

FOYLE DOWN SYNDROME TRUST

Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

For the year to 28th February 2025

Foyle Down Syndrome Trust – Registered Charity No NIC105694
info@fdst.org.uk

Annual Report for the year ended 28th February 2025

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Annual Report for year ending 28th February 2025

The Trustees of Foyle Down Syndrome Trust Ltd are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period 1st March 2024 to 28th February 2025.

In this report the Trustees present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances.

It contains the information required to be provided in the Trustees Annual report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company’s constitution are know as members of the Board of Directors. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act (NI) 2008, FRS 102.

Achievements and Performance

The Year in 6 Numbers

29 th	2818	988	6412	21	44
Year	Early Intervention programmes	Programme	Service	Staff	Volunteers
Supporting children and young people with Down syndrome		Activities	Delivery Attendance		

Early Intervention Programme

Our one-to-one **Education programme** continued to flourish through the year, delivering a grand total of 1,395 lessons to 39 children aged from birth to 12 years. While our approach remains consistent and systematic, our Education Officers tailor each lesson to meet the individual learning needs and abilities of each child, ensuring lessons are creative, fun and energetic to motivate our children to learn and progress in a familiar environment utilising age-appropriate toys and resources. Incorporating interventions and strategies such as, See and Learn Language and Vocabulary, See and Learn Numeracy, Numicon, Makaton, Jolly Phonics, and TACPAC, we have successfully grouped skills into manageable components in developmental areas, namely, numeracy, literacy, fine and gross motor skills, communication, and cooperation. By tracking progress daily, we effectively and regularly measured success, with planned lessons using analysed data collected throughout each term. There has been an increase in demand from educational professionals for support and guidance over the past year, resulting in the sharing of our expertise, skills and knowledge to not just teachers but also classroom assistants. This collaboration has fostered a more holistic and positive approach for our children’s educational and social learning and development and has promoted the understanding of our children’s specific educational needs. We hope to strengthen and build on this important connection between our services and local schools in the years ahead.

This year has been transformative for our **Music Therapy** programme, facilitating 538 sessions to 57 children and young people with Down syndrome, in both individual and group sessions. Significant benefits have been clearly evident, and magnificent progress has been made in key areas of development, including communication, motor skills, and emotional well-being. Our programme, during the year has focused on addressing the unique needs of each member through a range of therapeutic approaches. The use of rhythm, melody, and musical interaction has been important tools in enhancing the participants’ speech, social and coordination skills. Group sessions have encouraged them to engage with one another in a supportive, musical and creative environment, whilst individual sessions, tailored to the specific developmental goals of each participant, have provided deep emotional connection and targeted intervention. Our children and young people have made significant improvements in their communication, confidence, socialisation, and fine motor skills through a plethora of musical activities such as playing instruments, singing and rhythmic movement, throughout the year.

33 children and young people with Down syndrome attended a total of 407 **Speech and Language Therapy** sessions throughout the year. To hear first words, see signs being used for the first time in social settings and

to observe their growing development of understanding has been for me, as their therapist, been uplifting. Watching them diligently apply the skills learned in Speech and Language Therapy sessions within social contexts, including weekly groups and summer schemes, have at times been emotional. Small group sessions with our 4 to 7year group, focussed on language development, turn-taking, eye contact, and social skills and again progress has been remarkable. Collaborating with parents and educators, has continued as well as maintaining communication with other Speech and Language Therapists through termly meetings, has allowed us to consistently ensure that individual goals are achieved across all areas of daily life. This collaborative approach enables us to tailor goals more effectively, emphasising functional communication that meets individuals' environmental needs. We have continued our support for the 20+ members, with members each term receiving personalised therapy plans, personalised communication books, stammering strategies, and essential social communication skills.

30 of our members across all our age groups have enthusiastically engaged in a weekly **Art Therapy** programme which has delivered a total of 330 one-to-one fun creative sessions. The programme is also piloting a block of Parent and Toddler Art Therapy group sessions to furnish parents and carers with valuable insight into the significant benefits of art as a therapeutic tool. Beginning January 2026, we plan to organise group art therapy session for our 20+ members. During the summer months, we launched 'The Melody Garden', an integrated art therapy project facilitated by both our Art Therapist and our Music Therapist which was thoroughly enjoyed by all our children and young people, and we plan to deliver integrated group art therapies soon. Our art therapy sessions have taken place in a relaxing, safe, supportive and confidential space, encouraging our children's exploration and expression of emotions, developing their self-awareness, boosting their self-esteem and achieving positive changes in each of their emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Developmentally appropriate art materials and tools are selected for each member, and our Art Therapist encourages the spontaneous use of materials and tools to explore feelings and experiences.

