Chattertots

Helping children with Down's Syndrome Find their voice

Annual Report and Accounts 2025

For the year of 1 January to 31 December 2025

Registered Charity 1198362

Chattertots in numbers: 2025

Our impact in 2025

Families supported across Berkshire

35

Growing from just 3 families in 2015

Children reached through our services

7
Pre-school speech therapy
weekly, face-to-face
Woodley, Reading

17
School-aged speech therapy
biweekly, face-to-face
Woodley, Reading

15
Educational consultancy
schools visited
across Berkshire

10
Summer camp
5 days of intensive creative therapy
Bracknell

Go to School boxes
4
~£400 of resources each

Operating since
2015

Registered charity
2022

2025 finances

Total income
£54,647
grants, donations & contributions

Total expenditure
£51,980
delivering our full programme

Reserves held
£34,434
total

£30,149 unrestricted
£4,285 restricted

6+ months of operating costs

Introduction from the Trustees

The potential of children with Down Syndrome has never been greater. With the right support from the earliest years, these remarkable young people are thriving in mainstream schools across Berkshire, forming lasting friendships, developing independence, and building foundations for fulfilling careers. Such outcomes would have been unimaginable just a generation ago.

Whilst local authorities are expected to provide such essential support services, the reality is that provision often falls short. Some children receive no specialist therapy at all, and many schools lack staff with experience in the specific learning profile of children with Down Syndrome.

Chattertots fills this crucial gap in provision across Berkshire. Since our founding in 2015 and formal registration as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2022, we have grown from supporting three families to thirty-five. Each family represents a child whose communication skills, confidence, and life opportunities have been transformed through early intervention and ongoing support.

We have continued to grow our services in response to the needs of families across Berkshire, to make our governance more robust, and taken meaningful steps to secure the charity's long-term future. Above all, we have stayed focused on what matters most - supporting children to find their voice, and standing alongside the families who champion them every day. This report reflects on our achievements, a year that saw us expand our services, strengthen our organisation, and deepen our impact across the communities we serve.

2025 has been a year of real momentum for us. In 2024, we had taken the important step of appointing Clare McIntosh (our founder) as our part-time Charity Manager and CEO, providing dedicated professional leadership to complement the passion and commitment of our trustee board. In 2025, we saw fundraising income grow and provision improved as a result of this change.

"Chattertots are not just a charity to us. They are part of our family's story. They have been consistent, expert and deeply caring - and every service they have provided has made a real difference to our daughter's life and to ours. We are so proud that our daughter is looked after by Chattertots, and we are so grateful that this charity exists right here in Berkshire, for families like ours." A family in Arborfield

Our Year in 2025

Pre-School Speech and Language Therapy

Our cornerstone service continued to provide weekly, face-to-face speech and language therapy for seven pre-school children at Woodley Baptist Church in Reading. Sessions were delivered by Priscilla and Libby from Symbol UK, our partner with deep expertise in the learning profile of children with Down Syndrome.

Each child is assessed on joining, placed in a small peer group matched by ability and need, and given individual termly targets across speech sounds, Makaton signing, vocabulary, pre-literacy skills, and social communication. Notes are taken at every session; parents are actively involved and, at the end of each term, the therapist reports on progress against each target.

"The consistent speech and language practice, input from a speech therapist who is specially trained in the learning profile of DS, ideas for things to practise at home, opportunities for socialisation and support from families who have found themselves in a similar situation has been invaluable." A parent in Caversham

The results in 2025 continued to exceed expectations. Every child attending made progress. In every case, that progress went beyond what the therapist or the parents had initially hoped for.

The relocation of sessions from Windsor to Woodley in 2024 has proven a wise decision. The central Berkshire location serves our Reading, Wokingham and surrounding families well, and feedback from parents about the venue and accessibility has remained positive.

Go to School' Resource Boxes

Starting school is one of the most significant transitions a child with Down Syndrome - and their family - will face.

“For the last four years, not only have I had the privilege of being her mum, I've also been her advocate, interpreter, safe person, and at times, her voice. In a few short weeks, I will have to put my trust and faith into her school." A parent in Wokingham.

