



 **Gympanzees**<sup>®</sup>  
a world of fun & fitness  
for all disabled children

# Impact Report 2022

Charity number 1189375

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# Welcome

Looking back at 2022, I am incredibly proud of our achievements. This was our first year doing Pop Up's again after Covid, and we have had our highest number of visitors to date.

Last year we were able to provide fun and fitness for disabled children again through the Roadshows, but these were just a drop in the ocean compared to the size and scale of the Pop Ups. Seeing the faces of the children and young people again experiencing a Pop Up and getting the health benefits they so desperately need always makes the hard work worthwhile. Thank you to SGS Pegasus School in Patchway for allowing us to use the school for the Pop Ups.

Alongside delivering two successful Pop Ups this year, we have expanded the team and are now a team of eight. We continue to gain knowledge and experience and advance ourselves through training. We have gained Disability Confident Level 2, and we now have a Mental Health First Aider and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion trainer. We have completed 80 hours of workplace disability training. We also continue to research, review changes and improve our language and communication strategies to ensure we are inclusive and accessible for all.

We've also had 162 volunteers across the year who selflessly gave up their time for Gympanzees and 25 temporary staff at the Pop Ups, without whom Gympanzees could not run.

As you'll see in this report, our Lending Library and Online Resources Hub have been as busy as ever - ensuring families are still accessing the benefits of Gympanzees in between Pop Ups.

I've also been absolutely overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness we've seen this year from those who support us. From trust and foundations, to the companies that support us through charity of the year to individual fundraisers taking on all sorts of wacky and wonderful challenges. As always, Bristol has proved itself to be a city full of extraordinary people willing to go the extra mile for a cause they believe in. It's been utterly heartwarming to see so many get behind our appeal for a permanent home, and we are so grateful for the support we've received from Bristol and beyond.

It is an incredibly exciting time for us and we can't wait to see what 2023 brings, but before then, please read this report and see the impact we've had first-hand.

Thank you!

Stephanie Wheen, CEO and Founder of Gympanzees

Steph



# Our Year In Numbers

Through the door

Over **7,000** visitors across 36 days

Digital Community

**136,000** views of our online resources



Delivered to their door

**1,778** lending library loans

**604** registered users



Truly Inclusive

We have supported over **100** different disabilities



**29%** of our visitors use a wheelchair





Warning

# The Problem



- **66,000** children and young people (0-25yrs) with disabilities within an hour of Bristol.
- **77%** of parents have been unable to access youth clubs, playgroups and other local activities for their disabled son or daughter or haven't even tried. (Scope 2014)
- **92%** of parents of children with complex needs felt that their child did not have the same opportunities to play as their non-disabled peers. (Case for Play, Sense, 2016)
- **Contact a Family, 2011, found:**
  - **65%** of parents feel isolated frequently or all the time.
  - **72%** of families experience mental ill health such as anxiety, depression or breakdown due to isolation.
  - Disabled children are twice as likely as non-disabled children to be lonely (**72% vs 36%**). They are more likely to feel they have no one to talk to, feel left out, and to feel alone. (Activity Alliance 2020)

At Pop Up 5 (Summer 2022) we found:

- **91%** of parents feel isolated some or a lot of the time.
- **78%** of parents experience mental ill health some or a lot of the time.





## Our Mission

To enable every child and young person with a disability from 0-25 years old to access regular play, exercise and friendship, to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing, and to take their families out of isolation.

## Our Vision

The Gympanzees vision is to build the UK's first, fully accessible and inclusive, exercise and play facility which will cater for the play, exercise and social needs of children and young people aged 0-25, with any ability or disability, in and around Bristol.

## What we offer now

- Pop Ups twice a year offering a smaller version of the permanent Gympanzees facility.
- A Lending Library with therapy, gym and sensory equipment, and online resources throughout the year.



