



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023

www.swindondownsgroup.org.uk

WAYS TO HELP THE GROUP RAISE FUNDS

You may just want to make a donation, if so you can use one of the following platforms to donate to the Group

JustGiving™

PayPal
Giving Fund



Swindon Community Lottery

By buying a £1 ticket you could be in with a chance of winning £25,000 as well as supporting us as a charity. We get 50p from every ticket sold.

<https://www.swindonlottery.co.uk/support/swindon-downs-syndrome-group>

Give as you Live Online



Is a free and easy way to raise money for us, just by shopping online.

Once you've signed up, click 'shop & raise' to go to their website, then continue to shop as normal.

Recycle your print cartridges



You can raise money by recycling your printer cartridges using our dedicated envelopes. We receive £1 for every ink cartridge. Why not ask your friends and family to do this too.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group consists of many families, all volunteering our time and experience as parents and carers to make life that bit more fun and ensure our family with Down's syndrome have all the opportunities and support they need from birth to old age.

We started as a small group of parents who met for coffee and provided each other with support. As time passed, more parents connected with the group and in 2003 we became a charity in our own right.

The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group support people with Down's syndrome in Swindon and the surrounding area including Fairford, Malmesbury, Hungerford, Pewsey, Marlborough, Hullavington, Chippenham, Devizes, Calne, Ashton Keynes, Cirencester, Aldbourne, Bromham, Melksham and Cheltenham.

We are a volunteer led charity, meaning everyone has an active role in the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group and gives up their time because of the love of the group.

We are very fortunate to be supported by our fantastic trustees and volunteers.

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

“I am so proud to be part of such an incredible charity”

Once again, I would like to thank all the members and the Swindon community who continue to support us through challenging times. Thank you to anyone who has given time to help us fundraise, be it a jumble sale or an event. Without your support we would not achieve what we have, and our group would not continue to grow from strength to strength.

In the last year we have organised some fantastic events including what we can only describe as the “Greatest Charity Ball” at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Swindon. What a truly rememberable night that was, raising an incredible £12,552.63 for the under 25’s speech and language therapy. The group certainly knows how to party!

In May we were delighted to receive a generous donation from Hillier Funeral Service as part of their 100 year celebration. We received a wonderful £5,000. The group also received a donation from the Amazon Fulfilment Team which helped us fund the Christmas parties.

In June, four wonderful swimmers raised £846.25 swimming 74 lengths between them in the Rotary Club of Swindon & Thamesdown Swimathon. Thank you, Julie, Cathy, Clare and Sophie, for this event. June also saw Sgt Abin Subba and Sgt Kaushal Shahi raise £1,316.16 for under 25’s speech and language therapy by cycling 300 miles each in 3 weeks.

A grant from Wiltshire Community Foundation for under 25’s Speech and Language Therapy helps us keep this service running for the group.

We also continue to thank the National Lottery for their incredible support in funding our adult speech sessions.

Roy Perrett continues to build the WorkFit program for the group supporting our members in their workplace. You will be able to see in Roy’s report how successful this program is and the work placements that have been gained. We are very proud of how successful our WorkFit program is.

Throughout the year the talents of our members have been rewarded with medals. Lane and Alex continue growing their collection of medals in Tennis with wins in the LTA Learning Disability Regional Tennis Event. Holly represented GB in Italy in the European Swimming Championships and returned with several new medals.

We have to thank our friends in the community for the support over the last year. The Crown Inn Stratton has continued to support us throughout the year raising some fantastic amounts in their pub events. The Zurich Community Trust has provided hampers for raffles and a great party for the members with entertainment and refreshments and even a cookathon.

The group has enjoyed visits to Groves Farm, Bristol Hippodrome, Cotswold Forest School, Circus Star and we enjoyed a summer picnic at Coate Water provided by The Rotary Club of Swindon.

We are a small charity achieving great things and we couldn’t do it without you. Thank you for the continued support, it means we can keep providing the help to the families and the support to our members.

Finally, thank you to the hard working trustees that work tirelessly behind the scenes, sometimes late into the night to keep the Swindon Down’s Syndrome the great charity it is.

Kim West ,Chairperson
Swindon Down's Syndrome Group

Our Achievements

There was a lot to celebrate in 2023 and here are just a few of our achievements

£34,770

was received by the Group through fundraising in 2023

164

people now receive regular information through our mailing list

£1,212

was raised through voluntary membership donations

£14,716

raised in donations and grants to support adults in the world of work

£55,286

raised through donations and grants to provide SALT to our members

2,100

people follow us on Facebook

28

members enrolled for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)

813

online therapy sessions have been delivered through Mable Therapy

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Holly brings home the medals

Holly won Gold and Bronze medals at the British Downs Syndrome Swimming British Championships and three bronze medals at the European Downs Syndrome Swimming Championships in Italy in September.



