



South Manchester
Down's Syndrome Support Group
Fulfilling Potential

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2021

1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021

South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group
(SMDSSG)

Registered Charity Number: 1164570

**TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 TO 31
AUGUST 2021**

Administrative information

Charity name: South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group (SMDSSG)

Principal address: Unit 17, 41 Old Birley Street, Manchester, M15 5RF

Trustees

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates if not acted for full year
Richard Dolan	Chair	
Lucy Coverley	Secretary	Standing down (AGM 21/06/2022)
Jitka Cowgill	Treasurer	
Lydia Burke		
Rick Cowgill		
Tina Kirwin		
Dan Smith		
Esther Whitaker		<u>Stood down 29/05/2022</u>
Vacancy		
Vacancy		

Advisors

Type	Name	Address
Bank	Co-operative Bank	PO Box 250, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Freelance part-time staff

Name	Role
Bernadette Brooks	Group Coordinator (Until 31/03/2021)
Emily Sollis	Activities Coordinator (Started 01/09/2021)
John Henry	WorkFit Co-ordinator (employed by DSA, funded by SMDSSG)
Adelisa Yon	Speech & language therapist
Alison Calow	Speech & language therapist
Helen Adkins	Speech & language therapist
Judith Patel	Speech & language therapist (Started January 2022)
Jen Ellison	Sing & sign

Structure, governance and management

SMDSSG is an **Association CIO** (Charitable Incorporated Organisation), established by constitution on 26 August 2015 and registered with Charity Commission on 26 November 2015 (charity number 1164570).

A CIO is a legal structure, under the Charities Act 2011, designed specifically and only for charities. The principle of a CIO is that it is a corporate body with limited liability but formed under charity law (rather than company law) and registered solely with the charity regulator, the Charity Commission. The protection afforded by the group's limited liability make it easier to recruit and retain Trustees and to engage in contracts, including directly employing paid workers.

Purpose

We exist to empower children and young people with Down's syndrome to reach their potential and lead fulfilling lives. We do this both directly by facilitating their access to social and educational opportunities and indirectly by helping their family members and carers to provide more effective support.

We provide a wide range of activities, training and support. We host a preschool group that meets fortnightly. We hold a monthly Chatterbox event for all ages providing targeted SLT training. Regular over 17s events include bowling, pizza nights and most recently a silent disco. We also arrange ad hoc social events throughout the year including soft play and walks in the park. Training courses are attended by parents, carers, teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals. Parents can receive support and advice at Chatterbox club, training courses, social events, via new parent contacts and meeting informally.

We manage two WhatsApp groups that help to connect families and seek specific support or advice such as transitioning through school or toileting.

Our monthly newsletter is sent to around 330 recipients, including parents and professionals.

Achievements and performance

Membership

SMDSSG membership is approximately 175 members. Membership is free and members are entitled to:

- Vote at General Meetings of the group
- Attend members' events such as soft play, SLT sessions at Chatterbox and Christmas parties as well as all open events
- Discounted training course fees*
- Receive priority and discounted tickets* for events organised by SMDSSG

*where fees/charges apply

Communication

Our activities are advertised via email, general information can be found via our website (currently under major renovation), Facebook page, Twitter account and our newsletter. We have a presence on the local offer pages of 4 local authorities and an active localgiving page.

Our newsletter is sent to around 330 people to keep members and friends up to date with the group's activities and those run by other organisations of interest, and to provide other useful information.

Family support

The group provides opportunities for parents and carers to meet, share information and experiences, develop support networks and celebrate successes, and for children and siblings to socialise, make friends and have fun.

Training

Limited online training was completed during the first part of the financial year. With the abundance of online training available nationally we made the decision not to continue our own training program during the Covid pandemic, In March 2022 we returned to providing face to face training funded by BSL Industrie and money raised in memory of David Cowgill. A full report of training costs and delegate numbers will be provided in the next financial update.

Events

Returning to face-to-face activities was a big step forward for the charity, recruiting an activities coordinator on a part time freelance contract in September 2021.

Chatterbox club

Our monthly Saturday morning open drop-in Chatterbox sessions provide a range of activities for all family members - children and young people with Down's syndrome and their parents and siblings of all ages – and draw attendees from a wide area. Activities include sing and sign; yoga; Zumba; art and crafts; speech and language therapy. Chatterbox SLT sessions were held online throughout the financial year due to the ongoing pandemic returning to a new larger venue in September 2021. It has always been popular and has expanded, now regularly attended by over 50 families.

We would like to extend our thanks for such a huge effort from our wonderful team for organising a new venue, continuously updating Covid guidelines and for introducing some new activities. Adelisa, Alison and Helen have returned for face-to-face SLT sessions, supported by Jen for Sign and Sign and a new teen chat group. In January we brought in Judith to relieve the pressure on the expanded SLT program.

