



# Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd

Registered Charity Number 1130994  
Company registered in England and Wales  
number 6915555

Celebrating 25 years  
of development,  
education and  
inclusion



'Just kids' growing into 'just adults'  
who happen to have Down syndrome

## ANNUAL REPORT 1st JUNE 2024 to 31st MAY 2025

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*Fantastic course, it was really useful. I have left feeling more confident about working with students with Down syndrome.*

# INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

Welcome to our 2024/2025 annual progress report.

We have had a rollercoaster of a year, hitting a funding crisis at the end of 2024, reducing staff hours and services, closing the centre on a Friday and then launching our BIG100K campaign in January 2025 focussing our efforts on generating funding - which has not only been extremely successful but has also helped us to celebrate our families and services, reassuring us that we are valued by our beneficiaries whose fantastic efforts to raise funds have inspired us to continue to strive to meet needs and work to improve the education, development and inclusion of people who happen to have Down syndrome.

2025 is also the year we celebrate 25 years since the formation of the charity. We have yet to mark and celebrate this occasion and hope to do so before the end of the year.

This report covers all of the training, services and fundraising activities over the year; how the staff, the Pamela Sunter Centre and services have been funded and feedback from the many families and professionals who have benefitted.

This report has several purposes: feedback to our members, feedback to our funders, especially the National Lottery whose five year grant ceased in March, and feedback to ourselves. It helps us to reflect on what we have achieved and the direction we need to steer over the coming year. In addition a summary of the report is published on the Charity Commission website.

It is not a short report! We are always very busy and provide a wide range of services; there are, however, lots of wonderful pictures which tell their own story.

## **REDUCTION OF STAFFING AND SERVICES**

At the beginning of 2024 we had restructured staffing and employed 3 new members of staff, but by the end of 2024, we had to re-think our staffing and services to fit within the constraints of our reducing budget. All staff contracts were reduced by 5 hours, the WisH Club was reduced by 75% and Heather Bell resigned. We placed our monthly physiotherapy and occupational therapy on hold and ceased to fund transport for families. In addition the fees (by donation) for all our services were increased.

As we approached the end of our National Lottery funding we took further action. All staff contracts expired in March 2025 and it was decided not to renew the contracts of Melanie Dekker (Early Years Practitioner and Trainer) and Catherine Bourke (Adult Services Officer), plus, due to ill health Claire Harwood chose not to renew her contract.

Several of our early development groups were amalgamated and some of our one to one sessions for children with more complex needs ceased. We also decided to limit our adult services project.

Very recently, following funding from Iron Mongers, we have employed two new youth workers and reopened the WisH Club to run 3 hours every week. There are currently no plans to further increase staffing until we secure longer term core funding.

## **DIRECTORS**

At our AGM in October 2024 Lauren Drake and Farzana Kauser stood down on rotation and were re-elected. We currently have 6 directors. All directors have been in post for several years and have a great deal of experience in helping to steer the charity. They have had to make some very difficult decisions this year and we are very grateful for their continued commitment.

## **TRAINING**

One of our continuing targets is to 'improve the promotion and training for ALL across the Yorkshire region'. However, following Wendy's accident in November 2024 a number of training courses had to be cancelled or postponed. There has been a significant drop in the number of times we have delivered our training and also a drop in the income from training. In addition the number of times pre-recorded training has been downloaded has reduced by 51%. Moving forward we need to address this issue.

From September 2025 our full range of training will be delivered online via weekly one hour sessions. It will be interesting to see if uptake improves. Our current trainers are Wendy Uttley and Laura Hempel.

## **EARLY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS AND SPEECH & LANGUAGE GROUPS**

With the National Lottery funding expiring in March 2025 and, very recently the Awards for All funding also expiring, we are currently funding two of our essential services, our early development groups and speech and language groups respectively, from reserves.

We applied for further National Lottery funding in September 2024 but were unsuccessful. We have since re-applied, however the process takes about 9 months.

In the meantime we hope to continue to provide the excellent service we have honed over the years.

Evaluations of both services were outstanding and several comments are included in this report.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

Our family support services include: monthly family Saturday sessions, WisH Club, Going Out Club, Gym Club, summer trip, Dance21, Twirly21s and Sibz Zone. All have continued this year. We have managed to increase our group of volunteers and after several months of reduced hours the WisH Club is back to full strength.

## ADULT SUPPORT SERVICES

Along with the rest of our services, following a reduction in staff this service was reduced to cater for 2 young people. Moving forward we hope to improve this as the young people begin to use their Direct Payments for the service.

## FUNDING

Our aim for the year was to secure core funding for our early development groups. However to date we have been unsuccessful in our bids. Launching a massive BIG100K campaign in January 2025 has helped us to raise awareness of our funding crisis and generate £91,000, a massive thank you to Johnny Ratcliffe (Johnny's Walk) for his fundraising and promotion. This wonderful amount ensures our services can continue for another 12 months. However we cannot ease off on our fundraising - we have no large core funding grants in place and MUST keep going to ensure that this time next year we again have 12 months funding in place.

Grants this year have dropped from 65% to 28% of our income - we can no longer rely on this as our main source of income.

Our charity shop, Chromosome Rocks, in Keighley is generating approximately £1000 each month and we are on a mission to keep the shop well stocked and staffed.

In July 2024 we again undertook a large fundraising event at Keighley Rugby Union Football Club, Chromosome Rocks #24 and very recently we held Chromosome Rocks #25. We hope that this and 'Johnny's Walk' will become annual fundraising events.

Best wishes Wendy Uttley



# FUNDING 2024 TO 2025

**The total funding income for the last financial year was £235,950**

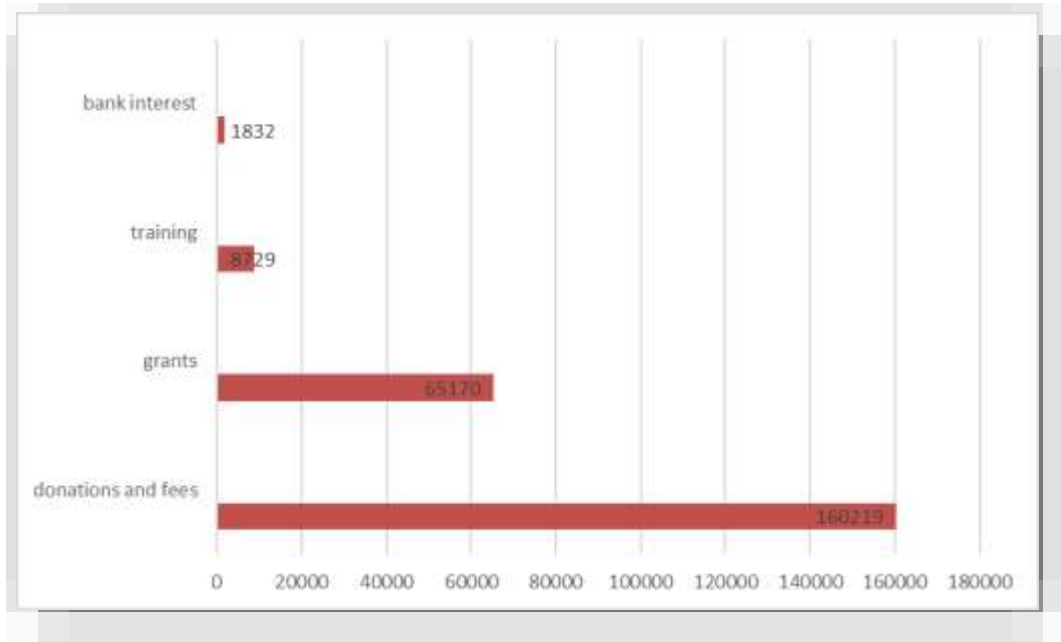
We received:

£160,219 from donations, Gift Aid, fees and fundraising activities (68%...last year 26%)

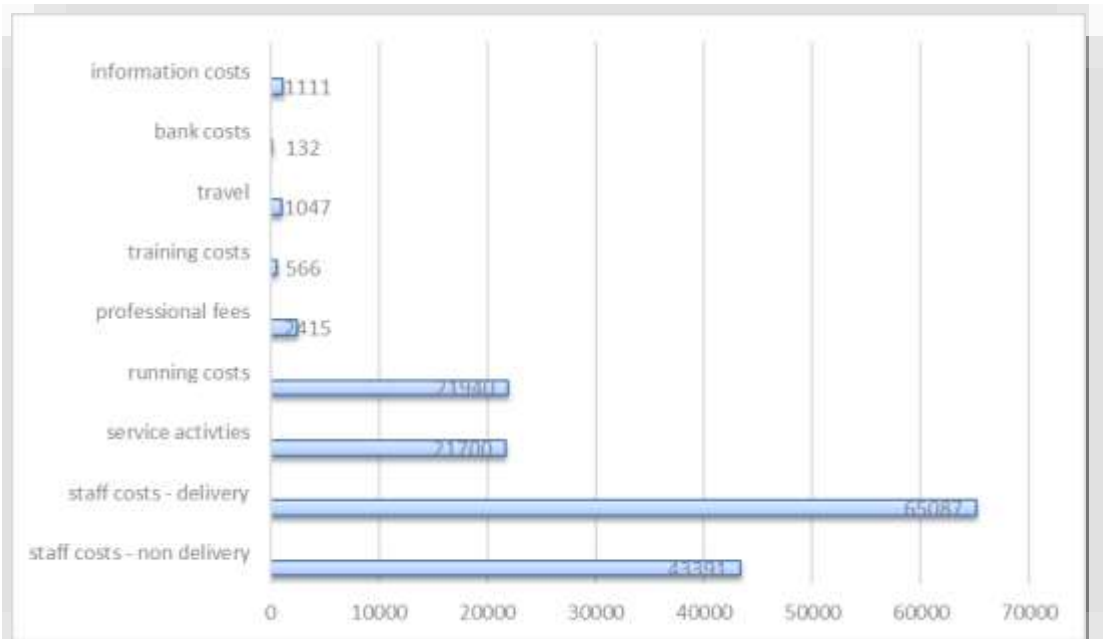
£65,170 from grants (28%...last year 65%)

£8,729 from training (4%...last year 8%)

£1,832 from bank interest (1%)



**Overall expenditure was £157,389**



Over the next few pages we detail this income and expenditure and report on how we are progressing with the training and support services we continue to offer.