Christmas Card Competition

Oliver and Barnaby won the design a Christmas card competition and both card went on sale in the on-line shop.



The Great Bake Off

August was our on-line bake off organised by the Zurich Community Trust. Chocolate cookies were the order of the day. A very successful cooking session with 8 budding chefs.

A Tea Party

The trustees enjoyed amazing cake and tea/coffee laid on by the Perform4Dreams dance team. The performances made our day.



A Day On The Farm

In September our younger members visited Groves Farm where they got up close to the animals.



Adventure Plus

In August we visited Adventure Plus for an awesome day of wall climbing, archery and games.

A drive to the riverside for some canoeing on the Thames created a great day.



Fun in the sun!

A fantastic day in the sunshine. A wonderful picnic with ice cream, cakes and drinks that were kindly donated by Rotary Club of Swindon. with rides on the Coate Water Miniature Railway and Pick "N" Mix Circus



Congratulations Charlie

A proud moment when Charlie graduated from Aurora Foxes after an amazing 3 years of hard work.

Forest School

An afternoon at the Cotswold Forest School in July where everyone enjoyed hide and seek and den building and best of all ... marshmallows on the fire !



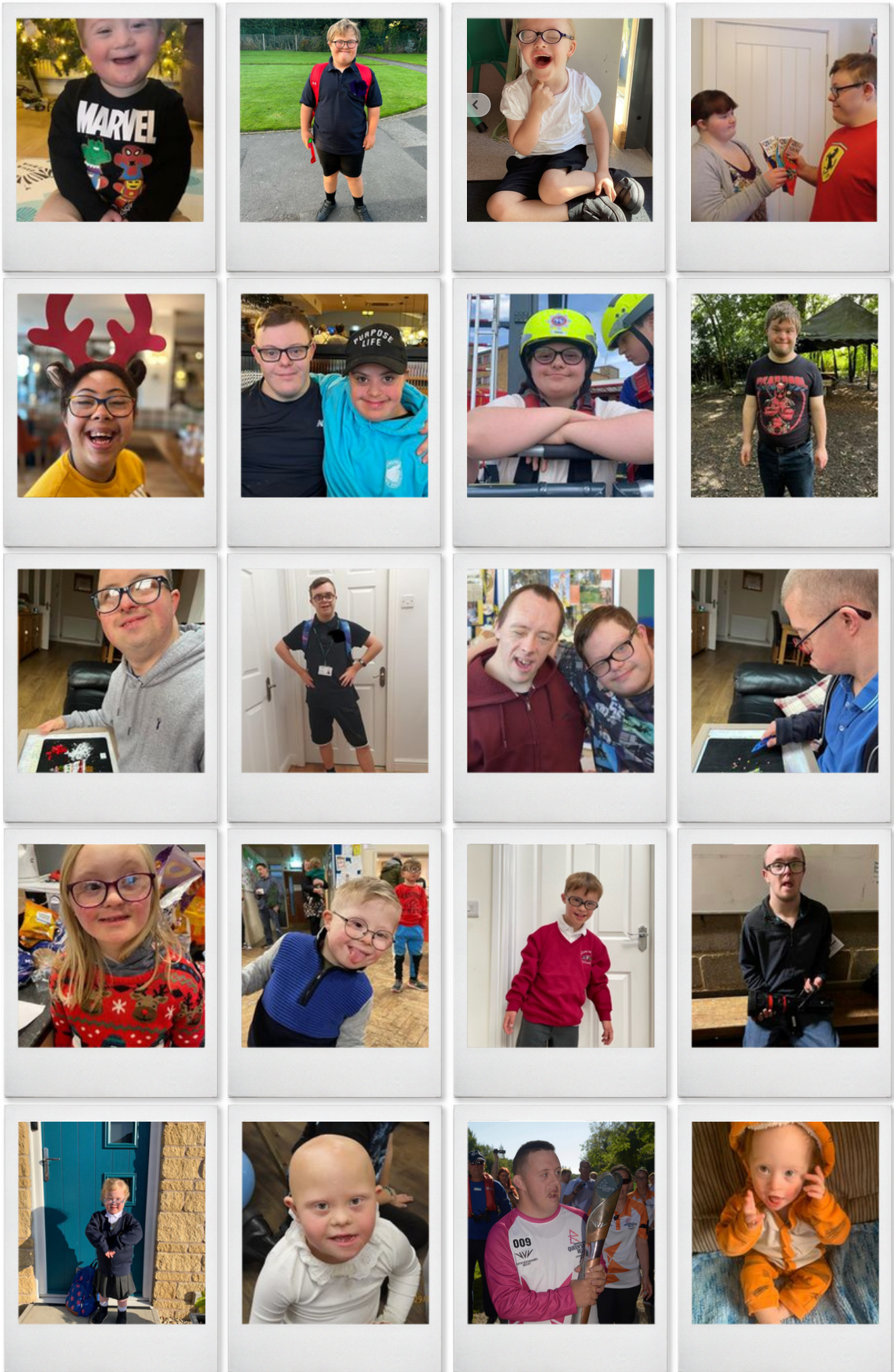
Gold for the Tennis

Lane and Alex continue to bring home medals at their tennis tournaments. They played at the LTA Newport Learning Disability Regional Tournament in October winning two gold medals.



