

# Impact report



The Elizabeth  
foundation

2021-22



# About us

We help deaf children learn to listen through their hearing technologies and to talk with clarity and confidence. Importantly, our skilled team of teachers, speech and language therapists, specialist nursery assistants and volunteers also provides emotional, educational and practical support to parents throughout the preschool years.

The charity was started 40 years ago by the family of a deaf child, and we remain committed to providing family-focused services that encourage learning through fun, practical, everyday experiences.

Our nursery programme is rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and has also received the accolade of Early Talk Level 3 Specialist Accreditation from Speech and Language UK (formerly I CAN).



## About this Impact Report

This Impact Report provides a summary of our activities during the year from August 2021 to July 2022, encompassing the 2021-22 school year in our nursery.

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*"The Elizabeth Foundation has been absolutely life-changing for our family, helping us to accept and understand our girls' deafness and help them to thrive. Thank-you so much."*

# Message from our Chief Executive

The Elizabeth Foundation provides early support with lifelong impact for deaf children and their families. Alongside the face-to-face nursery programmes we run at our Family Centre, we offer online support through our Let's Listen and Talk programme. Communication is at the heart of all our activities.

One of the most important skills we learn is how to be effective communicators with each other. This journey begins right from birth, with the preschool years being a time when children are building their foundation skills for communication.

This Impact Report clearly identifies how our services support families right from the time of the identification of deafness, providing information, support and guidance to parents as well as education and communication learning for children. You will hear from parents and from one of our graduates about the effect this has had for their family and on their lives.

You can also read about the growth of our services and the impact this is having across the UK. The 2021-22 academic year covered by this Impact Report was still heavily affected by

Covid-19. Although guidance and restrictions meant the world was changing on a regular basis, we continued to be a stable source of support for all of our beneficiaries – whether face-to-face or online.

As a charity, we would not be where we are today, as one of the leading providers of preschool education for deaf babies and children, without your support. So many people give in so many different ways – sharing information about our services, providing funding, volunteering time and expertise, donating goods, taking part in challenges, attending and supporting events – the list goes on and on. We are truly grateful for your support.

I hope you enjoy reading about the impact you, our dear supporter, are making on the lives of deaf children and their families.

We don't know what the year ahead will hold, but we do know that together we are stronger and together we can make amazing things happen!

**Julie Hughes**  
Chief Executive



# Our core services

83

**families** benefited from nursery sessions at our Family Centre, where we support them right from the time of identification of their child's deafness through to starting school. Our multi-disciplinary team guides these families all the way through their children's preschool years.

78

**baby sessions** helped 14 families at the time of, or soon after, the identification of their child's deafness. Parents and babies take part in discussions, group activities and play times, creating strong support networks and building firm foundations for their child's communication.

110

**toddler sessions** supported 24 families to feel confident in encouraging their child's developing communication skills. Each session allowed toddlers to investigate their world while also learning to focus and pay attention for longer periods of time, laying strong foundations for language and learning. By attending the sessions, parents become strong advocates for their child's future.

257

**preschool sessions** helped 31 children develop their listening, language, speech and social communication skills using all of their senses in very natural, fun and engaging activities. Our preschool programme prepares children to enter school as confident communicators.

***“Our time at The Elizabeth Foundation has had a huge impact on our entire family. It has been a joy to watch our daughter and the other children progress – they all amaze me every week...”***



260

**speech and language therapy sessions** benefited children in our toddler and preschool programmes with one-to-one input for their communication development. The sessions supported parents to become communication partners with their child, helping to build vocabulary, improve speech and foster confidence for communicating.

28

**Listen! group sessions** assisted 14 children with monthly sessions to improve their communication skills through advice and information, and fun, practical games. Children with unilateral deafness, mild / moderate deafness, conductive deafness, Down syndrome, and / or complex needs enjoyed listening and music activities that supported their listening and early language development.

11

**local authorities** were represented by families travelling to our Family Centre, allowing for partnered working with families. These families came from Surrey, Hampshire, Portsmouth, London, Berkshire, Southampton, Dorset, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, West Sussex and Oxfordshire.

4

**children** were seen through our new Educational Psychology consultancy service. Sometimes our children start to demonstrate behaviours which could indicate learning, communication or social needs in addition to those resulting from their deafness. We work with a consultant Educational Psychologist to help these children move forward with their skills in positive ways.