Our accounts are inserted on page 63.

## UPDATE ON OUR FUNDING SITUATION

Looking back over the past five years:

June 2020 to May 2021: we spent £140 499 and raised £150 860 (£98 051 from grants)

June 2021 to May 2022: we spent £157 644 and raised £164 423 (£109 100 from grants)

June 2022 to May 2023: we spent £153 517 and raised £141003 (£81 976 from grants)

June 2023 to May 2024: we spent £172 391 and raised £173 234 (£112 653 from grants)

June 2024 to May 2025 we spent £157,389 and raised £235,950 (£65,170 from grants)

As we neared the end of 2024 the charity was running at a massive loss, an average of £6000 each month. Drastic action had to be taken to reduce our expenditure as income from grants had much reduced. We reduced all staff hours and closed the centre on a Friday. As you can see from the above figures this pulled our expenditure back to the level of 2022. Launching a massive fundraising campaign at the beginning of 2025, OUR BIG100K, has been a large focus for everyone involved in the charity and we have managed to raise a whopping £158,000 by means other than grants. This has secured our future for another 12months. We have set a budget of £13,000 each month/£156,000 for the year.

Our bank balance is currently £220,000, setting aside £44,000 as reserves, leaves £20,000.

If we do not secure further core funding from the National Lottery (we submitted an unsuccessful bid in September 2024 and have reapplied May 2025) it will be vital to keep up our fundraising efforts for the year 2026/2027. Therefore our target for this year is to raise £130,000 through grants, fees and fundraising, so that this time next year we will be secure for a further 12 months.

Thank you to everybody involved in the ongoing amazing efforts to fund and maintain our charity. We appreciate everything you do to support us.

## FUNDING GRANTS

### EARLY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

Our Early Development Groups are currently being funded by our reserves at a cost of approximately £1000 each month, £12,000 annually.

In March 2020 we received five years of funding from the National Lottery. A total of £240 685 was being released incrementally until March 2025.

This funding paid for:

- early years practitioners salaries,
- administration of the early development group sessions,
- transport for families who would otherwise be unable to attend group sessions
- a portion of our core salaries,
- upkeep of the premises - building repairs and renovations



This grant expired in March 2025, a small underspend was spent by May 2025.

We reapplied to the National Lottery in September 2024 but were unsuccessful. A further application was submitted in May 2025.

The Early Development Groups are currently being funded from our reserves.

### CORE RUNNING COSTS

Our core running costs are about £24,000 per year.

Funding from **Garfield Weston** was carried forward from last year. In addition grants from **Jeans for Genes**, £5000 until May 2026, and **Wharfedale Foundation**, £10,000 for over 2 years until September 2026 help to fund these ongoing costs.

The logo for The Wharfedale Foundation features the text 'The Wharfedale Foundation' in blue and green, with the tagline 'BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES IN YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER' in smaller blue text below it.



### SPEECH & LANGUAGE GROUP SESSIONS

An award of £17,597 from **Awards For All, National Lottery** in February 2024 funded our speech & language group sessions and their administration until July 2025.

We are currently seeking further funding for these sessions until funds are secure. The cost of approximately £1000 each month will be covered from our reserves.





### DANCE SESSIONS

In April 2023, we were awarded £10,080 over 3 years from **The Barbara Ward Children's Foundation**. Funding will be released in increments until April 2026.



### MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING

Two new boilers were donated by Ideal Boilers and an award of £60 from Worcester Bosch Charity, was donated towards their installation.



### TRANSPORT FOR FAMILIES

A number of our funding bids include the cost of transport for families. Funding towards speech and language sessions (**Awards 4 All**) and early development group sessions (**National Lottery**) has helped to fund taxis for our more vulnerable families who would otherwise be unable to attend. Currently funded from reserves.

### DOWN SYNDROME LEARNING SUPPORT PACKS & NEW BABY PACKS

A grant of £870 was carried forward to fund our learning support packs and new baby packs. We are currently seeking funding for these resources which cost on average £3000 per year.



### FAMILY SATURDAY SESSIONS & SIBZ ZONE

Saturday sessions and Sibz Zone are currently funded by Bentley Advancing Life Chances, £500. We are currently seeking funding for this service and the award from Tesco's vote will be allocated towards costs.

### WISH CLUB FUNDING

Funding from the **Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust** was carried forward from last year. As this expired the Youth Club was funded from reserves and then the service was reduced in December. Following grants from the **Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust** (£2000) and **Ironmongers Foundation** (£4853) the club is now funded until April 2026 and back to full capacity.



### TRAINING FOR FAMILIES

Morrisons charitable trust donated £6780 towards training workshops, February 2025 to February 2026.



The Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust

### SAFEGUARDING

High Speed Training donated a further 10 online Safeguarding training courses for volunteers to complete during induction.



### ADULT SERVICES -

#### I CAN WORK PROJECT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROJECT

This year we amalgamated these two services using funding from **Aviva Crowd Fund and Community Fund, Co-op Community Fund and Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust**, which was carried forward from last year.



### GYM CLUB

Our weekly Gym Club is funded with a grant of £2728 from **Sports England** until December 2025.



### SUMMER TRIP TO LIGHTWATER VALLEY 2024

Our summer trip to Lightwater Valley was part funded by the Hedley Foundation with a grant of £975.



### FAMILY SUPPORT & COUNSELLING

Funding from **Edward Gostling Foundation**, and **Sovereign Healthcare**, was carried forward from last year and continues to fund our counselling services until Oct 2025. We are currently seeking funding for this service.



### UNRESTRICTED GRANTS

- **Masonic Charitable Foundation**, £15,000 over 3 years until May 2028
- **Marsh Charitable Trust**, £500.00 until July 2025
- **Card Factory Foundation Local Community Fund**, £5,000.
- **Skipton Building Society**, £1,000 - we won the vote!
- **South and West Bradford Stroke Group**, £500



We love receiving unrestricted grants because we can allocate the funded where it is needed most.



## YOUR FANTASTIC FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

At the beginning of 2025 we launched a fundraising campaign BIG100K with the aim of raising 100K before the end of 2025. From 1st June 2024 to 31st May 2025 (dates of this report) we have raised £93,267.41 through your fundraising efforts alone. AMAZING!

Since January 2025 we have placed £90,988.46 (including Gift Aid) into our BIG100K campaign.

- Oddfellows charity football match a further £301.43
- Sponsored walk, George's family, £144.88
- Harry Preston, £37.50
- Open House Huddersfield, £128.13
- Online donation, £10.68
- Aladdin's cave, £10
- TK Max donation of £500
- July 2024 - Chromosome Rocks #24, £3873.41
- Charity Digital Trust, £18.00
- Shipley Christadel, £83.56
- Dawson, donation on behalf Harry Preston, £25.00
- Will B, donation on behalf Harry Preston, £10.00
- Anonymous, donation on behalf Harry Preston, £25.00
- E Maxwell, donation on behalf Harry Preston, £12.50
- Nicky Major, Big chop fundraiser, £605.28
- Heather Elsworth, £80.55
- D Turner, £20.00
- L W Graphics, on behalf of Lee White, for Saturday Session Christmas food, £150
- Our Christmas Raffle, £441.26
- Motorbike Raffle - Stephen Senior, £6.38
- Usman Ghani, £10
- Inspirations Nursery, following training, £150
- Helen Gibbon, £10
- Emily Vuijk, £100
- K Gonzalez, £10
- Anonymous, £5,000
- Anonymous, £900
- G Webster, £500
- J Singh, £19.52
- L Taylor, £10
- Keith and Grace Cummins, £20
- Brian Harris, £50
- Maryam Qureshi, £800
- Susan Uttley, on behalf of Ann Hedley, £40
- Helen Gibbon, £5
- Matthew Warren, £49.10
- Naomi Kenningham, £30
- CAF £23.52
- Beverley Coleman £50
- M & S Qureshi, £1,000

### THANK YOU BECKY

Becky raised a stunning £2670 over Christmas when she ran the Chevin Chase for us. Thank you Becky



### CAROLS YOGA DAY

On Saturday 8th February Carol Young ran a yoga session at Bingley Methodist Church hall, followed by a bun sale. The event raised a total of £1036.50 (including Gift Aid) Thank you to everyone who took part and donated this generous amount.



### HELEN BOSTOCK'S FUNDRAISER

Helen raised £207.50 including Gift Aid via Just Giving.

- Muminah Kayani, £2,020
- R Casper, £10
- Dixon's City Academy, Class 6A for World Down syndrome day, £242.02
- Easter/spring raffle, £336.94
- Kildwick Primary School, £359 from a games night,
- Saturday session collection tin, £30.58
- Calder High School, £289.85. Noah delivered 3 assemblies for world Down syndrome awareness.
- Eric Godard, £16.63
- N Rodley, delayed Christmas donation, £100.00
- Kildwick CE Primary School Games Night Fundraiser, £159.00
- Bingley Creates Event, collection following Dance 21 performance, £25.99
- D W Greenwood Charitable Trust, donation towards Johnny's Walk, £500
- Family of Ayaat-Noor, £400
- Yarun Khatun, £10

### NICKY'S SPONSORED HAIR CUT

Nicky Major, one of our Adult Support Officers, raised over £500 for us by having her hair cut and donating her locks to Little Princess Trust to make wigs for children suffering from cancer. What a fantastic act for two fantastic charities. Thank you.



### DONATIONS OF GOODS FOR OUR CHARITY SHOP

We have stopped listing people on our monthly newsletter for the many, many donations we receive for the charity shop. But we thank you all for your continued generosity. Here are a few names - please accept our apologies if we have missed you!

- Jill Lund, Jennifer Senior, Gemma Andre, Ruth Worby, Anne Kay, Julia McLellan, Heidi Grosvenor, Anna Woodhouse, Liz McLean, Karen Barron, Rachel Cruickshank-Sutton, Karen Mayhew, Steve Robinson, Helen Gibbon, Jacob and Tia Harwood, Susan Uttley, Zoe Shepherd, Evangeline, Jennie and Dianne, Justine Cornforth, Adrian Woods OnTraks, Gemma-Marie Fawcett. Moreen Wakelin, Wendy Scaife, Jen Senior, Usma.
- A massive thank you to Mamas & Papas for their huge donation of cloths and item - they have generated a lot of custom.