A Visit to the Fire Station.

A visit to Stratton Fire Station for the group on two nights for younger and older members.



SUPPORTING NEW PARENTS



The Swindon Down's Syndrome 0-5 Parents and Carers Group is a WhatsApp group set up to support new parents and carers with young children. Our members age from 0-7. We have 30 members in the group who regularly share advice, questions, ideas and fears and lots of support for each other. Photographs, links to websites, press announcements and recommended purchases are regularly posted in the chat.

The families are based in Wiltshire and surrounding areas. A coffee morning stay and play runs once a month on the 1st Saturday (except December) from 10am to 12pm. It gives the families chance to meet up in a soft play area in Royal Wootton Bassett. The hall is hired exclusively for the group and refreshments are supplied. The session attendance varies as our little ones are young and easily pick bugs up. We usually have on average 5 families per session. The bouncy castle and ball pit are always popular with all the children including siblings. It gives the children a chance to have fun in a safe environment. By regular contact the families and the children become friends. It is always noisy, positive and full of smiles.



In November a volunteer from SEND Families Voice arranged a drop into the coffee morning to meet the families. We hope to arrange for Swindon Borough Council transport to attend in the future. Some families have discussed holding a meeting at a location closer to Chippenham. We have asked those parents to provide the group with more information so that we can support them meeting at another location.



FUNDRAISING

Crown Inn Stratton



The Crown Inn Stratton are long-standing supporters of the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group and throughout the year have organised numerous raffles and quiz nights to raise funds for us. In November they organised a Charity Steak Night and Pub Quiz and raised a phenomenal £1075. Thank you to all the amazing staff and customers for their continued support.

Martyn takes on the Atlas Mountains



Anthony Reape, Les Cavilla, Mel Ralph, Nigel Felton and Martyn Coles climbed Mount Toukbal in Morocco undertaking the Atlas Mountain challenge. The team battled through storms to reach the summit but due to safety reasons were unable to do this. Something that was out of their control. What an incredible team they are and they raised an amazing £4,685 for under 25's Speech and Language Therapy.

Barnaby is a Superhero



After receiving an invitation from Swindon DS committee to take part in a Triathlon the Briscoe family thought 'why not?' – "so it was then we found ourselves on a freezing August day dressed in tights, bright red shorts and super man capes about to take part in a fantastic event!

As is the norm we were prepping last minute – Ian frantically making superman capes and masks until midnight the night before – but the effect was brilliant. We looked the part even if we hadn't done any training!

We all received our medals and had our photos taken by the press – feeling almost like Olympic superstars! We might even do it again – if the weather is any better this August!"

Tiff runs the Marathon



Tiff Hughes ran the London Marathon for the Group raising an amazing £671

Swimathon 2023



A great mornings swim for the sponsored swimathon organised by North Swindon Rotary. Thank you to Julie, Cathy and Clare.



Greatest Charity Ball



The Group held its Greatest Charity Ball on Saturday 25th March at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Swindon. We had music from the fantastic band 24/7 and the evening was compered by Alison Edgar MBE. The Lawson Group was the main sponsor of the evening, along with other local companies. The evening raised an incredible £12,552.63 for our under 25's Speech and Language Therapy .

Hillier Community Fund



The Swindon Downs Syndrome Group would like to thank all those at Hillier Funeral Service for this incredible donation. Lane & John represented the Group at Hillier Funeral Service's 100 year celebration. The group were invited to the launch of the Hillier Community Fund.

Pimms in the Park



Well done to everyone who came and supported us at Pimms in the Park at Lydiard Park in the Summer. We raised an incredible £350.46.

Pride 2023



A great time was had at Swindon Pride on 12th August at Queens Park. A huge thank you to Cherylin Hempleman and Hannah Stafford for manning the stall all day and raising an incredible £493.45 for the Group.

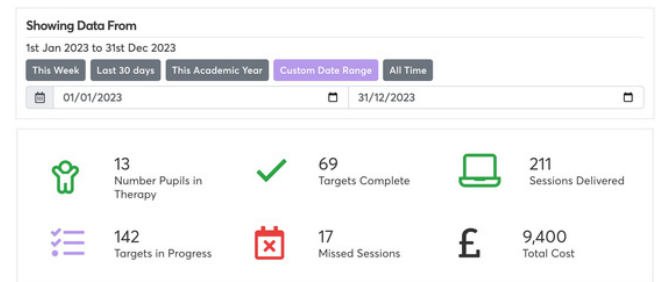
SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY

We continue to offer regular Speech and Language Therapy to our members. They are split into two groups:- Age 3 to 25 and Age 25+. The younger group is offered weekly sessions and follows the school year. The older group has fortnightly sessions throughout the year. In total these session cost us about £40,000 a year. Trustees and members work hard to raise money to pay for them.

