



 **Gympanzees**[®]
a world of fun & fitness
for all disabled children

Impact Report 2023

Charity number 1189375

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Welcome

Reflecting back on 2023, fills me with immense pride and excitement. It saw us take a major step towards our aim of opening The Gympanzees Centre, with the purchase of our huge 43,000sqft building at Aust. We launched our £8 million fundraising campaign 'Project Home' in September and with thanks to our supporters, we had raised over £1.5 million by the end of the year. The Pop Ups were as popular as ever, with the highest visitor numbers we have ever seen. And the Lending Library has also seen more loans to families, groups and schools, than ever before. It was quite a year for Gympanzees!

I must start by saying a huge thank you to SGS Pegasus School in Patchway and Venturers' Academy in Withywood for generously hosting our 6th and 7th Pop Ups this past year. Witnessing the joy on the faces of the children, young people, and families as they experienced the Pop Up and reaped the benefits made all the hard work very worthwhile.



Our Lending library and online resources hub remained bustling. As well as continuing to grow with individual loans, we now have a growing base of schools and groups frequently accessing the service. 2023 saw us expand as a team even further, across employed staff and volunteers, and we continue to learn through training, knowledge, advice, and support from our Board of Trustees and Committees.

Our supporters' overwhelming generosity and kindness have been a highlight throughout the year, from Trusts and Foundations to companies choosing us as charity of the year, gifts in kind, and individual fundraisers running and tackling unique challenges. We are incredibly grateful for the support received in our quest for our permanent home and wouldn't be where we are without the support we have had.

As the capital campaign continues to grow from strength to strength, and we eagerly anticipate what 2024 holds, I invite you to explore this report and see the difference your support has made.

Thank you!

Stephanie When CEO and Founder of
Gympanzees

Steph

Our Year In Numbers

Through the door

Over **7100**
visitors across
34.3 days



Digital Community

19,000 views of
our YouTube videos



Delivered to their
door **660**
lending library
loans



Truly Inclusive

We have supported
over **100** different
disabilities



25% of our visitors
use a wheelchair

In August **2023** we bought a
7 acre site to build the first
Gympanzees Centre



Currently



- There are currently **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 our 2023 Pop Ups we found:

- **90%** of parents feel isolated some or a lot of the time.
- **76%** 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, 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 2023



What is a Pop Up?

The Pop Ups are smaller versions of our plans for the main centre. They are a chance for us to co-produce, research, and test how the Gympanzees centre will run. 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%

Behaviours that challenge	42%
Medical	15%
Sensory Needs	78%
Social and Communication Difficulties	72%
Physical	28%
Learning Disability	54%
Other	10%

Wheelchair/ mobility buggy users

25% 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.



“We turned up not knowing what to expect and we were pleasantly surprised. The staff were very friendly and there were plenty of them too! My boys enjoyed it so much we’ve been back 3 more times already. It’s very inclusive and enables children and young people to be themselves giving them the opportunity to explore the extensive equipment they have on offer in their own way. There really is something for everyone here, I would thoroughly recommend it.”

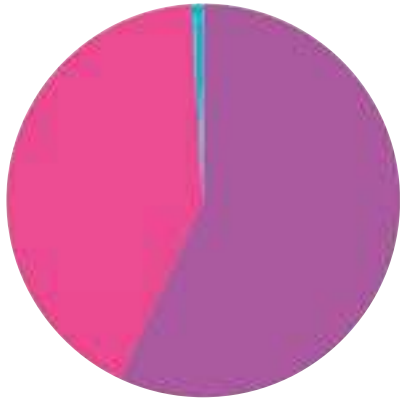
Ethnicities

We have seen a higher percentage of visitors from differing ethnic backgrounds than we did in 2022. This has been great to see and we will continue to work in partnership with disability groups from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds to ensure what we offer is inclusive to all.