***"..When the provision is right, it is like watching a magic trick take place – you're not quite sure how it happened but it really is quite exciting to watch. You are all magicians in my eyes and what you do for the families and children with hearing loss is truly remarkable."***



# How we change lives

Each of the children in our preschool and toddler groups received regular input from one of our Speech and Language Therapists, with our Multidisciplinary Education Team contributing towards a termly assessment of each child's progress.

48 children attended either our toddler or preschool groups during the 2021-22 academic year. This included nine children who joined us part way through the year, and two who left us before the end of the year. Around one-third (35%) of the children had additional needs other than deafness, whilst 17% of the children were being raised in a bilingual environment (where one other language, spoken or signed, besides English, is used fluently as one of the family's main languages).

## Language skills

Our team gets to know each child well, and this enables us to closely monitor their progress. Every term, our Teachers of the Deaf, Nursery Leaders and Speech and Language Therapists collaboratively assess each child's level of receptive and expressive language. This year we completed at least two of these assessments on 38 children, and of these children:

- 45% made progress that was either equal to or faster than their hearing peers – they made one or more month of progress for every month they were with us. This means they are beginning to close the gap between their delayed skills and those of their hearing peers.
- 55% made progress with their Language, though they did so at a slower rate. It is important to note that even these small steps can make a huge difference to a child's day-to-day communication and are a basis for future progress.

This means all of our children made progress with their language skills this year, improving their ability to communicate their wants and needs to those around them.



## Speech skills

Our Specialist Speech and Language Therapists monitor and assess each child's speech sound development – assessing how they pronounce sounds and words.

For children in the toddler group, this tends to take the form of informal monitoring – as during these early stages, our focus is on the foundations skills of listening and language.

Once children reach the preschool group, they may be able to participate in formal assessment of their speech sound development, and have the maturity of language and attention to be able to participate in focused speech sound work.

We were able to assess 28 of our 31 preschool children this year at least twice, on either a formal assessment measure or an individualised therapy plan. Of these children:

- 54% improved the percentage of individual phonemes (sounds) they could correctly produce in spoken words. This means they were using a higher number of accurate sounds in their words.
- 32% were beginning to show emerging progress, as gauged by informal assessment and observations – increasing the number of recognisable words they use to communicate.
- 14% maintained stable speech skills through the year. Some were adjusting to changes in their hearing technology and others maintained their current speech levels whilst making progress in other areas – such as developing a greater vocabulary or better social communication skills.

## Relationships with peers

All over the country, professionals have been reporting an increase in social difficulties due to the pandemic and we, too, could see the impact of this on our children in the nursery. We are continuing to reflect how we identify, assess and support children with social communication difficulties at our setting, to ensure we can address the ongoing impacts of Covid-19.

We have developed our own social communication checklists, which we use to measure the social communication and interaction skills of the children who attend our setting. This year, we assessed 34 children using this measure on at least two occasions. Of these children:

- Over half (56%) had made progress – these children showed measurable improvements in their ability to communicate with adults and peers, and form friendships within the nursery.
- Just over one-quarter (26%) of the children achieved a score that was the same or very close to their previous score – indicating that they had maintained their skills in very challenging times.
- Around one-fifth (18%) were showing an increase in difficulties with social communication. This could be due to a combination of decreased social opportunity throughout the pandemic, frustration, and / or increased awareness of their own needs. As a result of this, we are adapting our support for children's social / emotional development to address this increased area of need.

## Going to school

In July 2022, 12 children were due to leave us, ready to start school:

- Eight will be attending mainstream placements in local infant schools.
- Three will be going to schools with a language or hearing impairment resource base.
- One child's parents decided to defer school entry for a year.



# Amelia's story

When Amelia was born in 2019, she did not pass her hearing screening in the hospital. I didn't think anything of it at the time, as I was told it could just be fluid in her ears as she was born via C-section.

We were referred to have another test when she was around 10 days old. Again, she did not pass this and I started to get concerned. Amelia had another appointment which she also did not pass, so we were referred to the Test Centre at The Elizabeth Foundation.

Amelia had her hearing test while sleeping and the news was delivered that she had a severe to profound sensorineural bilateral hearing loss. My world came crashing down. This is not what you expect for your baby. I cried and I cried a lot! All I could think was what does the future hold for my little girl? Will she talk? How will she communicate? Will she ever hear?