The younger group

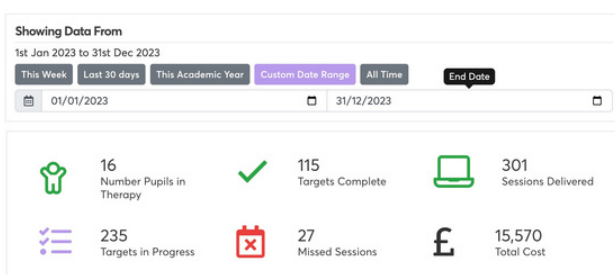
These sessions were held in our speech room with a fully qualified therapist through the company C& D. Unfortunately the therapist left and C and D were not able to fill the vacancy with another therapist.

We have a very good relationship with Mable therapy, who provide our on-line sessions for our older group. We were able to move our younger members over to Mable and fourteen from this group now receive weekly sessions from them. These members continue to have weekly sessions during the school year. Some of our very young members were not able to engage with this on-line approach and sadly have had to cease sessions. We hope to commence Face to Face sessions again in the future if a suitable therapist can be secured.

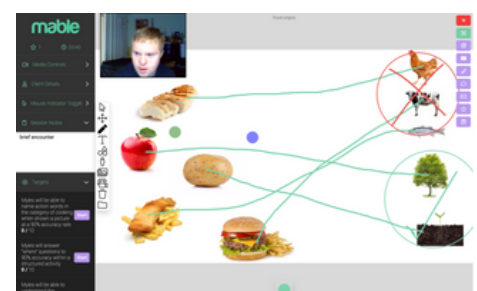
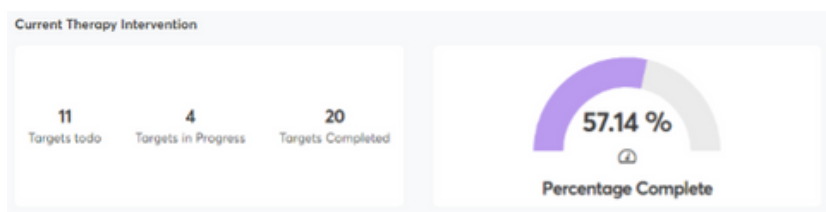


The older group

Mable continue to provide on-line sessions to our older group via their own platform. Each session is designed around a task and designed to be very visual and entertaining to ensure participation and motivation. Each session is twenty minutes long. Members can choose times for their appointments to fit around other commitments.



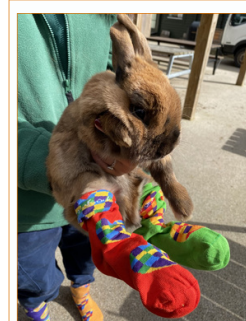
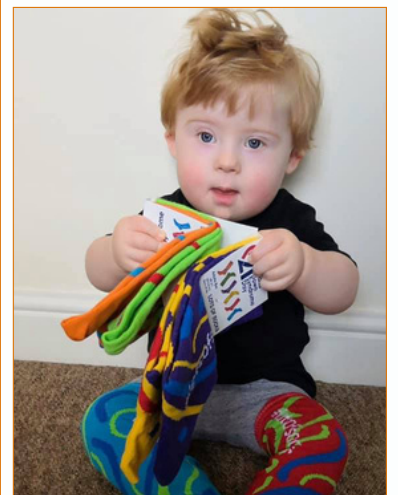
Mable provides weekly session reports and homework tasks that can be accessed at the click of a button. Long term targets are set and parents/guardians can see progress made to date:-



#LotsofSocks

Down's Awareness Week 2023

Once again in 2023, the Group sold **#LotsofSocks** to help fund our local DS WorkFit Officer. The socks had a new "Heart" design for 2023 designed by a person with Down's syndrome. Everyone donned their socks for World Down's Syndrome Day on 21st March, raising a fantastic amount of money for the Group.



A FABULOUS YEAR FOR WORKFIT

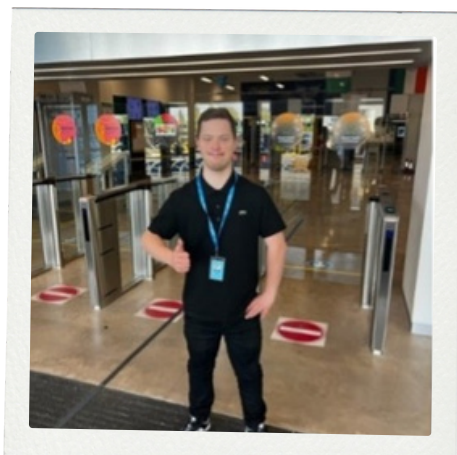
The partnership between the Down Syndrome Association's WorkFit programme and the Swindon Down's syndrome Support Group began in 2015 and since then it has been providing a tailored employment programme for people who have Down's syndrome in Swindon and the surrounding area.