In 2025, we supported this transition by providing four “Go to School” resource boxes to children starting primary school across Berkshire, each valued at approximately £400.

Each box is carefully curated to include visual timetables, phonics resources, fine motor activities, sensory items, communication aids, and transition support materials. These resources are selected in line with current evidence on effective strategies to support children with Down Syndrome in mainstream educational settings.

“When our daughter started school, Chattertots made sure she didn’t arrive empty-handed. They gave us a ‘Go to School’ box, packed with specialist resources carefully chosen to help children with Down Syndrome settle and thrive in a mainstream setting. It was a thoughtful, practical gift that made a real difference to those early weeks.” A family in Wokingham

In 2024, families introduced these resources to schools themselves. In 2025, we enhanced this approach by arranging for Clare to deliver each box directly to the school. These visits provided an opportunity to build relationships with teaching staff, demonstrate how to use the materials effectively, and support greater understanding of the needs of children with Down Syndrome.

Early feedback from both families and schools has been highly positive, with schools reporting increased confidence in supporting pupils and families valuing the strengthened communication and collaboration.

Educational Consultancy for schools

Letting go at the school gate represents a significant step for families, and parents often worry about whether their children are receiving the right support. To address this, we engaged Inclusively Down, an educational consultancy, to ensure that children receive high-quality, inclusive education.

The consultant provides specialist expertise in supporting children with Down Syndrome and works with schools, settings, and families to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create effective learning environments. Their support includes individualised learning plans, staff training, bridging home and school approaches, and monitoring progress to ensure interventions are evidence-based and impactful. This role strengthens both teaching practice and family engagement, ensuring that every child's learning needs are met.

Inclusively Down provided bi-annual specialist consultancy visits to schools across Berkshire for 15 children. These visits offered teachers and teaching assistants practical, tailored guidance on strategies that help children access the curriculum, manage transitions, and develop independence.

"The consultant's visit changed everything. Their expert guidance helped the school understand how to include our son effectively in classroom learning. Seeing him thrive alongside his peers and come home happy from school has been wonderful." A family in Windsor

Reports Funding

We continued to part-fund specialist assessments and reports for families navigating the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process across Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The EHCP process can be challenging, and having expert evidence on their side makes a real difference to families seeking the right support for their children. These reports can be particularly impactful in tribunals or other disputes, providing authoritative guidance that strengthens families' cases and ensures that children receive the support they need.

School-Aged Speech and Language Therapy

For years, parents had told us that the move to school felt like falling off a cliff – NHS provision did not materialise, schools were uncertain, and children who had made such progress in their early years began to plateau. Parents felt alone.

Building on the strong interest observed in 2024, we launched face-to-face Saturday sessions in Woodley to expand access to specialist therapy for our children. These sessions focused on supporting children with speech challenges, improving communication skills, building confidence, and encouraging greater participation in school and everyday life. Feedback from families and observed progress highlighted meaningful improvements in children's communication and engagement. The sessions ran successfully until November, when our therapist, Beth, began her maternity leave. Despite extensive efforts, we were unable to recruit a suitably qualified replacement willing to work Saturdays.

Rather than compromise on quality, we paused and reviewed. Working with Libby from Symbol UK, we began planning a new weekly virtual model – one that removes the geographic barriers that have always limited who can access support, and that we believe will serve our families even better. We will launch these in February 2026, and the excitement among our families is palpable.

Summer Camp

Our week-long summer camp, delivered by Make/Sense Theatre, was one of the highlights of the Chattertots year. Ten children from across Berkshire came together for five days of intensive, creative, and therapeutic activities designed to support communication, social interaction, confidence, and sensory needs.

Throughout the week, children participated in a range of activities, including drama, storytelling, sensory play, and group problem-solving exercises. These sessions were carefully structured to address individual sensory profiles, encourage peer interaction, develop vocabulary, and enhance self-expression in a safe, supportive environment.

The camp produced remarkable outcomes: children demonstrated improved vocabulary, stronger social skills, greater self-expression, increased confidence, and better regulation of sensory experiences. Parents reported that the benefits extended well beyond the week, positively influencing classroom engagement and participation in everyday activities throughout the autumn term.