White or British	85%	Pakistani	1%
Irish	1%	Bangladeshi	<1%
Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller	<1%	Chinese	<1%
Any other White background	3%	Any other Asian Background	<1%
White and Black Caribbean	2%	African	2%
White and Black African	1%	Caribbean	<1%
White and Asian	1%	Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	1%
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	1%	Any other ethnic group	1%
Indian	1%		10

Gender

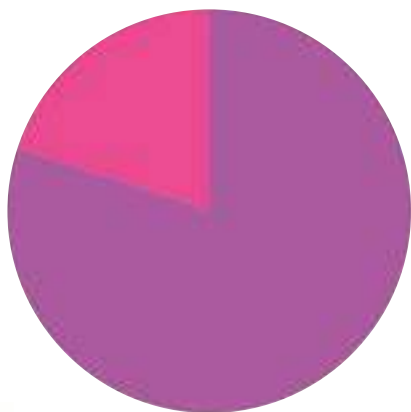
There is emerging research regarding the link between gender dysphoria and autism, with some researchers stating that 20% will experience gender dysphoria compared to 1% of the non-autistic population. We, therefore, were expecting a higher % of visitors who did not identify as male or female. However,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



Male	57%
Female	42%
Other	1%
Non-Binary, Transmale, Pangender	

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. We continue to grow from the research we did in 2022. This year we assisted the hospital ed team to support some of their older young people to access the centre. We were able to open the centre for visits after hours for young people who can find new environments and other people tricky to navigate. This gave these young people the chance to understand what we offer, the layout, and the staff in a way that was conducive to them. We then saw the young people return within our regular sessions, which is something they would have been unable to do, had they not visited out of normal hours.



Age 0-11	80%
Age 11-25	20%



How many visited?



2023 Bookings

	EASTER POP UP (11.3 Days)	SUMMER POP UP (23 Days)	(34.3 Days)
No of children bookings	1352	2201	Total: 3553
Bookings per day	119	95	Average: 107

7106
visitors in total

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



21,000
visitors since
the first
Pop Up in 2018

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

44%
of Summer Pop Up
visitors were
new to Gympanzees

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.

48% of 2023 bookings were from Groups.



“Totally inclusive, understanding setting. The ability to use the equipment that is not otherwise available to use is fantastic. Unique. We have no other way of accessing this in the community. We can't thank you enough. Thank you from us all. ”