# Pop Ups 2022



## What is a Pop Up?

The Pop Ups are smaller versions of our plans for the main centre. During the Easter and Summer holidays we take over an entire school and fill it with 3 truck loads of equipment. The school is set up with over 10 interactive rooms and spaces full of exercise and sensory equipment designed to get children and young people with disabilities active and exploring in a safe and fully-accessible environment.

There is a specialised gym, trampoline room, a calm and an interactive sensory room, a music room, soft play, indoor and outdoor playgrounds as well as a hangout room for older children. We also have rooms to rent for therapists, exercise studios for massage, disabled dance, or Pilates etc and an all-important café.

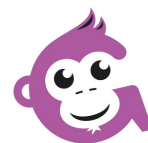




The Pop Ups are fully inclusive with changing places, hoists in every room and special attention is paid to the sensory environment. We run different session types – based on the child’s physical and sensory abilities so that visitors can choose the environment which suits their needs. Families are free to spend as much or as little time as they want in each space and disability-trained staff are on hand to help with hoisting, advise on equipment use, and to keep everyone safe and happy.



## Who were our visitors?



### Type of Disability

We welcome any child with any disability. We are equally equipped for children with severe physical and learning disabilities who are wheelchair users and fully dependent for their care needs through to independent children and young people with ADHD or autism. Many of our visitors have more than one disability or difficulty. Autism, for example can have a mix of sensory, behavioural, learning, or social and communication disabilities. Therefore the following list adds to more than 100%.



<b>Behaviours that challenge</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Physical Disabilities</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Sensory Needs</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Social and Communication Difficulties</b>	<b>58%</b>

## Wheelchair/ mobility buggy users

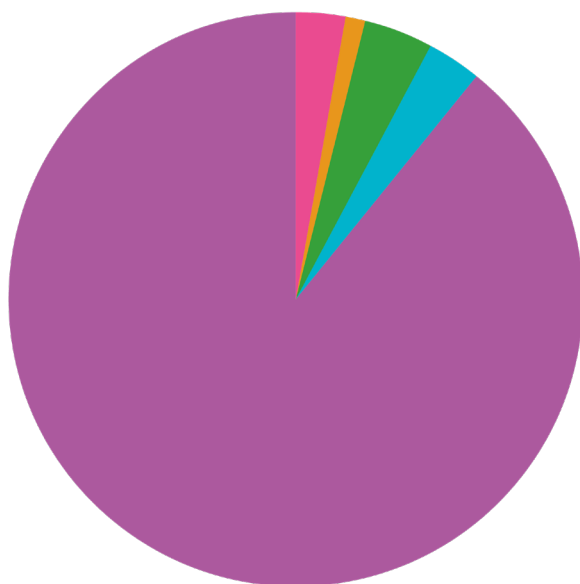
29% of our visitors use a wheelchair. These children and their families can have the most significant physical barriers to accessing leisure. Toileting needs, hoisting, parking, and getting in and out of equipment and play areas are all barriers so it is reassuring to have this high number attend our Pop Up from this group.



“Thank you so much all of you for creating such an invaluable play space. It is utterly transforming of school holidays, having a place to take both children, which is warmly welcoming, accessible, and REALLY GOOD FUN for both of them! So good to be able to get out, meet other families and get F exercising and stimulated, with T challenging himself and loving it.”

## Ethnicities

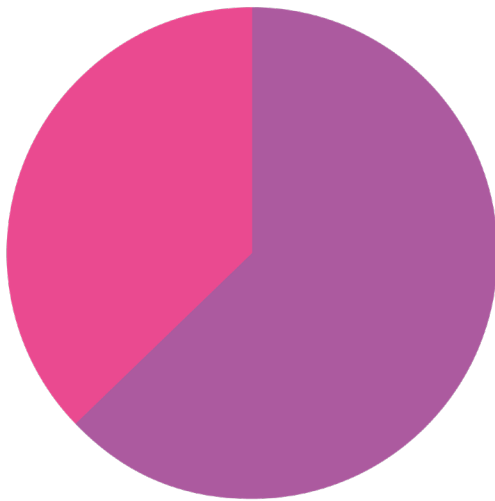
In 2022, 89% of our visitors identified as white, whilst 11% identified as Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, part of Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups or other race. We are currently running a project to understand the reasons for this discrepancy and to put a plan in place to welcome a more diverse population.