We were delighted that Bracknell MP Peter Swallow joined us for the end-of-week celebration, recognising the achievements of our children and families. The camp not only offered intensive therapeutic support tailored to each child's sensory and developmental needs but also created opportunities for children to form friendships, for families to connect, and for professionals to observe and share strategies to implement in schools and at home.

Building Community and Connection

Chattertots continues to provide a strong and supportive community for families. Throughout 2025, we delivered a programme of regular social opportunities, including monthly sessions at Thames Valley Adventure Playground (TVAP) in Taplow. This safe and inclusive environment enables children to play freely, build confidence, and develop meaningful friendships.

In addition to these regular sessions, we marked key moments in the year with special events. World Down Syndrome Day was celebrated with entertainment from Fred in the Shed, bringing laughter and shared joy to families. Our annual Christmas party, themed around Frozen, featured entertainment from Princess Parties, creating a magical and inclusive celebration for all.

These gatherings play a vital role in reducing isolation and strengthening connections. For many families, raising a child with Down Syndrome can feel isolating. Opportunities to meet others who share similar experiences, who understand the challenges, celebrate the milestones, and offer mutual support, are invaluable.

We are proud to create and sustain a space where families feel understood, connected, and supported.

Fundraising and Community Support

In 2025, we were delighted to receive £54,647 in donations and contributions, reflecting the continued generosity of our community and supporters.

A significant development this year was securing funding from local councils and community-based charitable organisations. We are grateful to Woodley Town Council (£3,000), Poor's Land Woodley (£500) and TK Maxx and Homesense Foundation (£500) for their valued support.

Community fundraising also played an important role. Fifield Fun Day raised an impressive £3,500, demonstrating the strength of local engagement and commitment to the children and families we support.

We were particularly fortunate to benefit from People's Postcode Lottery, with one of the postcodes where we deliver our pre-school Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) provision selected as a "Millionaire Street," resulting in a £10,000 donation.

We also received valued support from local businesses, including The Co-operative Bank (£1,000) and Lapland UK, via Berkshire Community Foundation (£500 towards our Christmas party). In addition, Berkshire Community Foundation awarded a further grant towards our core costs. We are also grateful for funding received from Cumber Family Trust, The Bailey Thomas Charitable Fund, and Frenkel Topping.

For the first time, we participated in Parallel Windsor, the UK's national celebration of disability inclusion held in Windsor Great Park. Two families took part in sponsored events, raising £1,343 for Chattertots. This inspiring event reflects the same values of inclusion and community that underpin our work.

We were also honoured to be selected as the Charity of the Year by Unicorn Club Wokingham. Their support included hosting an enjoyable quiz night in November 2025 in aid of Chattertots.

We extend our sincere thanks to every donor, grant-maker, community fundraiser, and supporter who made our work in 2025 possible.

"I would be completely lost without this group. Without doubt, my child would not have made the progress she has without Chattertots." A family from Reading.

Governance

Chattertots is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), governed by a board of trustees, all of whom are parents of children with Down Syndrome. This lived experience is central to our approach, ensuring that our work remains grounded in the real needs of the families we support.

The Board meets quarterly to review progress, make key decisions, and ensure the organisation remains accountable to families across Berkshire, as well as to its responsibilities as a registered charity.

During 2025, there were several changes to the Board. We said a warm farewell to Leiah Norcott, who stepped down in March after a decade of dedicated service. We also extend our thanks to Mark Murphy, who served as Treasurer and Trustee before stepping down at the end of the year.

We were pleased to welcome Patrick Robinson as Treasurer in September, and to see David Jones take on the role of Chair.

Management

Clare McIntosh acts as our Charity Manager and has a wide range of responsibilities. She keeps our day-to-day administration running smoothly: managing family membership and enquiries, coordinating with our therapy and education partners, maintaining our policy framework, and providing governance support to the trustee board. Trinity Kam provides bookkeeping support to ensure that financial records are accurate, up to date, and ready to support the reporting and transparency that good governance demands. Alongside this, Clare leads our fundraising activity - researching grant opportunities, preparing applications, managing funder relationships, and producing the reports that allow us to demonstrate impact and maintain trust with those who support us.