Amelia received her first set of hearing aids at six weeks old, and the same day we met Julie. She explained about baby group and how beneficial it would be for Amelia and us as a family.

Going to our first baby group, I was nervous. I didn't know what to expect, but everyone made me feel very welcome. It felt good to share my concerns and worries with parents going through the same thing. Weeks went by and I noticed a difference in Amelia. Baby group helped the start of Amelia's hearing journey – she started to babble and notice familiar sounds.

Amelia moved up to toddler group where she started to find her feet and became more confident. Her language skills really came along, her listening skills were brilliant.

When Amelia was 2½ years old, she had her cochlear implant surgery and then moved up to preschool. This was a big step for her, but I knew she would take it in her stride. Amelia now attends the preschool two days a week and absolutely loves all the teachers and children.

Without the help and support from The Elizabeth Foundation, I don't think Amelia would be as chatty and confident as she is today. As a family, we will be very sad when Amelia leaves to go to school but I believe she's had the best start to her education at The Elizabeth Foundation

Amelia's mother

***“Without the help and support from The Elizabeth Foundation, I don't think Amelia would be as chatty and confident as she is today.”***



# Ethan's story

Hi my name is Ethan. I have a sensorineural hearing loss and have been deaf since birth. I received my first hearing aids at just five weeks old.

I came to The Elizabeth Foundation with my Nan every week, starting from when I was a baby until I went to mainstream school at five. It became a very special place for my Nan, just as much as it did for me.

With lots of learning activities – arts and crafts, reading, cooking, sports day – I had a great time without realising that I was always learning what different sounds meant, building my vocabulary and learning how to put sentences together. By the time I left, I had developed strong communication skills.

At twelve, I decided to investigate cochlear implants. I did a lot of research on the Internet myself, spoke to my audiologist, parents and friends, before deciding it was right for me. I was implanted successfully in 2020.

I am now at school, getting ready for GCSEs. I am at a mainstream school which has a Resource Base for deaf students. The Base gives me a sense of community, as the pupils understand what it is like to be deaf; we don't have to explain ourselves or hearing loss to each other; and we also get it when someone just needs some space or quiet time.

I really enjoy sport and I started playing tennis aged four. One of the coaches at my tennis club introduced me to the LTA's Deaf tennis. I have been part of their Deaf Development Squad since 2018, and I won the GB Deaf Junior doubles in 2019. When I'm with my deaf tennis friends we completely understand each other's experiences – although a lot of the time we are just laughing together or playing tennis!

I recently went to Germany for my first international tournament. I was very proud to represent my country! Best of all, I managed to win the doubles, bringing back gold, and also came fifth overall in the singles.

When I leave school, I want to continue with my tennis. But also looking ahead, I want to study to become a sports physiotherapist for both deaf and hearing individuals.

Ethan Carter



***“I had a great time without realising that I was always learning what different sounds meant, building my vocabulary and learning how to put sentences together.”***



## Reaching out

Through our outreach activities, we support families living further afield who are not able to visit our Family Centre on a regular basis.

### Summer programme

After having to cancel our Summer Programmes in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions, we were delighted to be able to run our Summer Programme this year with support from our partners.

**families** attended our one-week programme in July 2022, which offered preschool classes for their deaf children, sessions for siblings, an educational programme for parents, and assessments from a range of professionals.

### Let's Listen and Talk

Let's Listen and Talk [www.letslistenandtalk.org](http://www.letslistenandtalk.org) is our free online support and information programme for families and professionals who want to help preschool deaf children develop their listening, spoken language and communication skills.

93

**new subscribers** joined the Let's Listen and Talk programme during the 12 months from August 2021 to July 2022.

969

**subscribers in total** were enrolled in the programme by July 2022 – an increase of 11% on the previous year. These users live all across the UK, and two-thirds of members were families and one-third were professionals supporting families.

During 2021-22, we also made further improvements to the programme:

- Working with external specialists, we continued developing our strand of music activities and songs – preparing the toddler songs section for launch in autumn 2022.
- We added fields to the sign-up process to collect additional useful information from families and professionals.
- We published the Cochlear Implant Technology strand, created with input from Advanced Bionics and University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service.

