



**Beacon  
Family  
Services**

# CIC Social Impact Report 2023



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# Message from our CEO



## Welcome to Beacon Family Services' Social Impact Report for 2023.

The last year has been characterised by regular reports about the crisis in children's mental health. I am concerned about this crisis because

children are our future leaders, parents and workers. My hope is that they will better address some of the challenges my generation is struggling with. To do so we will need our children to be determined, free thinking and creative as well as kind, connected and resourceful.

**50% of lifelong mental health needs are established by the age of 14. \***

Worryingly, the Children's Commissioner estimates up to a quarter of all primary and secondary aged children miss out on learning on account of poor mental health. That is, potentially, 1 in 4 children, or more than 10 children in every class. While there is no definitive number being placed on how many children aren't attending school regularly, we know numbers have been rising.

I don't like the term 'persistent absenteeism' because it blames children and parents. Nor do I like the term 'emotionally based school avoidance' as it neutralises the issue. Children are too anxious to attend school and teachers are leaving the profession at the highest level ever. These are signs that the system is not working. It should be a huge alarm bell for all of us that children, and teachers, are feeling very unsafe at school.

At Beacon Family Services, we understand the profound and positive impact of healthy parent-child and teacher-child relationships on mental health outcomes. That is why we are dedicated to supporting relationships as an early and preventative approach to addressing childhood anxiety. We know this approach is not only effective, but also sustainable in the long term.

**"The parent- child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention known to man kind."**

Bessel Van Der Kolk

In this report we will share stories of how supporting parents makes a difference to children and their wellbeing. We hope commissioners and leaders reading this, especially leaders in education, will feel hopeful that the social contract between schools and parents can be rebuilt if we work relationally.

To bridge the gap between need and access, Beacon Family Services are committed to innovation and sustainability. By continuously evolving our approach and adapting to the changing landscape of mental health, we're not just addressing the needs of today, but also laying the groundwork for a more connected tomorrow.

As you explore our report, we invite you to join us in our mission to build strong relationships between parents, carers, teachers and children to help them feel safe and secure. It is through a network of supportive relationships that we will help more children to thrive.

\* Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. (2005). Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62 (6) pp. 593-602. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593

# Perspectives from the Board of Beacon Family Services

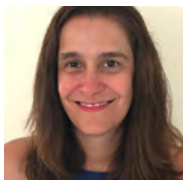
In our mission to champion children's mental health, Beacon Family Services draws strength from the diverse expertise and insights of our board members, each offering unique perspectives that shape our path forward.



**Sarah McAuley**, serving as a Parent Representative, shares her firsthand experience with Beacon Family Services' transformative impact on her children. Sarah emphasises the role of play in developing confidence and managing emotional challenges, citing personal success with the play-based strategies our therapy taught her family. These techniques have helped prevent emotional escalations, reducing stress for both children and parents.



**Jim Barton**, Executive Director of Change at His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, underscores Beacon Family Services essential role in bridging service gaps within the community. With a background in managing complex operations, Jim highlights the success of Project Salam as a beacon of our commitment to social change. This initiative exemplifies how our evidence-based interventions foster significant community and individual improvements in Birmingham and beyond, especially for families overlooked by statutory services.



**Katrina Jamieson**, Chief Financial Officer of Center Parcs, brings a strategic financial perspective, praising Beacon Family Services rapid growth and effectiveness, validated by substantial governmental grants and heartfelt family testimonials. Katrina stresses the importance of addressing long-term impacts of the pandemic on children's mental health and the integration challenges faced by children from conflict-ridden regions. She advocates for a focused recovery of pandemic-induced damages and enhanced support for immigrant children, aligning with Beacon Family Services ongoing initiatives.

As we move forward, our board's collective vision is keenly focused on leveraging both traditional and innovative approaches to enrich our services. They urge continued expansion of services that foster face-to-face engagements, which are crucial for holistic development and emotional well-being.

