

# Impact report



The Elizabeth  
foundation

2022-23



# About us

The Elizabeth Foundation supports communication development for deaf children and their families, using a multisensory oral / aural approach to facilitate learning in fun and child-centred ways.

We help deaf children learn to listen through their hearing technologies and to talk clearly and confidently. Our skilled team of teachers, speech and language therapists, specialist nursery assistants and volunteers also provide emotional, educational and practical support to parents throughout the preschool years.

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

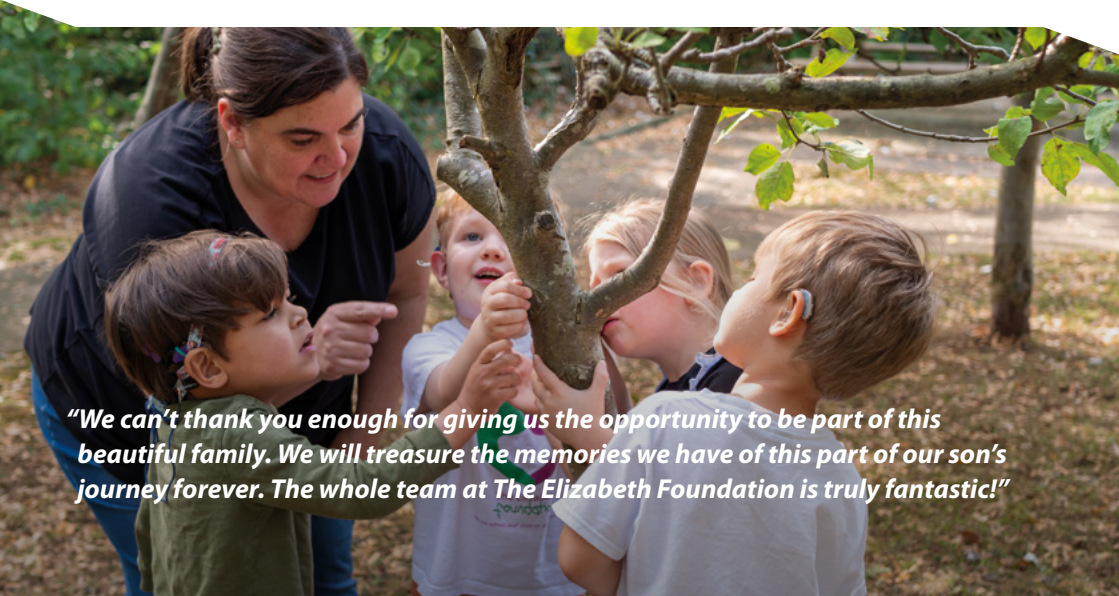


## About this Impact Report

This Impact Report highlights the services of the charity over the last academic year and the impact those services have on our beneficiaries. It covers our activities during the year from August 2022 to July 2023, encompassing the 2022-23 school year in our nursery.

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*"We can't thank you enough for giving us the opportunity to be part of this beautiful family. We will treasure the memories we have of this part of our son's journey forever. The whole team at The Elizabeth Foundation is truly fantastic!"*

# Message from our Chief Executive

As part of our commitment to families, we continuously reflect on our resources and services to ensure that we remain focused on equality, diversity and inclusion as we develop our programme. With this in mind, over the past year we have piloted new resources and programmes that support our beneficiaries in varying ways.

During 2022-23, we initiated a pilot programme to offer British Sign Language (BSL) Level 1 classes for parents whose children were enrolled in our programme. Although we do not teach sign language in our nursery sessions, around half of our children are learning BSL or Sign Supported English as part of their communication methodology. So, we wanted to support parents to be able to develop their sign language skills as well as use signing as a bridge to talking.

We also piloted a Listen! group for 2-year old children with mild / moderate and / or unilateral deafness, specifically focused on speech clarity. This group was run by one of our Specialist Speech and Language Therapists and received very positive feedback. We are looking at ways to incorporate this into our core services in the future.

