



Business Plan 2022-24



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"My children were 9 and 10 years old when my husband died of cancer. Simon Says was an important part of our lives for many years, and supported us all, as we rode the rollercoaster of grief. Now Michael is 22 and Lauren is 21 years, and I cannot believe how far we have come. Looking back I remember Sunday afternoons in Eastleigh, where the kids enjoyed craft activities, and explored various topics surrounding grief, whilst us bereaved adults supported each other over a cuppa. Then Michael and Lauren joined the youth group, and continued to benefit from interacting with others, who had also lost a loved one. There were Christmas parties, residential trips and summer barbecues. We made friends for life and happy memories through Simon Says, and everyone involved with this charity should know what a huge difference the charity makes to bereaved families, as they work their way through the toughest of times."



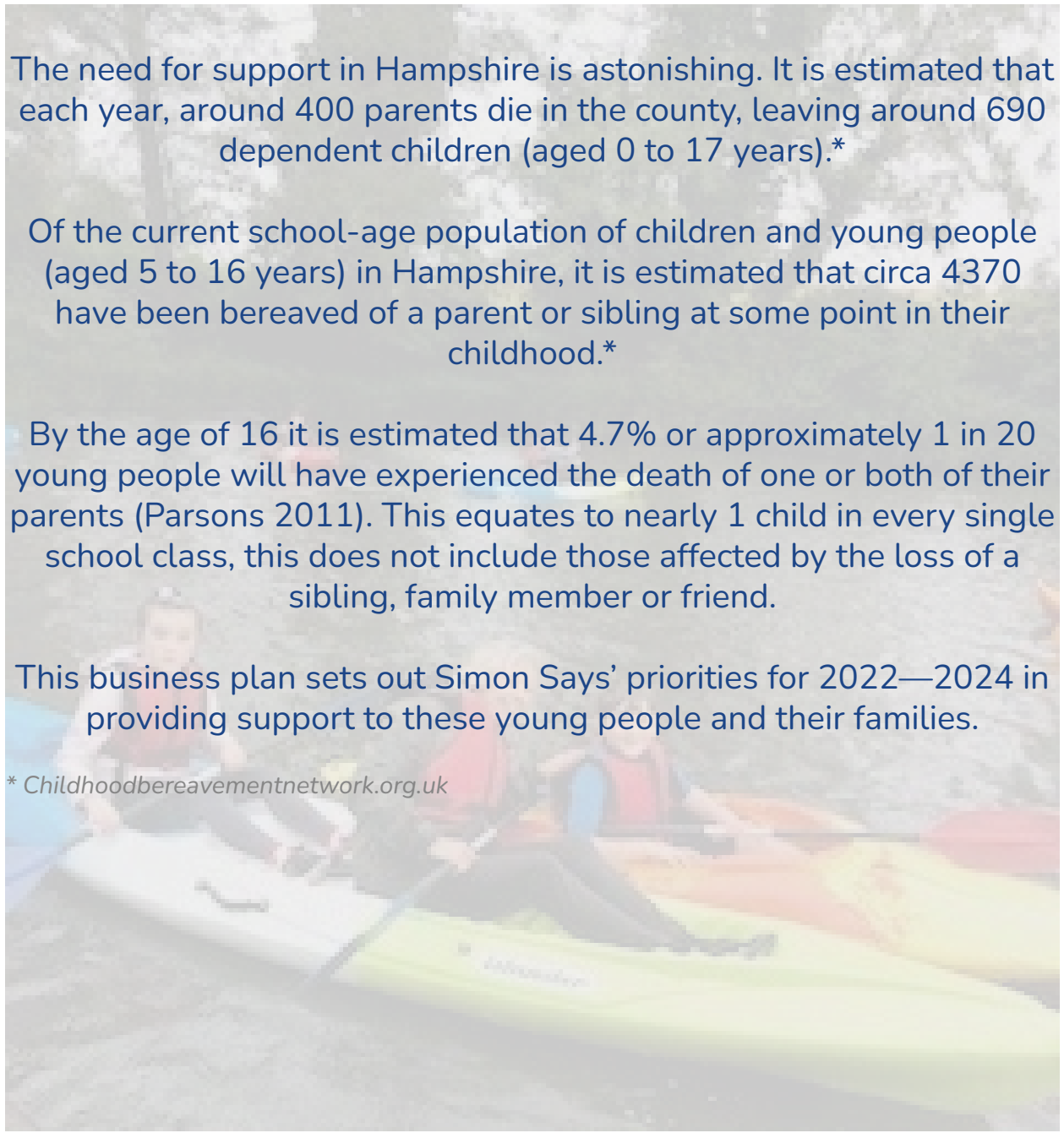
The need for support in Hampshire is astonishing. It is estimated that each year, around 400 parents die in the county, leaving around 690 dependent children (aged 0 to 17 years).*

