



Daniel's Den

Impact Report 2020-2021

Daniel's Den is a Charitable Incorporated
Organisation, Registration Number: 1147172





A note from the CEO

2020 vision is a term used to express good eyesight and seeing things clearly. As the pandemic hit at the start of 2020, little did we realise that it would continue throughout 2020-2021 and would affect our vision in so many ways – literally and metaphorically.

We spent the whole year running sessions online through Zoom, Facebook, and other forms of social media. Only in the last few weeks of the summer term were we able to run some outdoor in-person sessions and how good they felt. The creativity, resilience and openness of our team has enabled us to reach out to families in totally new ways and, as we look back over the year, it's incredible to see the impact we have had on families albeit in different ways.

I do hope you enjoy this Impact Report.

Jo Gordon
CEO & Founder of Daniel's Den





Daniel's Den @ Home

When the lockdown first happened in March 2020, we piloted our Daniel's Den @ Home project which really came into its own at the start of Sept 2020. With uncertainty still in the air on what the restrictions were for businesses and socialising, we made the decision to keep all activities online for this reporting year. We used the crafts we would have been doing in our in-person sessions and throughout the year we refined and developed our crafts, with a focus on recycling and using everyday things in the home. The legacy of this is huge, as we finally have honed our crafts into a two-year programme with accompanying handbooks. With funding from the National Lottery Community Fund we were able to produce the craft packs for the majority of the year.

Craft Packs:

We gave out 440 craft packs over the year which were loved by many. Many of these have gone to families experiencing key life points such as bereavement, new baby or staying with grandparents.

'The handbook you supply is fantastic. I follow the instructions and my daughter now thinks I am an expert with crafts'

Martin

Facebook Live

We did 52 Facebook Live Sessions with an average viewing figure of 160 – this is where the weekly theme/craft was introduced

Weekly Zoom Session

We ran 150 Zoom Sessions

Virtual Trips

We 'visited' The beach, The Farm, Bethlehem and even Lapland!