### THANK YOU TO PUPILS AT BECKFOOT SCHOOL

Following an assembly pupils at Beckfoot School raised £405 from a name the teddy competition, bake sale, staying silent and doing chores at home. Well done on raising such a fantastic amount.



### PHYLECIA'S BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISER

Thank you to Phylcia, Eva and her family and friends who raised £409.35 including Gift Aid.

**JustGiving**

### OUR REGULAR MONTHLY DONORS

Over the year we have had a big push to increase our monthly regular donors.

We now have 20 regular donors; giving via PayPal Giving, JustGiving or a direct bank transfer.

This is an increase of 81%.

A total of £1552.28 (an increase of 46%) has been raised by.

**Jo Morgan,  
Gill Martill,  
M Simms,  
Rachel Casper,  
Beverley Coleman,  
Avril Dear,  
Geoff Sweaney,  
Helen Gibbon,  
Nicky Major,  
Karen Bickerton,  
Kathy Atawo,  
Peter Todd,  
Tegan Bowis,  
Yasmin Akhtar,  
Jenny Rowlands,  
Susan Uttley,  
Elanor Murray,  
A Rodley,  
Nicky Rodley,  
Mary Sansom.**

### Eid Mubarak

During Ramadan we ran a fundraising page on Launchgood. The page raised £438.

Thank you to everyone for their kind donations.



### JEMMA AND HER TEAM FROM BRADFORD EDUCATION COMPLETE WALK FOR US

Jemma Hayes and her team from Bradford Education SCIL Team undertook a sponsored walk on 18th May and raised £780 including Gift Aid.



### ALAN, JAKE AND TONY COMPLETED THE ROB BURROWS LEEDS HALF MARATHON ON 11th MAY 2025

Congratulations to everyone who ran the Leeds Half Marathon for us.

A massive thank you to Alan, Tony, Jake and their mates.

Alan McCulloch raised £856.25 including Gift Aid.

Jake Scott raised £880 and

Tony Cooper raised £190.



**COLLECTION TINS -  
AN EASY WAY TO RAISE CASH**

This year we raised £595.73, a drop of 62% from last year.

We have recently purchased 20 additional collection tins and hope to improve on this figure next year.

Many thanks to the following people and organisations for taking and filling our tins:

- Main Street Deli, Bingley, £18.46
- Our centre, £6.92
- Holland & Barrett, 9.60
- Engine Room, £171.53
- Elena Kayamy, £32.16
- Bingley Tea Room, £27.29
- Intrim Hairdressers, £129.72
- Peacocks, Bingley, £30.51
- Tambourine Coffee Shop, £45.62
- Half Moon Café, £42.98
- Wendy Rhode's & her Aunty Pat, £21.81
- Phones for all, £15.69
- Fannys Ale House pub, £4.23
- ShIPLEY PRIDE, £32.66
- Bingley Taps, collection tin, £4.98
- Library Tap, collection tin, £1.57



**BEN, EISA AND FLO'S SPONSORED WALK**

In March 2025 Ben, Eisa and Flo undertook a walk round Myrtle Park raising a whopping £1856.25 including Gift Aid via their JustGiving page.

**IBRAHEEM'S WALK**

Ibraheem, supported by his family, did a sponsored walk around Lister Park. His JustGiving page did incredibly well raising £10,293.89 including Gift Aid.



**DONATIONS MADE IN  
MEMORY OF LOVED  
ONES**

- \* Catherine Howard, in lieu of funeral flowers, £308.00
- \* Janet Mirfield, collection at her funeral, £129.35
- \* Lisa Ord, in memory of her mother, £58.96
- \* In Memory of Jean Hughes, £15
- \* In memory of Orla's great grandad, £287.60



**GIFT AID**

Thank you to everyone who has added Gift

*giftaid it*

Aid to their donations.

This year we claimed £2,222.12 from HMRC. This is in addition to the Gift Aid automatically claimed via JustGiving donations.

If you are a UK tax payer any donations made to us can be Gift Aided. This means the government pays us an additional 25%, so if you donate £10 we actually get £12.50.

# WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY FUNDRAISERS



## JOHNNY'S WALK

On Friday 21st March Johnny, father of three, including Leo, who has Down syndrome, and over 80 supporters, all wearing yellow tee shirts walked 18 miles along the canal from St James's Hospital, Leeds to our centre in Bingley.

THEY RAISED £67,220.20 including Gift Aid, £35,795.73 for Down Syndrome Training & Support Service and £31,424.47 for Melanoma Focus.

Johnny has terminal cancer and is determined to support us so that we can continue to support his family when he is no longer around to do so.

Celebrations at the end of the walk were beautiful.

## CELEBRATIONS AT OUR CHARITY SHOP 'CHROMOSOME ROCKS'

On Saturday 22nd March the Voices of Yorkshire choir filled the Airedale shopping centre Keighley with their wonderful voices, followed by a brilliant performance by dance21.



Our charity shop sold Stand Out Socks, George Webster's books and a wealth of Down syndrome related merchandise raising £593. Thank you to everybody involved.



## COLLECTION AT ASDA KEIGHLEY FOR WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

Thank you to Asda Keighley for their support. Nicky, Sam, Jenn and Orla held a collection at the supermarket on Thursday 20th March and collected £96.41. ASDA staff also held a raffle and raised £130 for us.



## SCHOOL WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY FUNDRAISERS

### WHAT A FANTASTIC AMOUNT! £2343 RAISED BY MENSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ON WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

Pupils and staff at Menston Primary School held numerous stalls selling a range of items they'd created and raised £2343.23.

On 31st March Wendy went into school to personally thank the children and deliver an assembly about Down syndrome.



### MENSTON PRE-SCHOOL UNDERTOOK THE #Challenge21

Children and staff at Menston Pre-School rose to the #21 challenge in March and raised £556 through PayPal fundraising.

The children came up with some wonderful and imaginative things to do to fundraise, from naming 21 countries to trying 21 new foods!



### GEMMA & LACEYS #Challenge21

During March Gemma and Lacey undertook a '21 Sing and Sign Challenge'. They posted a song a day on social media and raised £195.





## OUR CHARITY SHOP 'CHROMOSOME ROCKS'

### OUR VERY FIRST CHARITY SHOP

In November 2024 we were delighted to lease our very first charity shop in the Airedale Centre, Keighley. People very generously donated shelving, tables and chairs and we were open ready for Christmas.

The shop is a wonderful opportunity for us to raise awareness, raise funds and provide work experience for young adults with Down syndrome.



From November to end of May 2025 the shop has raised £8358.01, an average of £1200 per month. This is fantastic.

A massive thank you to the many, many people who have donated toys, games, DVDs, CDs, clothing, gifts and household goods.

### TELEGRAPH AND ARGUS

We have been in the T&A twice



[Fundraising for Down Syndrome Training and Support Service | Bradford Telegraph](#)

[and Argus](#)

['Things now looking good' for Bingley-based charity | Bradford Telegraph and Argus](#)



### THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

We couldn't run the shop without the help of our amazing volunteers.

Thank you to

Wendy Uttley  
 Elanor Murray  
 Samuel Murray  
 Nasreem Kauser  
 Ayesha Kauser  
 Tracy Rodney  
 Nicky Major  
 Benjamin Major  
 Emerson Stead  
 Gerry Hughes  
 Finn Hughes  
 Karen O'Grady  
 Chris O'Grady  
 Robin Kneebone  
 Lisa Ord  
 Jenn Casper Smith  
 Rebecca  
 Andy Smith  
 Students from Craven College  
 Keighley People First  
 Shona Preston  
 Tegan Bowis  
 Jennifer Senior  
 Aarisha Khullar  
 Heidi Grosvenor  
 Karen Barron

Facebook page  
[\(2\) Down Syndrome Charity Shop | Facebook](#)

### STANDOUT SOCKS

We were donated 100 pairs of Standout Socks to sell at the shop.



## CHROMOSOME ROCKS#24 CHARITY GIG FUNDRAISER JULY 2024



### CHROMOSOME ROCKS'24

On Saturday 13th July we had another fantastic fundraising day at Keighley Rugby Union Football Club. We raised just about the same as 2023; £3873.41

The day went as planned; George Webster opened the event with an inspiring speech and donated 8 signed copies of his books, live music from Wild Geese, Guiseley Jazz Band and Clown Wagon was performed for free, and we all thoroughly enjoyed performances by dance21 and twirly21s. Our stalls,

face painting, food vans, bouncy castle, fire engine and free games on the field were constantly busy.

A massive thank you to everyone who volunteered on the day giving their time and energy, everybody who donated goods, bought raffle tickets, supervised stalls and children and to everyone who turned up and supported the event. FANTASTIC!



***A massive thank you to the following for helping to make our charity event so successful***

***Graham Sheffield - KRUF***

***George Webster***

***Wild Geese***

***Guiseley Jazz***

***Clown Wagon***

***Eyes on the Fries***

***Mr Immy's Ice Cream***

***H's Buttie Van***

***Dance 21***

***Twirly21s***

***CraftyChops - Face painting***

***Chester & Bubes - Card stall***

***Fire Engine***

***Everyone who has donated raffle prizes and gifts for our stalls***

***Our team of volunteers***

### CHROMOSOME ROCKS #25

We started planning this in October 2024, our 4th big fundraising event.



We will be reporting fully on this next year.

However we acknowledge it as part of this report as a large portion of the year was spent planning the event.

## RAFFLES

### CHRISTMAS 2024 RAFFLE

- 1st prize: Christmas hamper
- 2nd prize: Handmade luxury leather bag
- 3rd prize: Handmade luxury leather bag
- 4th prize: Luxury make-up kit
- 5th prize: Pamper goody bag

Total raised £441.26



**Thank you to everyone who donated prizes for our raffles and 'tin' tombola and bought raffle tickets this year.**

- Angie Drake who donated hand made leather bags for sale/raffles
- Liz McLean for various raffle items
- Oasis Cars who donated a limousine ride for 8 people plus bubbly
- Andrew and Linda Warin who donated a weekend away in Ingleton
- George Webster for donating several of his books and signing them
- Harlow Carr for their family day out
- Bingley Tea Rooms for afternoon tea for two
- £150 gift card x3 from Phillip Anthony Photography
- ASDA donation of bottles
- Clip and Climb Ilkley, free climb
- Lazer Zone Leeds, vouchers
- LS Ten, skate park vouchers
- Wetherspoons, Bingley - meal voucher
- High Adventure Outdoor Centre vouchers
- Diggerland voucher
- Highfield Hotel 2x family day pass
- Eureka! Vouchers
- Cobbles & Clay meal voucher
- Ninja Warrior voucher
- Thornton Hall Country Park voucher
- Cannon Hall Farm voucher

### SPRING/EASTER 2025 RAFFLE

The draw took place on Saturday 12th April.