Of the current school-age population of children and young people (aged 5 to 16 years) in Hampshire, it is estimated that circa 4370 have been bereaved of a parent or sibling at some point in their childhood.*

By the age of 16 it is estimated that 4.7% or approximately 1 in 20 young people will have experienced the death of one or both of their parents (Parsons 2011). This equates to nearly 1 child in every single school class, this does not include those affected by the loss of a sibling, family member or friend.

This business plan sets out Simon Says' priorities for 2022—2024 in providing support to these young people and their families.

* Childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk



Simon Says was founded in 2001

Our mission is to provide support for children and young people up to the age of 18, living in the county of Hampshire, who have a significant person in their life who has died or is dying.

We will ensure we can provide the best standards of care and support for the people using our services; secure funding; raise awareness of the support we offer; support existing work and provide evidence of our success by clearly setting out how we can effectively engage with service users and other key stakeholders.

At Simon Says, we know that the death of someone important can have a devastating effect on a child or young person. Given appropriate support and information, children and young people can be supported to understand what has happened and move forward to rebuilding their lives. Whether the death was sudden, or expected, we work closely in practical and creative ways with children and young people to create an atmosphere in which grief can be shared and normalised.

Our values

Values are crucial to the culture of any organisation and ours reflect the behaviour we embody. Whether we're talking to a child, young person, a parent, a volunteer or to a member of our own team, we always strive to be kind, inclusive, ambitious and genuine.

We are: caring, hopeful and honest; we respect others and we are always keen to learn and develop as an organisation.





Our mission

When children lose someone close to them they may feel angry, guilty, frightened and alone. It can be very difficult for a parent, carer, close relative or friend to help a bereaved child when they are grieving too. So our mission is :

- The relief of sickness and distress, by the support of children and young people who have suffered or are about to suffer a bereavement; and
- The advancement of education by the promotion of study and research in relation to the effects of childhood bereavement and into methods of supporting bereaved children and young people and the provision of training and education in relation to those effects and methods.

Our aim

To provide support for children and young people up to the age of 18, living in the county of Hampshire, who have a significant person in their life who has died or is dying,

- by listening
- supporting positive action by and for the young person
- sharing what we know about bereavement and its effects.

We will fulfil our mission by continuing to....

- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the charity to meet the needs of our service users.
- Increase awareness of the role of Simon Says in providing support to bereaved children and their families.
- Recruit, train and support our valued volunteers
- Continue to ensure ongoing quality and consistency of service delivery.
- Create a financial strategy that enables the delivery of the 2022 business plan through collaboration with current partners and future fundraisers.



Action plan for 2022

We realise that Simon Says has already supported hundreds of families in their most difficult times. Whilst we have ambitions, our continued success will always be dependent on our ability to raise funds in order to meet the needs of the families we intend to support. Our action plan looks to develop three broad areas of governance, service delivery and back-office support.

In the next year we aspire to:

- **Develop the trustee board**
 - Take advantage of our new Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status as a vehicle to provide a firm foundation for the future
 - Recruit two new trustees to widen the knowledge, skills and diversity of the board
 - Recruit a board secretary or service to support board meetings
 - Review skill gaps by surveying existing trustees alongside our business need
- **Build capacity for effective operational delivery**
 - Recruit core team members
 - Train existing staff/volunteers and newly recruited trustees
 - Support and review operational delivery of support groups in terms of quality, consistency and outcomes - with a view to a longer-term strategy to underpin our contribution to wider research and development.
 - Review the delivery plan for education service support and pilot an intensive, proactive approach across one patch
 - Provide IT training for staff
 - Fully review existing IT systems in the next year in line with our service delivery objectives
- **Income generation**
 - Support and add value to traditional Simon Says fundraising events
 - In the short term we will target specific funds to help support our service delivery
 - Develop a longer-term funding strategy to take account of past revenues and look forward to new ones



Our current position



Our Volunteers

Simon Says services are provided by a group of dedicated and skillful volunteers. In 2021 we had 140 active volunteers registered to work with our support groups, on activity days, in education settings, answering the telephone support line, helping out at events and in the office.