Swindon Down's Syndrome group fund Roy Perrett as our WorkFit Liaison Officer. Roy has been working hard to source and support work opportunities for group members, building important relationships with candidates and employers across Swindon and Wiltshire.

WorkFit takes a person-centred approach when working with people who have Down's syndrome and uses the information gathered about their career ambitions to match them with employers in their local area.

After meeting and completing vocational profiling with our candidates, Roy has placed individuals across a range of industry sectors, including hotels, restaurants, cafes, offices, and retail outlets. Work has many benefits, including learning, new skills, meeting new people and making new friends, improving confidence, earning money, and becoming more independent.

Regular progress reviews are conducted with all candidates and employers during each placement to ensure that everyone is happy and to address any issues that may arise. Overall, we have had excellent reports about our candidates with many receiving positive customer feedback. More importantly, we have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from them about the work they are doing and their pride at being part of a team and earning their own money.



WorkFit provide job-carving, advice, and resources to employers as well as training about how to support someone who has Down's syndrome in the workplace so that they can achieve their goals and enjoy greater independence and enhanced self-esteem.

Work can be anything from permanent paid jobs, volunteering roles, work experience (paid/unpaid) or supported internships/apprenticeships.

In November 2023 the WorkFit team won the 'Small Supported Employment Team of the Year Award' at the British Association of Supported Employment national conference. The team were recognised as a 'small but highly effective team, who have no limits to ambition to deliver inclusive recruitment in their areas'.

2023 certainly turned out to be a very busy year with 11 local employment opportunities secured. 12 training sessions have been delivered to a total of 73 staff, to ensure our candidates receive the best support in their new jobs.

Community engagement has again been a key activity throughout 2023. Roy has presented to students at local colleges and schools, including Fairfield Farm College, Dilton Marsh and Uplands School, Swindon taking the opportunity to discuss future work options and an overview of the WorkFit Employment Programme and the support it can provide.

If you're interested why not give Roy a call 07391 836006 or send him an email workfitswindon@downssyndrome.org.uk. Roy would be very happy to arrange a meeting to discuss with you.



Roy said '2023 has been a wonderfully rewarding year. I am so proud of our brilliant WorkFit candidates who have started their new jobs. They are a credit to their families and to Swindon Downs Syndrome group.'

KEEPING FIT AND ACTIVE

Keeping fit and active is so important that's why we offer regular activities for our members to access

Swindon DS Active Football by Jo Messenger

Another year of smiles, laughter and goal scoring with the best bunch of footballers you could ever watch. The enthusiasm of the players is infectious, and you can't help leaving a session without being proud.

The DSAActive football team have had an exciting year with the move from their previous training hall to the new and wonderful "Nigel Eady Training Centre" at the Foundation Park in Swindon. The new training dome is a perfect place for our team to develop their skills in a safe environment.

In September Bristol City came to Swindon for a friendly game showing great football and great sportsmanship by both teams. Friendships are formed each time they meet. Goals were scored and cheers of joy rang out. We are looking forward to seeing Bristol soon in a rematch.



Our football team is a great way to get moving and keep fit as well as learning about being part of a team. Of course, really, it's all about celebrating the goals! You don't need to be a brilliant player to join us, you just need to want to play football and have fun.

Football is available term time from 5pm – 6pm for further details contact football@swindondownsgroup.org.uk





Padel Tennis

by Jo Messenger

"Game, Set, Match: A Parent's Guide to Padel Tennis for our members."

If you've been wondering what all the racket (pun intended) is about when we mention "padel," you're not alone. Padel tennis is still the hottest new sport on the block.

What is Padel Tennis? First things first, let's unravel the mystery behind padel tennis. Picture this: a fusion of tennis and squash, played on a smaller court enclosed by glass walls. It's fast-paced, exciting, and perfect for our members who have energy to burn. The best part? Padel tennis is designed to be easy to pick up.

Team Spirit and Social Skills Padel tennis is not just about hitting the ball; it's a social experience that encourages teamwork and communication. The players learn to strategize with their teammates, celebrate victories, and handle defeats gracefully. The sport fosters a sense of camaraderie. The game promotes agility, coordination, and cardiovascular fitness. Plus, the strategic elements enhance cognitive skills, keeping those minds sharp. It's a win-win for both physical and mental development!

Our Padel4All sessions are enjoyed by our members and Alan brings out the best in each and every one of them.