Our board's collective vision reinforces our commitment to addressing underserved needs and fostering resilience in children and families. Their insights not only guide our strategic direction but also resonate with our community's aspirations, ensuring that our initiatives remain both responsive and impactful.

In conclusion, the board's unified message is clear: sustain and amplify the efforts that have proven so effective. Under great leadership, and with the dedication of skilled staff, Beacon Family Services is poised to continue making significant strides in promoting mental health and emotional well-being among children, particularly those facing the greatest challenges.

# Our Purpose

Beacon Family Services CIC is committed to improving mental health and wellbeing for children and families.

Globally, children's mental health is at a crisis point. According to the Global Mind Project report published in March 2024, the UK ranks the lowest of 71 countries for mental health. According to the Children's Commissioners report also released in March 2024, 1 in 5 children and young people in the UK aged 8–25 suffer with a probable mental health disorder. The report also suggested that of those children referred to Children's and Young People's Mental Health Services (CAMHS), only 32% receive support.

Over-stretched and underfunded, the demand for children's mental health services in the UK continues to outstrip the availability of support from the NHS.

**“We need fresh, long-term thinking when it comes to children’s mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Much of this work must be done upstream, creating an environment and a world – both online and offline – where children grow up feeling happy, safe and supported. This means every child feels loved and nurtured, lives free from poverty, and is able to focus on learning. With enough focus on prevention, children should never come close to crisis.”**

Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England

Using cost-effective and innovative therapeutic approaches, Beacon Family Services CIC worked directly with parents, carers and their children to help over 1,400 children and young people in 2023 to feel safe and secure.

Through group-based therapeutic approaches, Beacon Family Services continues to bridge a much-needed gap in provision while building and strengthening the relationships between children and trusted adults. These relationships are seen as an important determinate of good, long-term mental health by experts and are a key focus of all our work.

# Our Year in Review

2023 was a year of strengthening the work of the past five years. We have worked with new partners to deliver training and provide support, translated our resources for refugee families, upskilled team members, secured additional funding and increased our capacity and reach.

In 2023, Catherine Eveness, a Beacon Associate, incorporated Beacon NeuroConnect CIC to provide therapeutic support for families in Somerset and across the South West of England. In addition to the work of Beacon Services Resources, established in 2021 as Beacon Family Services research and development wing, Beacon NeuroConnect has provided increased capacity and resource for in-person support.

## January

Beacon Family Services provides Theraplay® training to Spurgeon's Children's Centre staff at BCFC St Andrews' Football ground

## March

Beacon Family Services launches Cards To Help You Connect (CTHYC) in Arabic to support families across the UK

## May

Beacon NeuroConnect CIC is incorporated expanding Beacon Family Services' reach by providing neuro-affirming, play-based therapeutic services to families in the South West of England

## June

Beacon Family Services team members, Peppy Hills and Pete Brindley, achieve their foundational Theraplay® certificates.

## July

Beacon NeuroConnect begins delivering free-to-access support for families across Somerset after being awarded funding from the Open Mental Health Network

## September

Beacon Family Services' National Lottery funded 'Play Attention' first year ends, supporting 500 parents and carers and 750 children to feel their family relationships and adult's understanding of their child were improved.

## October

Beacon Family Services is awarded funding by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to continue 'Project Salam' into its third year

Beacon Family Services' National Lottery funded 'Connect for Kids' Group hosts its first Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteer

## November

Beacon Family Services celebrates its 5th birthday

Team member, Kate Edwards, achieves her intermediate Theraplay® certificate.