However, due to the restrictions of the pandemic the amount of face to face support and activity was severely curtailed. Our Helpline continued to function and by the end of 2021 had taken 875 calls – the largest amount in any year since the charity began.

Volunteers contributed 912 hours supporting our regular groups alone (there were only 6 months of groups) However there were additional hours in terms of school events, training, activity days.

Each volunteer is recruited in line with HR guidance and policy. They are asked to submit an application, are interviewed, DBS checked and trained. Every volunteer is expected to undertake annual training, supervision and review. In addition they are required to read and understand all Simon Says policies as part of their induction. They each have access to our volunteers website where they can get activity updates, they can sign up for events and email other volunteers.



Children and Families

We registered 143 new children and young people in the last quarter of 2021, and support groups got back up and running.

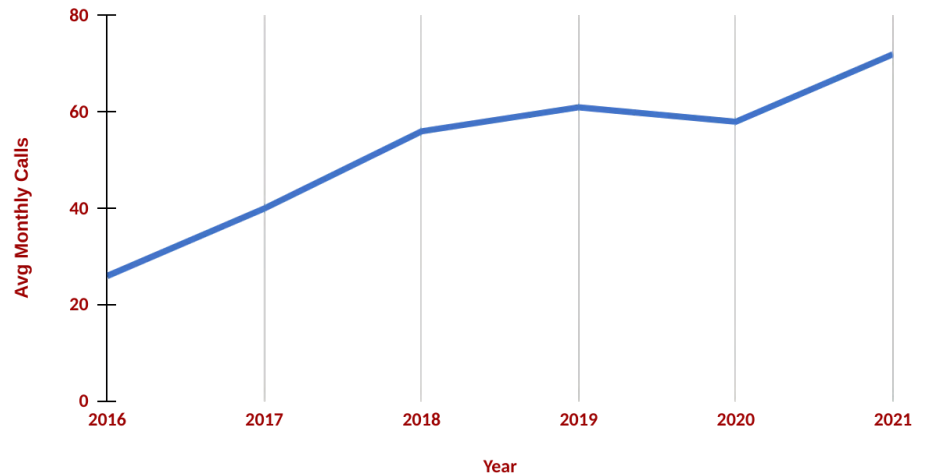
Our plans for 2022 are to firmly re-establish all 7 groups and to reinstate the Boxing Club in partnership with ActiveMe360. We aim to hold a summer event for all service



users and volunteers, and provide additional activity as needs become better understood.

Previously we have seen a steady increase in the numbers of children attending our group sessions. Even with the effects of the pandemic we saw 549 children in 2021 in only 6 months of activity. This is exactly half of the pre-pandemic numbers (2019 = 1152). This chart shows our average monthly helpline calls for the last 6 years.

Avg Monthly Calls by Year



Governance

We continue to evolve as a Board of Trustees, annually reviewing the roles, responsibilities and skill sets to meet the needs of the Charity. The current Board members have specific areas of responsibility and the Board has a programme of work to determine the direction Simon Says will take in the next 3 years and beyond. We have taken the first step in changing our charity status into a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission. This process has allowed us time to revisit and update the governance of Simon Says.

Our Funding / Financial Position

The Charity is in a good finance position at the start of 2022. However, this is due to previous prudence and a strong Reserves position going into the pandemic. The impact on fundraising events over the last year has been significant, and this means we cannot rely on the status quo being sufficient for the future. Our plan in 2022 is to resume fundraising activities, and to develop a FundRaising strategy that will support the charity going forward.



Last year income was down by £20,000 and this was offset by reduced activity and staffing. The new Business Plan requires investment in staffing and infrastructure such as IT for the future. This means we will be exploring new opportunities for income, monitoring expenditure closely and looking to see where we can gain efficiencies in our current operating model.

The 2022 Business Plan reflects this need to build a strong base over the year to enable us to develop further in 2023.

