

# ANNUAL REPORT



## 2021/2022

A world where everyone with Down's  
syndrome thrives!

# Annual Report 21/22

The Objects for which the charity is established are exclusively charitable according to English law and for the benefit of the public anywhere in the world by advancing the education of children and young people with Down's syndrome and similar learning difficulties, including but not limited to providing access to specialist teachers and therapists through digital content and other resources.




## VISION

A world where everyone with Down's syndrome thrives.

## MISSION

Using digital tools to empower people with Down's syndrome to thrive throughout their lives.

# Chair's Report



A diagnosis of Down's syndrome must never be a barrier to life or love.

What an amazing year 21/22 has been, it's a year that will stay in the memory for many of us forever. A whole new team came together to support the Down's syndrome community. With a wealth of skills, our new Trustees have set to work building an ambitious and resilient organisation that can continue to provide real difference for the community they serve. The team have spent their time collaborating and listening to the community to ensure their needs remain at the heart of every decision.

None of us could have predicted the profound impact of Covid-19. Lockdown was a challenge for parents across the UK. For those with Down's syndrome, the need for support became even more acute. Learn and Thrive has provided online resources to support young learners wherever they are. In less than a year, we have provided resources for almost 1,000 learners. The impact and feedback has demonstrated how powerful our resources are in enabling everyone with Down's syndrome to thrive.

One thing is clear! Our work continues to be vital. Barriers for those with Down's syndrome remain, and the lack of access to services is devastating to the community. We will continue to build partnerships with communities, local authorities and schools to maximise the impact our content provides.

This is only the start of the journey and we step into 22/23 ready to innovate, adapt and excel.

*Nikki Walker*

# Message from our CEO



"For me, delivering real impact is personal"

What an incredible start for a new charity!

Learn and Thrive has burst onto the scene to empower learners with Down's syndrome and other learning needs, to build the vital skills they need to reach their potential and be meaningfully included within their communities.

For me, this is personal, every day I see the impact of not having these services available on children and young people. I have been that parent left stranded and unsure. I have supported those teachers who are looking for ways to better support their students. There is the will to do better for our community, I am so pleased that Learn and Thrive are providing the way to make it happen.

With nearly 1000 current active users, over 4000 sign-ups using our projects, and new exciting things in the pipeline, I am confident that our team can build an experience that utilises digital learning to benefit thousands of young people with learning difficulties.

# About Us

Learn and Thrive utilises digital tools to empower people with Down's syndrome to thrive throughout their lives.

We understand the barriers created by society when you have Down's syndrome, and we are dedicated to providing online tools to empower the community to smash through those barriers and live their best life!


Outdated stereotypes, poor understanding of specific learning needs, and a lack of access to services, all contribute to this group of people often not getting the support they need within their communities. Research shows us that people with Down's syndrome are lifelong learners and that with targeted specific support, they can often gain the vital skills needed to access their community and live life to the full.



Focuses on early learning concepts and skills, covering practical approaches to building language skills through play.



Covers personal health, emotions, relationships, and appropriate behaviour for pre-teens through to adulthood.



"I know what I want, are you ready to listen?"

# Projects



Having moved to Learn and Thrive from 21 Together in December 2021, Teach Me Too continues to thrive and grow. We have improved user experiences through changes in the accessibility and membership models, produced new content, and spent time with families and professionals talking about the future.

We have reviewed our strategic priorities and intended audience, which identified local authorities and statutory services as the areas we need to

target to ensure we are reaching those children and young people who often don't have the financial or educational means to access specialist support.

We have teamed up with Hertfordshire Local Authority and commissioned an independent review of the Teach Me Too project in early years settings and schools throughout the region.



Launched in April 2022, Learning for Life is a new project developed by the team, alongside external experts and families. It delivers targeted and differentiated support to parents, schools, and other organisations tackling the complex area of relationship, sex, and health education.

We are identifying key areas of learning that are often missed, or whizzed through in education settings. These form the basis for key independent

life skills and include areas such as public and private, appropriate touch, relationships, social boundaries and socially appropriate behaviour. Without fully understanding these areas our young people are left vulnerable to abuse, and with significant barriers to inclusion in work, leisure and activities of daily living.

