

**Bedfordshire Down's Syndrome Support Group**  
Registered charity 1102599

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**Tuesday 2nd December 2025**

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

2025 has been a very special year, as we celebrate 25 years from when the Support Group was first founded, back in October 2000. From the humble beginnings of a coffee morning, held by the wonderful Jo Hart, for a few local families, we have grown to a registered charity with over 200 families as members, providing a range of services and activities for families in Bedfordshire and the surrounding counties.

From day one, one of the core objectives of the Support Group, was to enable families to come together, share experiences, support and friendship. We have continued this over the years by providing many social opportunities for our families.

This year we have organised many family days out throughout the year, starting with our ever-popular **panto at MK theatre** with 47 families, 127 people attending and thoroughly enjoying the show of Peter Pan. Thanks to Helen Long for organizing this event which is always a great start to the year.

We again held our **Get Together in March**, to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day and Awareness Week. The event was for all ages and was a great opportunity for the children and youngsters to have fun and for parents to catch up and have a chat.

Thanks to Tracey Johnson and everyone who helped run this event.

In April, we again had a wonderful activity weekend at **PGL Caythorpe** in Lincolnshire, with 16 families 47 people attending, with the range of ages of those with Downs syndrome being from 5 years to adult.

The whole family were able to take part in canoeing, fencing, laser tag, archery, climbing, problem solving, zip wire and abseiling. The weekend not only enables our youngsters to take part in activities they may not usually be able to access, but it is a great social weekend for everyone involved. There is always a great sense of community, support, togetherness and friendship and is a wonderful weekend. Thank you to Helen and Teresa for organizing the trip.

In May we had another lovely day at **Herring's Green Farm**, with our members having the chance to hold the owls and get close to some of the animals, as well as seeing the amazing birds of prey flying displays. The day was enjoyed by adults and children alike and the staff at the centre looked after us so well. 9 families, 24 people attended this great day out, with the range of ages from 4 years to adult.

And as usual we provided an **outing for every week of the summer** holidays, a time when activities stop for many of our youngsters. We enjoyed trips to **Mead Open Farm, Wicksteed Park, Hertfordshire Zoo, Summerfields Railway, pony riding, a coach trip to Southend on Sea, and also ten pin bowling** for the teenagers and adults with Down's syndrome. 43 individual families attended at least one and often more of these wonderful trips.

Huge thanks to Kelly Mathias, Jenna Bradshaw, Karen Forrester, Aimee Leconte, and Teresa, for organising these wonderful events, allowing our families to have fun together this summer.

We were very fortunate to be able to provide free tickets for **Circus Starr** circus performances in October, with **15** families, 53 people attending and enjoying the show.

Thank you to Tracey for getting the tickets, Sarah Cicco, Carrie Brimmell and Leanne Forrester for distributing tickets at the shows

And of course, we are looking forward to our annual **Christmas Party** on Sunday, where our families can dance, have fun & food and meet Santa. This is always a great festive event, with a real sense of community and belonging for our families. Thank you to Karen and everyone who organises this wonderful family event

We also have social groups for all our members with Down's syndrome, from birth to adulthood.

Our **Adult Social Group** is particularly successful with over 20 youngsters regularly attending, and the group continues to grow, not just in number, but in the friendships and sense of community that has developed over the years.

The monthly activities have included, bowling, Inclusive Fitness, karaoke, dinosaur golf, cinema trip, social evenings, Equine therapy and trampolining.

Huge thanks to Leanne for running the group so efficiently and giving excellent support to everyone who attends. Thanks too to the volunteers Paul, Rhiannon and Rosie.

Our **Teen Club** provides a monthly youth club for our teenagers and is an important step in increasing our youngster's independence, as they enjoy activities without having to be accompanied by their parents!

Activities have included bowling, a train trip to MacDonalds, Marston Moretaine Forest centre, pirate golf, badminton & table tennis, trampolining, trip to a local café, dance and pottery sessions.

Our sincere thanks to Lynne Munn, who organises these vital sessions for us and is always so kind and supportive to our youngsters. And to the volunteers Harry, Poppy and Amelie.