Healthy Hearts and Minds Project

Our Healthy Hearts and Minds Programme, continued to be thoroughly enjoyed throughout the year by all our children and young people who enthusiastically embraced new, fun, stimulating and at times challenging activities with vigour and determination. As always, we committed to providing a myriad of opportunities and experiences for our members, focussing on improving and maintaining their health, wellbeing, personal and social development, planned in partnership with them. We have also enjoyed working closely with a plethora of community and statutory partners to ensure that what we offer is of high quality, that it is fun, structured and exciting, ensuring our children and young people with Down syndrome are inspired to attain skills and expertise with aptitude and competence, whilst promoting self-reliance and fostering independence.

Demand for participation in our projects increased throughout the year, resulting in the creation of an additional age group, ie 8 to 10years. Developmental activities for this, particular group, included music, relaxation, multi-sports and socialising with their friends. Our 11 to 14year olds keenly undertook a "RugbyTeens" programme, building on their gross motor skills and also physical literacy, supported by coaches, staff and volunteers, motivating them to engage in moderate to vigorous intensity activities, with one-to-one support. I am pleased to report that each member has made significant progress, in, and working towards their individually set fitness targets. Our 15 to 19year olds completed both group speech and language and music therapy programmes with our HCPC registered therapists, whilst also participating in a fitness programme with a local gym. Positive changes in their confidence levels is clearly evident and, in addition to this, their knowledge and competence using quite a wide range of fitness equipment has expanded also, underpinned by attending healthy living workshops. The group also participated in a fun packed, energetic and exciting summer scheme and relished their overnight residential in Gortin Activity Centre. For many of them, this was their very first time staying away from home, thriving on this new-found independence and freedom.

Project 21

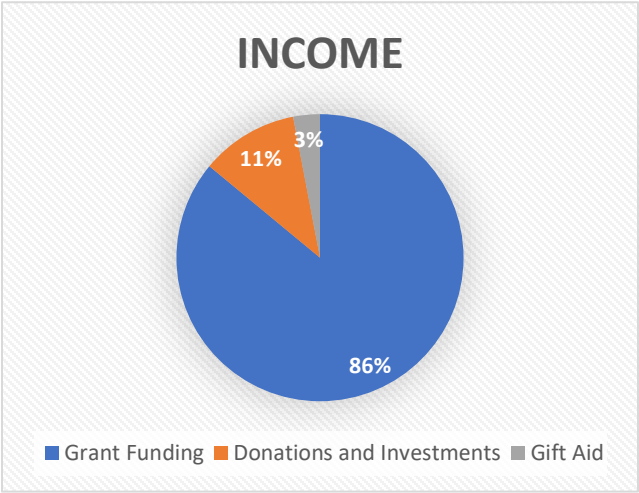
Our Project 21 group have eagerly engaged in a spectrum of new and exciting activities, particularly embracing a healthy lifestyle with gym programmes at Ulster University, Everlast Gym, Pure Gym, X-fit and U-turn Fitness. This has truly helped to break down barriers and demystified the gym environment, strengthening their knowledge and confidence in using gym equipment and whilst networking with others keen to keep up and maintain their fitness levels and improving their physical and emotional wellbeing. This busy and passionate group of young people completed an intergenerational programme with Caw Nelson Drive, a "Climate Crew" Programme with The Education Authority, "The Waste Warriors" Community Clean ups, conservation with The Woodland Trust, Employability with The Orchardville Society, "Down Right Inspirational" sessions with local community role models, Nutritional Mentoring Programmes, Independent Living Skills and "Feel Good Friday" Social Programmes to mention a few. They have also featured in a "Connected to The Community" billboard campaign with Ulster University highlighting their "Down Right Fit" programme. Planning and hosting another successful Peace Games Soccer Tournament for Adult Learning Disability Groups, with eight organisations from the North West and Donegal participating in our World Cup and Euro's competition, has been quite the highlight of their itinerary during the year.