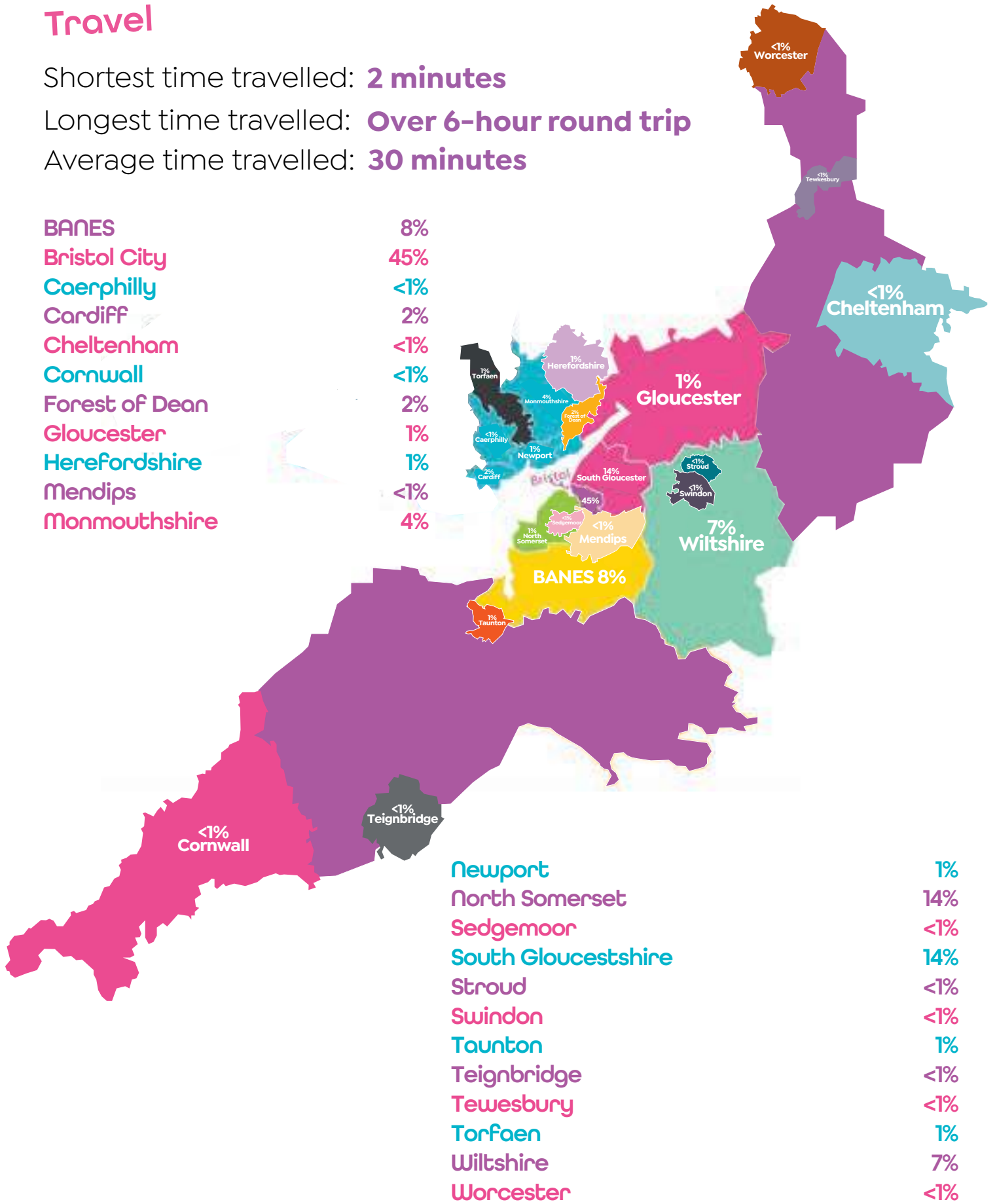
Travel

Shortest time travelled: **2 minutes**

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

Average time travelled: **30 minutes**

BANES	8%
Bristol City	45%
Caerphilly	<1%
Cardiff	2%
Cheltenham	<1%
Cornwall	<1%
Forest of Dean	2%
Gloucester	1%
Herefordshire	1%
Mendips	<1%
Monmouthshire	4%



For the Pop Ups we were able to secure funding from Mother’s Union to pay towards the cost of taxis. The use of volunteers meant we could stretch the funding further and this enabled us to support more families.

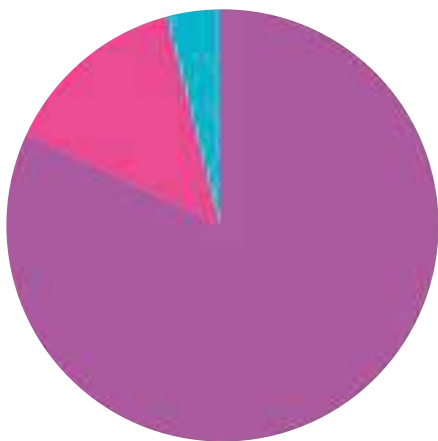
Cost



In 2023 we charged £9 for our 90-minute session (2 hours for Butterflies) and £12 for our 2-hour sessions. We also offered a half-price concession for those on benefits (except disability).

In line with our EDI strategy we also offered our full fee waiver. This meant that those who faced financial barriers could still use Gympanzees.

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.