- 1st Prize: Easter hamper
- 2nd Prize: handmade leather handbag
- 3rd Prize: signed copy of 'George and the Mini Dragon'
- 4th Prize: signed copy of 'This is ME!'
- 5th Prize: Men's Eternity set + chocolates
- 6th Prize: Fuzzy Duck shower kit



Thank you to everyone who donated prizes and bought raffle tickets; total raised £336.94.

### 2025 SUMMER RAFFLE - AMAZING PRIZES DONATED

Our summer raffle had some amazing prizes donated

1st prize: Limousine ride for 8 with bubbly donated by Oasis Cars

2nd prize: weekend away at Ingleton donated by Andrew and Linda Warin

3rd prize: day out at Harlow Carr

4th prize: afternoon tea for two at Bingley Tea Rooms

Drawn 13th July 2025



## ONLINE FUNDRAISING & SOCIAL MEDIA

We continue to use a range of online fundraising options. These can be browsed via the dedicated fundraising page on our website which provides details and links to: JustGiving, Paypal Giving, Dontsendmeacard.com, birthday fundraisers, leaving a legacy, Give as you live/Easyfundraising, holding a sponsored event and one off/regular donations.

Amounts stated against some events in this report may be different to those listed as often other small amounts come via several routes and are linked up later.

- **JustGiving** a whopping £55280.47 was raised towards our BIG100K campaign.
- **Paypal Giving**, £79.46,
- **Don'tsendmeacard**, £36.45 from Roz Plummer, Caroline Harris, Susan Uttley, Just Evans, Mary & Ian.

### Give as you Live/Easy Fundraising

We have an account with Everyclick, Give as you Live. If you shop online they will donate a small percentage of your payment to our charity, for example, Sainsburys will donate 6.75%.

This year we have raised £243.33.

AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOU. Visit [www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com)



### PUBLIC FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/DownsyndromeTSS/>  
For more general and formal information.



### CLOSED FACEBOOK GROUP

Our closed Facebook group provides information on day to day activities .

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DSTSS/>

### TWEET US AT

<https://twitter.com/DownsyndromeTSS>



### INSTAGRAM

[www.instagram.com/downsyndrometss/](http://www.instagram.com/downsyndrometss/)



### CONTACT LESS PAYMENTS - SUMUP

We are now able to take payments for all of our services and resources using our contactless machine!

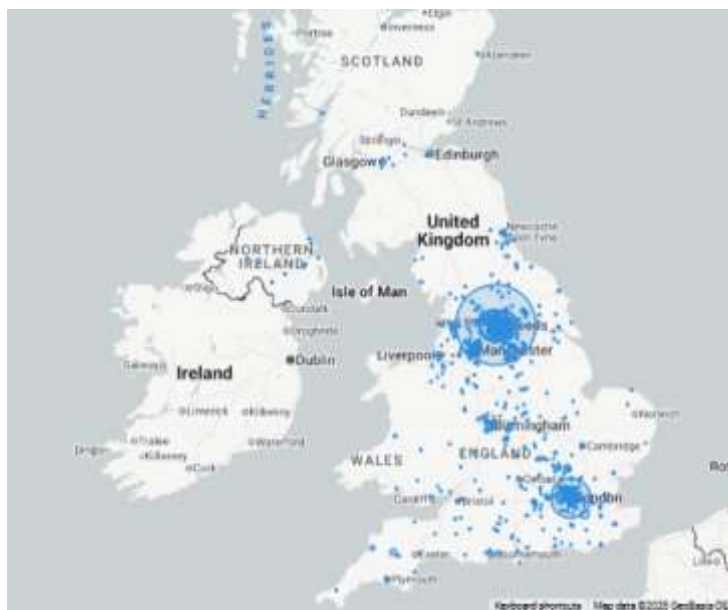
We can also generate a QR codes which supports payments and bookings.



## OUR WEBSITE

[www.downsyndromebradford.com](http://www.downsyndromebradford.com)

In the last financial year we have had 1773 unique visitors (92% new) to the site with 3109 site sessions. This is a drop of 14% from last year. 76% of visitors were via a mobile phone, 24% desktop and 1% tablet. Most of these were by direct link or Google. A total of 199 orders were placed raising £2,614, a drop of 43% on last year. These orders are from bookings for training and purchasing resources.



OUR SITE VISITORS UK

# OUR POLICIES

We currently have the following policies in place:

Child protection policy (Officers Laura Hempel & Wendy Uttley)

Complaints policy

Confidentiality policy

Conflict of interest policy

Data protection policy

Day trips policy

Disciplinary policy

Environmental policy

Equality and diversity policy

Fire Evacuation Policy

Fundraising Policy

Grievance policy

Health & safety policy

Key holders policy

Lost Child policy

Maternity policy

Parent participation policy

Personal evacuation plan policy

Recruitment policy

Reserves policy

Safeguarding policy

Social media policy, including e-safety

Touch policy

Volunteer policy

Vulnerable adults policy

Website policies: cookies, terms of service and privacy

Whistleblowing policy

ALL POLICIES ARE REVIEWED ON A ROLLING  
TIMETABLE

## OUR DIRECTORS

We currently have six Directors on the Board of Trustees:

- Heather Chattell
- Lauren Drake stood down on rotation and re-elected, Oct 2024
- Farzana Kauser stood down on rotation and re-elected, Oct 2024
- Jenn Casper-Smith
- Jenny Rowlands
- Rachel Cruickshank-Sutton

Thank you to all our Directors for their time, commitment and support.

## FIRST AIDERS

Wendy Uttley, Heidi Grosvenor, Nicky Major, Charlotte Roscoe-Mitchell, Karen Barron, Laura Hempel and Elanor Murray.

## GDPR

All of our data is governed by our Data Protection Policy and any personal information collected through our services and training is stored within these guidelines.

## PLASTIC FREE CHAMPIONS

We are constantly trying to reduce our use of single use plastics at the centre by:

- Using cloths rather than wet wipes
- Encouraging a ban on single use coffee cups
- Encouraging a ban on black plastic bin liners
- Using refillable soap, hand sanitiser and surface cleaner
- Recycling all soft plastics used during our sessions



## INSURANCE

Our public liability insurance, employers liability insurance and contents insurance is with Illingworth McNair, Markel UK Ltd.

## OUR DIRECTORS



Lauren Drake

Lauren Bernardina Drake  
CertMRCSLT HCPC  
Reg BSc (Hons)  
Highly Specialised  
Registered Consultant  
Speech and Language  
Therapist Licentiate of  
Trinity College London.  
Joined the Board October  
2017.



Farzana Kauser

Farzana Kauser holds a  
masters degree in  
logistics, business  
analytics and supply  
chain management. She  
is also mum to Amirah.  
Joined the Board  
October 2021.



Heather Chattell

Heather Chattell  
Qualified Teacher of the  
Visually Impaired (QTVI)  
Specialist Inclusion Teams,  
Sensory Team, Halifax and  
mum to Noah.  
Joined the Board June 2014



Jenn Casper-Smith

Jenn Casper Smith,  
Assistant Headteacher  
overseeing safeguarding,  
SEND and pastoral care and  
mum to Orla who attends  
our early development  
groups. Joined Board  
October 2021.



Rachael  
Cruickshank-Sutton

Rachel Cruickshank-  
Sutton, Senco in a  
mainstream school and  
proud mum of 3 including  
Ted who attends our Early  
Development Groups.  
Rachel joined the board in  
2023



Jenny Rowlands

Jenny Rowlands works in  
primary schools as the  
Director of Funclubs Ltd  
providing wrap around  
childcare. BA (Hons)  
Childhood studies and a  
keen interest in SEND law.  
Mum of three girls  
including Millie who has  
Down syndrome. Member  
of the board 2014-19  
joined again in 2024.

## OUR STAFF

*Wendy Uttley* is our Manager & Trainer, 30 hours per week term time/10 hours per week non term time. Wendy manages the group and develops and delivers training, assessments, observations and consultations. She also delivers some early development groups, writes the monthly newsletter, manages projects, overviews funding bids and attends meetings to promote awareness of the Charity.



*Wendy Uttley*

*Heidi Grosvenor*, is our Deputy Manager, 32 hours per week term time/5 hours per week non term time. Heidi manages the smooth running of the centre and works closely with Wendy Uttley to manage staff, training and services.



*Heidi Grosvenor*

*Laura Hempel* is our Early Years and Family Support Practitioner & Trainer, 12 hours per week, term time only. Laura delivers 4 of our early development groups, supports families and contributes to reports and discussion on education and development. Over the last year she has also delivered training, observations, assessments and consultations to educational settings.



*Laura Hempel*

*Charlotte Roscoe-Mitchell* is our Finance Officer and our Youth Club Coordinator. She submits funding bids and manages our finances. She also works in our youth club on a Friday evening. Charlotte works 15 hours per week in her funding role and 4 hours every Friday with our young people.



*Charlotte  
Roscoe-Mitchell*

*Karen Barron* is our Family Support Officer/Housekeeper/Administrator/Fundraiser. Karen works 15 hours per week term time only. She answers the phone, provides home visits, manages several of our family support services, fundraising strands and the housekeeping at the centre.



*Karen Barron*

*Nicky Major* is our Adult Support Officers. She works to support young people in our Independent Living Skills project and I Can Work project. Nicky works term time only on a zero hours contract.



*Nicky Major*



## STAFF WHO HAVE LEFT THIS YEAR

Following our big decision to reduce services and staffing hours Heather Bell decided to hand in her notice and left at the end of 2024. Heather was our Young People's Coordinator in the Wish Club



*Heather Bell*

In March 2025 our funding from the National Lottery expired and Mel Dekkers contract was ceased. Mel was our Early Years Practitioner, Family Support and Trainer.