And this year we launched “Foundations for Communication”, a new series of resources, available on our website, providing tips, advice and guidance that will enable parents and professionals to support deaf children in developing their listening, speech and language.

In this Impact Report you can read about current families attending our programme, as well as a graduate story, reflecting on their time here and looking to the future. You can also read on pages 13-14 about the ways we secure income so that we can continue to be a sustainable service. With no government funding, providing all of our services at no cost or minimal cost to families is a challenge, to say the least.

Thank you to each and every person that has allowed us to make this happen – our supporters, our donors, our volunteers, our staff, our Trustees, our families – because we cannot accomplish all that we need to do without working together with each and every one of you!

**Julie Hughes**  
Chief Executive



# Our core services 2022-23

79

**families** benefited from nursery sessions at our Family Centre, using all of their children's senses in fun and natural ways to help develop their speaking and listening skills. Our sessions begin right at the time of identification of deafness and provide support throughout the preschool years.

78

**baby sessions** helped 16 families at the time of, or soon after, the identification of their child's deafness. The sessions focused on support for parents as well as small, natural things to incorporate into everyday life to encourage their baby's communication development. Topics included the importance of visual cues, responding to cooing and babble, engaging in stimulating play, experiencing sound and keeping tiny hearing aids in, on and working.

111

**toddler sessions** supported 24 families to feel confident to support their child's developing communication skills. The toddlers enjoyed exploring their world, whilst also learning to sit and focus. Parents attended the sessions with their child, becoming confident with strategies, games and ideas to enhance communication and learning.

298

**preschool sessions** helped 38 children develop all areas of their communication and learning through the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Differentiated teaching strategies for deaf children empowered even profoundly deaf children to access sound, embrace hearing technologies, and develop strong spoken language and communication skills.

***"Thank-you a million times over – for not only being teachers, but friends; for your advice, your shelter, your comfort and for caring. We are going to miss you all so incredibly much, but you have given my daughter the best start in life!"***



290

**speech and language therapy sessions** supported children in our toddler and preschool programmes with one-to-one input for their communication development. With a mixture of assessment and therapy, these sessions helped to track progress, support development and contribute to each child's individual education programme.

35

**monthly Listen! group sessions** supported 19 children to improve their early listening and early communication skills. Each session provided interactive games and activities to encourage communication, language and listening as well as advice, guidance and information for parents. The sessions provided opportunities for families to share experiences and support each other. This included baby sessions, as well as our pilot programme for 2-year old children.

12

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

12

**families** participated in our pilot BSL Level 1 course. All the families benefited from the sessions and improved their signing skills to build their child's communication. Nine families also achieved the Signature accredited BSL Level 1 certification.

***"A huge thank-you for making a difference in our family's lives. You supported us from the very beginning. I remember, even now, the day we got the diagnosis and you were there for us to ensure that our daughter would have all the support she needs and that we as a family would have all the support that we would need. We will be forever grateful."***



# How we change lives

Each of the children in our preschool and toddler groups attends our service on a weekly basis during term-time, receiving tailored input in our specialist setting. They and their family also receive regular individual input from one of our Speech and Language Therapists to investigate and improve each child's individual listening, language and speech sound development.

53 children attended either our toddler or preschool groups during the 2022-23 academic year. This included 11 children who started sessions part-way through the academic year (either moving up from baby group or joining for the first time), and three who left us before the end of the year.

Just under 40% of the children had additional needs, other than deafness, which is higher than in recent years but in line with figures reported by the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS). 11% 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), which was the lowest level since we began recording these figures.

## 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 46 children, and of these children:

- 44 children (96%) had made progress with either receptive or expressive language, or both.
- 29 children (63%) 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.
- 15 children (33%) made progress with their language, but did so at a slower rate. This is to be expected for those children who are still building the prerequisite listening skills that are a necessary foundation for future language skills.

## Speech sound 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 foundation 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 36 of our preschool children this year at least twice, on either a formal assessment measure or an individualised therapy plan. Of these children:

- 20 children (55%) 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.
- 9 children (25%) were maintaining their clarity levels or beginning to show emerging progress, as gauged by informal assessment and observations – increasing the number of recognisable words they use to communicate.
- 2 children (6%) had not made progress, or percentage of error had increased (as measured either by formal assessment or observations). The reasons for these were felt to include ongoing specific speech sound difficulties, or a suspected drop in hearing levels.