If you want to join us, contact us for more information at tennis@swindondownsgroup.org.uk

Tennis

by John Stow

The weekly sessions at Delta Tennis Centre are attended by a small number of regular players. They have benefited this year by having the same coach each week and Livio has been working hard to get the best out of each player. The more experienced players have again brought home medals from LTA Learning Disability competitions. Lane and Alex retained doubles gold in their category at the Newport event for the third year running. It would be great to see a few more members at the sessions and you can find out more information about the sessions by emailing tennis@swindondownsgroup.org.uk

Swimming

by John Stow

Our fortnightly swimming sessions at Thamesdown Hydrotherapy Pool ran throughout the year and were again complemented during the summer with some well-attended extra holiday sessions. Vicky Hunt continues to offer coaching to our swimmers and we are always appreciative of the individual attention that she gives them. There are spaces available for any members wishing to give it a try. The pool is a brilliant, and safe, environment for learning to swim. Contact swimming@swindondownsgroup.org.uk for more information about the sessions.



P4D (Perform 4 Dreams) Dance Group

by Cathy Brown

2023 was another great year for the dance group. They have 12 members who meet at 5.30pm on Fridays in Swindon at Wilkes Academy (the temporary home of Bobbi's Academy of Dance). They are a mixed age group (ranging from Year 3 to adult) who work well as a team. Their teacher is Bobbi Newman, whose enthusiasm, skill and commitment continues to bring out the best in all the dancers. It is great to see the dancers' confidence and skills growing, and firm friendships being made. They always have lots of fun too! The parents also enjoy the opportunity to socialise.

One of the highlights of the year must be performing at the Wyvern Theatre on 9th September in the B.A.D's annual show 'Dance first. Think later'. The group also performed at a charity fete on 2 April; the audience loved their dance and the group were all buzzing afterwards! P4D performed again at B.A.D's End of Year Awards Evening which had a Great Gatsby theme. Travis and Sophie received dance awards. We are all very proud of all the group has achieved so far and look forward to an exciting future for our dancers!

Rocking around the Christmas Tree

by Victoria McGuire

Our annual traditional Christmas celebrations continued in December 2023 with 2 festive parties.

The under 11s enjoyed an afternoon of entertainment provided by Razamatazz alongside food and drinks, fun and games and even a snow machine - there was also a visit from the big man himself - Santa. The older members of the group danced the night away at North Swindon Club. It was a wonderful evening seeing so many people and their families enjoying the food and drinks and their favourite songs on the dance floor.



Cricket

by John Stow

Members of the Group attended the "Super 1's" hubs in both Swindon and Chippenham. These continue to work on basic skills of batting, bowling and throwing. Participants then get to showcase these with mini games at the end of the session. The outdoor sessions in the Summer months are enjoyed most, especially when the weather was kind. In February, some of the players joined those from Gloucestershire and Somerset at a skills day in Bristol. Unfortunately, the weather cancelled both mini-festivals during the summer which was just not cricket! The sessions are run by Wiltshire County Cricket although you can speak to us if anyone is interested by emailing info@swindondownsgroup.org.uk.

YOUTH CLUB

Youth Club is open to any members aged 13 and over.
We would love to see new faces in 2024.



Youth Club continues to be well attended with up to ten participants at the Toothill Farmhouse facility. We have regular members joining via Zoom as well.

Sessions take place fortnightly on Mondays, with break for August holidays. Activities include, board games, disco, table football to name a few. We have a sit down and refreshments part way through and a zoom session is held for those who can't make it to the farmhouse.

One of the popular activities is a quiz, usually on a topic chosen by the participants. Subjects include:- Summer, Winter, Harry Potter, Super Heroes, Nature and Halloween.

In the warmer months we went outside to make use of the adjacent green space and played games.

In March, to mark World Down Syndrome Week, many of us wore odd socks to Youth Club.

In July we had a trip out to The Cotswold Forest School. We played games and learnt how to build a shelter out of logs and dry grass. The day finished up by toasting marshmallows over a log fire.

Our final session of 2023 was in December and we had Pizza delivered to the Farmhouse and to those who attended via Zoom. We wore Christmas Jumpers and sang the Twelve Days of Christmas.



IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU, OUR SUPPORTERS

We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us over the past year

We owe a huge thank you to every single person, group or business that has helped us so support our young people with Down's syndrome. In particular we'd like to thank the following supporters:

Our Patrons

Cliff Puffett
Julie Thomas

Trustees (2023)

Kim West
John Stow
Sam Harding
Joanna Messenger
Michael Billinge-Jones
Victoria McGuire
Cherylin Hempleman
Martyn Coles