## December

Beacon Services Resources is awarded Kickstarter funding by software developers, o2h Technology, to advance their innovative App, lumin&us™

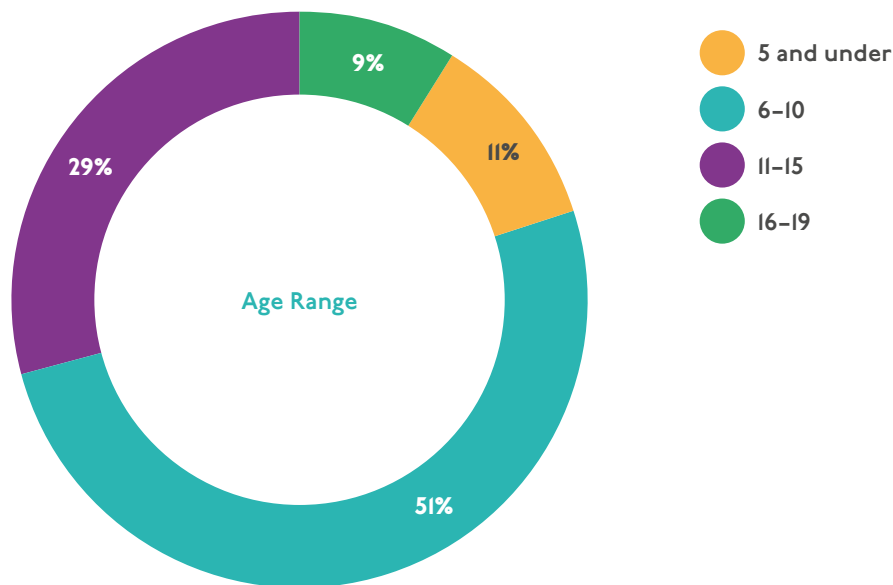
# Our Impact

## 1. Number of families using our service during 2023

- ♦ 256 Focus Children
- ♦ 195 Families
- ♦ 48 Families we supported with more than one child
- ♦ 468 Total sessions

## 2. Age range of children using our service

In 2023, Beacon Family Services worked with children between the ages of 1-19 years old. The majority of our work in 2023 was with children between the ages of 6-10 years.



## 3. Types of support accessed.

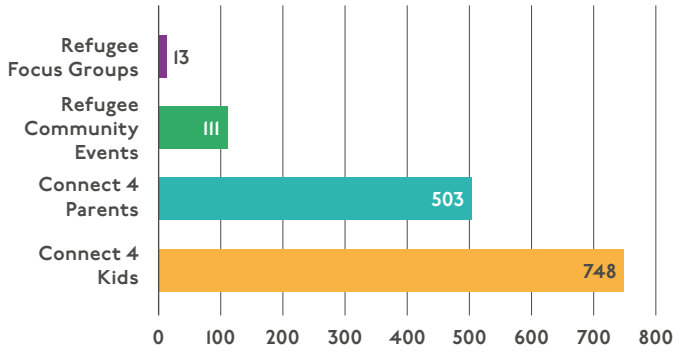
Type of Support	Number of Children
Adoption Support	27
<b>Play attention</b>	
Play Therapy	15
Connect 4 Kids (C4K)	748
Connect 4 Parents (C4P)	503
<b>Project Salam</b>	
Theraplay®	54
Play Therapy	2
Community Events	111
Focus Groups	13

# Our Impact continued...

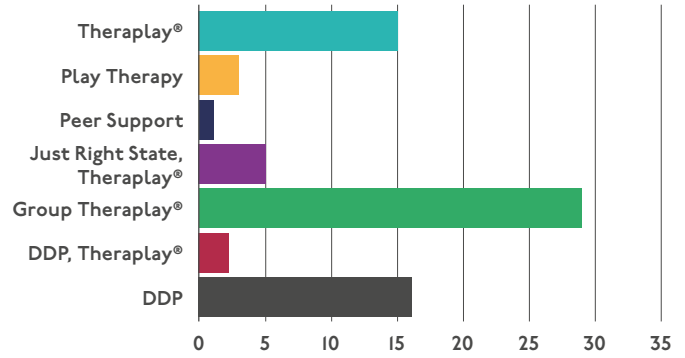
## 4. Number of hours therapy offered in the year

- ♦ 723 ASF Hours
- ♦ 91 Associate hours
- ♦ 1498 Hours logged for DDP, Theraplay® on FreeAgent
- ♦ 4319 Total Hours delivered by the business