Full price ticket	82%
Low income concessions	14%
Free Tickets	4%



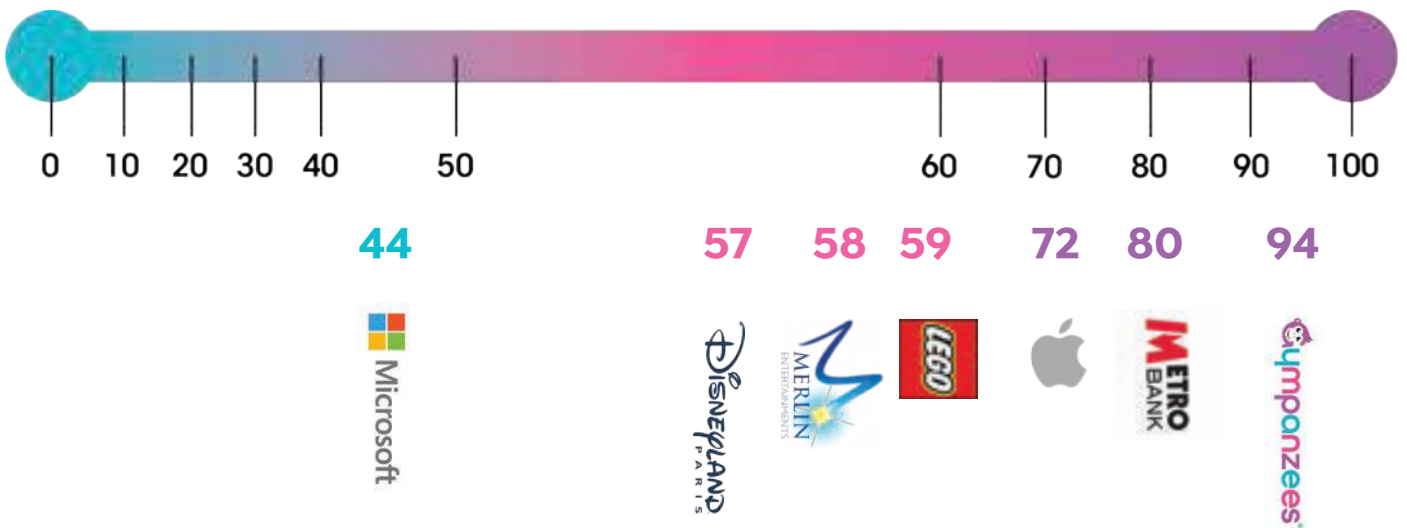
“Price was very good for what it is here, easy to get to and find our way to the place, as well as around the actual place itself. The booking system was easy to use and book. One highlight was my child being free and happy as well as her asking to come again and again, (this is a first).”

Feedback



Net Promotor Score (NPS) – 94

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.



Stats

33% of people said they met up with someone they had met up with previously at a Pop Up.

81% of people said their child was more active.

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

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



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.

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

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



What Parents Said...



Mum of a three year old boy on a trampoline at the Pop Up said that it was the first time she had ever seen him laugh—the best moment for her in the last 3 years!

“My girls had an amazing time today. Little sis fell asleep in the car on the way home, and big sis went from grumpy to contented.”

“My son never sleeps and he slept for 12 hours after his session.”

“Yesterday was the first time my little boy ever sat in the sand – a completely new experience and one I never thought would happen.”

“My son will never eat in a new place, but he did here, which shows how relaxed he is.”

Mum, H, said that 5 year old twins, O & B had both slept better than normal after their session at Gympanzees.

“We love coming here because we don't have to say 'sorry' when my son makes happy noises.”

“All of his sensory needs were met – a sensory room to calm down in, trampolines for big body movements, and a drum-kit (his favourite!) And music room to do some experimenting.”