***“Ahead of our son's ABR testing appointment last week, we went through your terminology course and found it so helpful to give us a good understanding of what to expect and helped prompt questions we wanted to ask. Really invaluable at a time when you feel so lost as parents, so thank you.”***

# Working together

We firmly believe in the power of partnerships – working together to provide wrap-around care to deaf children and their families. During the 2021-22 academic year, through our work with a variety of partners, we:

- Participated in a research project with City University / UCL, investigating literacy skills and deafness.
- Took part in an Advisory Group for the 'Early Parent Interaction in Deafness' research study by Martina Curtin.
- Worked with partners on developing content for Let's Listen and Talk (see opposite).
- Worked with the ENT Department at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust to provide ENT sessions on-site in our Ovingdean Building Test Centre.
- Wrote articles for the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) magazine and the Cochlear Implanted Children's Support Group (CICS) magazine.
- Wrote an article about early intervention for the International Journal of Birth and Parent Education.
- Presented to training Teachers of the Deaf at Manchester University and Mary Hare School.
- Presented a parent education session about music for the National Deaf Children's Society.
- Presented to a team of professionals at Palatine School – a school for children with complex needs in Hove.
- Attended Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) meetings, Portsmouth City Council EYFS cluster meetings, SENCO meetings and multi-disciplinary support team meetings.
- Attended sensory team meetings virtually across the UK to present on the work of the charity.
- Attended Clinical Excellence Network groups for Speech and Language Therapy.
- Attended the BATOD virtual conference.
- Mentored two students on the Teacher of the Deaf training programme.
- Hosted a variety of professionals to talk about the work of the charity and / or work collaboratively with families.





## Preschool book audit

During summer 2021, we completed an audit of the books we use to teach the children in our preschool groups. Looking at our lesson plans, we identified a total of 172 books covering 17 different topics. We then reviewed the books' representation of different cultures, ethnicities, genders, disabilities and types of family.

Based on this information, we will further improve the diversity of the books we use with our children, so that they provide a realistic picture of the world our children live in. We want to ensure that all children attending our preschool can see themselves and their families reflected in the materials we use.

## Funding

Every year, The Elizabeth Foundation has to secure all of the income it needs to meet its charitable aims and objectives. As we receive no core funding from government, we depend on the support of families, friends, grantmaking trusts, businesses and the community.

### Our sources of income during 2021-22\* – totalling £1,047,447

Legacies	Grants	Contracts and fees
<b>32%</b> £332,566	<b>24%</b> £249,283	<b>19%</b> £198,030
Donations and gifts	Fundraising events	Fees for use of charity property
<b>12%</b> £130,532	<b>6%</b> £62,732	<b>5%</b> £55,230
Investments and interest		
<b>2%</b> £19,074		

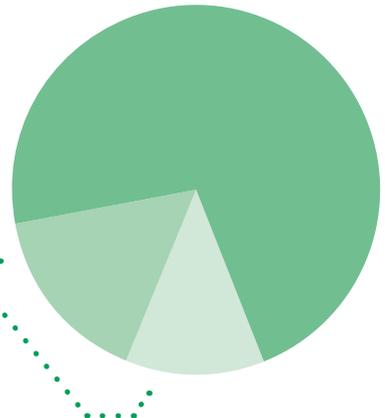
### How we spend your money\*

For every £1 donated:

**72p** goes directly to helping deaf babies and children learn to listen and speak .....

**16p** goes on raising funds and awareness .....

**12p** goes on governance costs and running the charity .....



\*We have based these summary figures on the audited figures in our Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22.

# Fundraising highlights

After fundraising turned virtual during the pandemic, we were excited to begin running face-to-face events again in 2021-22.

## Events and challenges

During the autumn of 2021, we tested the waters with our scaled-down Rock the Foundation music gig, followed by a murder mystery dinner and our Christmas Bazaar. Then in 2022, we were delighted to be able to run more of our fundraising events again. Our 14th annual golf day in June 2022 was a huge success, with thirteen teams taking to the fairway, followed by dinner, a raffle and auction, all helping to raise £4,517.

We held our ever-popular Summer Fayre in July 2022, the first since 2019! The weather could not have been kinder and attendees enjoyed games, stalls, raffles, acrobatic displays, character meet and greets, and even a visit from a fire engine, raising a total of £4,156.

Many supporters took on challenges over this last year, fundraising in a multitude of different ways. We are always so incredibly grateful for the dedication and inspiration you give us. Some highlights included:

- Children at Hummingbird Montessori School in Kingston upon Thames raised £590 through their sports day.
- Past pupil Elliott (pictured – right, at top) became one of our youngest Great South Runners when he took part in the Mini Great South Run in October 2021 at only five years old! He raised £575.
- Kaljeet, auntie of one of our current pupils, set herself the challenge of cycling 100 miles in a month, raising £1,257.
- Parent Lauren took on the Southampton Marathon and raised £2,791.
- Former pupil Ryan (pictured – right, at bottom) completed a skydive and raised £755.