*Mel Dekker*

In March 2025, Claire Harwoods contract also ceased and was not renewed due to ill health. Claire Harwood was one of our Adult Support Officers and Fundraising Officer.



*Claire Harwood*

Also in March 2025 Catherine Bourke's contract expired and was not renewed. Catherine was one of our Adult Support Officers.



*Catherine Bourke*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the above members of staff for their hard work and commitment during their employment with us and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

We could not run our support services without the help of volunteers.

A big thank you to all volunteers who have helped us with our administration, family Saturday sessions, trips out, WisH Club, early development groups and fundraising events:

Noor Alabdullah, Zymal Ali, Shabana Khan, Hannah Binns, Mary Brown, Daniel Champion, Katie Greenwood, Zunairah Hamayoon, Safia Hussain, Elanor Murray, Lisa Ord, Helena Watford, Nicky Major, Gerry Hughes, Tracey Rodley, Karen Johnson, Nasreen Kauser, Ayesha Ali, Sam Murray, Shona Preston, Jade Klepper, Mohammed Eesa, Vania Rodriguez, Nina Piotrowska, Maaria Yousaf, Zahra Yousaf, and the numerous dedicated parents who help out at our events.



We have a volunteer policy in place and all volunteers are recruited by interview, complete Safeguarding training and hold a DBS certificate. Expenses are paid towards travel and subsistence.

## STUDENT PLACEMENTS

This year we have had nine speech & language students from Leeds Beckett University, see page 42 and Bilal Hussain from Leeds Trinity University.

## FAMILY AND ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS

The number of families on our membership lists currently 415 and we have 185 organisational beneficiaries, many of whom are schools.

All of our membership forms are now electronic and can be accessed via our website.

These keep us up to date with contact details, child's school, permission to use photos of the child, Gift Aid and the option of receiving information and our monthly newsletter by email rather than by post.

All forms are compliant with GDPR legislation.

# TRAINING



One of our main objectives is to support the education, development and inclusion of people with Down syndrome across all services involved in supporting a child and their family.

A large part of this is an ongoing mission to support schools and families through training and workshops.

Both Laura Hempel and Melanie Dekker delivered the 'Introduction to Down syndrome' course several times and Laura has also

Delivered our 'Signing and Down syndrome' course.

A total of 64 sessions, benefitting 1693 people, were delivered during the academic year 2024/25. This is a increase of 38% since last year - however the number of people benefitting from our 'Introduction to Down syndrome' course has decreased by 43%.

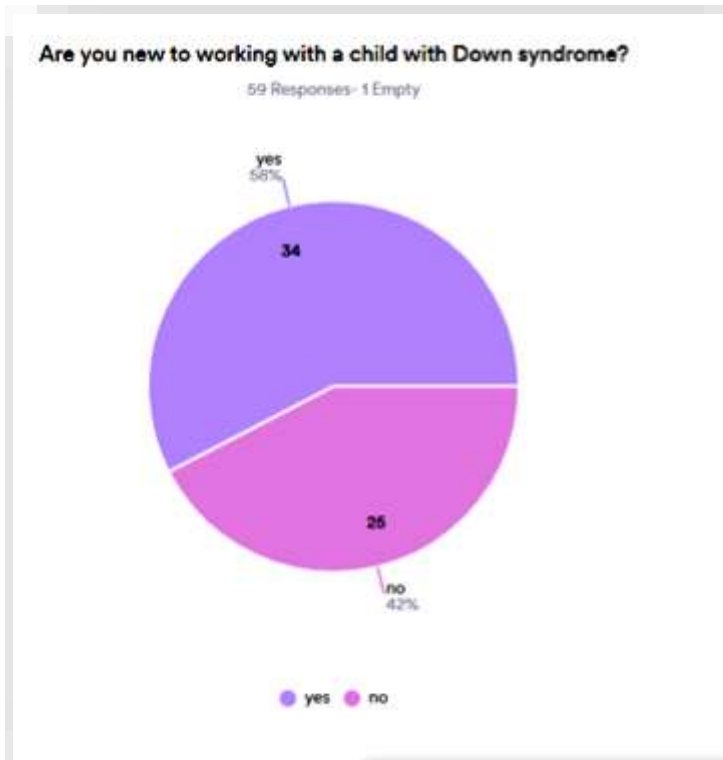
Pre-recorded training courses downloaded from our website have dropped by 51% this year to 65 downloads. The most popular downloads being 'Introduction to Down syndrome', 'Signing and Down syndrome' and 'Teaching basic number skills'.

Courses in the autumn of 2024; 'Introduction to Down syndrome' and 'Signing and Down syndrome' were offered free of charge and were well attended.

Workshops on toileting and sleep were cancelled due to poor uptake and the workshop ME: My body, my friends, my life was postponed due to Wendy's accident.

The six week behaviour course was moved online and this has proved to be popular and has been delivered twice this year.

Our plan over the next academic year is to move all training courses and workshops online.



58% of participants were new to working with a child with Down syndrome

## ONLINE TRAINING PLANS FROM SEPTEMBER

From September 2025 we will be offering our full range of training covering Introduction to Down syndrome, signing, teaching number skills, time and money, using visuals to teach communication skills and reading language intervention via several weekly one hour online sessions.

Each topic will be interspersed with a one hour, online group consultation session.

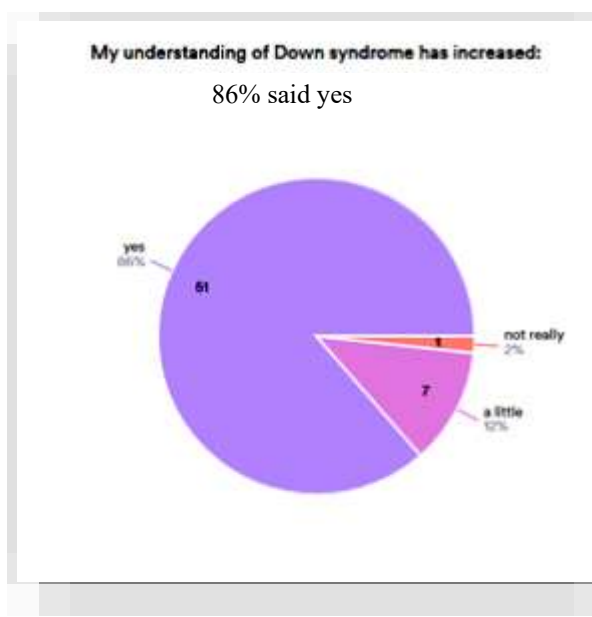
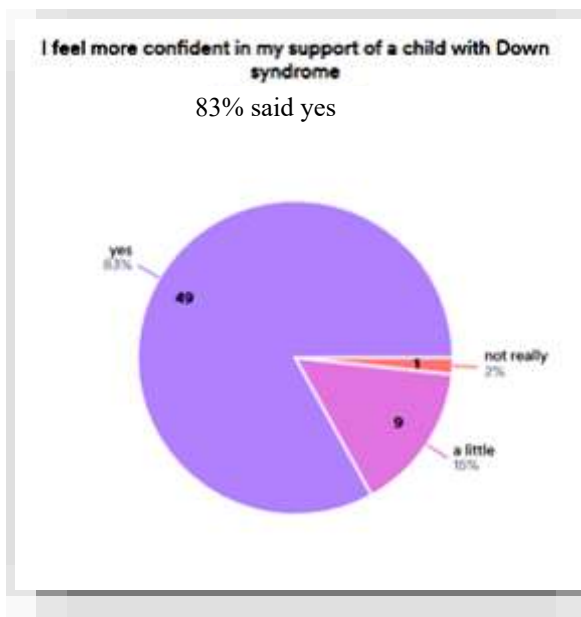
There are 22 sessions in total and these can be booked individually at £5 per session or as a bundle for £80. The sessions will run every Wednesday for one hour.

## WORKSHOPS

In addition we will continue to deliver our workshops on behaviour, toileting and sexuality relationships education - these will be delivered via 2 hour online sessions over several weeks and places will be limited.

## AIMING TO BETTER MEET SCHOOL STAFF AVAILABILITY

We hope that offering our training in this way will enable more schools to access the training needed to fully educate and include a child with Down syndrome. Acting on feedback it will remove the time for travel and enable schools to better plan cover.



*Attending in person before. Joined with school this time online. I enjoyed face to face as this is a personal preference but I found the online session easy to use and cuts out travel. Some elements of the course delivered in this way felt really different like the relaxation and it felt more impersonal when delegates didn't have videos turned on. Sessions well organised some teething problems for technology at the beginning because Teams was new to you but you managed this well. **Parent attending behaviour workshop***

### CONSULTATIONS OBSERVATIONS ASSESSMENTS

These services have been very much in demand this year in total 32 online and 10 face to face sessions have taken place benefitting 87 professionals and 39 parents. This is an increase of 14%. Wendy, Mel and Laura undertook observations and assessments and produced reports to contribute to EHCP reviews.

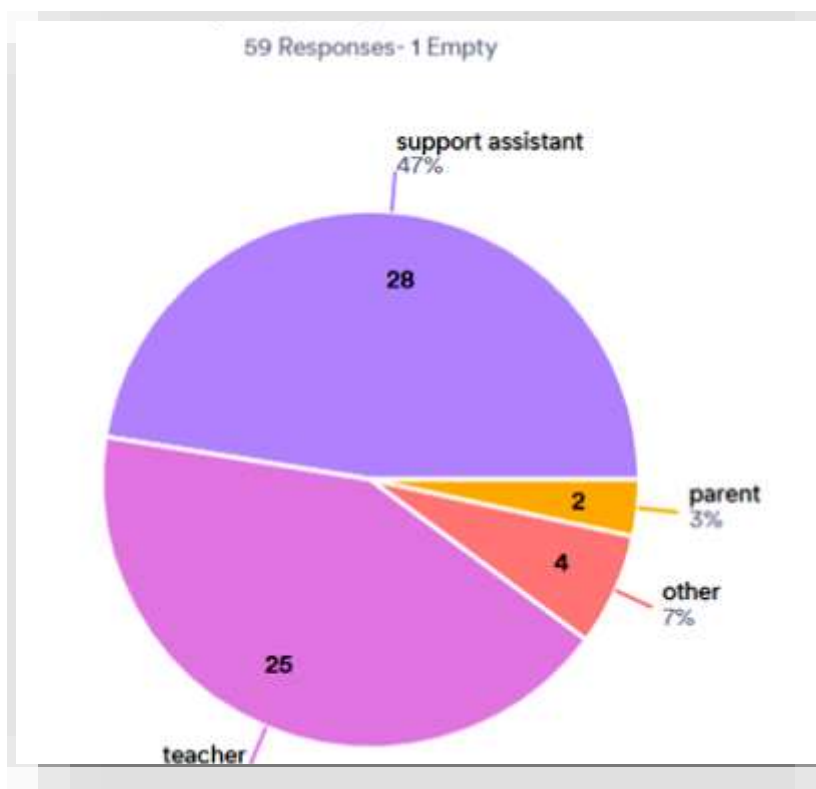
**Consultations** are offered face to face or online, via Zoom, and include discussions on EHCPs, concerns over school placement and behaviour.

