



## Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	1st	January	2023		31st	December	2023

### Section A

### Reference and administration details

Charity name

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

Charity's principal address

Postcode

#### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
1	Gillian Warwick-Thompson	Chair	
2	Huw Watkins	Treasurer	Appointed 26.1.2023
3	Rachel Angus	Trustee	
4	Abbie Hollick	Trustee	Resigned 31.12.2023
5	Anna Crispin	Trustee	Resigned 5.10.2023
6	Selena Chapman	Trustee	
7	Tina Guagenti-Birkin	Trustee	Appointed 9.11.2023
8			
9			
10			

#### Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

#### Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)



## Section B Structure, governance and management

### Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution dated 29.1.2018
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Appointed by existing Trustee Board

### Additional governance issues (Optional information)

The Trustees have considered the risk appetite of the charity. They have adopted a zero-risk tolerance to legal and regulatory risk. Their appetite for risk can be characterised as low reflecting the nature of the charitable organisation and their responsibilities to service users. The Trustees maintain and regularly review their risk register and take actions to reduce or eliminate risk where possible.

## Section C Objectives and activities

### Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

In March 2023, the Trustees amended the original object of the CIO to now include young people up to age 25. As such, the object of the CIO is the relief of children and young people up to age 25, with Down's Syndrome or other additional needs, particularly by providing appropriate support to their parents or guardians, so that such children and young people may achieve their full potential.

### Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

2023 represented the fifth full year of operational activity for DS Achieve having officially launched to the public on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018 following registration with the Charity Commission on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

In order to plan and execute suitable activities which meet the charity's objectives, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. These guidelines were discussed and used to plan seven main areas of activity for 2023:

- 1) Continuation of the pre-school teaching class for children with Down Syndrome aged five years or under, called **Little Achievers**.
- 2) **Training sessions** for parents and carers of children with Down Syndrome and professionals working with children with Down Syndrome.
- 3) Continuation of the weekly social development programme during term time for primary-aged and secondary-aged children with Down Syndrome, called **Young Achievers**

- 4) The continuation of the **Empowerment Group**, a programme of social and educational activities carefully designed to give parents/carers of children with Down Syndrome the opportunity to take a break from daily life, strengthen their social networks and to focus on their wellbeing.
- 5) The continuation of - the **Resources into Schools** service which combines special advisory teacher advice to nurseries and schools with the delivery of an educational resource to help teachers better support the individual children with Down Syndrome with specific aspects of their learning.
- 6) The continuation of the **EHCP Support Service** which provides assistance for parent carers with a child or young person with Down Syndrome to navigate the system around Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 7) The development of a new service - **Resources into Homes** which is a service providing direct training from a Specialist Down Syndrome Teacher, to parents, on how to use a specialist resource to enable their child to achieve maximum progression with their learning.

In addition to these seven areas of activity, DS Achieve also continued a partnership agreement with Hertfordshire Library Services - the **My Voice Project**, which aims to create volunteering opportunities for young people with Down Syndrome. This work will continue into 2024.

#### **Little Achievers**

Little Achievers is a weekly teaching class during term time for children, aged five years and under, with Down Syndrome. It focuses on early skills in the areas of literacy, numeracy, fine motor skills, physical development and communication. The teacher is a highly professional individual who has extensive experience in teaching and working with children and young people with Down Syndrome. Progress is monitored by the class teacher and reported at the end of each term.

The teaching class is accompanied by a wraparound 'Stay and Play' session which includes a number of focused developmental and fun play activities, as well as sing and sign sessions using Makaton. Visiting professionals also join the Stay and Play at regular intervals to offer advice to parents.

Three part time employees deliver the group – a manager and two support workers.

Feedback continues to be extremely positive with parents particularly valuing the high quality teaching classes and access to professionals. Parents are also appreciative of the supportive nature of the group - from staff and other families.

#### **Training sessions**

2023 saw the continuation of our high-quality training events with a focus this year on specialist topics that could add the most value to our families and avoided duplication of more widely offered topics from other organisations. These have been delivered online and face to face and have included Supporting Children with Down Syndrome in Education, Dental Care for Children with Down Syndrome and Supporting Siblings of Children with SEND. We are thankful for the expertise of Helen Long, Hertfordshire Special Care Dental Service and SIBs in delivering these courses on our behalf. Feedback from course attendees (both parents and professionals) has been hugely positive.