POCO
SHOT ON POCO F1



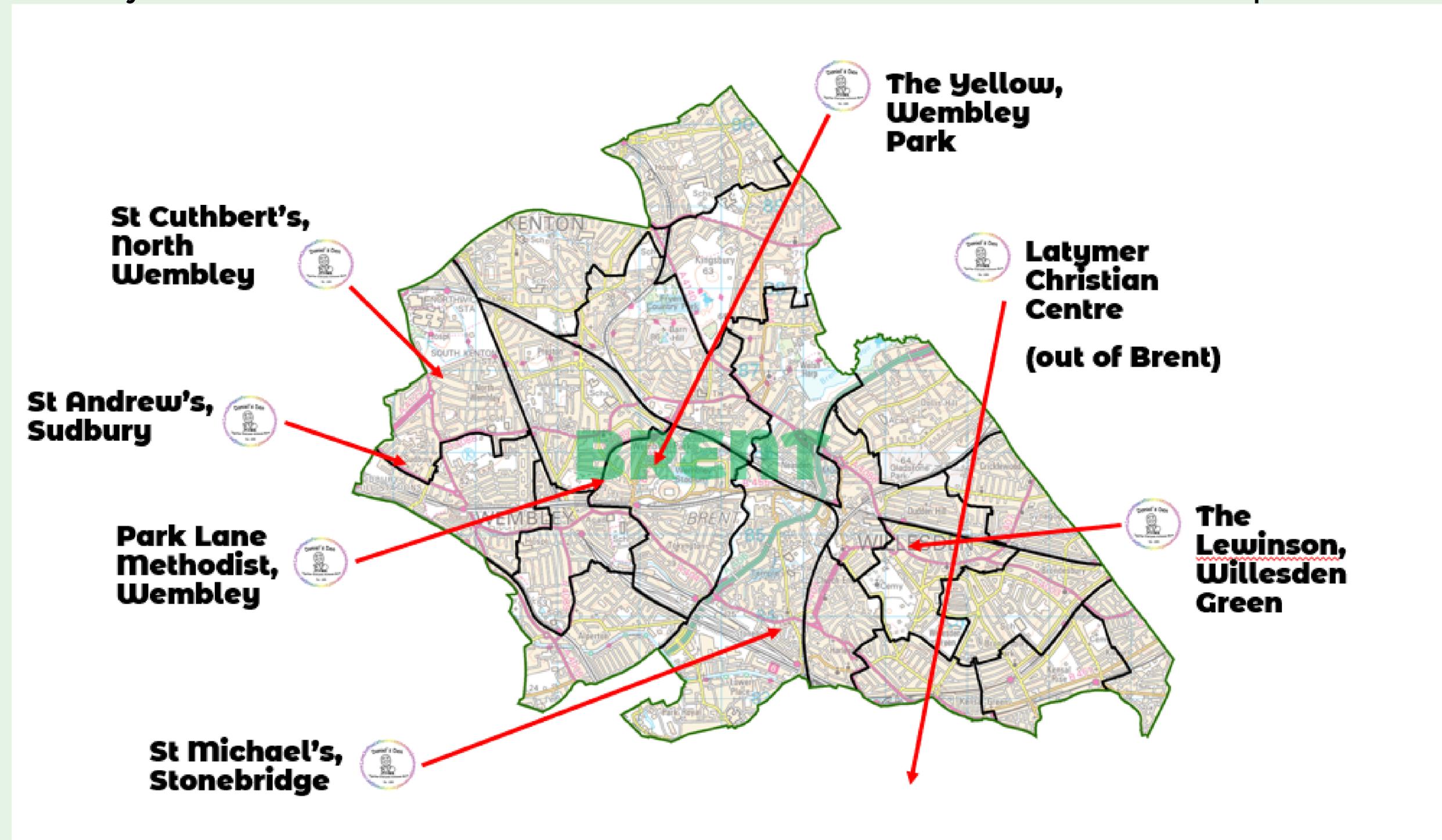
Sindhu & Seyon Daniel's Den @ Home

Sindhu and Seyon joined our Zoom sessions from Manchester. They arrived in the UK in Nov 2019 and hadn't made any friends face to face before lockdown. They found out about us from a family in London and joined us on Zoom. In the first session Seyon cried the whole time and hid behind his mum – he hadn't seen other people in such a close up way and was scared. Over the coming months his confidence grew and he actively joined in the sessions, creating the crafts and having fun with the games and singing. We were delighted to signpost him to an in-person session in Manchester at the end of the year and his mum commented how we had helped her son grow in confidence so much.



Our Groups

Though we didn't meet in person we ran Zoom sessions the same time and date we would have normally. We had local attendees and even some from Manchester and Hemel Hempstead!



Digital Poverty



We are keenly aware that offering activities online isn't a 'one size fits all' and many of our families didn't access them at all. In our feedback fortnight 50% said they hadn't attended and how many more didn't even respond to the question because they weren't online. Reasons for this include:

- Child has too much screen time
- Won't sit still (a misconceived prerequisite for joining the sessions)
- Not enough devices in the home
- Unreliable internet access
- Lack of skills

We addressed some of this.



A random tweet about a family needing another device so their little one could join led to a donation from a well-wisher in Derbyshire – they wanted to pay it forward 'I recognise my granddaughter has so much and I don't want another child to miss out'.



Donations from a local company, Sisk, included 2 laptops and an iPad, and this enabled our team to work from home.



Iva is one of our volunteers who didn't have a smart phone or computer. Thanks to cooperation between the local vicar and one of our session leaders she was given access to a computer and developed skills in using Zoom. This way she was able to engage in the online toddler groups.

T.E.A.M - Together Everyone Achieves More

Volunteers

The commitment and dedication of our volunteers is legendary and throughout this year they volunteered for a total of 1000+ hours. Whether it was snipping crafts, putting together craft packs, ringing people up, joining Zoom sessions, carol singing, making videos etc - they did an amazing job. The sense of teamwork grew in the midst of the pandemic, and we recruited new people to the team. Going online made our activities much more visible to the wider community and this piqued interest.



