

Little Hiccups Secretary Report

Reporting Period: July 2025 – July 2026

1. Introduction

This year has been defined by immense strategic evolution, team reinforcement, and record-breaking community growth. As a Leeds-based, parent-led charity, Little Hiccups continues to break barriers to ensure no family raising a child with additional needs or disabilities feels isolated. Through a major push towards corporate partnerships and the expansion of internal support staff, we have navigated 2026 with resilience and a clear focus on long-term sustainability.

2. Key Achievements

- **Surpassing 1,500 Members:** Registered families grew from 1,354 to a massive 1,587 total registered members.
- **Prestigious Award Finalists:** Celebrated community recognition as shortlisted finalists for both the Marie Gibb Awards and the Pride in Diversity Awards!
- **Launch of the 'Ready for Physio' Trail:** Introduced a brand-new physical activity path in June 2026 to keep children actively moving and supported.
- **Launch of Lunch and Learns:** Successfully piloted and rolled out our popular 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, creating an accessible path focused on vital education and key legal factors for parents.



- **Establishment of Dadlands:** Launched our brand-new, male-only group specifically designed to support and aid mental health for dads and male carers within our community.
- **Corporate Partnerships Launch:** Successfully established our new business corporate partnership scheme to anchor funding and collaborate closer with companies.
- **Expanded Counselling Team:** Recruited and welcomed both Dawn Walton and Rebecca Mitchell to bolster our mental health and counselling capacities.

3. Events & Engagement

We continued to deliver an extensive calendar of events, transitioning to new formats that our families love:

- **Stay n Play Growth:** Remained incredibly popular with themed sessions and interactive play. *Our World*, *Our Song* and *Our Story* and with the introduction of Lisa from Sense offering Sensory Sessions. We have also moved to TCV Skelton on a monthly basis to offer a wild and outdoor session.
- **Major Fun Days:** Ran massive community celebrations including our signature Eid Parties, summer picnics, and accessible excursions.
- **Summer Theatre Dance:** Successfully continued our highly popular theatre dance groups for the children during the holidays.

4. New Initiatives

- **Educational & Legal Focus:** Formally integrated our 'Lunch and Learn' programme into our ongoing support framework, targeting crucial educational and legal guidance for families.
- **Dadlands Peer Support:** Introduced regular 'Dadlands' sessions to provide a trusted, focused space for men to connect and protect their wellbeing.
- **Sense Partnership:** Formed a brilliant new link with Lisa from Sense directly within our Stay n Play sessions to expand sensory-specific expertise.



- **Harewood Link:** Formally established a brand-new community access partnership with *Harewood House*.
- **Staff Development Focus:** Invested heavily in team training, completing a 2-day De-escalation course alongside expert *Relax Kids* training, First Aid, and Child Protection.

5. Performance & Impact

- **Registered Families:** 1,587 (*Up from 1,354*)
- **Facebook Followers:** 2,995 (*Up from 2,655*)
- **Mailing List Subscribers:** 1,020 (decreased but tidied up the list to remove those that had unsubscribed)
- **LinkedIn Professional Reach:** Scaled significantly to 355 connections (*Up from 227*).
- **Case Study Highlight:** *Cai's Hydrotherapy Journey*—demonstrating transformative physical strength, pain reduction, and a crucial six-month delay in spinal surgery.

6. Challenges & Resilience

With an expanding footprint, our adherence to high governance standards has remained exemplary:

- Managed 11 health and safety occurrences (including minor slips, epileptic seizures, and scuffles), handling all with swift de-escalation and preventative planning.
- Recorded 1 safeguarding cause for concern, which was appropriately assessed with no further progression required.
- Managed 1 isolated hate/discriminatory language incident during a Stay n Play session. It was assessed via dynamic risk profiling, kept confidential as it was not overheard by other families, and used to create internal inclusion frameworks for staff and families.



7. Looking Ahead

- Secure a headline, long-term sponsor specifically for our high-demand **Hydrotherapy sessions**.
- Briefly expand by taking on **extra staff members** to support operational scaling and locate a dedicated **Patron**.
- Formally launch our children's relaxation sessions utilizing our new **Relax Kids training**.

8. Gratitude

A deep thank you to our incredible volunteers, corporate supporters, and institutional funders. To our Trustees and delivery team—thank you for your fierce protection of our values. Most of all, thank you to our 1,587 families whose strength reminds us daily that there are absolutely "No Limits" to what we can build together.

Miriam Watson-Pratt - Secretary