<b>Asian</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Black or African American</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Other Race</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>89%</b>

## Gender

There is emerging research regarding the link between gender dysphoria and autism, with some researchers stating that 20% will experience gender dysphoria compared to 1% of the non-autistic population. We, therefore, were expecting a higher % of visitors who did not identify as male or female. However, as 77% of our visitors are between 0-11 years old, this may not have come up yet. We are continuing to access training and plan how to make everyone welcome.



**Male** 63%

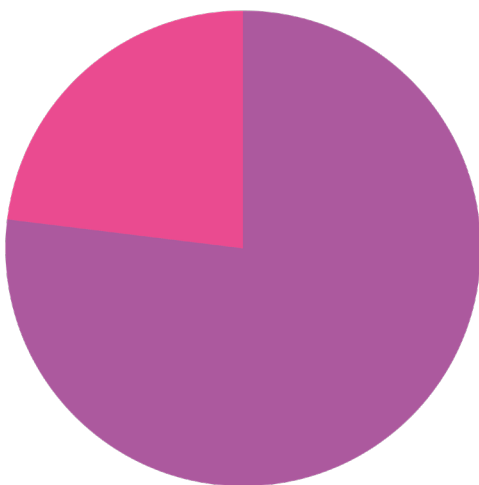
**Female** 37%

**Other** 0%

7 People identified as Non Binary.

## Age

We have always had more younger visitors than older visitors. This is expected as our equipment is all portable at the Pop Ups so much of it isn't suitable for older children and young adults. This year we introduced a new room called the 'hangout' for older visitors and have adapted our marketing to appeal to older audiences specifically. You can read more about this in 'Research' on p22.



**Age 0-11** 77%

**Age 11-25** 23%



# How many visited?



## 2022 Bookings

	EASTER POP UP (12 Days)	SUMMER POP UP (24 Days)	
No of children bookings	1137	2217	Total: 3354
Bookings per day	95	90.5	Average: 93

**7379**  
visitors in total

(based on a ratio of 1 adult to 1 child)

**14,000**  
visitors since the first Pop Up  
in 2018

(based on a ratio of 1 adult to 1 child)



For every **2.6 disabled people** who came to the Pop Up **1 non disabled** sibling attended.

Approx **1/3 of people** who visited us had **never been to a Pop Up before**

# Groups



We rent out the entire centre to different disability groups. They can then bring their members to enjoy the centre together. When we open our permanent Gympanzees centre, we expect approximately half of our bookings to be from disability and council groups. We are currently 53% booked in our first year of opening.

48% of 2022 bookings were from Groups.



“We had a fantastic time today with Little Treasures at Gympanzees. It was fantastic to see my son being himself, surrounded by the Gympanzees team and other SEN parents who just understood that he didn't want to say hello back. All of his sensory needs were met - sensory room to calm down in, trampolines for big body movements, drum kit (his favourite!) And music room to do some experimenting.”