## Community groups and schools

We enjoyed getting out and about in the community again this year. We gave presentations to various groups and organisations, including the Inner Wheel Club Cosham, the Southsea Morning WI and Probus Club of Cosham.

We were privileged to work with Michelle and Jeremy Rayne, parents of past pupils, who have developed a pack of teaching resources to teach deaf awareness to secondary age children. Jeremy, who is a teacher, piloted the resources in his lessons, and the pack is available for download via our website.

We were delighted to attend Portsmouth Comic Con in May 2022, on a panel about deaf representation in films, TV and comics. It was a great opportunity to start discussions and raise awareness around such an important subject.



# Grantmaking Trusts

We aim high but there is always more we can do to improve support for deaf children and their families, whether by extending our reach, enhancing our services, or improving our facilities and resources:

- Generous grants from Ovingdean Hall Foundation have helped us to increase our national reach.
- Funding from Comic Relief, the Weinstock Foundation, the Generation Foundation and many others have helped us deliver core services for deaf children and children with additional and complex needs.
- Improvements to our playground areas (including a wooden pirates' ship – pictured) were made possible by funding from AT&T.
- New iPads funded by the Hendy Foundation have kept our children building their communication, imagination and social skills.

We always strive to keep funders up-to-date and offer feedback on the positive impact of grants – whether inviting representatives to visit our Family Centre or with our grant reports.



***“Your report clearly presented the very challenging situation your charity and the families you support faced as a result of the impact of Covid-19. Despite restrictions, your experienced and well-qualified team were able to provide essential support helping parents and young children with hearing impairments, to make real progress towards key milestones for learning and development. It has been amazing to read about the significant improvements to so many children.”***

Feedback from BBC Children in Need grants manager following our final grant report.

# Corporate support

At a time when businesses were facing their own challenges, our corporate supporters continued to dig deep and provide much-needed help in a variety of ways this year. Among these were:

- Eight Wealth Management, Heidi's Swiss Patisserie, JB Corrie and HSE National Ltd, who supported the cost of running our charity golf day.
- Lightning Safety Systems, who continued to help us reduce our core costs and keep our beneficiaries learning through their generous giving and practical expertise.
- Engie, who are always ready to provide the food and fun for our quiz nights.
- Valued donations from Rathbone Investment Management, Red Door, Lowes Financial Management and LinkedIn Local Portsmouth have all helped us to deliver our essential education programmes.

Now, more than ever, we want to grow our corporate support so that we can raise awareness of our programmes across the UK and enable us to help the next generation of deaf children to overcome the barriers to language acquisition and communication. Contact us to find out more!

# Future plans

We continue to work through our 5-year strategy document 'Looking Forward 2020-25', supporting the growth and development of the charity. We keep our progress against the strategy under regular review, providing quarterly updates to our Board of Trustees. Our plans for 2022-23 include:

- Maintaining and continuing to improve our Ofsted 'Outstanding' core early years services to support deaf children and their families.
- Adding new resources to our parent education programme.
- Trialling our adapted Social Communication Checklist with children in the toddler and preschool nurseries.
- Adding to our range of languages for vocabulary lists available for speech testing for bilingual children.
- Piloting a new Listen group for two-year-old children with speech intelligibility difficulties.
- Taking part in relevant research projects that will impact on the lives of deaf children and their families.
- Maintaining and growing our partnerships with Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust, Audiology Department / ENT Department and the University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service.
- Building new partnerships to provide wrap-around care to families.
- Increasing awareness of our charity and our services across the UK.
- Sharing our experience and expertise at training seminars and conferences.
- Involving more professionals, more families and more volunteers to extend our reach.
- Making sure that the charity remains sustainable through continued development of our fundraising, and our professional and voluntary partnerships.



# Thank you!



To donate or support our work please visit our website or get in touch.



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foundation



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The Elizabeth Foundation – helping deaf  
children learn to listen and talk.

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***“Our time at The Elizabeth Foundation has been invaluable.  
Our son has made some lovely lifelong friends and  
his confidence has just rocketed to the sky!”***