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

- 57 young people experienced walking for the first time in our equipment.
- A 12-year-old girl slept through the night for the first time after her session.
- One boy did more exercise in his session than he would do in 10 weeks.
- A 9-year-old boy held his head up on his own for the first time for a full 10 minutes.
- A 5-year-old opening his clenched fist to play which he never does.
- A 6-year-old took his first independent steps after using our treadmill.

100% of people said they saw the physical benefits of the equipment used by their children.

99% of people said they saw the emotional benefits of the equipment used by their children.



Staff and Volunteers



11

Permanent Staff

(Across Development, Service Delivery,
Marketing and Fundraising)

18

Temporary Staff

(For the Easter and Summer Pop Ups)

191

Volunteers

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



Lending Library

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 a online resources hub, full of hints and tips for getting children with disabilities active at home.

The Lending Library Stats for 2023...

- 559** Loans to individual families
- 220** New members
- 101** Loans to schools and groups
- 25** New 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.



Research

Research is key to the success of The Gympanzees Centre. It is imperative that we co-produce with the families and groups that use Gympanzees. Without this we would not be able to provide a fully inclusive and accessible centre.



We have continued to put the research we have gained into practice. The hang-out space continued to be a huge success, offering a space that was familiar to our older individuals. This had a positive impact, showing we understood their needs and we saw that people felt more comfortable to go on and explore the rest of the centre.

This year we also created a light calm sensory room. We had received lots of suggestions for this in previous research. The feedback suggested that some children didn't like dark space, but really would benefit from the room. This space was well used and we have added this into our ongoing plans for the centre.

We continue to

- Survey all Pop Up visitors
- Ask questions on booking, related to the individuals attending
- 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



T's Story



“Meet T, a 24-year-old navigating the world with autism & learning disabilities.

At just 4 years old, T faced a life-changing battle with meningitis, leaving him with a fear of medicine and heightened sensitivity to certain sounds made by others, which makes it very difficult to access activities.

T's family first learned about Gympanzees while he was still attending school. During every holiday break, the school would compile a list of activities, and Gympanzees found its place in one of those leaflets. T's mum attended a session with his sister not long after, but at that time, it was quite a distance from their home.

During the summer, family's options were limited due to T's extreme sound sensitivity. They could only go for walks in open areas. Parking posed another challenge; the car had to be right outside their destination. This precaution was necessary because if a noise startled T, he would make a beeline for the car without regard for roads or safety. Their typical summer outings involved scenic drives, complete with stops for ice cream.

In 2023, however, things took a favourable turn. Gympanzees had set up just around the corner from them, presenting them with a

chance to see whether T would enjoy it.

T's mum said “It was a game-changer. The ability to participate in a proper activity, where we could feel safe and secure indoors while utilising the equipment, has been nothing short of amazing for our family. It opened new possibilities for enjoyable and worry-free experiences, making a significant positive impact on all of us. For T it was huge! His first visit was mostly checking everything out, including the staff, making sure there were no surprise noises. By the end of the Summer Pop Up T was completely relaxed at Gympanzees, talking and interacting with the staff, and even able to come along to sessions with other young people. A total turnaround for him and the family.

Every week he has been showing us the room layout leaflet indicating that he wants to visit and finding Gympanzees on Google maps just in case we didn't get the hint with the leaflet. For us it's been great to get out as a family and meet new people.”

A special thanks to...

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



Independent mobility specialists



Quality & service you can rely on



rugged. interactive



The Gympanzees Centre

The Site **14 Acres**



The Building

43,000 sqft
over
2 floors

500 parking spaces

Excellent access from M4 and M5

Lots of green space including its
own woodland area



Centre Updates



In August, we finalised the purchase of an incredible site at Aust, and are now the proud owners of the £3.1 million, 14 acre site with a 43,000 sqft building, 7 acres of green-land, including a woodland, and 500 car parking spaces!