Preschool group

The preschool group is a wonderful opportunity for parents with babies to meet in a small group and share information, advice and stories over a coffee. A key part of our offering the group is currently run fortnightly on a Monday morning. Throughout this financial year due to the ongoing pandemic, sessions were held on-line, returning to face to face meetings in September 2021, we are exploring the possibility of expanding the group offering different days and venues to increase accessibility for this essential service.

Singing Hands

A regular annual event, having cancelled the 2020 concert due to be held in March 2020, as the UK went into lockdown, Singing Hands held several online sessions including a very successful Christmas show. The group celebrated World Down Syndrome Day 2022 with Singing Hands at The Life Centre in Sale. It was a huge success with over 170 people attending.

WorkFit

The DSA's WorkFit programme is currently delivered by Molly Keal (Employment Development Officer) and John Henry (Employment Liaison Officer). The majority of WorkFit candidates have now returned to their positions and have been supported through this process, after having a significant period of shielding during the pandemic. The WorkFit team returned on a full-time basis in May 2021 and have supported 40 candidates in placements across the North West and West Midlands since this point. The majority of the placements are paid positions (30). Notably, in the Manchester area, we have a younger demographic and some of the work experience placements reflect this.

The following positions in Manchester have been successfully developed, within this period since May 2021;

Job Title	Employer	Start date	Terms
Café Assistant	Milk & Honey	10/08/21	Work experience

Busser	The Botanist, Deansgate	17/08/21	Paid
Sales Assistant	Dunelm, Trafford	10/09/21	Paid
Coffee Shop Assistant	Dunelm, Altrincham	14/09/21	Paid
Café Assistant	Olive Roc Café	01/11/21	Work experience
Banking Hall Assistant - 4 posts	Barclays – Rochdale, Prestwich, Market Street, Ashton Under Lyne	02/11/21	Work Experience
Café Assistant	Serendipitea, Sale	9/04/21	Paid

The WorkFit team are optimistic about the upcoming opportunities for candidates in the Manchester area and are currently developing opportunities with the following employers;

- Savills Estate Agents
- Brewdog
- Flourish, Didsbury
- J. W Lees Brewery
- The Hilton

Over 17s

One of our great success stories from the pandemic has been our over 17s group who met online for quiz and disco evenings via Zoom. Following our return to face-to-face events the over 17s have met for regular bowling events, enjoyed a Christmas disco, been out for pizza, helped shape the future of the charity by attending a focus group and most recently held a silent disco. Future events include dancing, and Zumba. A recent grant for £6000 has secured the future stability of the Over 17s.

Financial Review

The financial year has been severely impacted by the pandemic and restrictions limiting our ability to host events. Funding opportunities have been impacted so less money has been received than in previous years. However, the charity has maintained its financial position. Due to lower expenditure on events and with significantly reduced expenditure on employees (Bernadette Brooks worked until 31/03/2021 and John Henry remained on Furlough) during this financial period the cash position has remained stable. Overall the charity remains in a strong position to continue to support its members. At the end of the financial year, 31 August 2021, our accumulated funds totalled £20,255 (2020: £23,418) of which £516 (2020: £2,727) is restricted. The smaller figure for restricted funds is primarily due to existing grants being utilised during this financial year, we then received a small grant from the National Lottery covering our return to face-to-face activities in the new financial year. We always aim to maintain a minimum level of funds equivalent to six months' projected running costs of the charity. Based on our current operational costs and a successful large funding application with the National Lottery we have sufficient funds to operate for more than three years. The financial position is continually reviewed. Our future plans and expansion rely on further funding which we hope will come via the form of grants. Members should be reassured that the trustees do not intend to use our

reserves or plan/commit to any large expenditures without first having secured funding to support those plans.

Update on plans for the Future

During the last AGM the trustees were proud to present our vision for the future, we also highlighted our key strategic objectives required to help us achieve our ambitions.

Key Strategic Objectives

- A. Secure a large grant (provisionally from National Lottery Community Fund) to support a major process of organisational change and service development.
- B. Appoint a senior manager with supporting staff to manage and deliver the change programme.
- C. Strengthen the Board to oversee the change programme.

We are pleased to update you on the progress of our three objectives.

A. Large Grant

SMDSSG was awarded two grants towards the end of 2021 by the National Lottery, the first grant covered activities for a period of 6 months whilst the trustees focused on securing the second larger grant. This second grant will be paid in instalments over a period of 3 years and will help to secure the future of the charity.

B. Recruitment

The trustees of SMDSSG have, in the last year, added two new paid posts to ensure the running of the charity, following successful funding bids. The first appointment was that of an activities coordinator, Emily, who has now been in post for nearly 8 months.

More recently the trustees advertised for a CEO and was inundated with applications. The good field of candidates were shortlisted down to just 5 candidates. These potential CEOs were interviewed by three trustees and a young service user, Ben, either in person at the SMDSSG office or remotely over Teams.

After a very thorough interview process, the recruitment panel have unanimously agreed upon the most suitable person for the role. An offer of employment has been made and accepted, subject to good references and a clear DBS check the new CEO will be announced very soon.

We hope you will join us in warmly welcoming our new employees to the charity.