Risk Management

Our funding structure helps to diversify our income streams and manage risk. We continually review our income and expenditure with a view to providing the highest proportion of front-line services possible with the funding available. Thereby maximising our assets.

Key risks

We see our key risks as;

- The impact of the pandemic across all areas of our work with an anticipated increase in providing support and information for colleagues across the statutory sector.
- Recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled volunteers with the ability to meet our service users needs in the right areas of the county.
- Insufficient funding due to the unpredictable effect of the pandemic on fundraising activities, which could affect service delivery and deplete our reserves.
- A safeguarding or data protection incident which could lead to a negative impact on a family and damage the reputation of the charity
- IT failure leading to breach of GDPR regulations and current IT inefficiency.

In order to mitigate our risks we regularly review our risk register reporting by exception at Board level. We have an ongoing recruitment programme, monthly and quarterly reviews of the Charity's finances, all of our volunteers are DBS checked and regular IT checks are in place.



Objectives and Actions

Key Objectives & Actions



1. Develop the trustee board

Objective	Measurement	How?	Who?
Register as a Charity Incorporated Organisation	Develop ideas and practices to take full advantage of being a CIO	Build in check points through the year to ensure we are on track	Chair/Board
Improve Board Meeting records, planning and documentation.	In post by March 2022	Recruit a Board Secretary.	COO
Review skill gaps	Analysis of survey results - and action by May 2022	Trustees to complete survey	Chair
Develop the skill and diversity of the Board for the new CIO	Two new trustees in post by July 2022	Advertise and appoint at least 2 new trustees	Chair/Board



2. Build capacity for effective operational delivery

Objective	Measurement	How?	Who?
Develop and strengthen the capacity of the operational delivery team	New team members in post. Staff Turnover data Staff exit interviews	Recruit core team members to specific roles Identify , develop and support a set of key volunteers Succession plan key roles – staff and volunteers	COO
Recruit Volunteers to match organisational needs	Each Group and area of delivery eg; Helpline, has a pipeline of new and trained volunteers.	Advertise, interview and train new volunteers in areas where there are gaps. Undertake a skills audit and / or a geographical audit.	COO
Establish quality evaluation/ impact measures	Presentation of data options to the Board, providing a baseline from which to move forward, for approval by the end of the year.	Research other orgs. Ask service users what would work for them. Look at best practice guidance. Assess data required for funding bids – incorporate those measures that make a successful outcome.	COO
Review and develop of Education Resources to further research in the field	Board paper by end of the year , with recommendations for any changes and funding required to improve our impact and increase our reach in education settings	Review existing support – methods and resources into schools (noting impact of covid and new ways of working)	COO



Undertake a full review of IT operating systems to make best use of technology across all service delivery.	No paperwork through the post by end of the year. One system in place used by all. Data stored in the cloud	Engage a consultant to assess our current use of technology and suggest improvements to meet GDPR standards consistently and increase efficiency	COO
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3. Income Generation

Objective	Measurement	How?	Who?
Support and add value to traditional Simon Says fundraising events	Increase income from 2021 Illicit support from new sources. Explore statutory income possibilities.	Start planning for new year, based on analysis of previous best income gains – ROI. Make more use of social media to advertise – have a plan for the year. Engage key group of F/R volunteers to support activities	COO
In the short term we will target specific funds to help support our service delivery	Set an income target for grant applications Receive funding	Submit a bid	COO
Maximise income generation to support specific goals	New funders / donors offer support	Create interest in an original scheme / pilot project	COO



Our future aspirations

In the longer term we will.....

- Research and develop a plan for supporting children and young people in new ways.
- Keep abreast of developing trends regarding the complexities of traumatic bereavement and start incorporating what we learn in our delivery
- Revitalise our website to include an improved area for school staff and other 3rd parties.
- Aim to carry out some market scoping and analysis of our service provision in our geographical patch and work more collaboratively with the healthcare industry i.e. health, GP's, NHS, Hospitals, hospices and other bereavement organisations in order to share best practice.
- Benchmark ourselves against similar charities not in our area, develop our techniques, our training and our offering.





Child Bereavement Support

Contact details



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<http://www.simonsays.org.uk/>



@SimonSaysCBS



Simon says child bereavement support



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