### **Young Achievers**

September 2021 saw the launch of the new Young Achievers Social Development programme that is led weekly during term time by an experienced Youth Leader with support from an Assistant Leader, a Support Worker and a team of volunteers. Young Achievers has continued throughout 2023 with 30 different children joining the programme for some or all of the three terms with most of them returning each term.

The children have had a lot of fun while learning new skills to help them develop friendships, join in social activities and to understand the social world a little better. Feedback continues to be positive with parents valuing the structure and content of the sessions as well as the social opportunity provided to their child.

### **Empowerment Group**

The Empowerment Group was launched in February 2020 and is a programme of activities carefully designed to give parents/carers the opportunity to take a break from daily life and to focus on their wellbeing.

In June 2021, parents were invited to share their views to determine the future offering of the Empowerment Group. In response, a new programme of events was devised and the Empowerment Group relaunched in January 2022.

The Empowerment Group offering for 2023 has included two social sessions with 20 parents attending across the two events with some choosing to attend both sessions and a programme of Facebook Lives for parent carers on a range of parenting and education related topics in our closed Facebook group which have had 233 views over the year.

### **Resources into Schools**

This service combines specialist advisory teacher advice to schools with the delivery of a resource to help teachers better support the individual children with Down Syndrome with specific aspects of their learning. During 2023, 25 different children have been supported through this initiative. School staff have hugely valued the opportunity to receive expert advice from the specialist teachers and to learn from them.

### **EHCP Support Service**

During 2023, this service provided information and training through four workshops, with 33 different parent carers attending one or more sessions. A small pilot was also run which provided legal EHCP support for individual parents. At the end of 2023, it was concluded by the Trustees that this pilot would not be renewed as support to parents could be provided through other specialist services.

### **Resources into Homes**

This new service launched in April 2023 and provides direct training from a specialist Down Syndrome advisory teacher to parents of children on how to use a specialist resource to enable their child to achieve maximum progression with their learning. During 2023, parents of 10 children accessed the service which covered the topics of Speech and Language and Reading. Feedback from parents confirmed that they felt they had better understanding and knowledge to support their child as a result of the training.



## **Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)**

The Trustees give their time voluntarily to run the charity and to support the delivery of services. In addition, the Trustees gratefully accepted voluntary support from the Board Secretary and other support from volunteers to help with the delivery of services described above.

## **Section D**

### **Achievements and performance**

#### **Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year**

The Trustees of DS Achieve are delighted to report a number of key achievements during 2023.

- We have continued to empower parents and professionals through our social media, newsletters and WhatsApp groups providing information and signposting and providing a platform for peer support. We have seen our following continue to grow and been delighted to welcome new families.
- We have run seven training courses, with 83 places booked, for professionals and parent carers and delivered seven shorter training videos for parents to watch (and rewatch at their convenience) on a variety of relevant topics, all of which have had consistently strong feedback.
- Our Little Achievers programme welcomed nine new families in 2023, with four of the children with Down Syndrome old enough to join our specialist teaching classes. We were sad to say goodbye to two children who have both been with the group for a number of years and left to start Reception Year at school. We could not be more proud of them!
- In May 2023, we welcomed an additional Little Achievers Support worker to the team who is a qualified teacher. She has been a valuable addition to the Little Achievers programme and has formed great relationships with the children and families who attend.
- In April 2023, the Young Achievers programme changed venue and moved to a school in Welwyn Garden City which is much better suited to the needs of the attendees and the group. The programme has continued to go from strength to strength and we are grateful to our team of volunteers which continues to grow alongside some volunteers who have been with us from the start. We have been delighted that so many of the children have returned each term and have built some wonderful friendships.
- We were happy to see our original Young Achievers Group Leader return from maternity leave in September 2023 and we were grateful to the fantastic youth leader who provided cover in her absence.
- We welcomed the appointment of two new Trustees to the Board with complimentary skills and professional experience. We were grateful to the two departing trustees for their dedication to DS Achieve during their tenure.
- In September 2023, we implemented a structural change which saw the Head of Operations role reduce in hours, the removal of the Operations Coordinator role, and the introduction of an Operations Manager role to run the Charity day to day. The Trustees are grateful to the Operations Coordinator for her contribution to the charity during her employment. We were delighted to welcome the new Operations Manager to the team and see her pick up the reins



quickly to deliver our new and existing programmes. This structural change better meets service user needs and delivers a team model which provides enhanced stability for the future.

