

Family Fun Sessions

Thursday 7 August 2025

12.30-2pm and 2.30-4pm

The King's Church

Budget: £2400 split across 3 dates (approx. £800 per session)

Broken down into: £900 from Budding Foundation
£1500 from BHTC

Total Spent: £650.25

Spend Breakdown:

£190 -Bloomin' art

£12.75 -replacement date sticker for banner

£152.50 -inflatable assault course

£295 -Trackmaster Sussex

There were no costs incurred for:

-stones for painting activity, which were gifted by The Budding Foundation

-Venue hire, volunteers and additional activities were provided by The King's Church (TKC)

Aim: To provide a safe and fun event for children and young people with SEND, whilst providing support and information to parents and carers, as well as offering activities to siblings.

Number of bookable tickets: 60 families, via Ticketsource and the Help Point.

Booking statistics: The total number of bookings was 29 families for both sessions, so 58 in total. Tickets were per family but they were asked to provide the ages of the children attending. So, we are able to break down the booking to show how many children attended. We also asked where people lived.

	12.30pm	2.30pm	total
No. of families	29	29	58
People in total	97	95	192
Just Children	52	56	108

Per area	total
Burgess Hill	33
Surrounding Village -Hurst/Hassocks etc	6
Haywards Heath	17
West Sussex	2
None of the above	0

Looking at the ages of the children; the bookings were mainly for children aged 4-7, with smaller numbers of under 3's and 8-11-year-olds. There were also a small number of children aged 12 plus, 4 of whom were not attending with a younger sibling.

Child's age	total
under 3	24
age 4-7	49
age 8-11	29
age 12 plus	6
total	108

Most of the activities were aimed at ages 4-11 so hopefully the majority children were catered for.

Attendee statistics: The total number of attendees on the day was 43 families across both sessions, 22 and 21 respectively. There were 5 on the day cancellations (3 and 2 respectively) and 4 no shows in the first session and 6 in the second.

Publicity:

The event was advertised in a multitude of ways, including:

- The King's Church shared the event with congregation, contacts and on their social media
- Poster in the Help Point Window
- Event calendar
- Press release in advance
- Shared with all local schools
- All noticeboards in the town
- Nationwide noticeboard
- Middy article (from summer PR)
- A banner at the McDonalds roundabout
- Several posts on the Town Council Facebook
- Sent, via email, to all the Young Carers database
- Shared with a support group I am part of personally
- Sent to those who attended the April sessions
- On the holiday activity flyer

Event breakdown:

Local organisations who support families were invited to attend and have an information table at the event. 5 organisations attended offering support; these were:

- Brighton Hove & West Sussex Deaf Children's Society
- NHS Oral Health team
- West Sussex County Council Early Help Team
- West Sussex Library Service
- Makaton Jenny

Carers Support were due to attend but cancelled last minute due to staffing issues.

The King's Church ran a number of activities with volunteers from the church, and the budget was used to provide other activities, some information services provided activities too. The activities were all free to do and on offer there was:

- Inflatable assault course
- Giant train tracks
- Stone painting activity
- Floor level games
- Lego table
- Clay art
- Several colouring activities
- Art activity with Bloomin' Art
- Temporary tattoos station

The Library staff provided a sensory story reading, alongside Jenny Fisher who did Makaton signs.

Feedback:

We created a QR code which is available at the events to scan as well as in notice boards afterwards. The code is linked to a Google form which we can keep adding events to without changing the code itself. The form simply asks what event you have attended, *'what went well'*, *'it would be even better if...'* and *'If the event you attended required you to book in advance, how did you find the process?'*

Here are some of the responses received for this event:

What went well?

- Everything. It's amazing that SEND kids have opportunity to have many activities under one roof.
- Inclusive, Fun! My children felt they could be themselves with ease. Brilliant day!
- Lots of space, lots of choice of activities, the bouncy castle assault course, Lego.
- It was well organised and resourced with helpers, lots to do, lovely craft activities, a great range of activities that were very appropriate for SEND children and siblings
- Well organised. Not too busy.
- Really impressed with the variety of activities on offer
- Fantastic free event with lots of fun activities for my children to do.
- Lovely helpful volunteers. Good range of activities. Lovely atmosphere.
- Great activities, amazing staff (Trisha especially).
- Great range of different activities for my children. Lovely helpful.
- Everything
- Its good so far

It would be even better if...