We wanted to enable families of younger children to get together regularly, and we would like to say a big thank you to Aimee for organising our **under 5s and 5-12 yrs groups**. Aimee does a fantastic job of always trying to find activities that our families would like to come to and enjoy. Activities have included visiting the pumpkin patch, coffee morning, harlequin gym, indoor soft ply and mead open farm.

Numbers attending these groups have, sadly, been lower than we had hoped, but we hope more families will attend in 2026, as those of us with older children and young adults, know how important it is for children with Down's syndrome to meet up and also for their siblings and parents to get together.

We also provide 2 other regular activities, our monthly **Multisports sessions** for children aged 4 – 12 years and their siblings, continues with Jack Bartram, from Elite Skills and Fitness. These sports sessions are great fun and we have regular feedback as to how great Jack is at supporting the children and how much the children enjoy the sessions.

And our weekly online **dance class** continues with Jade Cooke from Spectrum, with the youngsters loving Jades fun routines. Jade never fails to be full of enthusiasm, and we have regular feedback about how much the youngsters enjoy the sessions.

We had a special opportunity this year, as our youngsters from Teen Club and Dance Class, were invited to perform in public at the Inclusive Performing Arts Festival in July. Elise Gray, who organised the festival, kindly helped develop a routine for our teenagers and Jade helped and supported our Dance Class. Not surprisingly, our young people rose to the occasion and gave fantastic performances. They even got a spot on the local TV news! Many thanks to Elise, Lynne, Jade and Karen for helping to organise these performances showcasing our youngsters' talents as well as the Support Group.

Education and development have also been an important aspect of the Support group and thus we continue to provide group **speech therapy**. We have had 13 children attend sessions this year.

Speech, language and communication skills are vital in enhancing the social and educational development and interaction of our children and we would like to say a massive thank you to Beth Davies, Sue Hall and Pui Lee, for providing an outstanding service for us, and for so often going above and beyond the remit of their roles to support our families. We would also like to say thank you to Jane Reddy who has been managing the admin side to the Speech Therapy groups and liaising with the speech team and the committee. We are incredibly grateful.

Sadly, our **Early Development Group** has not been so successful this year, and we were unable to run sessions for the Summer and Autumn term, as we did not have enough children attending.

The Early Development Group started in the summer of 2008, has supported 45 children over that time, providing vital social and developmental sessions for our families. These sessions not only helped parents support their child's development but were a vital social opportunity to families at this crucial early stage and we have seen numerous friendships develop over the years, between both the children and parents, that are still going strong many years later.

We are now carefully considering how we can continue to provide support for families of young children in the early years. In the meantime, we would like to say a huge thankyou to Helen and Sue for their dedication, support, expertise and hard work over the years that has helped so many families

All these activities and services come at a cost of approximately £20,000 per year. And so, our amazing fundraising team set the challenge of raising £25,000 in this our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. They aimed to do this in several ways:

They promoted the **25 for 25 challenge** and asked our members to fundraise for the Group by various activities connected to 25 and we are very grateful to the many people who rose to the challenge:

Chris and Jenna Bradshaw took part in the Gower Peninsula Ultra Challenge in July, walking 50 K. They raised over £ 1500

Our own treasurer, Catherine Bianco, walked 25 miles round a route designed by the Parks Trust in Milton Keynes, raising £549

We have asked members to take part in the Smartie Challenge, filling an empty smartie tube with coins. This has been a great way for our youngsters at Teen and Adult Club to get involved in fundraising too.

And of course, the amazing Mia- Rose Chapman who, at 16 months of age, took on the challenge of walking 25 steps with her new walker from the physio, and raising over £480

Mia Rose was such an inspiration to everyone, that she won our new Jo Hart Fundraiser of the Year Award.

