



South Manchester
Down's Syndrome Support Group
Fulfilling Potential

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2023

1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group
(SMDSSG)

Registered Charity Number: 1164570

Trustees' Annual Report 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

Administrative information

Charity name: South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group (SMDSSG) Primary address: Unit 17, 41 Old Birley Street, Manchester, M15 5RF

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), in the same name as the previous unincorporated association (charity number 1147397), as mandated by the SMDSSG membership at the 2014 AGM.

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.

Trustees are appointed and/or reappointed at the Annual General Meeting or by the Board of Trustees during the year, as required and in accordance with the constitution. There is a child protection policy in place, and all Trustees must undergo a DBS check. They are also required to sign the Charity Commission's Trustee eligibility declaration, and a fit and proper persons declaration based on HMRC guidance.

Trustees

	Trustee name	Office	Notes
1	Rick Cowgill	Chair	
2	Steve Ashton	Secretary	
3	Jitka Cowgill	Treasurer	
4	Lydia Burke		
5	Clare Hillyer		
6	Tina Kirwin-McGinley		
7	Vacancy		
8	Vacancy		
9	Vacancy		
10	Vacancy		

The trustees are actively looking to add to the skills base of the board but also improve diversity. We are passionate about having a board member with Down Syndrome in the future and details of first steps are included in this report.

Employees

Employee name	Role	Notes
Esther Whitaker	CEO	
Emily Sollis	Activities Coordinator	Finished July 2023
Claire Reynolds	Events & Volunteer Manager	Offer of employment accepted, starting September 2023
Kayleigh Howarth	Admin & Finance Assistant	Started July 2023
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	
Jen Ellison	Founder Little Talkers - Baby/Toddler Signing Club Makaton Tutor / Speech & language therapist	
Anita Bartlett	Occupational therapist	Started April 2023

Our Charity

Purpose

We exist to empower children and young people with Down 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.

Values

We are a member-led charity, and we see ourselves as:

Welcoming and inclusive

Caring and supportive

Positive about Down syndrome

We believe it is our whole-family approach to the empowerment of young people with Down syndrome that marks us out.

Introduction from the Chair

What a year we've had. The information shared here shows we are starting to see real transformation following several years of hard work behind the scenes. I hope you enjoy reading this report and can start to get a feel for the positive changes we are making and the impact we are having on our members. This year we are excited to trial a new format AGM which includes giving information to our members with Down syndrome and asking them for direct input, giving them the opportunity to vote on our plans. Plans are now well under way to provide a platform for our members to directly feed into future strategy and decision making. The trustees are very proud to provide the information in this report and hope to continue to support and grow the charity over the coming years.

Word from the CEO

We are very excited to be launching our new feel AGM, planned to encourage more engagement from all members.

The AGM is a wonderful time to reflect on all the great things that have been going on! Notably more activities, better attendance, and ultimately better outcomes for our members with Down Syndrome.

We welcomed new members, secured paid employment through the WorkFit Programme, forged new relationships, and put on new events. All with the aim of supporting people with Down Syndrome to reach their potential.

Behind the scenes it was a busy year of securing income, bringing in new systems and processes to make sure we are stable and here to keep providing our much-needed services!

Membership

SMDSSG currently holds just over 200 members on its books. A review of the data held is still underway. Membership is free and members are entitled to:

- vote at General Meetings of the group
- stand for election as Trustees / committee members
- attend members' events such as soft play, SLT sessions at Chatterbox and Christmas parties as well as all open events
- discounted fees for training organised by SMDSSG
- receive priority and discounted tickets for events organised by SMDSSG

Communication

We communicate to our members and partners via a monthly newsletter, sent to over 300 addresses to keep members and friends up to date with the group's activities, provide useful information and signposting. We have social media accounts, and our activities are advertised via email and private messaging groups. General information can be found via our website which also contains links to resources and support. We have a presence on the local offer pages of local authorities across Manchester.

Family support

The group provides opportunities for parents and carers to meet, share information and experiences, develop support networks and celebrate successes. We create events that give the chance for children and siblings to socialise, make friends and have fun. We assist new parents by providing help, support and friendship through a local network of volunteer new parent contacts. We have successfully set up a "Dad's football" social network which meets fortnightly. This year we have provided over 100 hours of family support across our network.