# The Future



## Strong Foundations

As we move into year two, it is vital that we continue to build strong foundations that stand us in good stead for many years to come. Taking on an existing project has allowed us to take on pre-existing structures and governance, as well as access multi-year grants and existing funding opportunities.

We need to make the most of this start by continuing to adapt and build robust strategies to deliver innovative projects with direct impact for our community, sustainably. While every decision-

making process should have children and young people with Down's syndrome at its heart, we must also build an organisation that is mindful of the wider issues that face the charity: specifically the impact of the economic climate, policy, staffing and the general political environment.



## Increased Content

A clear way forward is to continue to build more project content. Taking our lead from our young people and working closely with the community when planning the next steps.

Both Teach Me Too and Learning for Life have clear plans for the future and are in full development. We need to keep listening, evaluating and improving, making sure our projects have the best possible outcomes for children and young people.



## Taking Digital Further

In the coming year, we will be reviewing different ways of taking digital learning further. Looking at options from online resources and games to entire learning platforms. Our research is ongoing, but as the rest of the world embraces technology, we believe there is a whole world of potential to be unlocked. We just need to be clear on what is possible, and what best suits the needs of our communities.

# Impact

As a brand new charity we have hit the ground running with our project users continuing to grow. With less than a year under our belt we have delivered 20 new video resources, 10 new student packs, and identified and set-up long term quality monitoring processes.

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526

Learning For Life users - In the short time it has been launched, we have already seen many children and young people benefitting from this new project.

449

Teach Me Too current active members. Historic sign up and system use now tops 3500 individual users.

73

Free learning videos available to all.

"A fantastic resource for children with Down's syndrome. I have tried many different methods to get my little one focused and engaged and the Teach Me Too is by far the more successful."  
- Parent

"Thank you so much for the excellent resources for our teenagers. We have started working our way through and they are excellent!" - Donna White

# Achievements



## Learning For Life

The feedback from our Learning for Life series has been overwhelming. To have planned, launched and developed feedback pathways for this new project in such a short space of time has been a real feat. We are already hearing about the impact it is making on the lives of children and young people.



## Trustee Recruitment

As a brand-new charity we are really proud of our Board of Trustees. With a wealth of experience in their areas, backed up by members with lived experience, we really do have a team that encompasses passion, aspiration and excellence.

In times when Trustee recruitment can be tough, we have recruited six members onto the board, driven by their passion for the cause. The level of commitment involved in creating and structuring a new team is immense, and their dedication is to be commended.

"The confidence these resources gave us to deliver Relationship and sex education to our pupils was invaluable."  
Kirsty Buckland -SENCO

"I have definitely seen the concepts click with JJ as she has been using them in her normal life. We go swimming regularly and she is now understanding about needing privacy when getting changed and learning that there are different areas at the swimming pool that are public and private. What I'm most impressed by is she is really keen to learn about these topics and wants to do it!"

Debbie - Parent

# Achievements



## Local Authority Partnership

As the Teach Me Too project grows and evolves, we need to better understand where it sits in a post COVID arena. It was designed to support young children during lockdowns, and since then it has been taken up by schools and nurseries.

We needed to find out more about how schools are using the resource and tease out as much learning as possible.

This learning will help us adapt and improve the project, building a legacy that survives the pandemic and continues to support children and young people.

Our partnership with Hertfordshire Local Authority to complete an independent review into the Teach Me Too project in schools, has been planned and launches in September 2022. Linking with statutory services not only gives us insights to improve the project, but also acts to build our strategic direction of engaging more teachers, SENCOs and health visitors, ensuring the opportunities are reaching those who are not accessing private or additional charitable services.



## Collaboration

We have extended our network of partnerships and now work with a variety of highly regarded experts in their field. Collaboration is a cornerstone of our delivery model and our approach to supporting children and young people.

We alone cannot solve the issues surrounding living with a learning difficulty. We have to work together

to build and maintain a variety of tools and pathways to promote the best possible outcomes for the communities we serve.

By rooting ourselves within the communities we serve, and collaborating with families and young people. We can ensure the voice of the children and young people and their families remain the centre of all our decision-making processes.

# Challenges



## Reaching the most in need

Ensuring we are targeting the hard-to-reach communities remains a real challenge. It is challenging for even large, statutory bodies to fully engage harder to reach families, and as we don't have the resources of those big organisations we need to ensure we are thinking and acting strategically and being innovative in how we engage and reach these families and schools.