C. The board

The board currently has space for four new trustees, we are looking for people with particular skills who will work well with the current trustees and new CEO. We invite anyone wishing to volunteer for this role to do so at the AGM. New volunteers will be invited to meet the team before confirming they wish to stand for election as a trustee. We are always looking for volunteers to help run projects, committees and our events so there will always be roles for all volunteers. Once we have sufficient procedures in place we aspire to recruit one of our members with Down's syndrome onto the Board of Trustees.

Staff

Since the departure of Bernadette Brooks in March 2021 the charity has not employed a replacement and the charity has been run by the trustees. In September 2021 we employed Emily

on a temporary contract to help organise our return to holding events. A quote from Emily explaining the important work she has been doing over the last few months.

"I have been working as the Events Coordinator for the South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group for the past 9 months. As part of my role I help to organise activities at the monthly Chatterbox event such as yoga, drama workshops, Venture Arts and the Christmas party which included a balloon modeler and raffle with items donated from local small businesses. I recently liaised with the BBC production team and Trafford SEND Local Offer team to organise filming at this event to help raise awareness to other families. I've recruited Speech and Language therapy students from The University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University who have the opportunity to shadow the qualified Speech and Language Therapists that run small groups at this event. I communicate with venues and professionals across Manchester to organise social events for our +17s members, our fortnightly pre-school group and training opportunities for members. I also write the monthly newsletter which provides members with up-to-date information on news, events and activities. I really enjoy my role with SMDSSG and the opportunity to work with such a lovely community of people who have been supportive and welcoming."

Coronavirus Pandemic

The last financial year was significantly impacted the Coronavirus Pandemic. The outlook for the future is very positive. The trustees are proud to have seen the charity through a very tough couple of years, we look forward to expanding the group in line with our 5 year "vision of success" as detailed in the previous annual report.

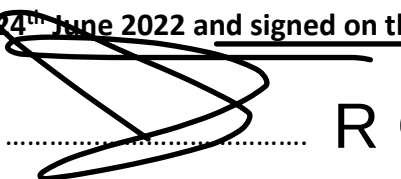
Fundraising and donations

We currently rely on grants, fundraising and donations to support our activities. Donations can be made via our localgiving page: <https://localgiving.org/charity/dsmanchester/> and we encourage this over cash or cheques.

We are very grateful to all our supporters who donated so generously. Thank you!!

General data Protection Regulations (GDPR): As a small charity we are compliant with the regulations whilst carrying out our objectives and keeping personal data we hold and the data we process under constant review. Two of our trustees have extensive and relevant experience with GDPR and provide support and guidance.

Approved by the Trustees on 24th June 2022 and signed on their behalf:


R Cowgill



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name

South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group

On accounts for the year
ended

31/8/21

Charity no
(if any)

1164570

Set out on pages

1 and 2 of form CC16a

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/08/2021~~YYYY~~.

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

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. *Delete [] if not applicable.*

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

15 June 2022

Name:

Sonia Davies

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

ICAS

(if any):

Address: 2 Parkfield Court, Altrincham WA14 2BU

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/09/2020

To

31/08/2021

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted to the nearest £	Restricted to the nearest £	Endowment to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Bank interest					-
Fundraising events					
Donations and grants (incl. gift aid)	7,905	10,440		18,345	30,998
Fees for charitable services	2,665			2,665	1,860
Fees for training courses				-	270
Members' subscriptions				-	20
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	10,570	10,440		21,010	33,148
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	10,570	10,440		21,010	33,148

A3 Payments

Arts and crafts supplies	721			721	968
Bank charges				-	-
Building hire				-	200
Christmas activities				-	1,121
Group activities	1,722	500		2,222	2,229
Misc expenses	284			284	-
Pre-school group				-	216
Professional costs				-	150
Refreshments (meetings and Chatterbox)				-	319
Rent and utilities	2,510			2,510	1,871
Play worker				-	-
Resources	1,567			1,567	135
Sing and sign	1,250			1,250	650
Speech and language therapists		6,225		6,225	6,395
Staffing		8,254		8,254	25,923
Stationery. Printing & postage costs				-	229
Training		980		980	4,210
Yoga	160			160	200
Sub total	8,213	15,959		24,173	44,816

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)

Deposit for Office	-	-	-	-	-
Learning resources	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	8,213	15,959	-	24,173	44,816

Net of receipts/(payments)	2,356	-	5,519	-	3,163	-	11,668
A5 Transfers between funds	-	3,309	3,309	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	20,691	2,727		23,418		35,086	
Cash funds this year end	19,739	516		20,255		23,418	

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

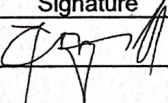
Categories	Details	Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Current account	19,739	516	-
	Cash in hand			-
				-
	Total cash funds	19,739	516	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))				
		OK	OK	OK

		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details		-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	Details		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details			
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which	Amount due	When due
B5 Liabilities	Details		-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf	Signature	Print Name	Date of
		Jitka Cowgill	18/04/2022