Chatterbox

Our monthly Saturday morning open drop-in Chatterbox sessions provide a range of activities for all family members, children and young people with Down syndrome and their parents/carers and siblings of all ages, with attendees travelling from all over the Greater Manchester Area. Activities include sing and sign; yoga; Zumba; art and crafts; speech and language therapy with the addition this year of occupational therapy. Chatterbox activities are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure we are offering different activities each month to cover a range of ages and interests, more exciting activities to be rolled out next year! Chatterbox club continues to increase in popularity supporting up to 50 families at each event. Once again, our sincere thanks to our staff and volunteers who continue to provide expertise and support and continue to make this monthly event such a huge success.

Pre-school group

New parents meet fortnightly supported by volunteers who are also parents of children with Down syndrome. The gatherings are a wonderful opportunity for parents with babies to meet in a small group and share information, advice and stories over a coffee. Drop-in sessions from professionals cover a range of topics to help support families in the early years.

10-16s

This year saw the first 10-16s social, a great success with much hard work behind the scenes to provide a valuable and much needed event, more to follow.

Over 17s

The Over 17s group continues to be a great success, tying in nicely to the WorkFit program, we delivered 12 over 17's social events ranging from Junkyard Golf, Bowling, Quiz night, Photography shoot and a painting class.

WorkFit

Another great year for John Henry, we report the following successes with our thanks to John for all his hard work.

Candidates currently active in the North West overall – 259 (Greater Manchester – 98 candidates)

35 placements – between September 2022-August 2023

28 – paid work placements

7 – unpaid work placements (6 work experience, 1 volunteering)

Companies working with during this period; Barclays, East Cheshire NHS Trust, Dunelm, The Blue Bicycle, Buzzy Bee Bakery, Multipave LTD, Winston's Bistro and Bar, J.W Lees Brewery, GXO Logistics, Iceland, Brewdog, Savills UK, The Grand Theatre, Holy Cross and All Saints RC, St Vincents Nursery, Pinsent Masons, The Hilton, The Rep Theatre, Marshall Fleet Solutions, The Botanist, Severn Trent, Stand Out Socks

Dance SOS

This year we celebrated WDS with an empowerment dance class run by Dance SOS, a really great event with lots of amazing photos and positive feedback from our members and volunteers.

Greggs

This year we have started a new corporate partnership with Greggs. The partnership has added significant value, not only in sausage rolls and muffins (at chatterbox) but also providing volunteers at events and high-quality office space for training and staff events.

Singing Hands

The group celebrated World Down Syndrome Day 2023 with Singing Hands at The Life Centre in Sale. Thank you to all involved in organising this huge event, a huge success as always with great feedback from our members.

Training

Since the pandemic, the delivery of training has been a real challenge. Many providers stopped training or moved online. This flooded the market with a huge range of content, but we were, and remain, very keen to provide high quality face to face content with the ability for our attendees to ask direct questions and trainers to provide feedback and specific advice in a safe space. This year training was delivered by DS Cheshire, Kelly Burgoyne, Simon Birch, Helen Adkins, and Alison Calow, including a RSE session delivered by Brook. Attendance remained varied with some sessions cancelled at short notice due to lack of interest and getting the correct balance remains a challenge. Reflecting on this year the staff have carried out surveys and spent significant time speaking to members and schools to find out why. Following this the board have approved investment into the next year and we are excited to report further on a new look, full calendar, with 9 dates already booked in for 23-24.

Employees

The board is excited to see the continued growth of our staff. Whilst we say thank you and goodbye to Emily, we welcome Kayleigh and Claire, and we wish them well in their new roles.

Volunteers

The charity relies heavily on volunteers, the trustees would like to thank those who have committed their time to our expanded program this year. Many of our volunteers are students who often leave after the academic year, but we are starting to see an increase in more permanent placements. We have developed a new onboarding process and implemented a new online platform for DBS checks which is cheaper and more efficient creating a better overall experience and improving retention. We have also connected volunteers socially and will hold our first "Thank you" social event.

Financial Review

As at the year end to 31 August 2023, our cash at bank totalled £79,201 (2022: £27,116) of which £35,605 (2022: £12,421) is restricted. Full details of receipts and expenditure can be found in the form CC16a submitted with this report.

The trustees are happy to report the charity is in a strong financial position and therefore we are able to continue to support our members.