Events and Workshop Attendies



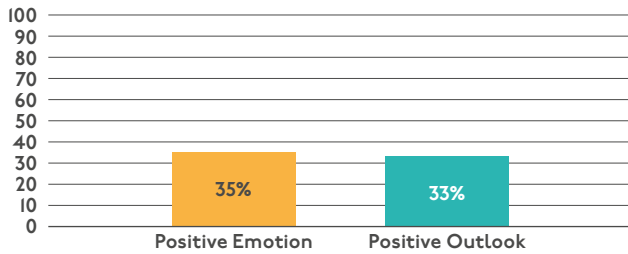
Services



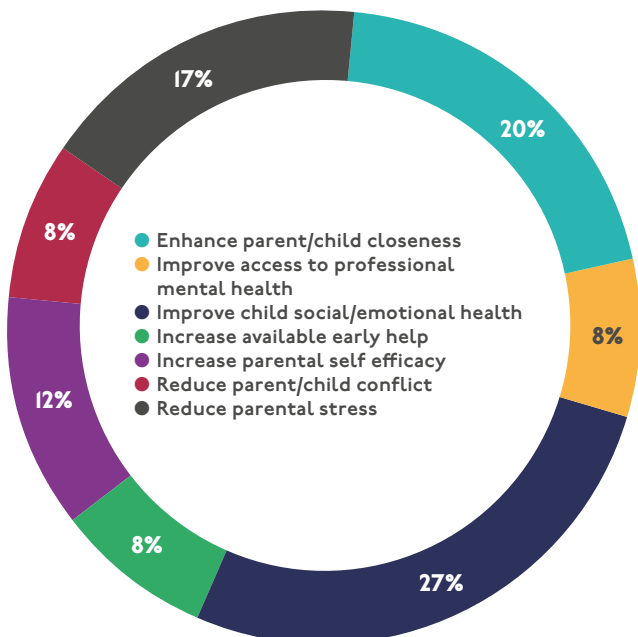
## 5. Outcome measures

### Children's feedback from 'Play Attention'

Children's wellbeing outcome (using Sterling Measures)



Aspect of Impact



### 'Play Attention' collated feedback from, I-2-I, C4K, C4P

Aspect of impact	Amount of children
Enhance parent/child closeness	13
Improve access to professional mental health	5
Improve child social/emotional health	17
Increase early help available	5
Increase parental self efficacy	8
Reduce parent/child conflict	5
Reduce parental stress	11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>64</b>

### Increase in reach of lumin&us™ app and CTHYC

Resources	Amount used
Number of packs of Cards To Help You Connect (CTHYC) provided	100
Number of families referred to BFS' lumin&us™ App	2,639
Number of additional families who accessed support through app and CTHYC i.e. families who are not local or who are unable to access Play Attention for other reasons	27



## Our Impact continued...

### 'Project Salam' outcome measures

Event	Common Theme of feedback
Play Therapy	Play Therapy impacts the child's life in class and playtime, making friends
Theraplay®	Shared joy and connection, increase in confidence and family relationships
Community Events	Expanding networks and a sense of belonging

### 6. Number of lumin&us™ downloads in 2023

Month	Apple	Google
Apr-23	6	227
May-23	27	240
Jun-23	128	230
Jul-23	214	222
Aug-23	14	218
Sep-23	119	230
Oct-23	38	227
Nov-23	22	224
Dec-23	25	228

**593**

Apple App Store downloads

**2,046**

Google Play downloads

**2,639**

Total downloads, averaging **293** downloads a month

**Rated**

 on Apple App Store

### 7. Potential saving to the NHS

In 2022/23, the NHS plans to spend **£12.8bn** on mental health services, which is **8.1%** of the total NHS budget. The conservative financial cost of mental ill health in the UK is **£117.9bn**. This equates to 5 per cent of UK's GDP.

If the cost of mental ill health in the UK is **£117.9bn** and the population is **67 million** this equates to a cost of **£1,764** per head.