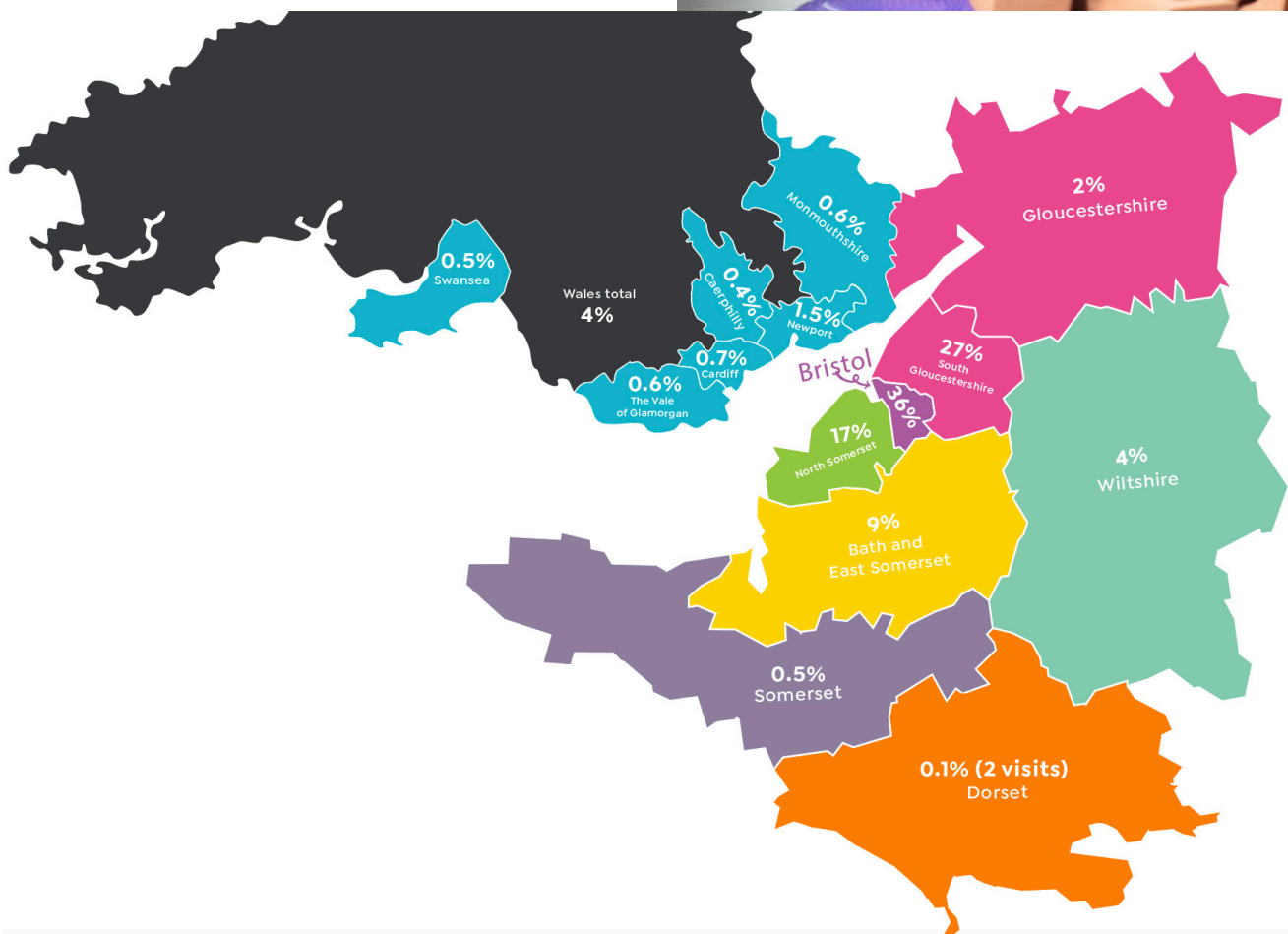


## Travel

Shortest time travelled:  
**4 minutes**

Longest time travelled:  
**6-hour round trip**

Average time travelled:  
**33 minutes**



For the Summer Pop Up we were able to secure funding from Mother's Union to pay towards the cost of taxis for those where travel is a barrier to using the Pop Up. In the summer we used taxis and volunteers to support this. The use of volunteers meant we could stretch the funding further and this enabled us to support more families.