Staff

The Reaching Communities funding gave us the opportunity to recruit new members of the team. With the previous Operations Manager leaving in February, we were able to appoint Natalie Fabello in the role and she is relishing the opportunity to work with our various teams in a hands-on way. She is born and bred in Brent and has a vision to see DD growing. We now have several people in part-time roles and are endeavouring to build a staff team that can serve the vision of our charity. Bringing clarity to working processes is evolving as we combine working from home with working in the office.



In memory of Emma Hay

Volunteers

Emma Hay came to Daniel's Den at Gladstone Park Primary School when her daughter Anais was a baby. She couldn't help getting involved and she became one of our long-serving volunteers. She was always willing to help out - whether it was setting up, cleaning toys, leading singing sessions - she was there. She loved being on the welcome desk and was meticulous in ensuring everyone was signed in, paid their donation and received a welcome pack. She was an example to us all.

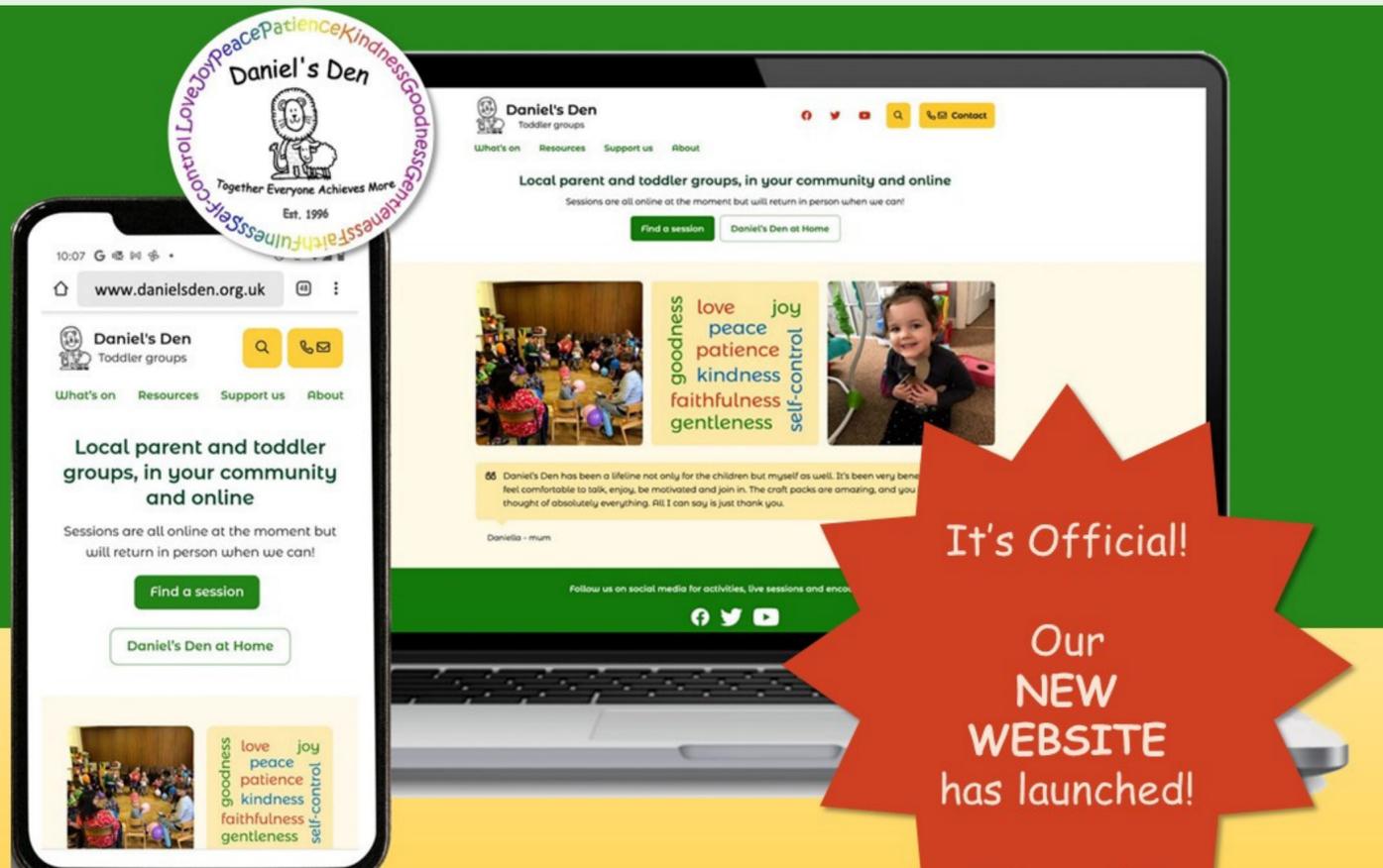
Emma was part of our TEAM and lived out our motto in so many ways - Together Everyone Achieves More. She was such a team player and really worked well with others. Helping run the DD at Wykeham School, running the afternoon session on Mondays at St Michael's in Wembley, helping lead at Gladstone Park Primary School, St Andrews and latterly the Lewinson Centre in Willesden as well as helping at other sessions. Emma served as a volunteer through good times and challenging times, never failing to smile in spite of her pain.