**Observations** are offered in school. We can come into school and observe for 1 to 2 hours, preferably while the child is doing some literacy and number work within their usual timetable. It is also good to observe interactions with other pupils and staff, transitioning around school and general inclusion. This is then written into a detailed report which includes suggested targets.

**Assessments** are offered at our centre. A child can be assessed across maths, reading, language, speech and general development. This usually takes one hour. This can be followed up with a detailed report and suggested targets.

### ASSEMBLIES

A pre-recorded assembly is FREE to download from our website. We are also available to come into school and deliver an assembly on Down syndrome. Such assemblies are about 30 minutes long allowing for questions and answers. We have delivered two live assemblies this year and 6 schools have downloaded the assembly.



90% of participants across Introduction to Down syndrome and Signing were school staff.

## TRAINING FIGURES

Course title	Number of times delivered Sept 2024 to July 2025	Number of Attendees
Introduction to Down syndrome	9 face to face	196 professionals (43% reduction)
Signing and children with Down syndrome	6 face to face	5 parents 109 professionals (137% increase)
The inclusion of children with Down syndrome - expectations of behaviour—six week workshop	2 online	12 parents 14 professionals 9 children (225% increase)
Sexuality relationships education course: ME, my body, my friends, my life	postponed	0
Toileting workshop & support	Cancelled due to poor uptake	0
Assemblies	2 face to face	800 pupils 35 professionals (100% increase)
Consultations/observation/assessment	32 online 10 face to face	39 parents 87 professionals 4 children (14% increase)
Talk on reading to DSRF	1 online	325 professionals
Talk on our services to interested groups	1 face to face	40 children 2 professionals
Wills & Trust	1 online	16 parents
	<b>Total online 36</b> <b>Total face to face 28</b> <b>Overall total 64</b>	72 Parents 768 Professionals 853 Children/YP  Total:1693

PRE RECORDED TRAINING COURSES DOWNLOADED FROM OUR WEBSITE	
Introduction to Down syndrome	15
Teaching basic number skills (including time & money)	21
Expectations of behaviour	3
Reading Language Intervention	5
Let's make it visual	1
Signing & Down syndrome	12
Assembly on Down syndrome	6
Phonics and Down syndrome	2
<b>TOTAL DOWNLOADS</b>	<b>65 a 51% drop</b>

### **FEEDBACK ON 'INTRODUCTION TO DOWN SYNDROME' AND 'SIGNING AND DOWN SYNDROME'**

- *Reassuring to hear I am not alone and other parents and teachers have similar struggles.*
- *Fantastic course, it was really useful. I have left feeling more confident about working with students with Down syndrome.*
- *Great course, really informative and engaging delivery from Wendy*
- *Excellent and useful signs to use everyday*
- *This course was extremely informative and well presented. Thank you. I am looking forward to booking a place on the next course.*
- *Really useful, lots of information and was personal to our child*
- *One of the best training sessions I've attended. Very informative and with lots of practical ideas. Thank you.*
- *It was a great course. Mel delivered by it really well and it really helped staff knowledge.*
- *Really liked and I am already using with child I work with thank you helped me to learn new sign .*
- *Really knowledgeable trainer, lots of practice and suggestions to remember signs.*
- *Some really good pointers, so much information that makes sense.*

**THE FULL REPORT IS AVAILABLE TO DONWLOAD FROM OUR WEBSITE**

[www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1](http://www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1)

### **NEW MATHS RESOURCE by DR WENDY UTTLEY** ***Down Syndrome & a Pathway Through Mathematics***

During the summer of 2024 Wendy put together a new resource bringing together teaching notes, activities, worksheets, videos and visual resources to print off.

The resource is aimed at ability level rather than age and will help parents and practitioners to understanding how and why children with Down syndrome find maths a challenge, how they learn to understand numbers, count and calculate and learn about time and money.

Throughout the resource there are lots of examples of tried and tested effective teaching activities from early to adult years.



## TRAINING FOR HEALTH STAFF

### IMPROVING PRACTICE, RAISING EXPECTATIONS

Our 5 module training course aimed at health and maternity staff has been downloaded 13 times from our website.

We need to further promote this training which is free to download.

MODULE 1: Meet a baby with Down syndrome and their parents. Ideas to help support parents

MODULE 2: What is Down syndrome? Society's view, expectations and using appropriate language

MODULE 3:

Additional health and medical needs that may be present when a baby has Down syndrome

MODULE 4: Methods to help support a baby/infant with Down syndrome as they develop

MODULE 5: Meet an adult with Down syndrome

### DOWN SYNDROME AND A PATHWAY THROUGH HEALTH

Hard copies have been distributed across all local hospitals. Every new parent receives a copy in their new parent pack and it can be downloaded from our website.



### SUPPORT FOR FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS

In February several of our families offered to share their lived experience with medical students in their first year at the University of Leeds. This was done via Zoom.

### Shape research, change lives: setting priorities in genetic syndrome research

We were involved in research into what needs to be done to improve the lives of people with Down syndrome, Fragile X and Williams syndrome. The study directly involved young people with these conditions and was executed by the University of Surrey.

## WILL & TRUST EVENING

On Wednesday 19th March we held our third Wills & Trust evening with Michelle and Lois Independent Financial Advisors from Eccles Greenwood and Sara Cooper, Solicitor from AWB Charlesworth. The meeting was held online via Zoom and 16 parents joined for a very informative talk about wills and trusts.



## REPRESENTATION ON SEND GROUPS

Our capacity to attend meetings relevant to the education and development of children with Down syndrome has been much reduced this year. Wendy Uttley still sits on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy group but rarely manages to attend meetings. Both Wendy Uttley & Jenn Casper Smith sit on the Maternity Voice Partnership but again attendance has been patchy.

Our representation on the Co-production Group, Preparation for Adulthood group and Parent Network Group has also been very limited.

## OUR NEW PARENT PACKS

The pack is aimed at new parents, or parents-to-be, and contains information on local and national support and a booklet comprised of pictures and lovingly written accounts of some of our members children.

This year 20 packs have been distributed to local hospitals.

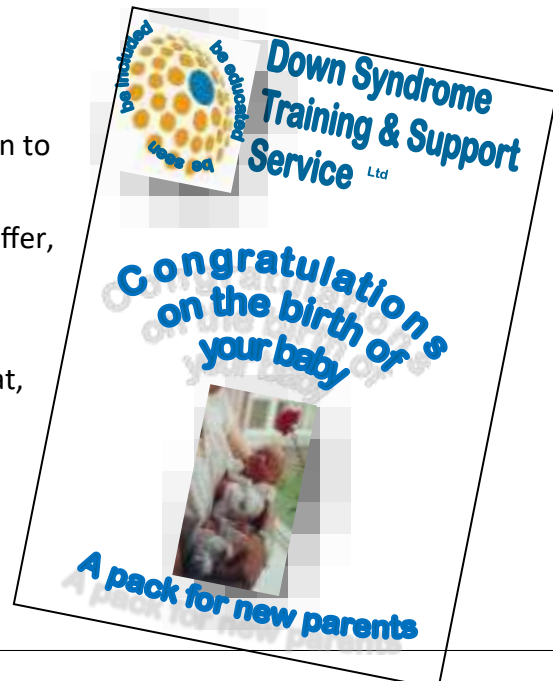
The packs are a vital support for new parents.

Funded by the Seedling Foundation. We are currently seeking funding for more packs.

## HOME VISITS

Karen Barron, our Family Support Officer has been to visit 9 new families.

When families make contact with the group we offer, whenever possible, a home visit followed by an invitation to attend the second hour of our youngest early development group where we chat, get to know each other and do some singing and signing as a gentle introduction to our early development groups.



# OUR OWN PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES

All of our resources and training videos can be purchased by visiting the resource page of our website. Items can be downloaded as e-copies and we also stock hard copies that are posted out to order.

In the last financial year resources and pre-recorded training videos generated £1069 a drop of 77% from the previous year. Next year we need to increase the promotion of our training resources.

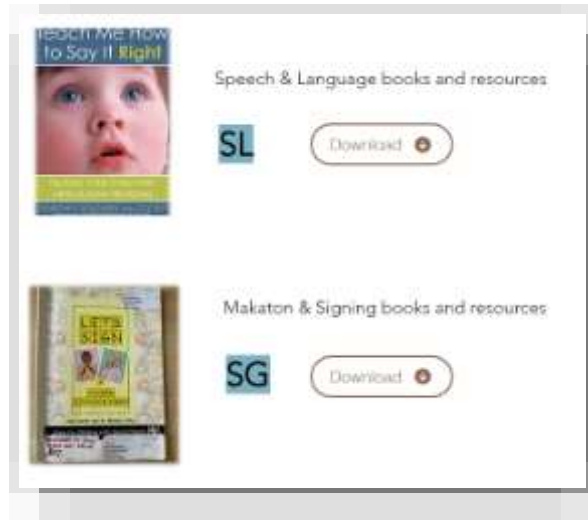
We sold: 16 sets of RLI reading books, 4 Teaching Basic Number Skills books, 4 Let's Sign & Down Syndrome books, 10 Down Syndrome and a Pathway Through Education books, 2 SRE & Signing books, 4 ME: my body, my friends, my life resource packs, 4 What Time Is It? resource packs, 8 Numicon resource packs, 5 Teaching money skills packs and 8 Language resource packs.