Alison Edgar
All our Jumble helpers
Amazon
Anthony Reape
Barnaby Briscoe
Blunsdon House Hotel
Bobbi's Dance Academy
Brookfield Primary School
Cailey Witcher
Cathy Brown
Charities Trust
Cheltenham Jockey Club Racecourse
Christopher Morrison
Circus Starr
Clare Stow
Cobbs Farm
Coles Scaffolding
Composite Branch
Coop Limited
Cotswold Forest School
Cotswold Sewing Creations
Deacons
Dennis Removals
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service
Double O Charity
Double Tree by Hilton Hotel
Fairfield College
Fairfield Farm Trust
G Herbert
Glynis Mercer
Great Western Hospital
GWR
Heddleton Pre-School
Hillier Community Fund
Impact Planning Services Ltd
Interprint - Swindon
Jennifer Anne Williams
Justin Tomlinson
Lane Stow
Lawson Demolition
Les Cavilla
Magic Touch

Marina Billinge-Jones
Mary Hodgson
Mel Ralph
Mr & Mrs Nicky Albergy
Mr and Mrs Holt
Mrs Rizvana Sheik
Myles Billinge-Jones
National Lottery
Nationwide
Nigel Felton
North & Thamesdown
North Swindon Club
Nutmeg Design
Oliver Messenger
Oxford Brookes University
Padel4All
Pimms in the Park
Rebecca Baxter
Rt Hon Sir Robert Buckland KC MP
Rotary Club of Swindon
Roy Perrett
Sue Frawley
Samantha Ford
Sgt Abin Subba
Sgt Kaushal Shah
Swindon Old Town Rotary Club Trust
Swindon Pride
Swindon Town Football Club
Terry Williams - Rotary of Swindon
The Crown
The Crown Inn Stratton
Thomas Price
Tiff Hughes
TW & CA Novis
Unite S/W Swindon Area
Usay
Velospeed Electric Bikes
Wiltshire & Dorset Fire & Rescue
Wiltshire Community Foundation
Zurich Community Trust

and anyone who has purchased socks from us.

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Charity name: Swindon Down's Syndrome Group
Charity number: 1158449
Principal office: 34 Periwinkle Close, Swindon, SN2 2QH

Governing document

Swindon Down's Syndrome Group is constituted as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission. It is governed by a constitution last updated in 2018.

Charitable objects:

The objects of the CIO are to relieve the charitable needs of people with Down's syndrome, and their families, helpers and carers in particular but not exclusively by the provision of support and information and speech and language therapy so that they are able to attain their full potential and to undertake any other charitable activities in connection with the relief of Down's syndrome in the SN postcode and the surrounding area. (Area of Benefit)

Surrounding area to be defined as – "post code areas associated to Fairford, Malmesbury, Hungerford, Pewsey, Marlborough, Hullavington, Chippenham, Devizes, Calne, Ashton Keynes, Cirencester, Aldbourne, Bromham, Melksham and Cheltenham."

Activities:

We are a parent-led charity supporting people with down's syndrome, their families, carers and all those with an interest in down's syndrome in Swindon and the surrounding area. We are an independent charity, affiliated to the national Down's Syndrome Association.

Organisation structure

The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The trustees meet together as a body monthly and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running the charity. The charity can have a maximum of 10 trustees.

Trustee Name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
Kim West	Chair	
Mike Billinge-Jones	Vice Chair	
Sam Harding	Treasurer	
Joanna Messenger	Secretary	
John Stow	Vice Treasurer	
Cherylin Hempleman		
Victoria McGuire		
Martyn Coles		

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The existing trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees. In appointing new trustees we seek people who are part of our local community. Potential trustees are invited to trustees' meetings or to meet with the chairperson to learn more about the charity's aims and objectives. If all trustees agree they are proposed as new trustees. New trustees are required to complete a DBS check and given a three month trial. This process allows due consideration of the person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist knowledge and skills.

Public benefit

The trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities the charity should undertake. The trustees consider that they have acted in the public benefit.

Conflicts of Interest

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on Conflicts of Interest and the Trustees only act in the best interests of the Charity. The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group have strong systems in place to identify conflicts of interest and we ask each Trustee to declare any conflicts at the beginning of every meeting.

Financial review and reserves policy

At 31 December 2023 the charity held total funds of £108,860 of which £99,838 are restricted and £9,022 are unrestricted. Unrestricted funds include designated funds of £5,000 for Speech. Free reserves are £4,022. The charity has minimal overheads as it is run by volunteers and so does not need to build up free reserves. The main commitment and the charity's highest cost is paying for Speech therapy, which will cost some £40,000 for 2024. Therefore any excess free reserves are designated to the Speech fund. The restricted funds comprise:

Speech	
Donations and grants to provide speech therapy	£65,443
Salamander	
Donations and grants to fund the fire course	£3,620
WorkFit	
Donations and grants to support adults into work	£5,535
Other smaller funds	£25,240
Total restricted funds	£99,838

Approved by the trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Kim West, Chairperson
Swindon Down's Syndrome Group

THE FUTURE

2024 marks our twenty-first year as an official charity. It's great to look back to see how far the Swindon Down's Syndrome Group has come in that time but, as always, we must look to the future. In the coming year we need to continue ensuring we can be here to support you and all the families that have someone with Down's syndrome in our area.