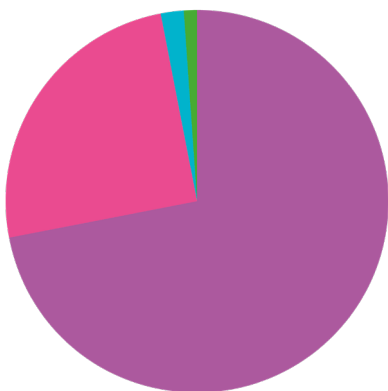
# Cost



At Easter we charged £8 full price for 1.5 or 2 hours and £4 concession for those on benefits (except disability benefit). For the Summer Pop Up we charged £9 full price for 1.5 or 2 hours and £4.50 concession to match the rise in inflation.

We introduced a full fee waiver this year. This meant that those who faced financial barriers could still use Gympanzees. This is in line with our EDI strategy.

We offered voucher codes to staff and identified champions within the SEND community who could share these codes with their contacts. The vouchers were aimed at people who had never been before, removing the barrier of cost and broadening our audience.



<b>Full price ticket</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Low income concessions</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Free Tickets</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Voucher Code</b>	<b>1%</b>



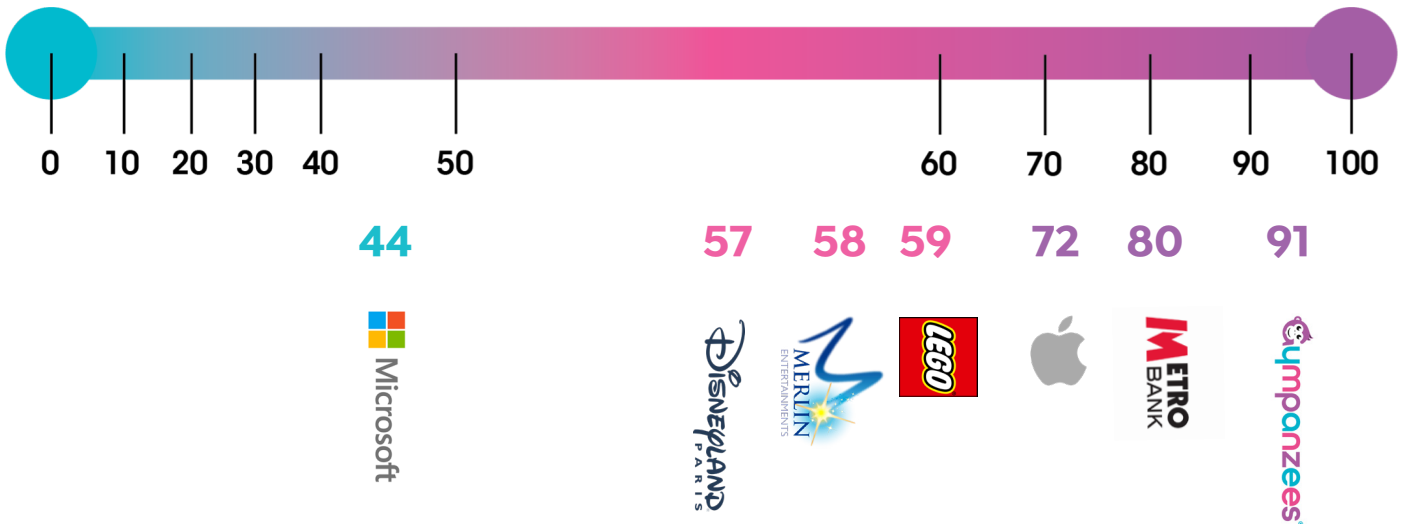
“The price was very reasonable for the things there were to do. The price had made me assume that there wouldn’t be that much equipment - I hadn’t expected this much!”

# Feedback



Net Promotor Score (NPS) –

Scores between 0 to 30 are typically good, but there's room for improvement. Scores of 30-70 are classified as great and it typically means you have a lot of happy customers. If your NPS is 70 or higher –you are doing an excellent job with a high number of promoters in your customer base.



We ask families to fill out a feedback form after their visit, to gather feedback on the experience for the child, parent, and siblings. We are a learning organisation and want to continue improving and refining our services through feedback.