## LIBRARY OF BOOKS AND RESOURCES

Our library of books and resources continues to be underused. The contents is available to view on our website under the headings:

- Education and inclusion
- Speech & language development
- Signing
- Early development
- Sexuality relationships education
- Children's books featuring children with Down syndrome
- Health and medical issues
- Maths and number skills
- Family experiences
- Literacy and reading
- Benefits



## NEWSLETTER

We continue to produce a monthly newsletter detailing our events, services and developments in the field of Down syndrome and relevant information from other services.

From January 2025, when we made cuts to all our services we stopped printing and posting the newsletter to the 140 families who preferred to receive it by post.

Instead it is emailed and a link is posted on Facebook and our WhatsApp community group. This saves in ink, paper and postage.



# EARLY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

*Delivering vital intervention for babies and young children with Down syndrome and vital support to their parents since 2005*

Our Early Development Groups are for infants and young children with Down syndrome aged 12 months to 5/6 years of age. Babies are also welcome to join in the second part of our youngest group.

Laura, Mel and Wendy started the academic year delivering 7 group sessions and 4 one-to-one sessions for children with more complex needs.

Following Wendy's accident in November 2024 Mel took over delivery of her group and one to one sessions.

Then, with the cessation of National Lottery Funding in March 2025 and our failure to secure further funding, cuts had to be made. All staff contracts expired March 2025, Mel's contract was not renewed, some groups were amalgamated and three of the one to one sessions ceased. In addition we increased the fees from £6 per session to £10 per session. This 'fee' is still classed as a donation and no child will ever be excluded for financial reasons. We continue to seek funding for these sessions which are currently funded from our reserves at a cost of approximately £1000 each month.



In total 50 children and their families have benefitted from these sessions; this include 10 babies and 8 one to one sessions.

The groups were evaluated very recently with some fantastic comments.

The full report is available to download from our website:

[www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1](http://www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1)

## OVERVIEW OF OUR EARLY DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

We have been delivering our early development groups since 2005! The intervention is over 5 years and follows a programme written and developed by Wendy Uttley. All early development group sessions are two hours long and focus on early communication, language, speech sounds, interaction, early number, early reading, feeding skills, and fine and gross motor skills, all delivered through short fun activities.

Sessions can be quite intense at times but the focus is always to ensure the child enjoys the session and parents feel confident to continue input at home. Professionals attend either in support of the children or to observe our best practice. The children in the groups never cease to amaze us with their achievements and it is extremely rewarding to be part of their development.



## ONE to ONE SESSIONS & ASSESSMENTS

One to one sessions are used to support children who need more specific input. In addition, for a fee, we can undertake an assessment and produce a written report should a school or parent request one.

### USING WORDS IN PRINT TO DEVELOP SPEECH AND READING SKILLS

We introduce words in print from age 3 by word to word matching and as the children begin to learn these 'black on white' squiggles mean something we begin to use them to support speech.



Here's Orla using a sentence strip to ask for biscuits at snack time and Ethan using signing and word recognition to read an early book.



Wendy presented at the Down Syndrome Research Forum sharing videos to celebrate the success of the children we work with. We are very proud of our early development groups and the children who attend them in preparation for school.

### JULY 2025 GRADUATES

In July 2025 our year 5 children graduated. Certificates were awarded and reports written detailing the progress of each child across literacy, numeracy, speech, language, communication, feeding skills, fine and gross motor skills and behaviour. In addition we send information into their schools offering training and support.



## EXCELLENT EVALUATION REPORT

A massive thank you to the 16 families who completed our evaluation form; the full report is available to download from our website:

[www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1](http://www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1)

Here is a brief summary:

**My child is making progress as a result of attending these sessions**

4.87/5 

**What progress have you seen?**

- *Concentration has increased, sharing skills, number skills*
- *Better focus/attention, can sit & spend longer doing a task without getting distracted and is starting to understand the concept of colours, matching & counting to 3 (albeit she is none verbal, but reacts in cur to the adult counting)*
- *My son is more socialising, before he was scared from strangers..etc..*
- *Able to sit in group times longer, able to wait longer in taking turns. Better number recognition, better sound knowledge, speech improvements and improvement in listening skills.*
- *Development of speech and language skills such as increased vocabulary and speech clarity, increased use of Makaton signs. He is able to sit and focus on tasks for longer. He is starting to develop his use and understanding of numbers. He is developing skills in turn taking and sharing. His friendships and confidence in interacting with others are growing.*
- *Developed communication skills. Improved social behaviour. Learnt sign language*
- *Increased confidence in talking and Makaton. Improvement in counting and word recognition. Better listening skills*
- *O is able to recognise letters and make the relevant speech sounds, as well as identify numbers and count. This has enhanced her ability to prepare for starting school in Sept*
- *Learned to do more sign language & remember them & use them to communicate.*
- *Better listening skills picking up signs so she can express herself more. Wants to learn and finds it fun*
- *O hugely benefits as both her and I are being educated on the best ways to help her learn. She has learnt how to count to ten and also to identify words. She is beginning to learn to read.*



## FUNDING

Sessions were funded by the National Lottery for 5 years, from March 2020 to March 2025. We were unsuccessful to securing further funding and currently fund sessions from our reserves



**I feel confident to support my child's learning as a result of attending these sessions**

4.75/5 ★★★★★

### **Comments about the delivery of the sessions and how they help parents**

- *A is much developmentally delayed than other children her age (including children with DS), which has worried me about how I can get her to learn. However Wendy's approach of repetition, perseverance, and consistency means I've not given up and assumed she's incapable.*
- *Sessions are very informative, staff are really supportive. Children have gained a lot of skills from sessions and interact well during sessions. A great chance to meet with others and share information and experiences.*
- *Resources supplied have been really beneficial to reinforce learning at home and at nursery. My child can concentrate on learning tasks for a longer length of time. Splitting words by tapping them out has helped my daughter to start saying 2 syllable words, including her name.*
- *Using certain commands which have been demonstrated in the group, has enabled us to further assist O's development. We replicate what we have seen at the sessions and this has enhanced O's understanding. Her listening and concentrating skills have developed as a result of continued practising of strategies.*
- *My child is not sitting at these sessions, concentration not there yet or focus. Joint attention needs to increase*
- *This is an outstanding sessions. The staff is always happy to support and give advice to parents. Without these groups it would be impossible to understand our children's capabilities.*
- *Whereas I don't find all of the activities are relevant to the stage my child is at, many of them are and I love that I really gain an understanding of the learning profile of my child and style of learning. Sometimes we struggle to attend but this is no reflection on the group which is useful and well led. My child enjoys it and likes the learning materials.*
- *Sessions are a great help I get a better understanding of U's needs and behaviour. It has also helped me too with the questions I have.*
- *These groups have been really valuable for both me and my child. I can see the improvement in his learning, development and confidence. There is a lot of support available for parents as well as for the children.*
- *Unable to express how great these sessions are I travel all the way from Oldham every fortnight.*
- *The groups/session are vital from children with Down syndrome, particularly at a time when NHS therapies are non existent and being cut. The only therapy that my child has received has come from the charity. Even the SENNIT teachers are unaware of these strategies (teaching and learning specified to DS).*

#### **FACEBOOK**

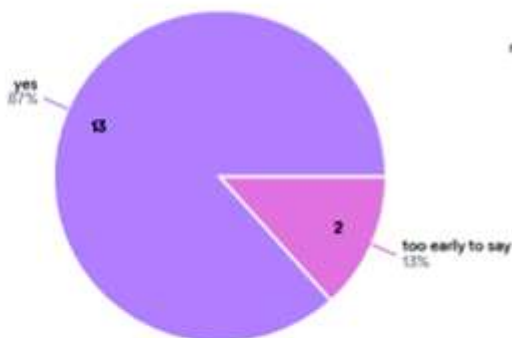
We have a secret Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/earlydevelopmentgroups/>

### Comments about school

- *She will start mainstream primary school in a position which is not too dissimilar to other students in her class, as she is able to identify certain words, letters and numbers as well as make a number of speech sounds. These are not things which I believe she would be able to do had we not attended the sessions.*
- *U is able to concentrate more even at school.*
- *They help with behaviour, giving/supporting effective face to face strategies. School staff do not receive this training unless they attend these specific groups, I have also gained skills. It has helped raise morale/expectation*
- *There are fantastic, I wish they could continue throughout primary school. We missed them when they reduced from twice to once a month.*
- *We have learnt a lot from the DS specialist teachers and I am very grateful to their support and knowledge. The sessions are extremely useful, it is a shame that the sessions are not compulsory for all children with DS and that school staff attend along with the children because they would learn a lot from them making their inclusion in mainstream sessions more effective.*
- *The EDG provides with a differentiated/targeted work for my child. School staff are also joining the centre, which helps guide what my son should be learning and support his development.*

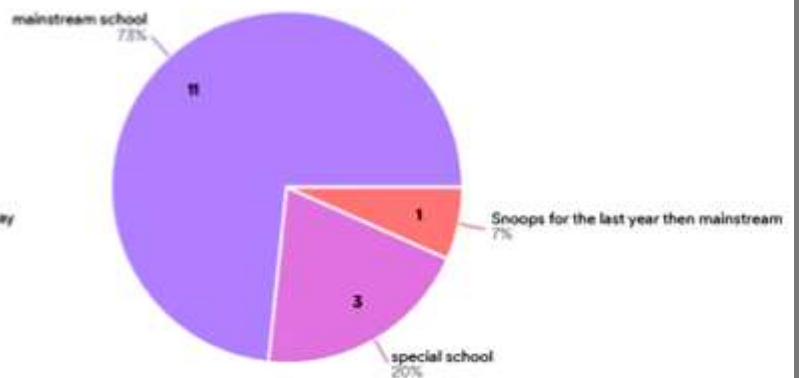
Do you think that your child will have a better start in life because of these sessions?

15 Responses- 1 Empty



Which type of school are you planning for your child to attend?

15 Responses- 1 Empty





# DOWN SYNDROME LEARNING SUPPORT PACKS

*Delivering vital intervention for babies and young children with Down syndrome and vital support to their parents since 2005*

## DOWN SYNDROME LEARNING SUPPORT PACKS

All children new to the Early Development Groups are provided with learning support packs housed in a sturdy plastic box. These packs are long term in that the information contained in them is

relevant for many years, in particular the first 5 years of life.