Social Enterprise

Our Social Enterprise, 'Down-Right Crafty' has enjoyed another terrific year affording our young people opportunities to expand on their social, business and technical skills, whilst also enthusiastically learning how to navigate and implement a plethora of new computer design programmes which have included Creative Studio, Serif 9, Cut Studio and My Sawgrass. Proficiently using these design programmes, our Social Enterprise team have produced high quality digital designs for product creation. Expansion of our range of sublimation dye printed designs in addition to vinyl printed ones has resulted in the production of many personalised t-shirts with unique designs for happy customers attending concert, hen, stag and birthday parties. Embedded in our weekly social enterprise sessions is the building of money management skills and expertise, taking orders, cost and correct change calculations. We continued our successful business partnerships during the year, in particular with Number 19 in the Craft Village, who stock and sell our unique range of bookmark and keyring sets and have sold hundreds to both locals and tourists. In addition to this, Number 19 provide work placement opportunities for our young people, in which they stock shelves, meet, assist and serve customers, create window displays and of course promote their very own products. The boost to their self-esteem is very evident and their skills and experience is transferred very well to their Down Right Crafty project. Together with our young people, I would like thank Number 19 and their staff for their continued support and the championing of our product range. The run up to Christmas is always a very busy time in our Social Enterprise, fulfilling orders for personalised Santa Sacks, Tree decorations, Jigsaws, Bags, and Mugs. Providing that very personal touch such as printing photos of families, their children and even their pets onto a variety of products has proved a great success with a lot of very happy customers. This time provides a great opportunity for our team to practice their customer service and money management skills.

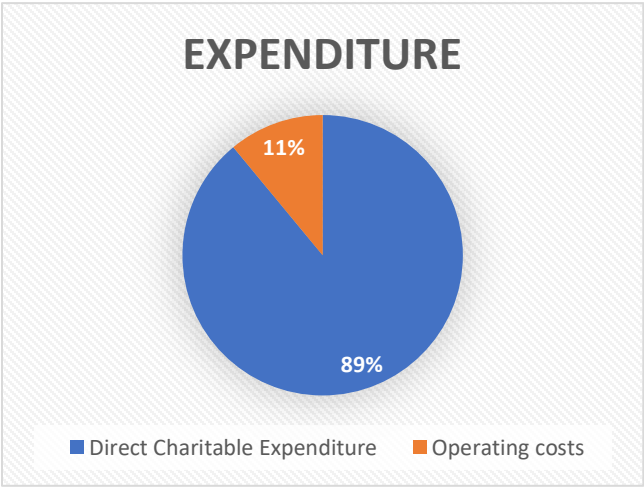
Financial Performance

Financial performance in the year to 28th February 2025 has been predominantly consistent with the Board of Director’s forecasts and expectations; a net surplus of £101,491 for year ending 28th February 2025. This year, our reserves totalled £384,945.



Grant Aid	£497,719
Fundraising	£69,585
Gift Aid	£14,072

86% of our total income was secured through successful funding applications and requests to a wide range of funding Trusts, Foundations and Charities. 12% (£62,111) of this particular income stream was from new funding sources and the remaining 882% (£435,608) from long term funders, ie Pathway Fund, Western Health and Social Care Trust and The National Lottery Community Fund. 11% of our total income, £69,585 was raised by our families and friends through various fundraising events. 3% of our income was raised through Gift Aid.



Direct Charitable Expenditure	£430,830
Operating Costs	£49,055

89% of our income was expended towards Direct Charitable Expenditure, covering core staff expenditure items of salary, pension costs, travel, health insurance and training (£360,684), programme activities (£51,884) and resources (£13,888). Our salary and pension expenditure increased by £4,217 from the previous year with Support Workers employed for additional hours. A combination of both grant funding and reserves was used to cover these particular costs. Our operating costs saw a reduction of 9% of our expenditure for the year, due to us spending less on IT and fundraising throughout the year.

Financial Management and Reserves Policy

Foyle Down Syndrome Trust has a Financial Management Policy which meets the requirements of the Charities Act 2013 and The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. Our annual accounts are prepared for each financial year as required by the Companies Act. They show a true and fair view and follow accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and adhere to recommendations of Statements of Recommended Practice.

The Charity's total income for the year ending 28th February 2025 was £581,376 (2024: £494,117) and expenditure was £479,863 (2024: £468,128).