Another big fundraising event this year was a **Family Fun Day**, organised by Jenna Bradshaw, Aimee and Mel Barnes. The day included various stalls, activities from Elite Skills & Fitness, a wonderful performance by the youngsters of Born to Perform, and lots of fun activities

We would like to say a huge thank you to these three lovely ladies for all their hard work, time and effort which resulted in raising an amazing £1,374

Last month we had our annual festive **Christmas Fayre**, which was as lovely as ever, with numerous stalls, fantastic refreshments, a visit from Santa and his elves and an inspiring performance from the youngsters at Born to Perform, which kicked off the afternoon. Thank you to all the fundraising team, everyone who helped, or who attended on the day, donated items, bought raffle tickets and made the day such a success raising £1,850

And of course, our wonderful **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Silver Ball in October**, was an amazing night. There was delicious food, great live music from the Blue Rinse Band, fun and games with tops and tails, raffle and secret auction and wonderful speeches from Catherine Bianco and Michael Asbury. Catherine, who has been involved with the Support Group from day one, described how the group was founded and grew in the early years and the wonderful insight of Jo Hart who, sadly, passed away earlier this year.

And Michael gave a memorable, entertaining and inspiring speech which delighted all present!

Everyone had a great night and there are not enough words to thank Leanne, the fundraising team and everyone involved in making the evening a resounding success which raised an amazing total of £13,326!

We would like to thank Jane Reddy and Tracey for working hard on **grant applications** this year, A time consuming and often long process. Their hard work has paid off though with us successfully benefiting from obtaining grants from the Wixam Tree Trust, of £2,500 for our Teen Club and Adult Group

The immense hard work, time, effort and generosity of so many people have enabled us to achieve our challenge of raising £25,000 this year and, in fact, so far, we have raised a phenomenal £29,000! Thank you to every single person who has made this possible!

In order to run a charity , organise so many events and activities, there is a lot of work that goes on unseen and so we would like to say a huge thank you to Catherine, for taking over the role of treasurer so well and dealing with the opening of a new bank account, as well as preparing accounts for every committee meeting and a report for the Charities Commission. We would also like to thank Anmol Kad, who has very kindly agreed to be our new Independent Examiner, auditing our annual accounts for the Charities Commission. We are extremely grateful to him for giving up his time to complete this essential task.

We would like to thank Helen, Jane, Aimee, Jenna and Leanne for working with the trustees and giving so much of their time to organise events and activities this year.

And we would like to say a huge thank you to the fundraising team, Karen, Kelly, Tracey, Leanne, Carol, Kathy and Jenny for their immense work this year.

I would like to say a special thank you to all the trustees, Catherine, Karen, Tracey and Linda Smith, for their continued commitment and dedication to the Support Group

And we would like to say a very special thank you to Kelly, who is sadly retiring as secretary and trustee. Kelly became a trustee in 2014, took on the responsible role of treasurer in 2015 for a few years and then secretary since 2020. Kelly has also been a crucial part of the fundraising team.

Kelly has always carried out her duties in a calm, polite, professional, kind, respectful and caring manner and we will sadly miss all her valuable input to the organisation of the charity. We wish her success and happiness in all her future ventures.

And finally, we would like to thank all our families for attending events, donating and fundraising and making the Support Group the success it is today

It is obvious from all that I have said that it takes a huge amount of work, effort, kindness, sacrifice of time and generosity to make the Support Group the success that it is today. And why do people give so freely of their time effort and hard cash? Well it is because they are always inspired by our wonderful children and adults who have Down's syndrome, for on a daily basis they inspire us all with their love of life, kindness and affection, ability to live in the moment, say it as it is, persevere to succeed despite any challenges in their way, and because they are all a shining light in each and every family who love and admire them for the wonderful individuals that they are.

We look forward to continuing to be inspired and to serve this amazing inclusive community of people with Down's syndrome and their families.

And we look forward to all the adventures that the next 25 years will bring to our amazing charity!