Beacon Family Services providing help to **250** children would save the NHS **£436,567 A YEAR**. Using these calculations, in 2023 Beacon Family Services have saved the NHS nearly **£2,500,000**.

When downloads of lumin&us™ are added to the calculations, Beacon Services Resources have potentially saved the NHS an additional **£11,000,000** in 2023 alone.

# Spotlight on Staff

## Peppy Hills

Project Lead for Project Salam



Peppy embodies the passion and dedication that defines our team. With a rich background in creativity, dance, and play therapy, Peppy has been instrumental in supporting the relational well-being of refugee

families since September 2021. Her approach, deeply rooted in cultural sensitivity and personal connection, ensures tailored support that resonates with each family's unique needs.

One of Peppy's most cherished moments was a community event where a Syrian mother expressed her gratitude for the safe and welcoming space provided for her children. This moment highlights the profound personal impact of our work, demonstrating the trust and safety that our programs foster among the families we support.

Beacon Family Services is committed to the professional development and all round well-being of its staff. Peppy values the comprehensive supervision and the continuous learning opportunities available, which allow her to refine her skills and deepen her practice.

**"It's the equivalent of a greenhouse for supportive reflected thinking, professional and personal growth and a lovely warm space to work in".**

This approach ensures our staff thrive and enhances their ability to make meaningful social impact. Through leaders like Peppy and initiatives like Project Salam, we continue to prove ourselves as an exciting workplace, deeply invested in the well-being of its employees and the communities we support.

## Kate Edwards

Associate Social Worker, Theraplay® practitioner



With a BSC in Social Policy, a Diploma in Social Work, Level I DDP training. In 2023, Beacon Family Services provided funding which allowed Kate to achieve her intermediate Theraplay® practicum.

Kate is highly-esteemed and much valued member of the team. Her empathetic approach helps to create a sense of safety and trust for families, enabling them to fully engage in the Theraplay® approach.

In 2023, Beacon Family Services supported Kate's work by providing clinical supervision with a Theraplay® practitioner, group supervision with a Clinical Psychologist and the time, space and reflection which is essential to delivering good practice. Kate is proud to support the work of Beacon Family Services and feels that it provides a valuable service to the families she works with.

## Laila Mourad

Family Support and Project Worker



Laila holds a BA (Hons) in Youth, Community and Families. She is passionate about supporting families and strengthening their family bonds, reaching child/parent out in their own comfortable zone, create a joyful environment for them by play and organising family community events.

Resettled in the UK from Syria, Laila feels that her role within Beacon Family Services has offered her a stable salary and a type of financial freedom that has helped her to be independent in supporting herself and her children. She values the team and the support they offer.

In 2023, Beacon Family Services invested in Laila with training in Safeguarding Awareness, Childhood Challenging Violent and Aggressive Behaviours, Theraplay® Group Training, Excel Training, Sensory Processing and Understanding Anger.

Speaking three languages, Laila can connect easily with different people from different cultures and is a real asset to the Beacon Family Services team.

# Extending Our Reach



## Project Salam

Throughout 2023 we have continued to support refugee families settling in Birmingham. In response to the diverse needs of our communities, we've been translating our resources. The resources produced for Project Salam are some of the first therapeutic resources available in Arabic, making our services even more accessible and inclusive.

The past two and half years of Project Salam have offered opportunities for us to hone and adapt our practice to become more acutely culturally sensitive and aware. As Project Lead, I initially imagined that working with interpreters would be the major vehicle we would use to make communication clear and offer refugee families the safety and familiarity of using their own language within reflective meetings and Theraplay® sessions. As the project has grown the need for a range of translated resources became apparent and we have been able to meet as part of Beacon Family Services' responsive approach to working with families.

An Arabic translation of BFS Intake paperwork including consent forms and a What is BFS Information sheet ensured that parents were fully aware and an active part of engaging with Project Salam from the initial meetings onwards. The reaction of Syrian parents to our Arabic text documents and the presence of our BFS interpreter at sessions was a mixture of gratitude and empowerment. The significance of honouring/acknowledging their mother tongue/home language was both visible in their facial expressions, relaxation of bodies and words, it was also emotionally felt within the sessions by myself and parents who openly spoke and shared their feelings in a way that would not have been possible purely through a second language.