Her untimely death in January 2021 was a huge loss to the whole team at Daniel's Den. We dedicated our reprinted songbook to her and also created a new annual award called the Emma Hay Sunshine Memorial. This was presented to the volunteer who has made most progress over the year and our first recipient in June 2021 was Alison Ifil.





New Systems ... are go!



Through the support from Comic Relief Funding the new website went live during this year. This is integrated with a new database we have also been able to utilise with funding from The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund. We also have a new finance system being introduced. These will provide a sound base for our operations in the future and enable us to be much more responsive.

We have been very grateful for the Reaching Communities funding as this has allowed us to develop our staffing and systems, enabling the secure development of more groups. We recognise that we need to secure funding for the future as our income from donations from the group users and others is not sufficient to cover our costs. We are urgently addressing this with our new fundraising strategy.

Sowing Seeds - a DD Project

One of the huge successes of the year was our Sowing Seeds project. After some research that revealed over 20% of our families had no access to a garden or balcony, we developed a Sowing Seeds project. We were successful in receiving funding and then the pandemic hit, cutting off in-person contact with our families and pensioners. However, we did manage to put seeds into our craft packs and over the course of the years we grew: • Cress seeds • Sunflowers • Lettuce.

Families have shared their pictures At one of our craft collection points a member of the local community called Amanda came to collect one for her neighbour. She asked if we would be interested in helping with their local community allotment that needed attention. We jumped at the opportunity and Linda became the project leader with her volunteer assistant Gina. Over the course of the following months the space at the Chalkhill Community Growers Allotment was transformed. The 'sight for sore eyes' become a 'vision of beauty' and has been enjoyed by families on several occasions. DD was a catalyst and, after several meetings, The Metropolitan and Pinnacle Group have been directly involved in removing the rubbish, building raised beds, and filling them with compost. This has encouraged other community groups to get involved and the whole allotment is thriving.

We held two sessions every Saturday for families to attend - People who came along said how getting outside and growing things has really improved their mental and physical health. Volker Fitzpatrick donated garden tables and benches, a shed and outside classroom as well as building two mud kitchens. In July we had a fantastic Bear Hunt event that was enjoyed by so many. Martin, a retired headteacher and user of the allotment lead us in a fantastic re-enactment of the story Going on a Bear Hunt.



Other DD Projects

London Network

The London Network of Parent and Toddler Groups hosted monthly networking meetings to offer support across the city to other toddler groups and these were greatly appreciated. The annual conference took place in October 2020, via Zoom, with 90+ delegates, and included a representative from Little Village, Homestart, local midwives plus other toddler group leaders leading sessions. It was very well received, and plans are already underway for the conference in 2021. In June we coordinated the London Prayer Marathon – telling Good News stories from each of the 32 London boroughs. It opened people’s eyes to what is going on across the city – for a new baby bank in Harrow to a group for non-moving babies in Bexley. Through this raised profile we were able to support a new group opening in September in Church Road, NW10 with the donation of equipment and prayer support.