- We have continued to increase our professional network this year, building links with health and education professionals locally and giving them information about how we can also support both them and the families they are working with so that they signpost new families to us.

The Trustees of DS Achieve are extremely pleased with the achievements during 2023 and the feedback from service users about the positive impact of services the charity has delivered.

## Section E

## Financial review

### Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

DS Achieve aims to hold sufficient unrestricted reserves to ensure that any training courses committed to, alongside any administrative costs of the charity can be met for the following six months at any point in time.

It is expected that both the Little Achievers and Young Achievers programme will be largely funded by grant income and the delivery of the programmes will be dependent on successful grant applications. The Trustees were able to successfully secure grant funding for the next three academic years for these programmes in 2021.

At the year end, unrestricted reserves totalled £40,447 thanks to the generosity of our donors.

### Details of any funds materially in deficit

Not applicable

### Further financial review details (Optional information)

#### RECEIPTS

Income has been received via four channels: donations, event income, project income and grants.

#### Donations

DS Achieve were delighted to be the recipient of a number of generous donations during 2023. Total donations received amounted to £23,264.

#### Event income

Income was received from attendees to both the Little Achievers classes, Young Achievers sessions, social, and training events. All events were subsidised by DS Achieve either through unrestricted reserves or specific grant awards.

#### Hertfordshire Libraries

Income was received from Hertfordshire Libraries to run the My Voice project.

#### Grants

DS Achieve successfully applied for two grants during 2023.

The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund awarded £5,000 in grant funding towards core costs for 2023. A £1,000 grant was also awarded from Tesco Community Grants to support the new Resources into Homes project.

In addition, DS Achieve continued to receive grants from:

- The National Lottery Community Fund (RC London and South East Region) to specifically fund the Little Achievers Programme for three academic years from September 2021.



- BBC Children in Need to specifically fund the Young Achievers Programme for three academic years from September 2021.

All grants that have been awarded are restricted funds, meaning they must be spent in accordance with each of their terms and conditions.

#### **PAYMENTS**

The majority of the expenditure of the charity fell into eight areas:

##### **Event costs**

These costs relate to ten training events including trainer costs, venue hire and expenses, our Young Achievers support worker salary, two Empowerment Group socials and an end of year family social.

##### **Little Achievers Classes**

Costs for the Little Achievers programme for the Spring, Summer and Autumn terms relate to venue hire, the teacher, visiting therapists, staff costs, salary and resources.

##### **Young Achievers Sessions**

Costs were incurred for venue hire, activity providers, refreshments, staff costs, salary and resources.

##### **Resources into Schools**

Costs were incurred for specialist advisory teachers and specific educational resources.

##### **EHCP Support Service**

Costs were incurred for venue hire for training and for professional services.

##### **Resources into Homes**

Costs were incurred for specialist advisory teachers and specific educational resources.

##### **My Voice - Hertfordshire Libraries Project**

Costs relate to staff salaries attributable to the project and training provided to Hertfordshire Libraries staff by a specialist advisory teacher.

##### **Administration**

Administration costs were met through a combination of restricted and unrestricted funds and were necessary for the effective running of the charity.

## **Section F**

## **Other optional information**

### **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Statement**

**Environmental Sustainability** – we are committed to working in a responsible manner to reduce our impact on the environment. We are a remote organisation with our employees either based at home or delivering services via hired premises. This ensures that we only use energy and physical resources in a targeted way for our front line delivery. We aim to be a paperless organisation but where paper based resources are required we limit the amount we produce and recycle surpluses. When hiring premises we consider the suitability for our beneficiaries and undertake risk assessments to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet high standards for careful use of resources.

**Social Performance** - as a charity our purpose is to provide public benefit and performing a social good is our fundamental role. We welcome all families with a child or young person with Down Syndrome in our community and seek to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment. We have a strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and strive to ensure our organisation and the services we offer are accessible for all. We have organisational policies to support our ways of working and to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded. We offer employment and volunteering opportunities for people with Down Syndrome. We ensure we pay a fair and living wage and ensure that any out of pocket expenses incurred by employees and



volunteers are reimbursed. We have an Employee Assistance Programme to help ensure that we look after the wellbeing of our employees.