## Relationships with peers

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 38 children using this measure at the start and end of the academic year. Of these children:

- 29 children (76%) had made measurable progress – these children made improvements in their ability to communicate with adults and peers, and form friendships within the nursery.
- 5 children (13%) achieved a score that was the same or very close to their previous score – indicating that they had maintained their skills.
- 4 children (11%) were showing an increase in difficulties with social communication. This could be due to becoming more reserved when moving to a new group (e.g. from toddlers to preschool) or to increased frustration around language, increased awareness of their own needs, or the impact of other factors socially or developmentally.

In our current cohort, many children and families have been affected by previous Covid-19 lockdowns, having had fewer opportunities to attend groups or other settings in their early years. 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.

## Starting school

In July 2023, 14 children left our services, ready to start school in the autumn:

- 11 children (79%) will be attending mainstream placements in local infant schools.
- 2 children (14%) will be going to schools with a language or hearing impairment resource base.
- 1 child will be attending a school for the deaf

All 14 of these children had an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) in place to ensure they would receive the appropriate support in school.

***“Thank-you so much for everything – your support, kindness, wisdom, fun – where would we be without you all? You have been our rock and we are so grateful.”***



# Ella's story

Ella was born in 2019 and after failing the newborn hearing screening we were told she was profoundly deaf. Luckily, we were immediately allocated a fantastic Teacher of the Deaf who told us about The Elizabeth Foundation. I was initially hesitant to drive down from London to Portsmouth every week, but after a phone chat with Julie I needed to go and see what it was all about.

We never looked back from our first session when Ella was seven weeks old. She got very little from her hearing aids but she loved baby group. She began to develop early listening skills despite probably not being able to hear anything. Lying on the big drum feeling the vibrations and sensing the wind chimes were some of Ella's favourite things to do and they were one of the few things that would stop her screeching. Thursdays swiftly became the highlight of our week.

During her first year, we went through the cochlear implant assessment. The scans revealed Ella had incomplete cochleae and thin hearing nerves. No one could tell us if implantation would be possible, let alone the outcome. The view was that she would probably only have access to environmental sound and would rely on lip reading and sign at best. Thanks, however, to an incredibly talented surgeon, just after her first birthday Ella received partial bilateral implants.

To start with, Ella hated her cochlear implants, pulled them off constantly and refused to wear them. Her behaviour indicated that she was becoming increasingly frustrated. Julie and Emma would reassure us that one day it would click into place and she would want to wear them, but it was hard to imagine if and when that day would ever come! A tip from Julie to get audiology to adjust a setting was the turning point. Ella started to accept them more and with this we saw daily increases in her understanding.

Ella moved up to Nicki's toddler class where sitting and listening was a challenge – to say the least! However, Nicki and Lily's unwavering patience meant Ella could learn in her own style, even if it was under the table. Slowly, as her understanding improved, so did her behaviour and ability to listen. We started to hear babble and a few incomprehensible words.

Before we knew it, Ella was ready to move up to Rachel's preschool class for two days a week, which is where her language finally took off. She adores going to 'Rachel's house', sits and listens to every word and loves to tell both Rachel and the other children what to do!

It is entirely thanks to the support she has received from The Elizabeth Foundation that Ella has defied the odds to have the listening and speaking skills she has today. Her life and ours have been transformed. We will all be sad when the day comes for Ella to leave to go to mainstream school, but she has been given the best start to her education that we could ask for.

## Ella's mother

***"It is entirely thanks to the support she has received from The Elizabeth Foundation that Ella has defied the odds to have the listening and speaking skills she has today."***





# Ben's story

My name is Ben. I am 19 years old. I have severe to profound hearing loss; I have a twin brother Oliver who has moderate to severe hearing loss. I also have a younger sister Emily who doesn't have hearing loss. I've been deaf since I was born, I had my hearing aids fitted in January 2004. I went to a mainstream nursery as well as going to The Elizabeth foundation.