**100%** of visitors said that Gympanzees offers unique facilities for them and their child/children.





# Feedback



## Parents

**91%** of parents/carers reported they felt socially isolated some or all of the time.

**78%** of parents or carers reported they have experienced mental ill health some or all of the time.

**87%** of parents/carers were able to talk to other parents at the Pop Ups.

**99.5%** of parents/carers felt supported during their visit by staff at the Pop Up.



## Children and Siblings

**100%** of children/young people said they enjoyed coming to Gympanzees.

**75%** of children/young people said they got to meet new friends - *most of those that didn't report this was due to their child's disability or not wanting to meet new people.*

**96%** of siblings were able to play with their sibling/friend.

**72%** of siblings said they got to meet new friends.

## What Parents Said...



“This is our 3rd visit and we wished we could’ve come more. Each time we have accessed all areas but in varying ways. By the third visit my daughter knew where she was going and was excited for the 45 min drive. It was absolutely worth the journey!”

“It’s wonderful - thank you for giving us an inclusive and safe place to come where I can relax and enjoyed myself as much as the boys do. That is a form of respite in itself”

“Thank you so much. Only place my son can run free, be safe and not judged”

“Such a vast variety of rooms and equipment to suit different moods. On our first visit at this pop up my son was active and playful and on our second visit he was more drawn to sensory and chilled mode. Perfect for all moods”

“Exceeded expectations. Brought 2 autistic children and was a bit worried it may be a bit clinical but really was ideal for them both who have very different sensory needs”



## Health Outcomes...



The Gympanzees Pop Ups are designed to provide exercise and/or a varied sensory experience while providing play and fun for the visitors, so they improve their health and development without having to pay for therapy.

This exercise will lead to reduced pain experienced by those with physical disabilities, potential increased life expectancy in those with severe physical disabilities, reduced obesity throughout the community and improved gross and fine motor skills leading to more functional independence. The varied sensory experience will lead to improved behaviour including cognition and attention for those with sensory processing difficulties and autism.

### Pop Up 1sts 2022

- A 28-year-old bounced for the first time.
- An 8-year-old wheelchair user walked 3km in our equipment.
- An 18-year-old doubled the time they could spend on a wheelchair cross trainer.
- A child took their headphones off in public for the first time in 6 months.
- 12-year-old boy never sleeps, slept for 12 hours after his visit to Gympanzees.



# Staff and Volunteers



**8**

## **Permanent Staff**

(Across Development, Service Delivery,  
Marketing and Fundraising)

**25**

## **Temporary Staff**

(For the Easter and Summer Pop Ups)

**162**

## **Volunteers**

(For the Easter and Summer Pop Ups and  
Lending Library)



# Our Home

Gympanzees 'Our Home' was created so families could access Gympanzees at home. This was originally a response to families being stuck at home during Covid, however the service proved popular and has continued since the pandemic.

Our Home includes an equipment lending service called the 'Lending Library' where families can borrow equipment from Gympanzees for free, a series of webinars with different therapy topics and an online resources hub, full of hints and tips for getting children with disabilities active at home.

## Webinars



We've had **over 3,000 views of our webinars** in 2022.

## Online Resources Hub

We've had over **136,000 views of our online resources hub** in 2022.



# The Lending Library...



**1778** Loans

**300** New members

**604** Total of members

**26** schools/groups

We have started to broaden our reach, lending to schools, groups, and professionals, and have had great feedback. This not only give us chance to market to the children at the school but supports the schools to provide sensory integration and work out which items to spend their limited funding on to best support their children.

“When you have a child, who doesn’t like leaving the house, and is constantly sensory seeking, it is so useful to be able to offer new sensory interventions and toys to keep that child engaged.

Being able to swap items every two weeks gives us something to look forward to on a Wednesday.”



# Research

Research is a big part of what we do at Gympanzees. Without research, we would not be able to co-produce with families on the projects we run and create the best service we can.



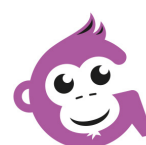
This year we have focused on Ethnicity, Diversity and Inclusion.