One of the parts of this work that families tell us they value most is the individual advocacy and casework support that Clare provides. When a family in Berkshire is struggling to secure the right provision for their child - whether that means challenging a refusal for an Education, Health and Care Plan, pushing back on inadequate provision in school, navigating the tribunal process, or simply knowing their rights, Clare is there. She works alongside families to help them understand the system, build their case, and advocate effectively for their child. This support is informal, personal, and, for many families, makes a real difference at moments of considerable stress.

Beyond the families we directly serve, Chattertots plays an active role in educating the wider community about the needs of children with Down Syndrome. Clare visits schools across Berkshire to work with teachers and staff, helping them understand the specific learning profile of children with Down Syndrome and the practical adaptations that help those children thrive. The Go to School resource boxes (provided to children transitioning into primary school) are accompanied by in-person visits to schools to demonstrate how the materials work and how best to support each child. The feedback from teachers has been genuinely encouraging, with many describing these visits as transformative for their confidence and understanding.

Chattertots also takes its responsibility to influence policy and improve provision seriously. We encourage and support our families to respond to local and national consultations, ensuring that the voices of Berkshire families are heard. In 2025-26, we participated actively in the Government's consultation on the statutory guidance for the Down Syndrome Act 2022 (a landmark piece of legislation with the potential to improve outcomes for people with Down Syndrome across health, education, social care, and housing). We produced resources for our families to support their responses and submitted our own formal consultation response, drawing on the lived experience of the families we serve.

Our Trustees and Management Team

Name	Role and Background
David Jones	**Chair and Trustee** David joined the board in 2024 and became Chair in 2025. A qualified solicitor, his legal expertise directly informs his responsibility for Chattertots' legal and regulatory compliance.
Magdalene Kim	**Trustee** Magdalene brings strong organisational skills, with a background in hospitality management and a postgraduate qualification in management. She leads parent communications and oversees the summer camp programme, while further developing her expertise through the Early Years SEND programme with Dingley's Promise.
Victoria Kirby	**Safeguarding Lead and Trustee** Drawing on extensive experience from her background in the Guiding movement, Vicki keeps our safeguarding practice robust and current. In March 2025, she attended the Down Syndrome Research Forum, an annual international event hosted by Down Syndrome Education International, keeping our practice informed by the latest research.
Mark Murphy	**Treasurer (to August 2025) and Trustee (to December 2025)** Mark served as Trustee and Treasurer, bringing a background in digital marketing and commercial customer engagement. He stepped down as Treasurer at the end of August 2025 and as a trustee at the end of December 2025. We are grateful for his contribution during a period of significant organisational growth.
Leiah Norcott	**Trustee (to March 2025)** Leiah served as a trustee from the charity's earliest years, stepping down in March 2025. Her decade of dedicated service made a significant contribution to the development and stability of Chattertots.
Patrick Robinson	**Treasurer and Trustee (from September 2025)** Patrick joined as Trustee and Treasurer in September 2025. A qualified Chartered Accountant with a background in commercial finance, his expertise ensures every pound raised for Berkshire children with Down Syndrome is managed with rigour and transparency.
Clare McIntosh	**Charity Manager and CEO** Clare founded Chattertots in 2015, driven by direct experience as a parent of a child with Down Syndrome. She brings 30 years of professional expertise spanning strategic leadership, fundraising, and marketing, gained at organisations including British Gas and O2, and applies that experience daily to building Chattertots' income, partnerships, and capacity.
Trinity Kam	**Finance and Administration Support (from March 2025)** Trinity holds a degree in Accounting and Finance and brings practical experience in charity finance and administration. Her attention to detail and experience across the charitable sector support the smooth running of Chattertots' day-to-day operations.

Organisational Development

Throughout 2025, Clare McIntosh continued to build the organisation's capacity, strengthening relationships with funders and specialist providers, managing an expanding portfolio of services, and ensuring compliance with our obligations as a registered charity. We reviewed and updated key policies including our GDPR and data protection framework, and safeguarding procedures. We also developed a comprehensive service contribution policy to ensure our funding model remains fair, transparent, and sustainable.

Clare attended the Down Syndrome UK Annual Support Network Event in October, with sessions covering charity finance and governance, philanthropy, and family support, bringing valuable insight back to our work.