Hotspots

Our weekly discussions on relevant topics took place every Monday evening in Zoom and were streamed live on Facebook. The highlight for us was an interview with Martin Murray and he spoke candidly re his experience as a dad.

Bumps Babies and Brushes

The idea for this project came from one of our mums, Laura, who gave birth to twins in the pandemic. She was keenly aware of the challenges of giving birth in Lockdown and wanted to help reach out to new parents in a fun creative way. She devised some online art projects and thanks to funding from Aviva we were able to send out packs to people’s homes and run sessions via Zoom. We were very aware that so many babies were born during Lockdown and hah had no contact with other children for the whole of their life. This is true for toddlers too.

Networking

Throughout the year a greater presence online led to increased publicity and a growing awareness of what we do. This attracted several connections and opportunities including speaking at a conference for children’s workers in the South East, a shout out on national radio for being a great example of a hybrid toddler and writing articles for several publications.



London Network of Parent and Toddler Groups



'Run by toddler groups for toddler groups'



The great outdoors

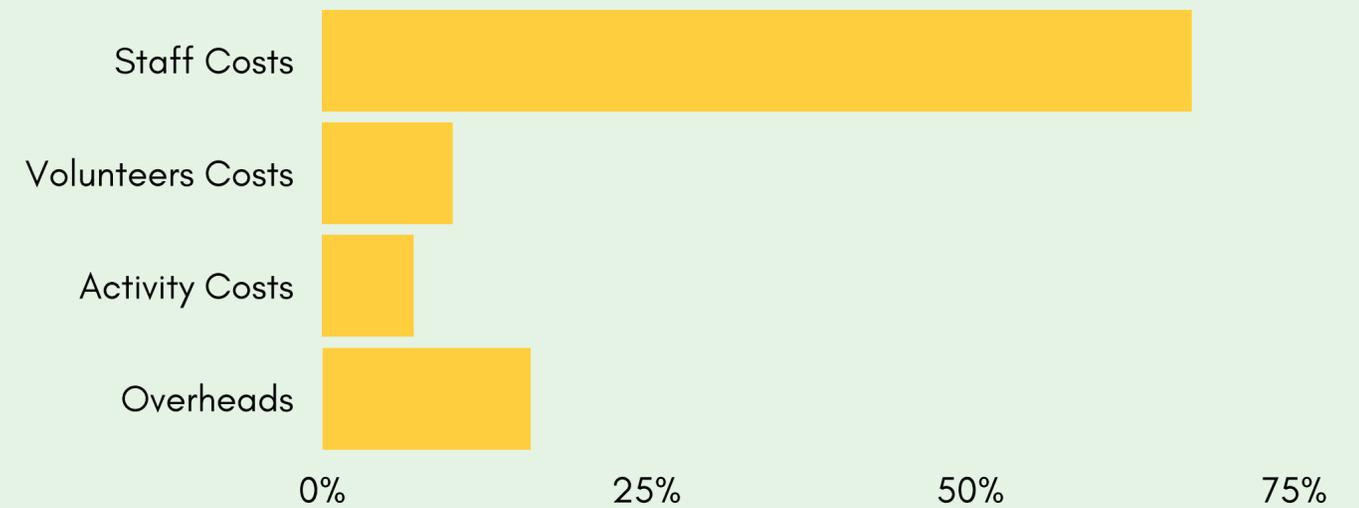
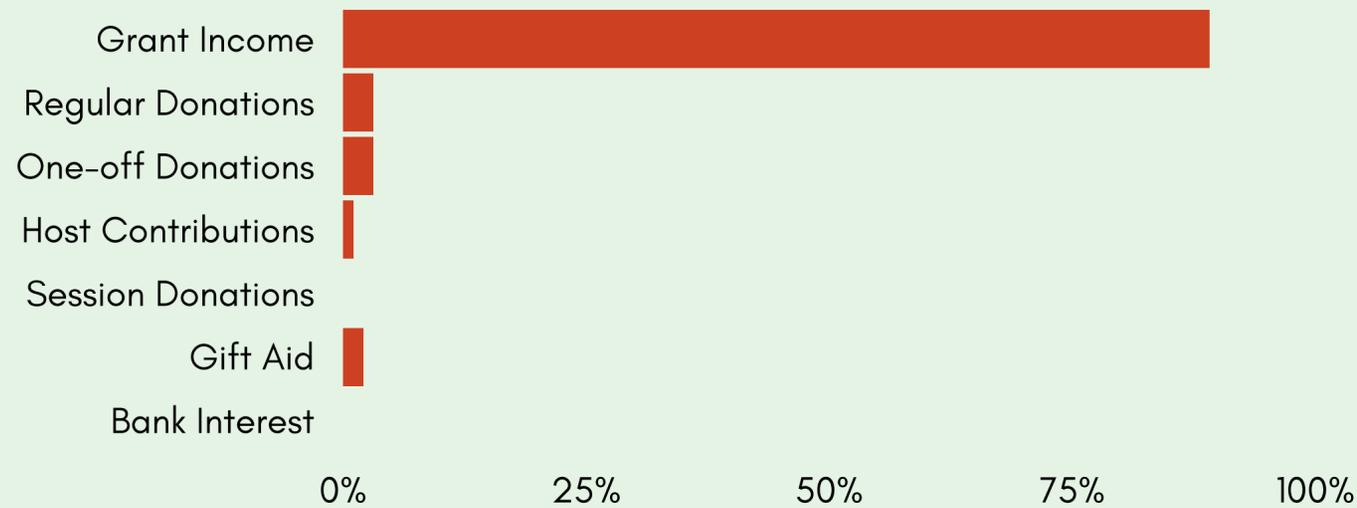
At the start of our Summer term we toyed with the idea of opening up some outdoor sessions at our venues with a private outdoor space. Our phone and email were inundated with enquiries of when we were re-opening our groups, hearing from countless parents desperate for their children & themselves to get out and socialise again. In June we opened outdoor groups in our St Michael's, St Andrew's and St Cutbert's venues as they had private gardens. During this time, we saw dozens of new families register on our database through our website, anticipating updates of when we would host our pop up sessions.