Since our creation, we have understood and prioritised the power of social and digital media. We now have two main features spaces booked with highly influential SEN education magazines, which will further our reach among the education professional network.

We remain committed to designing our communication plans to improve our reach. Therefore, we need to continue to build our links and connections with local authorities, education and health professionals. While also continuing our online media and marketing.



## Economic impact

Times are tough! We need to consider the impact of the cost of living crisis on our families, their access to technology and the direct impact on their lives. Inevitably, less money means the often overlooked areas our projects cover become even more ignored. This means free access to projects will become even more vital to families, schools, and other community organisations.

Additionally, we need to consider how the economic situation could change our own access to funds. The pressure on grants and trusts has vastly increased, with even more charities vying for the same pots of money. Previously, we have secured excellent relationships with corporate partners who have been central to the success of recent projects.

The generosity extended by companies during the pandemic and since has been a key pillar of our fundraising, and we must be mindful that the economic impact and rising costs may mean there is simply less corporate funds available. Therefore, it is vital we continue to have a robust reserves policy that protects the projects for the communities we serve, and we actively look to diversify our funding.

# Finance

## Funding

Teach Me Too transferred from 21 Together to Learn and Thrive on 1st December 2021. Alongside the project came the restricted funds to develop the project held by 21 Together, as well as unrestricted donations from Quality Compliance Systems (QCS). The support provided to Learn and Thrive by QCS, and specifically Mat Whittingham (QCS Founder), was pivotal in allowing the charity to form and thrive from day one.

QCS not only provided considerable financial support, they also delivered significant professional support in the form of marketing support, tech support, peer support and mentoring. Staff regularly used their giving back days to give their time and expertise to the charity.

The National Lottery Community Fund continue to support the Teach Me Too project on its transfer to Learn and Thrive, and we thank them for their patience and support. It remains central to the expansion of Teach Me Too and the wider stability of the charity.



# Treasurer Report



The charity was registered on 5th July 2021, however it was not until the transfer of the Teach Me Too project on 1st December 2021 that the organisation started to function. Therefore, this annual report only reflects the 4-month period of 1st December 2021 to 31st March 2022. In that short time, we have started to build sustainable income pipelines, build comprehensive multi-year project plans and developed multiple new partnerships. We have also made strategic financial plans, with the aim of diversifying our income streams to include a robust portfolio of trust and foundation supporters, as well as obtaining support from corporates.

In our first period of income, we received £64,913 from two grants and a further £52,474 in unrestricted income (through individual donations, corporate donations and income from 21 Together). Following this strong start, we have begun to successfully diversify our income streams, with numerous grants and trusts already awarded in 2022/23. We have also seen great success from our "Strictly Makaton" fundraising challenge, which generated both unrestricted income and awareness of Learn and Thrive's offering. In addition, obtaining corporate support has been a focus. Our Board of Trustees have the strength of being both well-connected in the world of business and in the Down's syndrome community. With the current spotlight being shone on the importance of access to work in the neurodiverse population, and on diversity and inclusion more broadly, we believe our work connects well with many potential corporate supporters and partners.

# Treasurer Report

In our first period of expenditure, we incurred a total of £20,750 expenditure, primarily relating to contracted services for content development and salary costs. We anticipate these to continue to be our primary source of expenditure. Our position at the end of our first reporting period is a strong one; total funds carried forward totalling £96,637, setting the foundations for a resilient charity in the years to come.

As a new charity, we have also set our Reserve policy that we believe is both prudent and appropriate in our context. We incur ongoing costs relating to the provision of existing educational content, staff and overheads. We also incur additional costs when developing new content to expand our offering. Expenditure fluctuates with cycles of new content development, resulting in short periods of high spending intermittently throughout the year. Children and young people, their families and their carers rely on our resources, and it is therefore vital that we can sustain our support over prolonged periods without need to pause/cease access to our educational content if funding streams fluctuate or stop. In this context, we have set a reserve level of 12 months of running costs.



Friendship can be tricky, but now I have the skills.

# Thank you to our supporters

We are so grateful for all the support from our current and future funders. Their belief in our vision has been inspiring and has allowed us to step into the next financial year with confidence.