The Elizabeth Foundation has helped me become the person I am today. I have a few memories of my time there, like meeting some Portsmouth football players. And Dave, the bus driver that used to pick us up and drop us back every day [Editor's note – this was our co-founder Dave Metherell MBE who was a volunteer minibus driver when building works meant families had to park off-site].

I started school in 2007. I went to a mainstream primary and secondary school. I had a Teacher of the Deaf who would regularly check-up on me and how I was doing. I also had extra support around the school if needed, which was a bonus. I liked PE at school but found Maths and English hard.

I played lots of football with local teams and even had the chance to play with the Southampton pan-disability team. We won the 2018 tournament organized by Manchester United Disability Supporters' Association (MUDSA), beating Brighton, Man Utd and Chelsea. I was also on the pathway to play for the deaf England team but that all came to a stop due to Covid-19.

I left secondary school during the Covid-19 lockdown year, which meant I couldn't sit my exams. I then went to college to do a sports course but due to lockdown and not being able to do the physical stuff alongside the theory I fell out of love with the course. The following year I started a plumbing course which was a more hands-on practical course which I instantly fell in love with. I have just started a level 3 plumbing course and am looking for an apprenticeship.

When I am not at college I work part-time and go to the gym. I have done many exciting things, for example I climbed Mount Snowdon in North Wales which was very beautiful. I have also been to many music festivals in the past year, the most recent one being in Europe which was my first time being outside of the country without my family.

The Elizabeth Foundation has also had a big impact on my family. My mum now works there as a Teaching Assistant alongside the teachers who taught me. It's nice to go back there now – I always feel incredibly welcome!

**Ben Hankin**

***“The Elizabeth Foundation has helped me become the person I am today.”***



# Reaching out

Through our outreach programmes, we support families living further afield who are not able to attend face-to-face sessions at our Family Centre on a regular basis.

## Let's Listen and Talk

Our online support and information programme Let's Listen and Talk [www.letslistenandtalk.org](http://www.letslistenandtalk.org) enables us to work in partnership with professional support networks across the UK. Let's Listen and Talk is a useful resource for professionals and guides families through the process of building their child's listening and spoken language skills. During 2022-23, we continued offering the Let's Listen and Talk programme free of charge, and the numbers enrolled grew steadily:

191

**new subscribers** joined the Let's Listen and Talk programme during the 12 months from August 2022 to July 2023.

1,173

**subscribers in total** were enrolled in the programme by July 2023 – 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.

We also made further improvements to the programme:

- With the input of our new Professional Lead, we increased our activities to engage with teams of professionals, to help them implement the programme with the families they support.
- We launched the "Learning through music – toddler songs" section in autumn 2022.

***"I found the course really useful, thank you. The videos were brilliant, and it is good to see things in action and to hear how other parents dealt with the emotional side of their babies being deaf. Your resource and information made me feel much better about things." Parent***

## Summer Programme

Our Summer Programme in July 2023 provided a week of intensive support for the whole family.

6

**families attended** our Summer Programme in July 2023. Their 6 deaf children focused on communication development in our specialist nursery, whilst the seven siblings were exploring the unique strengths and needs of brothers and sisters. The 13 parents and grandparents received advice, guidance and information from a range of experts, young deaf adults and parents of deaf children.

***"The Elizabeth Foundation Summer Programme has been one of the best things I've done for my deaf child ... and also for myself as a parent. Not only have I had a lovely time and learned so much, my daughter has had the opportunity to mix with other deaf children her age and enjoy a fun and engaging week. The pleasure on her face has been so lovely to see."***

# Working together

We feel passionate about partnerships because we know that we can make a more positive impact by working together with families, professionals and like-minded organisations who support deaf children. During 2022-23, as part of our partnered working, we:

- Continued supporting the Literacy and Deafness longitudinal research study with colleagues from University College London.
- Met with NDCS education advisors from across the country to share expertise and presented early years sessions at 4 NDCS events (3 for parents and 1 for professionals).
- Wrote articles for the CICS (Cochlear Implanted Children's Support Group) magazine, supporting families in the early years.
- Presented to Teachers of the Deaf at the BATOD North conference about our online services and partnered working.
- Held four professional days, sharing the work of the charity with other professionals and hearing about their work in local settings.
- Shared knowledge and expertise at Children's Hearing Support Working Group meetings, LINK meetings with teams from Surrey and University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service, cluster meetings held by Portsmouth City Council, and a meeting with audiology and local Teachers of the Deaf to discuss the support of mutual children.
- Attended sensory team meetings across the country to present on our outreach services.
- Presented to the third-year psychology students from the University of Portsmouth, to the audiology team at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust, to Portsmouth GPs, and to training Teachers of the Deaf from Manchester University.
- Supported placements for training Teachers of the Deaf and training Speech and Language Therapists, and hosted student placements for past Elizabeth Foundation students.
- Hosted staff from mainstream settings who were doing transition visits for children coming into their reception in September 2023.
- Supported the launch of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Appeal at Queen Alexandra Hospital, creating new links with this team.
- Continued to partner with the audiology and ENT departments at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and the University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service.





## Foundations for communication

“Foundations for communication” is a new series of resources from The Elizabeth Foundation providing tips, advice and guidance. Each article looks in detail at a specific topic and will enable parents and professionals to support deaf children in developing their listening, speech and language skills.

During 2022-23 we launched these new resources with a first article looking at how music and singing can help the listening and communication skills of deaf babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

We plan to release a new “Foundations for communication” article each quarter, on an ongoing basis.

## 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 2022-23\* – totalling £751,905

Contracts and fees	Legacies	Grants
<b>29%</b> £218,042	<b>26%</b> £196,564	<b>21%</b> £162,073
Donations and gifts	Fundraising events	Investments and interest
<b>12%</b> £87,131	<b>7%</b> £49,618	<b>4%</b> £31,997
Fees for use of charity property		
<b>1%</b> £6,480		

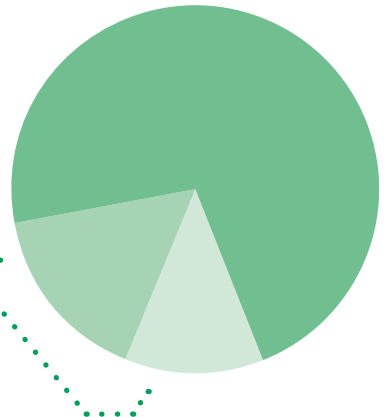
### How we spend your money\*

#### For every £1 donated:

**71p** goes directly to helping deaf babies and children learn to listen and speak .....

**17p** 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 2022-23.

# Fundraising highlights

Fundraising has been back in full swing this year, with all manner of wonderful events happening in aid of The Elizabeth Foundation. Here are some of our highlights.

## Events and challenges

Our Annual Golf Day and Dinner in June 2023 was a huge success, despite our golfers melting in the heat from the hottest June on record in the UK! The two-course dinner and cold drinks enjoyed at the end of the day were very well-earned and the auction of various sporting items and breaks-away contributed to the incredible £5,245 raised.

At our Summer Fayre at the start of July, hundreds of visitors enjoyed games, stalls and raffles, alongside a fire engine, character meet and greets, circus performers and a ukulele band, to raise a wonderful total of £4,054.

Some other fabulous fundraisers included:

- Past pupil Sam raised £564 by completing a fun-run and fundraising in celebration of graduating primary school.
- A team from ACP Freight Services tackled a 30km walk, raising £2,120.
- Past pupil Alex ran the Brighton Marathon and raised £475.
- Former volunteer Antonia took on the 42km London 10 Peaks trek to raise £472.

## Community groups and schools

We enjoyed getting out and about in the community this year, with presentations and visits to various groups, including the NHS Retirement Fellowship, Four Marks WI and Lymington Rotary Club. A definite highlight was when the 64th Portsmouth Scout Group invited us to run a session for their Beavers and Cubs all about deafness. The children were so eager to learn and a really wonderful audience!