At the beginning of the year, we produced a report on our users aged 11+. After this report, we introduced a room catering for this age only, called the 'hangout space' which included table tennis, table football, board and cards games, giant games (Jenga, bowls, boccia, connect four) and a TV and gaming corner.

We also discovered we needed to change our marketing to be more age-appropriate when relevant and started up our youth council and aim to set up an adult council in the future.

## We continue to

- Survey all Pop Up visitors
- On booking, ask questions related to the families' bookings
- Interviews with children and families at the Pop Up
- Send out feedback forms for every Lending Library loan
- We ask the schools and professionals to feedback



# Fundraising Highlights



## Gympanzees Wine Night

We kicked off the year with an event at Averys Wine Cellars. It was a great opportunity for us to get key supporters in the room and update them on Project Home and the year to come.

## The first-ever Gympanzees Golf Day!

This event allowed supporters new and old to step up to the tee for Gympanzees. The day was sponsored by BOM IT solutions and will now become an annual fundraising event.



## Gympanzees Annual 3 Peaks Challenge

We had 33 walkers take on the 3 Peaks Challenge for Gympanzees this year! They battled the elements, sore legs and lack of sleep but they still smiled their way across the finish line and raised over £20,000!



## Gympanzees Ball

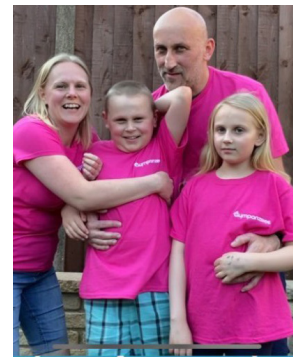
An evening of glitz, glamour and fundraising! Thanks to the incredible amount of generosity in the room we took over £87,000 on the night!





# Public Fundraising

Alongside our events we have seen some incredible fundraising efforts from the public, our charity of the year supporters and the families that use us. One little girl raised £550 after cutting off her hair and doing car boot sales with her family. Another little girl did a sponsored silence to raise money for us and highlight what life is like for her non-verbal brother. We've seen some amazing examples of kindness and giving this year!



# Gympanzees Receives Royal Recognition



This Summer, Gympanzees were presented with the UK's highest business accolade for enterprise innovation for our inclusive Pop Up play and exercise facilities. Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Bristol, Peaches Golding, represented the Queen at Gympanzees Pop Up in Bristol to present the Queen's Award for Enterprise Crystal. This award celebrates our success in supporting children and young people with disabilities and our exciting plans to build a permanent state-of-the-art, fully inclusive leisure facility.

On receiving the award Gympanzees CEO and Founder Stephanie When said

“I am absolutely thrilled and honoured that we have received this incredible award. I'm so happy for all our staff, volunteers, and plethora of other supporters that their hard work and pure dedication has been recognised like this.”



# A's Story

**A and his family have been visiting Gympanzees for years. A is six-years-old and has a neurological condition called Jouberts Syndrome which has affected some of his organs and his ability to swallow and talk. We spoke to his mum, Asia....**

A is blind and non-verbal but communicates through smiles and vocals such as crying and laughing, and we can see just how much he loved visiting Gympanzees! He loves jumping on the trampoline, going on the swings, and using the Innowalks.

A is a great music lover and found a passion for the drums this summer at Gympanzees. He was rocking out, dancing and hitting the drums with the support of holding the drumsticks and hitting the bases.

My son prefers the butterfly sessions as it's a little quieter and less busy. He can become overstimulated by too much background noise, so it's great we get the chance to choose a type of session that fits our family's needs.

