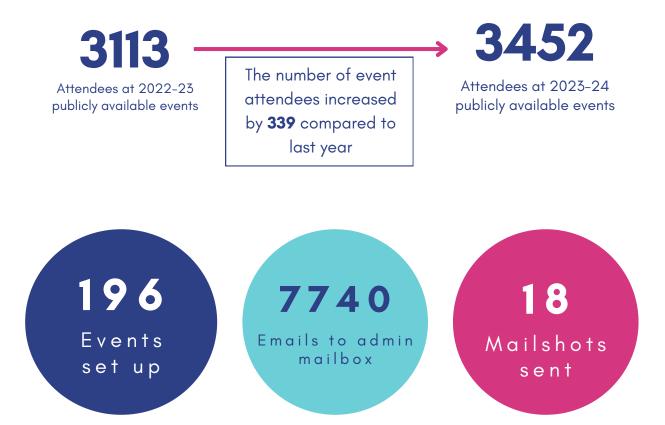
Aldermaston Parish Council Arborfield & Newland Parish Council Barkham Parish Council Benevity/Gartner Match funding donation Berkshire Community Foundation **Big Give Binfield Parish Council** Brighter Futures for Children **Brook Small Grants Charlie Waller Trust** Charvil Parish Council Children in Need Comic Relief **Crowthorne Parish Council** David Brownlow Foundation David Solomons Charitable Trust Earley Town Council **Enterprise Mobility Foundation** Euro Car Parts **Field Seymour Parkes** Finchampstead Parish Council Future Care Group Garfield Weston Global Make Some Noise Heathrow Community Trust Invesco Magdalen Hospital Trust Masonic Charitable Foundation Mobbs Memorial Trust National Lottery Community Fund NHS Berkshire East CCG/S4H GEMS NHS Berkshire West CCG/Autism Berkshire One Slough Community Fund Postcode Society Trust Reading Borough Council **Reading Families Forum Rimini Street Shanly Foundation** Sovereign Housing St James Place Foundation St Laurence Relief in Need Fund Sunningdale and Ascot Parish Council The Alchemy Foundation The Ammco Trust The Earley Charity The Gerald Palmer Eling Trust The Good Exchange/Greenham Trust The John Sykes Foundation The Lewis Baylis Charitable Trust The Lexicon Charity The Lockett Trust The Squire Patton Boggs Charitable Trust The Thales Charitable Trust The Toy Trust Twyford Parish Council Urban Science Int Ltd - Community Giving Grant Warfield Parish Council Wargrave Parish Council West Berkshire Council Winnersh Parish Council Wokingham Borough - Community Diversity Grant Woodley Town Council

Supporters

3CD Cleaning Action Coach - Mark Van Rol Aims Accountants Andy Eagles Ascot Racecourse Ascot Round Table Asset Plus Mortgages **Bastion Berkshire Heating Blackstone** Printing **BNI Ascot members** Calla Landscapes Charlotte Tilbury Corbett Carpentry Dallas and Co Elysee Kitchens and Interiors Eton and Windsor Brewery F Hinds Fat Adams Cocktails and Ice Creams Fego Restaurant Ascot **Fitness Space Ascot** Forever on Digital (FOD) **Gp** Computers Home Care Removals It'seeze Windsor Jewel Homes Jonathan Lea Network LB Construction Loftbox Marvellous Festivals MiMi Wokingham **New Court Solicitors** Oracle UK Papaya Decorating Paula Bicknell Wealth PK Bookkeeping **Providence** Finance **R2B Business Solutions Richmond Chauffeurs Ridley Electrical** Rishi Rai Photogrpahy Silent Pool Gin Silveroak Therapies Siren Craft Brewery SVIVM Specialist Cleaning Sweetpea and Pillow Properties The Billington Family The Mill House Hotel The Russell Players The Stephens Family Travel Counsellors Annabelle Marshall Tricord Solutions HR Vana Parker Keynote Speaker Village Maid Cheese Visual Dialogue Windsor and Eton Brewery Winsor Racecourse Thank you also to all our half/marathon runners and Superhero Triathlon fundraisers Special thanks to our Everest Trek Team and Vana Parker for her Jump 50

Admin Behind the scenes

The Admin Team support the charity by maintaining: IT/Cyber security, including associated staff training & NHS compliance; GDPR compliance; PSC database (CharityLog); website; Technical expertise & training/support; Data reporting; Event eligibility; mailing list, and Client support.



Social media followers

f o in e ventbrite MailChimp 4900 858 964 2000 2000

Staff & Volunteers

We couldn't do it without our wonderful team!



Celebrating 10 years at PSC



Director of Family Services, Funding & Commissioning Manager **Zobia Kalim**



Finance Manager **Jo Lavelle**



Parenting & Sleep Practitioner Helen Cattermole



Parenting Practitioner **Denise Challis**

Advisory Boards

Lived experience has always been central to Parenting Special Children. We are passionate about listening and responding to all voices. PSC have the following advisory boards:

Neurodiversity (including Neurodivergent Academics)
 Equality & Diversity (including Ethnically Diverse Communities)
 Neurodivergent Children & Young People

Looking to the future

The need for timely support for families is greater than ever and the complexity of need means that we continue to develop our services to ensure that we offer timely and holistic support to families.

In this coming year, we aim to:

- Develop our work with ethnically diverse community groups we have already established a support group in Reading with thanks to funding from Reading Borough Council which is well attended
- Embed our new website so that families are able to easily find the information and advice they require to support their children and young people
- Continue to work in partnership with local authorities, health and both local and national charities
- Acknowledge the growing demand for our services amidst funding challenges. We will continue to grow our funding, fundraising and commissioning base to ensure continued sustainability and growth.
- Continue to support families across Berkshire and surrounding area so that they are informed, empowered and have the resources to navigate the SEND system and the whole family grows in confidence and hope.

A Heartfelt Thank You

To every person on the PSC team, you bring such a wealth of knowledge and experience, lived experience and kindness and compassion. We also thank all of those who have financially supported PSC and we look forward to continuing this vital work with your support. To learn more about our work or access our resources, please visit our new website: www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk.

Contact Us

Helpline

This service can support parent/carers in a variety of ways: A pre-booked telephone consultation **Ring our Helpline** E-mail conversation

We have volunteers who speak different community languages. Please get in touch with us if a parent needs support but does not have English as their first language.

Helpline: 07810 689 679



helpline@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Website & Other Services

www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Trauma & Attachment service: tas@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Commissioning: commission@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

All other enquiries: admin@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Donate

Your donation can transform the lives of children and families in need, offering them support when they need it most. 'Prevention before Crisis' By donating, you're not just giving money – you're giving hope, strength, and a brighter future to families in need.

Go to our website www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk to find out how to donate, or contact tess@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk



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