We were also happy to be able to host our annual Great Get Together picnic at King Edwards Park in Wembley. It was joyous to see many old and new faces. Our presence at the park also caught the attention of families using the park who joined in the fun and received our information cards so they could read up on more of what we do and bring their children to future sessions.



Money

Where our money comes from & where it goes



We are very dependent on grants and fundraising to provide our sessions. We could not run our sessions from session donations alone and with Covid-19 halting in person groups has made it harder. We are seeking new avenues in order to provide our @home projects and prep for our return to physical groups when permitted.



Looking ahead

2020 vision is something to be treasured. Sight does change over time and it's important to have it tested – sometimes we don't even know it is changing but things can be blurred. I know my own eyesight has been affected by spending so much time in front of a screen.

In July 2021 the trustees met for a vision away day and this helped us look at things with new eyes. Our focus is on establishing 12 Daniel's Dens in Brent and having these as a rich resource in their local community and being beacons of hope for others to see.

Reopen or in person groups

We are planning to reopen our in-person groups in September 2021 – these will be in Willesden, Wembley Central, Stonebridge, Sudbury, Ladbroke Grove, Wembley Park and North Wembley. We are planning to open a new group in Chalkhill and also a Global Zoom Group online. This will be 9 groups in total.

Celebrating 25 years

In November 2021 we will celebrate our 25th birthday. We will be looking back in order to see where we've come from since November 1996 and also look forward to the next 25 years. What will DD look like in 2046?



Thanks to our funders

Friends of Daniel's Den

The National Lottery Reaching Communities

Comic Relief

Aviva

Robert Southall Trust

Wembley Park Community Fund



Thank You

Daniel's Den

St Andrews Church | 956 Harrow Road,
Sudbury, HA0 2QA | Tel: 020 8908 6986

Website: www.danielsden.org.uk

Daniel's Den is a parent and toddler organisation based in London,
which provides a variety of sessions in different locations during term-time only.
It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisations, registration 1147172