Asia, A's mother, wrote on his behalf,

*"I met someone like me today, someone with the rare neurological condition I have. I met a boy who will now be my friend for life. I've never met anyone like me before, there is only 47 of us in the UK. Someone who has lived through life like me. He came up from a different city from me. Thanks to Gympanzees for this opportunity and for creating an amazing place which brings children with additional needs together, where we can create precious moments. Never did I think I'd manage to meet someone with the same condition, but today I did, and it was wonderful. We played together in our own separate ways, but we were together."*



# Stephanie's Story

**Stephanie, a parent from Bristol, struggled to find places she could take her two daughters with additional needs. Until they decided to give Gympanzees a go!**

We had initially heard about Gympanzees through various friends and other mums over the past few years but never thought about going as we weren't sure whether the girls would enjoy it. Both girls have additional needs but are at opposite ends of the scale sometimes, we've struggled to find something that can suit them both equally.

The girls absolutely loved it, they were so relaxed from the minute they walked in. Usually, we end up having to reassure S all the way through a new environment and O we normally have to encourage

her in social situations/environments but it seemed like they felt right at home.

As soon as S noticed the trampoline and the bouncing swings she was in her version of heaven. O is a little actress in the making and soon found the dressing up clothes and enjoyed playing different characters whilst riding on the cars and making lots of noise in the music room.

I wish we'd taken the plunge earlier when we were first told about Gympanzees a few years ago, as we could have had a lot more fun sessions there! I hope things get into motion for a permanent home for Gympanzees soon, as we would definitely be coming a lot!



# A special thanks to...

Thank you to the following organisations for generously lending Gympanzees their equipment this year.



rugged. interactive



# Funders 2022

Without the support of the following list of trusts and foundations, corporate supporters and groups we would not have been able to provide the health benefits and impacts highlighted in this report for children and young people with disabilities and their families.

## Trusts and Foundations

Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust  
The Archer Trust  
Arnold Clark Community Foundation  
Batchworth Trust  
Blevins Franks Charitable Foundation  
Bristol City Council Youth Sector Support Fund - Quartet Foundation  
Bristol One City - Quartet Foundation  
Dame Violet Wills Charitable Trust  
Denman Charitable Trust  
Disability Rights UK  
Douglas Arter Foundation  
Enterprise Holdings Foundation  
Freemasons Gloucester  
Greenhall Foundation  
Herefordshire Community Foundation  
Hospital Saturday Fund  
Jack Lane Charitable Trust  
John James Bristol Foundation  
Langtree Trust  
Leonard Laity Stoate Charitable Trust  
Mothers Union  
Paradigm Norton Trust  
Persula Foundation  
Portishead Nautical Trust  
The Pople Charitable Trust  
Postcode Lottery Community Trust  
Renishaw Charities Committee  
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust  
The Society of Merchant Venturers  
Souter Charitable Trust  
Sported  
St James's Place  
Sunrise Foundation  
Toy Trust  
Van Neste Foundation  
Warburtons Community Awards

## Corporate

All About the Cooks  
Archus  
Ashton Gate Stadium  
Ashville Group  
Averys Wine Merchants  
Bank of Ireland UK  
Blow Salon  
BOM IT Solutions  
Bowmore Wealth Group  
Bristol City Football Club  
The Bristol Golf Club  
Bristol Private Equity Club  
Brunel insurance  
Burgess Salmon  
Conscious Solutions  
Co-op  
Direct Wines  
Enterprise Hire  
Fosters Events  
Guildhall Chambers  
Hollis Morgan  
Hydrock  
Irwin Mitchell  
JLL  
LGT Wealth Management  
Limbs & Things  
Mode Consult  
Natwest  
Ndemic Creations  
Origin Workspace  
Osborne Clarke  
SCC  
Soccer Shooters  
Sovereign Housing  
SR2  
Team Refrigeration and  
The Space Program

## Groups

Brislington & St Anne's Conservative Club  
Bristol City Robins Foundation - Sports Business and Entrepreneurship Students  
Bristol Morris Minor Owners Club  
Exultate Singers  
The Grassy Knoll Ukulele Ensemble  
Last Friday Ride

**And a heartfelt thank you to all our individual donors, friends and fundraisers who give so generously.**





Charity number 1189375

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