Teresa Hurley

Chairman

**BEDFORDSHIRE DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP**

Registered Charity number 1102599

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted 24-25 £	Restricted 24-25 £	Total 24-25 £	Unrestricted 23-24 £	Restricted 23-24 £	Total 23-24 £
<b>Income</b>						
Donations and gifts	8,716	-	8,716	4,080	-	4,080
Fundraising and raffles	13,427	-	13,427	10,779	-	10,779
Outings/socials/events	-	13,869	13,869	-	14,324	14,324
Speech Therapy	-	2,770	2,770	-	2,760	2,760
Education courses	-	610	610	-	590	590
Dance/Multisport Events	-	1,104	1,104	-	135	135
U5s/Teen/Adult Groups	-	1,550	1,550	-	1,422	1,422
	<u>22,143</u>	<u>19,903</u>	<u>42,046</u>	<u>14,859</u>	<u>19,231</u>	<u>34,090</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Outings/socials/events	6,128	13,869	19,997	3,350	14,324	17,674
Fundraising costs	2,202	-	2,202	1,753	-	1,753
Speech Therapy	6,168	2,770	8,938	7,260	2,760	10,020
Education courses	3,655	610	4,265	3,271	590	3,861
General/Postage/stationery	1,210	-	1,210	654	-	654
Dance/Multisports Events	1,397	1,104	2,501	1,136	135	1,271
U5s/Teen/Adult Groups	2,308	1,550	3,858	2,282	1,422	3,704
	<u>23,067</u>	<u>19,903</u>	<u>42,970</u>	<u>19,706</u>	<u>19,231</u>	<u>38,937</u>
Surplus/(Deficit for the year)	<u>(924)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(924)</u>	<u>(4,847)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(4,847)</u>

Approved on behalf of the Trustees:-

Name: Catherine Bianco  
Position: Treasurer

Signature: *C. Bianco*  
Date: 2.12.25

Name: Teresa Hurley  
Position: Chairperson

Signature: *T. A. Hurley*  
Date: 2/12/25



# BEDFORDSHIRE DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

Registered Charity number 1102599

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted 2025 £	Restricted 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted 2024 £	Restricted 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	28,630	-	28,630	29,554	-	29,554
Net Assets	28,630	-	28,630	29,554	-	29,554

Represented by:

Brought forward at 1 April	29,554	-	29,554	34,401	-	34,401
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	0	-	0	(4,847)	-	(4,847)
Balance at 31 March	29,554	-	29,554	29,554	-	29,554

Cash at bank and in hand

	Santander £	Cash £	Total £
Opening bank balance	29,554	-	29,554
Receipts	0	-	0
Payments	0	-	0
Closing balance	29,554	-	29,554

Approved on behalf of the Trustees:-

Name: Catherine Bianco  
Position: Treasurer

Signature:  
Date:

*C. Bianco*  
2.12.25

Name: Teresa Hurley  
Position: Chairperson

Signature:  
Date:

*T. A Hurley*  
2/12/25



# BEDFORDSHIRE DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

Registered Charity number 1102599

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025

## INCOME

£

Donations, Membership and Gifts

Donations and Gifts

8,716

Membership and Miscellaneous

-

**8,716**

Fundraising activities and events

General fundraising activities/events

13,427

**13,427**

Outings, parties, social events etc.

PGL Weekend Deposits

5,822

Contributions to other outings, parties, social events etc.

8,047

**13,869**

Education events

Early Development Group Places

610

**610**

Regular Events

Speech Therapy Subs

2,770

Teen Group Subs

500

Adult Group Subs

1,050

Dance Events Subs

864

Multisports

240

**5,424**

Total income

**42,046**

## EXPENDITURE

Outings, parties, social events etc.

PGL Weekend Payments and Refunds

11,397

Other Social Events, Theatre, Xmas Party and Summer Outin

8,600

**19,997**

General

Fundraising costs

2,202

General costs/Postage/Stationery/Website

1,210

**3,412**

Education events

Education Training Package

-

Early Development Group

4,265

**4,265**

Regular Events	
Speech Therapy	8,938
Teen Group	1,429
Adult Group	2,164
Dance events	1,578
Multisports	923
Under 5s Group	265
	<u>15,296</u>
Total expenditure	<u>42,970</u>
Surplus/(Deficit for the year)	<u>(924)</u>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name  
BEDFORDSHIRE DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 March 2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1102599

Set out on pages

1 to 4

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 / 03 / 2025.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

8 December 2025

Name:

Anmol Kad

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

ACCA

Address:

400

Capability Green

Luton, LU1 3LU