- More events. More inflatables sessions. SEN sport.
- There were more Sen family days during the summer in BH as this one was 2 slots in 1 day.
- My daughter loves the sand art they used to do. And my son loved the hot wheels that was here last time
- If it would be more events for SEND kids. And if it would be more activities for kids 13 years old and older
- In comparison to the previous SEN sessions, we have attended this one seemed a lot busier and louder so both my children found this session more of a struggle but my eldest was unable to join in some activities as she just felt overwhelmed by how noisy the environment was. I think it is hard with SEN sessions as my children need a very quiet and calm environment where I know other children attending are often noisier and more boisterous.
- Tables could have had signs to explain what the activity was as didn't realise what some were set up for until heard someone say

- Honestly can't think of anything, I think it is better every year, something for all my children's ages (10-4)
- Signposted to more children with SEN
- Nothing it was great
- Nothing
- All went well :)

If the event you attended required you to book in advance, how did you find the process?

- Very easy, quick phone call
- Very Easy (x2 comments)
- Fine
- Its good
- It was fine
- Easy (x4 comments)
- Booking was very easy to do.

Feedback from information services and activity providers:

The Budding Foundation (sponsor of the sessions) -I am pleased we were once again able to support the Family Fun Sessions organised by Burgess Hill Town Council & Kings Church, having personally attended I was very impressed by the standard of activities together with the excellent volunteers. The children were enjoying play and learning new skills. Congratulations to all involved.

The King's Church -The King's Church Team feels privileged to be a part of this display of community partnership working. It was brilliant to see parents and carers connecting with each other and with the supporting organisations who made themselves available for the day. We hope families came away feeling encouraged and with positive memories, made through their engagement with the wide range of activities on offer. A huge thank you to all who contributed their time and energy – it really would not happen without you. We look forward to the next sessions in October!

The Oral Health Team -Thank you for inviting the oral health promotion team to join you the last couple of years. As a consequence of attending last year the team met a local author, Julie McDonald. We were able to support and guide Julie in the creation of 'Hedgy Visits the Dentist'.

We wanted a story with up-to-date information and characters that children can connect with, especially those who have never visited the dentist before. The book is accessible for all children, and adults, Hedgy is neurodiverse and worried about his visit to a new place. The book contains not only the story but also a game, 5 step guide for looking after teeth and advise for parents and carers. All this because we were invited to your event – we can't thank you enough. You can find out more here at the launch we had in our trust nursery here: <https://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/news/trust-news/oral-health-team-supports-new-childrens-book-on-visiting-the-dentist>

Both years we have found the event brilliantly organised and it has enabled us to talk to families who might otherwise might not have an opportunity to talk freely about their fears about oral health and access to issues.

Evaluation:

Interestingly, the ages of children for these sessions were quite different from the April sessions. Where as in April the main ages were 4-11 (40 aged 4-7 and 41 aged 8-11) with 14 under 3's, for these sessions 49 children were aged 4-11, with 29 aged 8-11 and 24 aged 3 or under. Also 15 over 12's attended in April, compared with only 6 for August.

As our target age for activities was 4-11, most children were catered for. We will also continue to provide some activities for older children, and if there are lots of young children/babies then we are able to use some of TKC's resources to cater to them.

Analysing the data from where people live, it is interesting that 33 families stated they were Burgess Hill residents, 6 from a surrounding village, 17 declare they are from Haywards Heath and a further 2 from West Sussex in general.

That calculates to 57% being Burgess Hill residents, 10% being from a surrounding village, but a huge 29% being Hayward Heath residents (all percentages rounded up/down). Whilst TKC has a Mid Sussex based congregation, not just Burgess Hill, and we are very close to Haywards Heath, with the borders ever merging closer, we need to continue to assess the number of non-residents we support. Whilst residents of the surrounding villages will not get similar support from the village councils, as their budgets are lower etc, Haywards Heath does have a Town Council who should be looking to support their residents.

There was a good turnout on the day, and both sessions were fairly similar with numbers of cancellations/no-shows. In April, there were many more families who didn't attend the second session and we wondered if the unseasonally warm weather had an effect or just the later time of the session, but the number for August reinforce the thoughts that the weather effected the April numbers.

Looking at the feedback, there is a comment around the sessions feeling busier and this was definitely true when we look at the stats for April and August. Whilst we can take onboard the comment; I would not limit the number of tickets lower than the 60 agreed, as this number allows us to support as many families as possible, whilst enabling a number of no-shows and cancellations. If we were to limit the number, then we would need to think further about how we manage the no-shows and cancellations, which would be difficult.

Overall, the feedback is positive, and we continue to see families returning time and time again, as well as new people attending. The supporting organisations are also keen to keep returning and find the event beneficial to them and report meaningful conversations. The feedback from the Oral Health team is really positive and shows not only are families building good networks but that the organisations are too.

Thinking about 2026, we are very keen to continuing to deliver 6 sessions, across the 3 dates, working with the Budding Foundation and TKC, as well as all the supporting organisations.

Kayleigh Elliott-Davidson
Events, Communication and Administration Officer
11/8/2025

Photos of event