There remains a lot of work to do to meet our project targets, but having the continued support of the organisations below has allowed us to concentrate on the quality of our projects and meeting the needs of our communities.

## Funders 21/22



## Funders 22/23

Confirmed up to July 2022



# **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF LEARN AND THRIVE**

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Learn and Thrive**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Learn and Thrive for the period ended 31 March 2022 , which are set out on pages 1 to 7.

## **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 Trustee'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 2011 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

S.R. Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA  
Ashdown Hurrey Auditors Limited  
20 Havelock Road  
Hastings  
East Sussex  
TN34 1BP

Date: 5 October 2022

## LEARN AND THRIVE

### RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Year Ended Total funds £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Grants	2	-	64,913	64,913
Donations	3	52,474	-	52,474
Fundraising		-	-	-
Charitable Activities		-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<u>52,474</u>	<u>64,913</u>	<u>117,387</u>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Costs of Generating Funds		-	-	-
Charitable Activities	4	325	18,292	18,617
Management and Administration Costs	5	240	1,893	2,133
Other Expenditure		-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<u>565</u>	<u>20,185</u>	<u>20,750</u>
<b>NET RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)</b>		<u>51,909</u>	<u>44,728</u>	<u>96,637</u>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>	6			
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u><u>51,909</u></u>	<u><u>44,728</u></u>	<u><u>96,637</u></u>

## LEARN AND THRIVE

### STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.03.2022 Total funds £
<b>Monetary Assets</b>			
Cash at Bank and in Hand	51,909	44,728	96,637
	<u>51,909</u>	<u>44,728</u>	<u>96,637</u>
<b>Debtors</b>			
Accounts Receivable		-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Social Security and Other Taxes	-	1,323	1,323
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,323</u>	<u>1,323</u>
<b>Other Assets</b>			31.03.2022 Cost £
Computer Equipment			-
			<u>-</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 4 October 2022 and were signed on its behalf by:

K Taylor - Trustee

N Walker - Trustee

## LEARN AND THRIVE

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

#### 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

##### **Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

#### 2. GRANTS

	31.03.2022 £
Grants - National Lottery (via 21 Together)	54,982
Grants - Awards for All	9,931
	<u>64,913</u>

#### 3. DONATIONS

	31.03.2022 £
Donations - 21 Together	28,894
Donations - Corporate	20,000
Donations - Enthuse	3,580
	<u>52,474</u>

#### 4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES EXPENDITURE

	31.03.2022 £
Direct Wages	9,161
Pension Costs	264
Resource Creation	225
Recruitment	142
Staff Training	75
Venue Cost	408
Bought-in Services	8,342
	<u>18,617</u>

## LEARN AND THRIVE

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

#### 5. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION COSTS

	31.03.2022
	£
IP, Licence, Permissions	300
Website Maintenance	448
Bank Fees	56
IT Software & Consumables	12
Software Costs	139
Postage, Freight & Courier	18
Subscriptions	677
Insurance	483
	<u>2,133</u>

#### 6. RESTRICTED FUNDS

Fund Name	01.04.2021	Receipts	Payments	31.03.2022
	£	£	£	£
National Lottery	-	54,982	(18,685)	36,297
Awards for All	-	9,931	(1,500)	8,431
	<u>-</u>	<u>64,913</u>	<u>(20,185)</u>	<u>44,728</u>

Trustees during reporting period:

Name	Date Appointed	Role
Nicola Walker	05 July 2021	Chair
Kate Rosanna Taylor	22 September 2021	Treasurer
Vikki Leach	05 July 2021	Trustee
Karen Michelle McGuigan	05 July 2021	Trustee
Shilpa Bose	05 July 2021	Trustee
Andrea Melanie Wilson	05 July 2021	Trustee

The Key Management Personnel are the Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO):  
Johanna Aiyathurai – CEO

Registered Office & Operational Address:  
MCSC, 39-48 Marsham Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1HH

Independent Examiner:  
S R Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA, Ashdown Hurrey Auditors Limited, 20 Havelock Road,  
Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1BP

Bank:  
CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA



## Governance and Structure:

### Type of governing document

Foundation Registered 05 July 2021

### How the charity is constituted

Foundation CIO

### Trustee selection methods

Trustees are appointed by the existing Trustees

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

## Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Nicola Walker

Chairman



Kate Taylor

Treasurer