## Gears for Ears

Our Summer Fayre in July 2023 was also the finish point for the first-ever Gears for Ears cycle challenge organised by a current pupil's parent. The two-day, 90-mile cycle ride was taken on by 18 supporters, who followed the 'Solent Six Ferries' route, from Portsmouth to Gosport, Hythe, Lymington, the Isle of Wight, across the island to the ferry back

across to Portsmouth, then via Southsea and Hayling Island back to our Family Centre in Cosham. Their arrival at the Summer Fayre was an emotional one, with rapturous applause all round and a cold beer (or two!) ready for our exhausted cyclists. Gears for Ears raised an astonishing grand total of £9,711.



# Trusts and companies

As we look back over the last academic year, it is truly joyous and humbling to consider what we have achieved through the generous giving of our supporters.

We have been able to refurbish our newborn screening and counselling rooms. We have been able to equip deaf children with the knowledge and skills necessary to use their hearing aids and cochlear implants, enabling them to access and comprehend sound. We have facilitated robust listening, language and early-learning abilities, and launched new BSL sessions for eager parents. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have made such a positive difference.

With demand for our services ever-increasing, charitable support continues to play a pivotal role in making our aspirations for deaf children and their families a reality. Together we can effect transformative change, so please know that your continued commitment and generosity is truly appreciated.

We would like to thank everyone who has given their time, resources and money – too many to mention them all, but including:

- Corporate supporters – Lightning Safety Systems, Red Hat, Zurich, Proagrica, Equans, SGN, Keys Trips and Events (see below), Solent Sky Services, and murder mystery company MurderedForMoney.
- Grant-making trusts – Ovingdean Hall Foundation (see below), Communication Consortium, The Mikado Trust, Brickability Foundation, Steel Charitable Trust, Tesco, Beatrice Laing, The Grand Order of Water Rats, Screwfix and Morrisons.

***“The Ovingdean Hall Foundation has been working with The Elizabeth Foundation for over a decade. Over the last few years, we have focused on Let’s Listen and Talk, the free online communication programme for deaf babies, toddlers and preschoolers. It has been incredible to see the development of this programme, which has now reached over 1,000 families and professionals across the country. It truly came into its own during the pandemic when it supported families isolated at home, and the programme continues to flourish today.*”**

***“Working with the team at The Elizabeth Foundation has always been a joy. We are delighted to be a supporter of The Elizabeth Foundation and we know that Let’s Listen and Talk will continue to benefit deaf children during the key early years of development.” Sarah Armstrong, CEO of The Ewing Foundation and Secretary of The Ovingdean Hall Foundation (OHF).*”**

## Keys Trips and Events

In April 2023, we hosted over 60 people for a tea and biscuit reception at our Family Centre before heading off on a trip arranged by Keys Trips and Events to tour the historic naval base on Portsmouth's Whale Island. A wonderful time was had by all, with the day raising £1,879.



# Future plans

Our senior management team keeps our progress against the five-year strategy under regular review. We are confident that we are on track, as evidenced by the quarterly updates against the current year's targets that are presented at each of our Board of Trustees' meetings.

Our plans for 2023-24 include:

- Maintaining and continuing to improve our Ofsted 'Outstanding' core early years services to support deaf children and their families.
- Trialling ways to evaluate our services and the impact we have to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of our work.
- 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.
- Creating new information resources and videos for our websites.
- Building new partnerships to provide wraparound 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.
- Ensuring the charity remains sustainable through continued development of our fundraising, professional and voluntary partnerships.

***"No words can really do justice to the huge difference The Elizabeth Foundation has made on our family. From baby group, to sessions on Zoom, back to toddler group, preschool, with fetes and Christmas parties in between – we have had the most amazing journey with you. Thank-you to everyone at the wonderful Elizabeth Foundation!"***



# Thank you!



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



The Elizabeth  
foundation



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

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***“Thank-you for all you do – you change  
lives for the better every day.”***