Our robust financial management is a continuous process and includes budget setting, financial monitoring and decision making.

Restricted Reserves will be maintained at a level required for fulfilling our financial obligations to current funding streams. Unrestricted Reserves will be maintained at a level to cover unforeseen costs that may arise, recognise the volatile grant environment as well as allowing for the payment of liabilities which would arise should the company cease to exist. Any call upon the use of reserves will be at the approval of our Board of Directors which will examine the rationale for doing so and agree an amount where appropriate.

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name	Foyle Down Syndrome Trust Ltd
Charity Number	105694
Company Number	NI039134
Charity Address	Shared Future Centre 61 Irish Street Waterside Londonderry BT47 2DB
Charity Trustees as of 28th February 2025	Elaine Kirk Patricia Bray Anthony Kirk Angela Thompson Graham Warke Mari McElgunn Mary Durkan Clare McMonagle Gary Walsh Rosin Hamill
Independent Examiners / Accountants	McGroarty McCafferty and Company Ltd 2 Carlisle Terrace Londonderry BT47 2DB
Bank	AIB (NI) Meadowbank Strand Road Londonderry BT48 7TN

Structure, Governance and Management

Foyle Down Syndrome Trust Ltd is a charitable company limited by guarantee and not having any share capital and is registered under the Companies Act 2006.

Governing Document

The charitable company's document is the Memorandum and Articles of Association adopted in 1996 and last updated on 10th December 2018.

Board of Directors

The Directors of the Company are also Charity Trustees for the purposes of Charity Law and under the organisation's Articles are known as Members of the Board.

The charity is governed and directed by a voluntary board which comprises of 10 people from varied backgrounds and skill sets, including, finance, community development, health, education, community development and human resources. The aim of the Board is to provide leadership and develop strategy as well as to ensure good governance and financial control. New Board members receive training to brief them on roles and responsibilities and their legal obligations under Charity and Company law, the organisational structure and key organisational activities. The Board ensures the good governance of the charity by setting its strategic objectives and policy direction and by monitoring the charity's operations.

Board Meetings

The Board of Directors met 12 times last year, including the Charity's Annual General Meeting. The day-to-day operations of the Charity are managed by a Manager. He has led up a team of 21 members of staff during the last year and attends Board meetings and presents financial reports and other operational information to the Board to assist them in their governance role.

Serious Incidents Statement

We, the Trustees, confirm that there have been no serious incidents or other matters during the year which need to be reported to the Charity Commission.

Objectives and Activities

Charitable Objectives

Foyle Down Syndrome Trust endeavours to support and empower children and young people with Down syndrome, from birth to adulthood, to lead full, meaningful and productive lives and to help them reach their full and individual potential, ensuring they take and enjoy their rightful place in the community. We foster a culture of inclusion for all our members, with an holistic approach to addressing their educational, social and emotional needs, aspirations and goals, to enhance their literacy, numeracy, dexterity and social skills, improve their cognitive, communication, behaviour, emotional and language skills, whilst affording them new, regular, structured, interactive and challenging experiences and opportunities to improve their quality of life, break down barriers to achievement, increase educational attainment, reduce social isolation, build and strengthen friendships, increase their confidence, motivation and self-esteem. We strive to address inequality and endeavour to find innovative ways of addressing it and support our members overcome their many daily challenges.

Public Benefit Statement

The direct benefits are to relieve and rehabilitate children and young people with Down syndrome, improving their well-being and quality of life as well as their extended families and caring circles. They receive better services that fully meet their needs. They are enabled to participate in mainstream life including social activities and employment. They learn skills for life. To advance the education of children and young people with Down syndrome and their carers, improving outcomes through the development of capabilities, competencies, independence, play skills, communication and understanding. To organise conferences and workshops to enable professionals offer a more cohesive service to the families and this is a wider benefit to the community. These benefits are demonstrated through improved ability to engage in everyday life, using life skills learned, improved motor skills, muscle tone, behaviour, confidence, communication and self-esteem. Evidence is sought to demonstrate the benefits by seeking and receiving continuous feedback from participants and carers and carrying out regular monitoring and evaluation of our service provision.

This report is prepared in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act 2006 and was approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 2nd December 2024 and signed on its behalf by our Chairperson.

Angela Thompson

ANGELA THOMPSON
CHAIRPERSON