We have seen a large increase in restricted funds to cover our core running costs and core activities. Funding to cover core costs, including salaries, will continue into 2025 thanks to the support from the National Lottery Community Fund, Morrisons and Children in Need.

Reserves are increasing in line with our current planned expansion. Members should remain reassured that the trustees have no plans to use any of our reserves or plan any large expenditures without first having secured funding to support our plans. We aim to maintain a minimum level of funds equivalent to six months projected running costs of the charity.

Our financial position is continually reviewed with plans for future expansion being funded by successful fundraising from multiple sources. The fundraising environment across the UK is challenging but we remain confident that we can continue to attract support for our important work.

Future plans

The Trustees continue to work hard on developing a dynamic strategy document which can evolve as the charity continues to grow. A large part of that work is the development of a user group for our members with Down syndrome to directly influence the direction and shape of the charity. This is such an exciting step for us to take and we look forward to reporting, alongside our members, the progress, and successes of that group next year. This group will be a stepping stone towards one of our members becoming a trustee. We are also working cautiously towards a re-brand which we see as vital to the continued success of the charity.

Our strategy over the next year will see us continuing to focus on consolidating the membership; increasing the availability of support and events to include all our members. Financial stability and sustainable growth remain a priority and we hope to pilot our new look holiday club.

Fundraising and donations

We rely on grants, fundraising and donations to support the running costs of the charity and to continue to provide our activities.

Donations can be made via our website www.dsmanchester.org.uk/make-a-donation and we encourage this over cash or cheques.

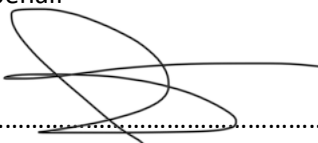
We are incredibly grateful to all our supporters who have donated so generously throughout the year. Thank you!!

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.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved this trustees' report.

Signed on their behalf

Signed 

Full name Mr Richard Cowgill

Position Chair

Date 24/06/2024

South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group	1164570
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Receipts and payments accounts

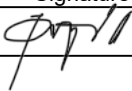
CC16a

For the period from	01/09/2022	To	31/08/2023
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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	1,693			1,693	
Donations and grants (incl. gift aid)	35,250	57,543		92,793	30,605
Fees for charitable services	1,767			1,767	1,489
Fees for training courses				-	-
the National Lottery Community Fund "RC North West Region"		43,092		43,092	19,534
Members' subscriptions				-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	38,710	100,635		139,345	51,628
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	38,710	100,635		139,345	51,628
A3 Payments					
Arts and crafts supplies	-	965		965	725
Bank charges				-	-
Building hire	558			558	1,583
Christmas activities	217			217	1,236
Fundraising costs	640			640	
Group activities	2,521	6,062		8,583	5,490
Misc expenses incl travel	86			86	167
Pre-school group	280	1,068		1,348	-
Professional costs	1,138			1,138	6,989
Refreshments (meetings and Chatterbox)				-	99
Rent and utilities	1,740			1,740	1,606
Play worker				-	-
Resources	20			20	-
Sing and sign		1,300		1,300	1,560
Speech and language therapists		6,395		6,395	6,098
Staffing	1,560	21,048		22,608	3,266
Stationery. Printing & postage costs	43			43	-
the National Lottery Community Fund "RC North West Region"		40,533		40,533	14,242
Training	450			450	1,387
Yoga		80		80	
Volunteer expenses	557			557	320
Sub total	9,809	77,451		87,260	44,767
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Deposit for Office	-	-	-	-	-
Learning resources	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	9,809	77,451	-	87,260	44,767
Net of receipts/(payments)	28,901	23,184		52,085	6,861
A5 Transfers between funds		-		-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	14,695	12,421		27,116	20,255
Cash funds this year end	43,596	35,605		79,201	27,116

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	43,596	35,605	-
	Cash in hand			-
				-
	Total cash funds	43,596	35,605	-
	(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		-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
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 asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which	Amount due	When due
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of		Signature	Print Name	Date of
			Jitka Cowgill	24/06/2024



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
South Manchester Downs Syndrome Support Group

On accounts for the year
ended

31/08/23
Charity no
(if any) 1164570

Set out on pages

1 and 2 of form CC16a
(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/08/23**.

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

[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: 17 June 24

Name:

Sonia Davies

Relevant professional

ICAS

qualification(s) or body
(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.