Policy and Advocacy

2025 saw Chattertots deepen its engagement with the wider policy landscape affecting children with Down Syndrome.

The Down Syndrome Act 2022 represents a significant legislative step, placing a duty on NHS England and local authorities to have due regard to guidance on improving outcomes for people with Down Syndrome across health, education and social care. As the Government moved towards publishing statutory guidance in 2026, Chattertots actively encouraged our families to engage with the consultation process and amplify their voices.

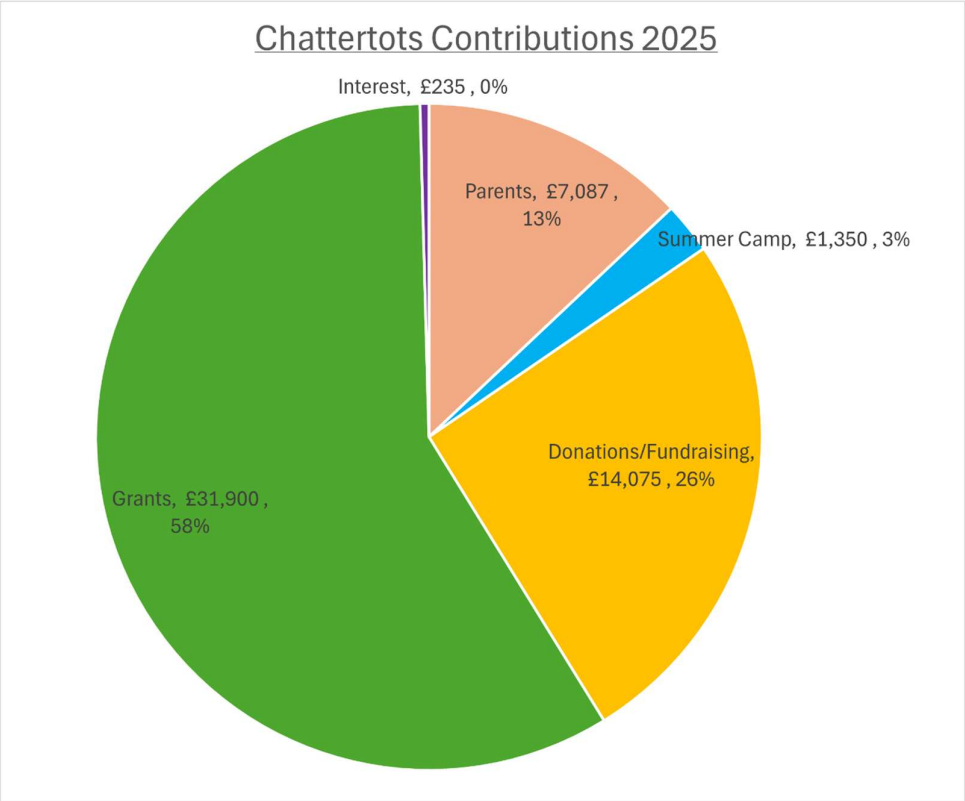
We also strengthened our relationships with local MPs, including Bracknell MP Peter Swallow, who visited our summer camp and showed a genuine interest in the challenges facing families in Berkshire.

We believe that the lived experience of our families – the real, day-to-day reality of raising a child with Down Syndrome in Berkshire – is some of the most powerful evidence available to policy-makers. We will continue to find ways to make that voice heard.

Financial Review

Our accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, as is the norm for charities with a gross income below £250,000. Under this method, income and expenditure are recorded when cash is received or paid. On rare occasions this can mean that grant income and its related programme expenditure may therefore fall in different accounting years, even where both sit within the same funder's grant period. An example of this is our Christmas party spend where some invoices were received and processed in 2025 and some in 2026. The full cost of the activity goes across the two year groups.

Our opening balance for the year commencing 1 January 2025 was £31,767. Our annual income for 2025 is approximately £54,647, comprising parental service contributions of £8,437, Gift Aid reclaims of £4,613, and fundraising and grant income of approximately £31,900.