The £3.1m site was purchased with support from Triodos Bank, The Nisbet Trust, Rockcliffe Charitable Trust, The Sunrise Foundation, BOM IT Solutions and some amazing individuals. Gympanzees were also donated over £200K of pro bono work to secure the site by Stride Treglown, Osborne Clarke, Northen QS, JLL, Hydrock and Burston Cooke. It has been a gargantuan team effort with every family, supporter, donor, advisor, volunteer, staff member, and trustee playing a crucial part.



Capital Campaign

We launched our Capital Campaign, Project Home Appeal, in September 2023. The campaign is a £10.8 million phased capital campaign. We need £8 million to open our doors, and plan to welcome our first visitors in June 2026.

In the first 3 months of the campaign we have raised over £1.8 million towards our target.

A massive thank you to our founding partners for your help so far with the Capital Campaign!

BOM IT Solutions
Burston Cook
Hydrock
Irwin Mitchell
JLL
Maggie
Northen QS
Osborne Clarke
Rockcliffe Charitable Trust
Stride Treglown
The Nisbet Trust
The Sunrise Foundation
Triodos Bank



Events 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 Golf Fundraising Days!

Our annual event successfully raised £8976.20! And through their own events to support Gympanzees, Henbury Golf Club raised £30,000!

Gympanzees Annual 3 Peaks Challenge

We had over 30 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 £29,564.74!