**Governance** - we use an Independent Examiner to review our accounts, we implement data protection measures, and have an ambitious culture that drives rigorous review, training and improvement of the trustee board. We follow the Charity Governance Code and undertook an audit in 2020 and implemented improvements as a result. We undertake regular self assessments and skills audits of our Board and use the findings to improve our performance. We create strategic plans on a three yearly cycle and use our annual awaydays to help us develop and review our plans incorporating feedback from our stakeholders.

## Section G

## Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

H. Watkins

G. Warwick-Thompson

Full name(s)

H. WATKINS

G. WARWICK-THOMPSON

Position (eg Secretary, Chair,  
etc)

TREASURER

CHAIR

Date

21/3/24

21/3/24





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

DS Achieve	1176873
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## Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period from	Period start date 1/1/2023	To	Period end date 31/12/2023
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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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	14,264	9,000	-	23,264	17,072
Event Income	5,401	-	-	5,401	7,441
Hertfordshire Libraries	5,533	-	-	5,533	4,043
The National Lottery Community Fund (RC London and South East Region)	-	17,891	-	17,891	15,258
Grant from BBC Children In Need	-	9,955	-	9,955	10,455
Grant from The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund	-	5,000	-	5,000	-
Grant from Tesco Community Grants	-	1,000	-	1,000	-
Grant from The Childwick Trust	-	-	-	-	3,000
Grant from HCC - Festive Grant	-	-	-	-	300
Interest Received	421	-	-	421	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>25,619</b>	<b>42,846</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>68,465</b>	<b>57,569</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>25,619</b>	<b>42,846</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>68,465</b>	<b>57,569</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Event Costs	2,254	618	-	2,872	8,451
Little Achievers Classes	-	18,230	-	18,230	14,281
Young Achievers Sessions	1,017	10,913	-	11,930	9,912
Resources into Schools	593	4,948	-	5,541	3,143
EHCP Support Service	5,010	-	-	5,010	699
My Voice - Hertfordshire Libraries Project	4,142	-	-	4,142	426
Resources into Homes	-	764	-	764	-
Website & IT Costs	244	911	-	1,156	1,092
Insurance	-	573	-	573	568
Subscriptions	104	404	-	508	359
Marketing	53	372	-	425	272
Sundry Expenses	98	202	-	300	881
Salaries & Staff Costs	14,053	5,537	-	19,591	16,381
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	60
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>27,569</b>	<b>43,473</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>71,042</b>	<b>56,525</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases</b>					
Storage Shed	423	-	-	423	-
Little Achievers Sensory Library	-	-	-	-	892
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>892</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>27,992</b>	<b>43,473</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>71,465</b>	<b>57,417</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 2,373</b>	<b>- 628</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 3,001</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>42,820</b>	<b>15,820</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>58,640</b>	<b>58,488</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>40,447</b>	<b>15,192</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>55,639</b>	<b>58,640</b>



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

### Categories

#### B1 Cash funds

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
Bank Account	20,026	15,192	-
Savings Account	20,421	-	-
	-	-	-
<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>40,447</b>	<b>15,192</b>	<b>-</b>

#### B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
Gift Aid Due	464	-	-
		-	-
		-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

#### B3 Investment assets

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

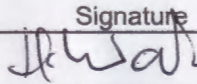
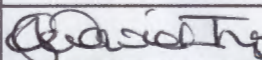
#### B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
Little Achievers Equipment	Restricted	-	1,620
Projector Screen	Unrestricted	-	86
Event Banners	Unrestricted	-	157
Playgroup Equipment	Unrestricted	-	-
Projector	Unrestricted	-	-
Little Achievers Sensory Library	Restricted		892
Storage Shed	Unrestricted	423	-

#### B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
Staff Costs - Unrestricted	Unrestricted	281	
Young Achievers - Staff Costs	Restricted	104	
Young Achievers - Hall Hire	Restricted	80	
Little Achievers Therapist Costs	Restricted	480	
RiS Advisory Teacher Visit	Restricted	222	

Signed by one or two trustees on

Signature	Print Name	Date of
	H. WATKINS	21/3/24
	G. WARWICK-THOMPSON	21/3/24





Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
DSAchieve

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 December 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1176873

Set out on pages

9-10

(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 **31/12/2023**.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

Date:

27/09/2023

Name:

Kathryn Coxon

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

Address:

39 Station Road

Harpenden

AL5 4XD



Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight 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.**