Last year, many of you answered the call to help at our events and fundraise with your own activities. We thank those that did, but we still need more of our members to give up a small amount of time to make more things happen. Offering just an hour of your time at one of our events, selling some of our merchandise or even sharing one of our fundraising messages can be so beneficial and goes a huge way to helping us continue to do what we do.

As with last year, we have decided to share with you how we will prioritise our services this year. It must be remembered that nothing on the list can take place if there are no funds to pay for it:

1. WorkFit
2. Speech and language therapy for under 25s and adults
3. New parent support
4. Keeping active including Football, Tennis, Padel Tennis and Swimming
5. Youth Club
6. Dance
7. Primary support
8. School Resource Packs
9. Support for schools
10. Christmas parties
11. Family events and trips

Our priority for this year is simple. We want you to be more involved. We want to hear your thoughts; we want you to be a part of what we do and help us shape the future of the Group. If you'd like to find out more drop us an email to info@swindondownsgroup.org.uk.



www.swindondownsgroup.org.uk/shop



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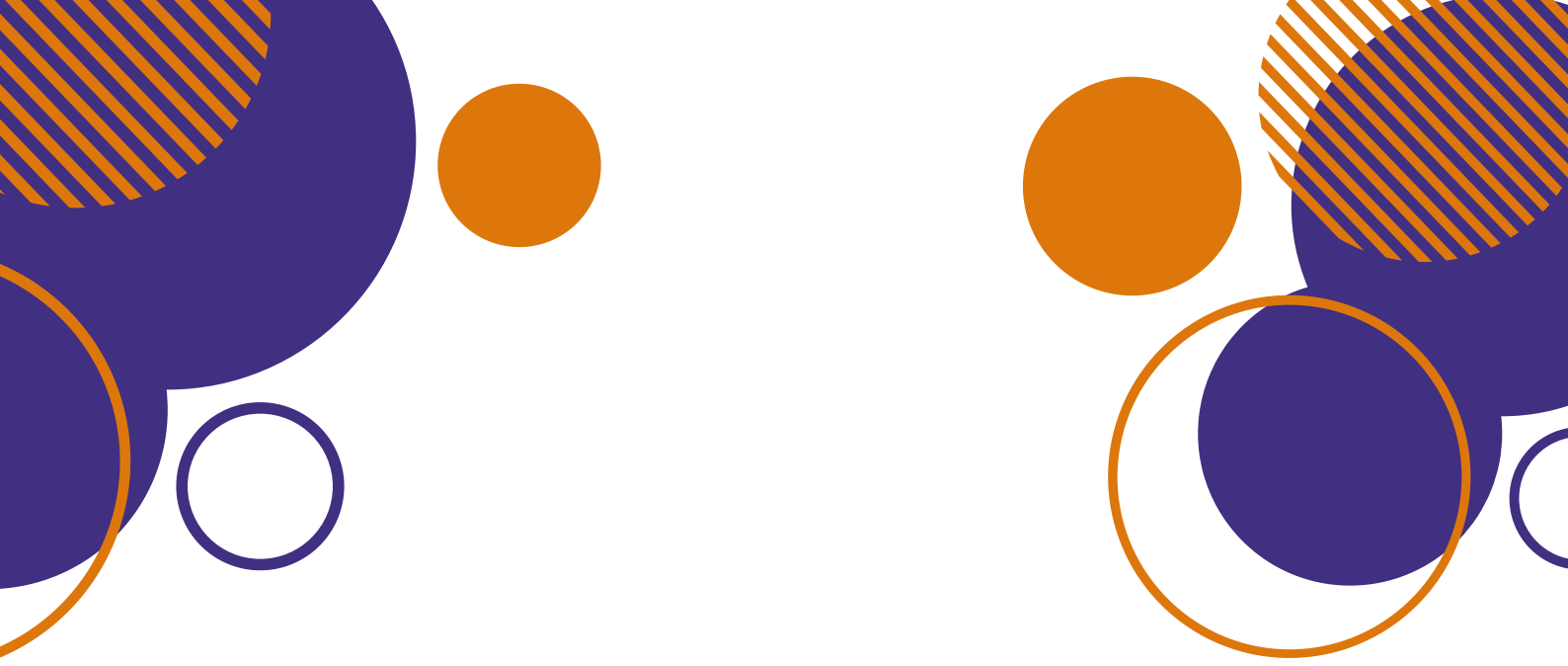
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The Swindon Down's Syndrome Group is a parent-led charity supporting people with Down's syndrome and their families in Swindon and the surrounding area.

We are here to help people with Down's syndrome to have the same opportunities as everyone else and raise awareness of Down's syndrome in the local community.

REGISTERED CHARITY

Swindon Down's Syndrome Group is a UK registered charity. Registered Office 34 Periwinkle Close Swindon SN2 2QH.

Charity number: 1158449

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