Our annual expenditure for the same period is approximately £51,980, reflecting the full cost of delivering our expanded programme. The principal costs are:

- Pre-school speech and language therapy (Symbol UK): £5,686
- School-aged speech and language therapy (FunctionAbility): £6,075
- Educational consultancy (Inclusively Down): £5,833
- Summer camp (Make/Sense Theatre): £10,835. This includes some of the costs for 2024 as well as 2025.
- School boxes: £540
- Internal staffing and related costs £20,310

Our reserves policy requires us to hold at least six months of operating costs in reserve – approximately £26,000. This prudent approach protects our ability to continue supporting families even if income is disrupted.

Our full accounts are subject to independent examination and are available on the Charity Commission website.

Looking Ahead to 2026

2025 has given us a great deal to build on. As we look to 2026, our priorities are:

- Continue to raise awareness of our services throughout Berkshire so that all families can be supported.
- Continue to deliver our core portfolio of services to families
- Test virtual school salt and make a decision on the best solution long term
- Develop a calendar of social events responding to the needs of different families. In particular, develop other solutions for the school holidays.
- Improve dialogue with schools, hospitals and local authorities.
- Engage actively in the Down Syndrome Act 2022 statutory guidance process and SEND white paper ensuring the voices of Berkshire families are heard

We are ambitious for our children. We know that with the right support, the right community around them, and people who believe in them, children with Down Syndrome across Berkshire can achieve things that no-one expected. We have seen it happen, year after year.

Thank you for being part of it.

CHATTERTOTS

(Registered Charity 1198362)

Receipts and Payments Account for the 12 months to 31st December 2025

RECEIPTS	2025 £	2024 £	Variance £
Monthly Contributions	7,087	4,891	2,196
Report Contributions	0	90	-90
Summer Camp Contributions	1,350	1,240	110
Donations Events	5,197	1,104	4,094
Donations General	5,767	2,420	3,347
Donations Local Giving	3,111	2,429	681
Interest	235	0	235
Unrestricted Grant	15,000	9,123	5,877
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED RECEIPTS	37,747	21,297	16,451
Grant Restricted	16,900	5,500	11,400
TOTAL RESTRICTED RECEIPTS	16,900	5,500	11,400
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£54,647	£26,797	£27,851
PAYMENTS			
Christmas Party	0	80	80
Events	0	100	100
Fundraising	276	0	-276
Governance	125	0	-125
Office	20,556	4,751	-15,805
Pre School SALT	0	8,075	8,075
School Box	540	565	25
School SALT	1,120	360	-760
SEN Support - school consultancy	4,333	8,185	3,853
Social events	1,145	0	-1,145
Summer Camp	6,169	0	-6,169
Symbol Report	400	248	-153
Travel and entertainment	102	0	-102
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED PAYMENTS	34,766	22,364	-12,402
Christmas Party	407	0	-407
Pre-School SALT	5,686	0	-5,686
School SALT	4,955	0	-4,955
SEN Support - school consultancy	1,500	0	-1,500
Summer Camp	4,666	901	-3,765
TOTAL RESTRICTED PAYMENTS	17,214	901	-16,313
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£51,980	£23,265	-£28,715
NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR	**£2,667**	**£3,532**	**-£865**

CHATTERTOTS

(Registered Charity 1198362)

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2025

CURRENT ASSETS	2025 £	2024 £	Variance £
Co-op Bank Current Account	34,434	31,767	2,667
TOTAL ASSETS	£34,434	£31,767	£2,667
RESERVES			
General Reserve			
(DEFICIT) / SURPLUS FOR YEAR	2,981	-1,067	4,048
Balance b/f	27,168	28,235	-1,067
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	£30,149	£27,168	£2,981
Restricted Reserve			
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR YEAR	-314	4,599	-4,913
Balance b/f	4,599	0	4,599
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	£4,285	£4,599	-£314
TOTAL RESERVES	£34,434	£31,767	£2,667

Prepared by:
Patrick Robinson, Treasurer

Examined by:
Chris Satchwill

I report to the charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of Chattertots for the year ended 31st December 2025. I confirm that the Receipts and Payments account and the accompanying Balance Sheet are in agreement with the records shown to me and the explanations given.

Signed P. C Satchwill.

(Honorary Examiner)

Date 2nd June 2026