"At the beginning I wondered about 2 people being in the sessions, but when I saw how she (the interpreter) was, it was good. It especially made a big difference with an Arabic speaking person too. You know how to choose your interpreters, how she is, calm and respectful and joining in, it made me feel comfortable and more relaxed." (Parent)

"The way you (BFS therapist & interpreter) deal with us it make me feel good and comfortable. I can be open with you. You are approachable and respectful." (Parent)



We have grown our Arabic translated resources to include;

- All the documents shared with a family while working with a therapist.
- Our Cards To Help You Connect
- YouTube videos explaining neurodivergence in Arabic

### Feedback from Project Salam Focus group – parents

"Especially with instructions on how to play the game and why it is a good game to play."

"Perfect (the cards in Arabic) I can depend on myself. You are the leader, not your children translating for you."

"The picture (handclapping) is very useful and it's helped me to be closer. He (son) is safe to ask for help."

"Now they (sons) say 'Mum, we're going to have fun today, playing together. They don't let me throw out anything we have made in sessions. They keep them carefully in their room.'"

"The cards reignite the fun of being with your child and it's the simplicity of them, no fancy theory to understand first just clear and simple directions with minimal props or resources needed. The games are so accessible and tangible, so easy and there's no sense of the parent being assessed just supported to connect and enjoy their child."

Our translated resources provide a variety of ways to connect with BFS and to access mental health support in direct and more distanced ways. Families we work with are left with a pack of Arabic 'Cards To Help You Connect' to sustain the activities that support their family relationships. Other Syrian parents may receive a BFS pack as part of a community day organised by another organisation and they can explore it at their own pace within their home. Translated blogs offer parents a chance to connect digitally, to gain knowledge and know they are not alone in their parenting journey.

## Extending Our Reach continued...

Feedback from parents using the cards included a sense of empowerment and being able to embrace playful parenting. Parents often comment on how strange it feels to rely on their children to translate for them in everyday life, as often the child's understanding of English language develops quickly through their school experience.

"The mother should help the children, not the other way."

In 2023, we were also contacted by a Salvation Army Social Worker who had been using our resources with a Sudanese refugee parent resettled in Belfast having read about Project Salam and our translated resources online.

The Salvation Army translated the cards into Nuer so the mother could build her relationship with her youngest child who had been temporarily taken into care. Playtimes with her child built her confidence to connect through play with her child and resulted in her being granted full parental responsibility for her son.

The past two years of developing resources has confirmed that clear, culturally sensitive communication is key within any trusting relationship. By translating our materials, we send a clear message of respect and openness to work with families, joining with them in play to support their family's relational wellbeing and bring moments of joy and lightness to their resettlement experience.

Resources can be found on our website [here](#) or by contacting us [here](#).

### Beacon NeuroConnect

#### Support for families in the South West of England

In September 2023 we launched Beacon NeuroConnect CIC, based in Somerset, to support families and those affected by developmental trauma with a specific focus on neurodivergence.

Navigating the complexities of raising a neurodivergent child can be an overwhelming journey for parents. The challenges extend beyond the child's unique needs to encompass emotional, social, and educational hurdles that can often leave parents feeling isolated, misunderstood, and unsupported.

Traditional support systems may not always cater to the needs of neurodivergent families, leaving a significant gap in accessible, effective support. Parents told us they are looking for a community that understands and helps them building resilient family relationships.

The Beacon NeuroConnect team, led by Catherine Eveness, understand the intricacies of parenting a neurodivergent child because they've been there. They offer more than just advice; they provide a safe, empathetic, and informed community where parents can feel understood, supported, and empowered.

In their first few months Beacon NeuroConnect provided 189 hours of support to 36 families, spanning various age groups, benefitting parents, siblings, friends, and other family members.