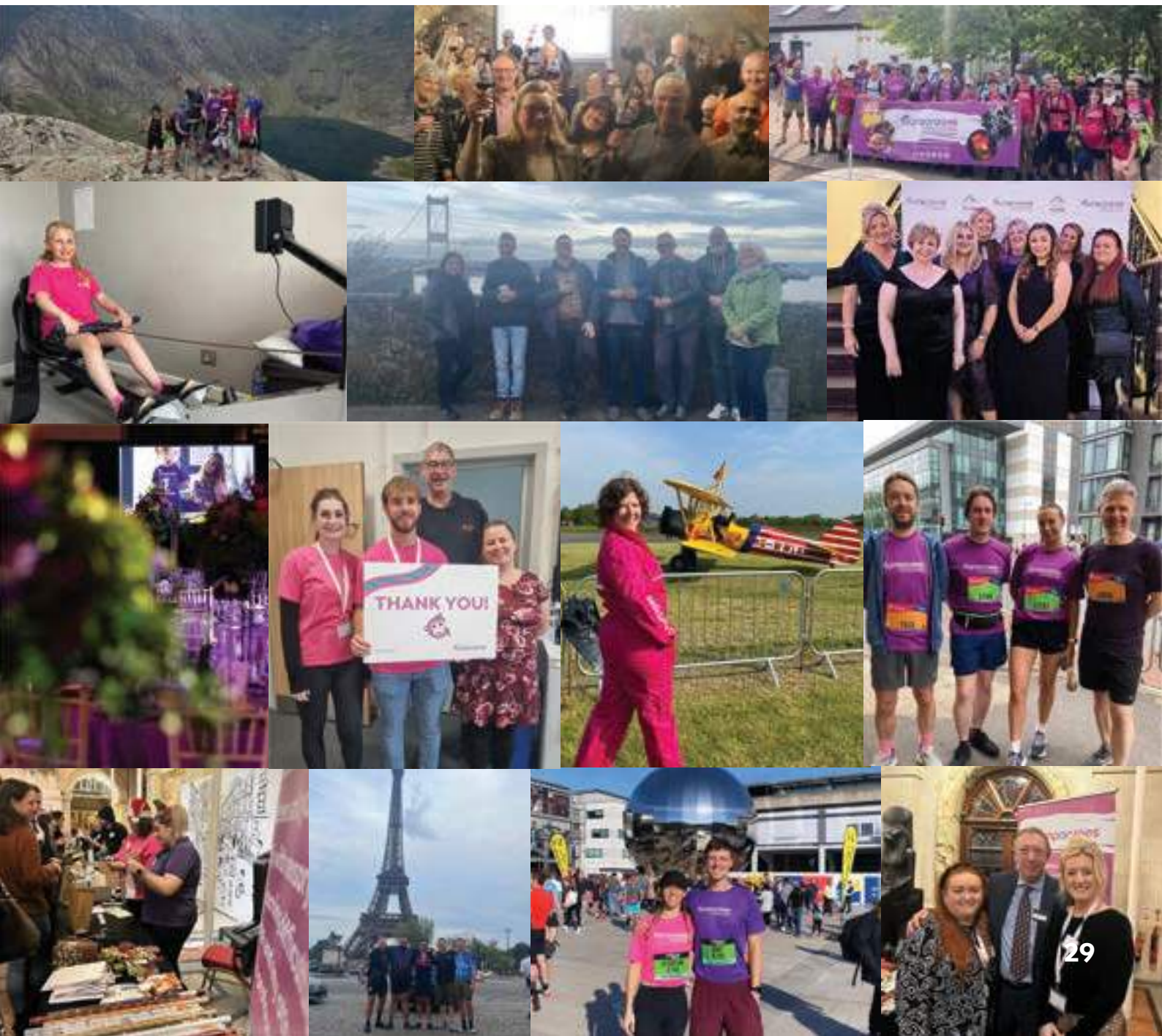
Gympanzees Charity Ball

An evening of glitz, glamour and fundraising! Thanks to the incredible amount of generosity in the room we took £78,000 in total!



Public Fundraising

We have received some fantastic engagement with our supporters this year, supporting us to raise the vital funds needed to purchase the new building at Aust. Here are just a few examples: Avery's wine-tasting event raised £3,890, a group of supporters braved a skydive for us, and raised £5,749.67 with another group set up to do the same in 2024. We witnessed the first wing walk which raised £1,843. We also saw the Bristol Half Marathon raise £4,725.35. Our Friends of Scheme received £4,701.70. And finally People Talents Cycling Challenge raised £4,325.78. In total Corporate Charity of the Year partnerships raised a total of £88,349.01.



Our Funders 2023

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

BClear Communications
Bentley Advancing Life Chances
Dame Violet Wills Will Trust
Denman Charitable Trust
DWF Foundation
Edward Gosling Foundation
The Hargreaves Foundation
Herefordshire Community Foundation
John Horniman's Childrens Trust
John James Bristol Foundation
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust
The Masonic Charitable Foundation
Medlock Charitable Trust
Mothers Union
Nisbet Trust
Paradigm Norton Trust
The Portishead Nautical Trust
Prince of Wales Trust
Quartet Community Foundation
Rockcliffe Charitable Trust
Souter Trust
Stoke Park Group Friends Fund
Sunrise Foundation
Van Neste Foundation
The Warburtons Foundation

Corporate

Archus
Ascot Group
Ashton Gate Stadium
Ashville Group
Averys Wine Merchants
Blow Salon
BOM IT Solutions
Bowmore Wealth Group
Bristol City Football Club
The Bristol Golf Club
Bristol Private Equity Club
Burgess Salmon
Business Leader Magazine
Conscious Solutions
Container Team
Enterprise Hire
Guildhall Chambers
Hollis Morgan
Hydrock
Irwin Mitchell
JLL
Limbs & Things
Mode Consult
Natwest
Ndemic Creations
Oakland Construction
Origin Workspace
Osborne Clarke
People Talent
Shakespeare Martineau
SR2
Team Refrigeration and
The Space Program

Groups

Amicus
Bristol Autism Support
Bristol Downsyndrome -
Trust
Bristol Parent Carer Forum
Buddies Adult Day Service
Cerebral Palsy Plus
Design For Life
Face
Jessie May
Jigsaw
Khas
Marches
Neon Daisy
North Somerset Council
Props
South Glos Parent Carers
Special Friends Club
South West -
Advocacy Network

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





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