A thriving monthly support group for parents and carers has been established at Wincanton Balsam Centre, along with an in-person meet-up in Frome for neurodivergent families which is growing with each session.

Neurobears Programme: A 12-week online groupwork programme for parents and children focused on positive autistic and neurodivergent has run.

## Extending Our Reach continued...

Virtual and flexible wellbeing sessions have been offered to parents, especially those with children accessing alternative education provision.

Many families find it easier to engage in online or telephone support rather than in-person groups. The feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive. Families have expressed gratitude for the support, highlighting the importance of understanding, acceptance, and practical help in navigating the challenges of neurodivergence.

As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to supporting neurodivergent families and fostering a community where everyone feels understood, accepted, and valued.

We'd love to share more of our impactful work with you.

If you'd like to learn more, talk to us or support our initiatives, please get in touch with us at:

[neuroconnect@beaconservices.org.uk](mailto:neuroconnect@beaconservices.org.uk)  
01460 200277

## Developing lumin&us™ lumin&us™



In response to additional demand for our relationally-focused we have continued to develop and improve their innovative, therapeutic resources in 2023. Through these resources, Beacon Family Services has increased capacity, reduced per person cost and provided support to more families and schools at an early and preventative stage.

This economical, innovative response to increased demand remains freely accessible to all and has seen a remarkable increase in users.

To increase our reach and help as many children and families as possible, Beacon Family Services is harnessing the power of technology and investing in innovation. lumin&us™ has enabled Beacon Family Services to break down barriers to access and ensure support is available to those who need it, when they need it most.

# Accounts and Funders

As a Community Interest Company (CIC), we remain committed to improving the lives of children and families, as well as the organisations supporting them. Our therapeutic interventions continue to foster attachment relationships, particularly in instances where a child’s mental health or experiences of trauma have impacted these crucial bonds.

In terms of financial sustainability, Beacon Family Services has continued to grow each year since its incorporation in 2018. Through strategic diversification of income streams, including grants, trading initiatives such as Regional Adoption Agencies and school partnerships and the innovative use of resources like Cards to Help You Connect, we continue to thrive.

In the fiscal year under review, we have witnessed continued growth in revenue. This has allowed us to invest in our IT infrastructure improving engagement with families and commissioners as well at the working environment for staff.

Grants play a significant role in funding our operations, alongside sales, primarily driven by the Adoption Support Fund. This transition reflects our agility in responding to evolving funding landscapes and underscores our commitment to financial sustainability.

Income Statement	1/11/21-31/10/2022	1/11/22-31/10/2023
Revenue	141, 507	227105
Income from commissioned therapy and school support	93371	115,312
Grant income	48136	111,793
Running Costs	134 493	184480
Surplus	7014	42,625

We continue to require additional grant funding to ensure equitable access to our services for all families, especially those with limited resources unable to access limited NHS resources. We are particularly grateful to funders:

- ♦ **The National Lottery**
- ♦ **Heart Of England Community Foundation**
- ♦ **Birmingham City Council**
- ♦ **Open Mental Health Network**
- ♦ **Social Enterprise Support Fund**
- ♦ **Clarion Futures**

Our collaboration with local organisations through initiatives like the Early Help partnership reinforces our collective efforts in meeting the diverse needs of our community.

Moreover, we remain dedicated to nurturing our team of therapists through ongoing training and development initiatives. This year, we supported three of our therapists in furthering their expertise through participation in the Theraplay® practicum, reinforcing our commitment to excellence in therapeutic practice. We are continuing to evolve our comprehensive supervision and professional development package for existing staff.

Moving forward due to our surplus we have been able to improve staff benefits including increasing our pension contribution to up to 8%. This supports us to retain the staff we invest in so they can offer long term relational support to families. We are also able to grow our team of therapists and key business support.

As we look to the future, we are confident in our ability to build upon our achievements, forge new partnerships, and continue making a meaningful impact in the lives of children and families across Birmingham and beyond.



**Beacon  
Family  
Services**

## **Contact us**

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