Each pack contains the first 2 See & Learn Language and Reading kits produced by Down Syndrome Education International, a home Numicon kit, our publications 'Signing and Down Syndrome', 'Teaching Basic Number Skills', 'Down Syndrome and a Pathway Through Education', 'Down Syndrome and a Pathway Through Health' and a magic bag.

This year we have received funding from the Seedling Foundation for these packs. We are currently seeking further funding.

## FEEDBACK ON THE PACKS

- *It's a brilliant resource to provide to families, really helpful with practicing both words and numbers at home and in educational settings.*
- *I am grateful that dstss provide us with an Early years support pack, as this has enables us to continue learning whilst at home.*
- *The see & learn kits have been incredibly useful as we use them at home and then they repeat this learning by using them at nursery. The kits are too expensive for nursery to purchase. Magic bag has been invaluable for learning to sign + the Numicon has enabled us to frequently practice counting.*

*In the sessions the teacher models high expectations of skills like good listening and concentrating. This has given me the confidence to persevere with skills we are working on together and strategies to use to keep my child's focus.*

*We have started to see that she is using early language to express her needs and wants. She wants to make her own choices and having worked on speech sounds and using Makaton has allowed her to begin communicating which will have a big impact for her future independence*

*She is more focused and can spend longer on learning tasks. Confident finding her name. More consistent in matching Numicon to number. Saying a lot more individual words & signs*

## SPEECH & LANGUAGE GROUP SESSIONS

Speech & Language input for children and adults with Down syndrome is vital. Research demonstrates that children and young people with Down syndrome benefit from monthly input with gains still being made in their 20's.

Statutory speech and language can be very patchy and many children do not get continuous input. Only through a charitable service can such input be achieved.

We offer group sessions to all children and young people over the age of 5. Under 5's are offered fortnightly sessions via our early development groups and these sessions address their early speech, language and communication needs. We also offer occasional one to one sessions should a child/young person or adult need a little additional support.

We employ two highly specialised therapists, Lauren Drake and Jessica Foley, trained by ourselves, to deliver up to 13 group sessions each month. This year 41 children and young people have benefitted from the sessions.

*Our child is visibly delighted when he is understood by people. School comment on how much better his relationships and learning are now his communication has come on so much.*

### STUDENTS FROM LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

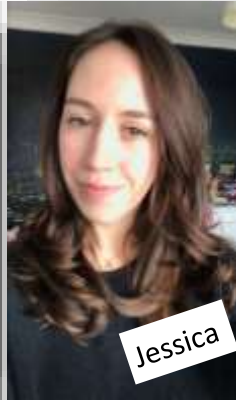
Throughout the year nine Speech & Language students from Leeds Beckett University have joined us to gain work experience. We are delighted that we are able to help train future therapists gain knowledge and understanding of people with Down syndrome:

Daniel Champion, Cliona Dykins, Olivia Brear, Aaliyah Ilyas, Lorna Kime, Amirah Batool, Mia Cuthbertson, Dani Mahoney and Ellie Gilman.

Both therapists deliver across all age groups one weekend each month, and can also provide a



Lauren



Jessica

private assessment and report upon request.

Adult speech & language group sessions involve developing confidence to communicate needs in real life social settings and situations, for example, catching a train. In March Jessica's group went to the Card Factory to buy Mother's Day cards, then took them back to the centre to address.



### FUNDING

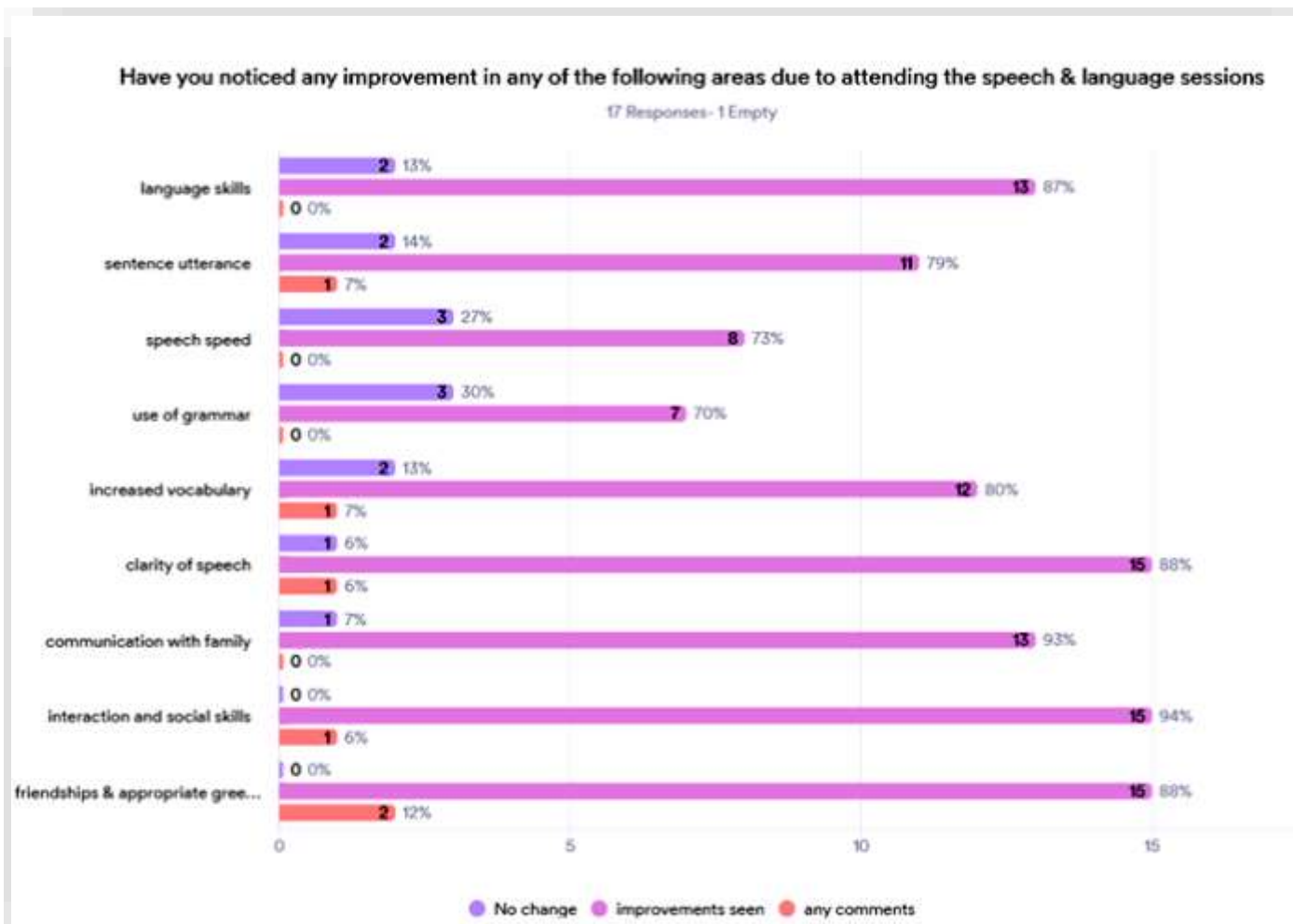
Funded by Awards 4 All until July 2025.



## FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS

Session were evaluated using an online feedback form. Some comments are included here. The full report can be downloaded from our website:

[www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1](http://www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1)



*N is beginning to use his skills in a range of social situations.*

*Jessica uses time to encourage and develops speech and language but also incorporates activities of daily activities such as writing own name and address on envelope and structuring a sentence within the card.*

*Engagement varies depending on factors like how he is feeling, how many other children are there/ what they are doing and what the task is. Lauren is good at noticing this and changing the task/ incorporating movement when engagement is drifting.*

*my child has been identified as needing more support but these sessions most definitely have improved his life.*

### **Comments on the impact sessions have on parents:**

- *At home we often carry on these lessons and buy a particular game or activity/ book used and it helps towards learning*
- *I can ask bespoke questions and get useful resources from a knowledgeable professional*
- *I can always ask advice with language and always get helpful tips and advice, even where to buy them if it's something I feel A needs*
- *I need to feel like we are trying! The peer support of fellow parents and the tips and sounds to focus on are really useful. Therapist is so understanding and works hard with the children even if they don't want to!*
- *Copying the techniques Lauren uses and learning how to support clear pronunciation have been very helpful.*
- *While the session is taking place it gives an opportunity for parents to have some time to exchange ideas, sharing tips and advice on what is helping or not helping.*
- *Gaining insight on how to deal with school, social care and support that may help. I hope he gains confidence*

*My child loves attending the sessions. In Calderdale she does not have access to a speech therapist so we really value these sessions*

*Copying the techniques Lauren uses and learning how to support clear pronunciation have been very helpful.*

*I think these sessions are invaluable for our children, however I also believe that they need more direct speech therapy on a regular basis in school. Without these sessions my child would not have made the same progress he has but feel he could make more progress in the school environment where there are more challenges/ different scenarios to a session at the centre with the main caregiver present.*



*Increased vocabulary and speech clarity. Improved confidence and building on friendships. His ability to focus on tasks is also improving.*

*I believe that children and families need regular direct support of a therapist as our children pass through different stages of their life.*

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

In January 2025, due to reduced demand and also the need to reallocate much needed funds to core costs, we placed our occupational therapy service on hold. Between September and



December 2024 seven children benefitted from the service which remains on hold until we secure further funding. Wendy Scaife is however available for private one to one sessions, assessments and consultations. Funded by the National Lottery until December 2024.



## PHYSIOTHERAPY

In January 2025, due to reduced demand and also the need to reallocate much needed funds to core costs, we placed our physiotherapy service on hold. This remains the case until we secure further funding.



Up to the end of 2024 Holly Dunne delivered 4 one to one physiotherapy sessions. She is available for private one to one sessions, assessments and consultations. Funded by the National Lottery until December 2024.



## COUNSELLING

During the year Tara Fox decided to take a break from counselling. Tara has supported our charity and many, many parents over the years. We wish her all the best. Gill Iley continues to support parents and adults with Down syndrome in need of counselling.



As the impact of the Covid pandemic lessens, demand has reduced and this year 5 parents have benefitted from the service.

As with physiotherapy and occupational therapy we were successful in gaining permission to reallocate some funds towards core costs.

Funded by Sovereign Healthcare.

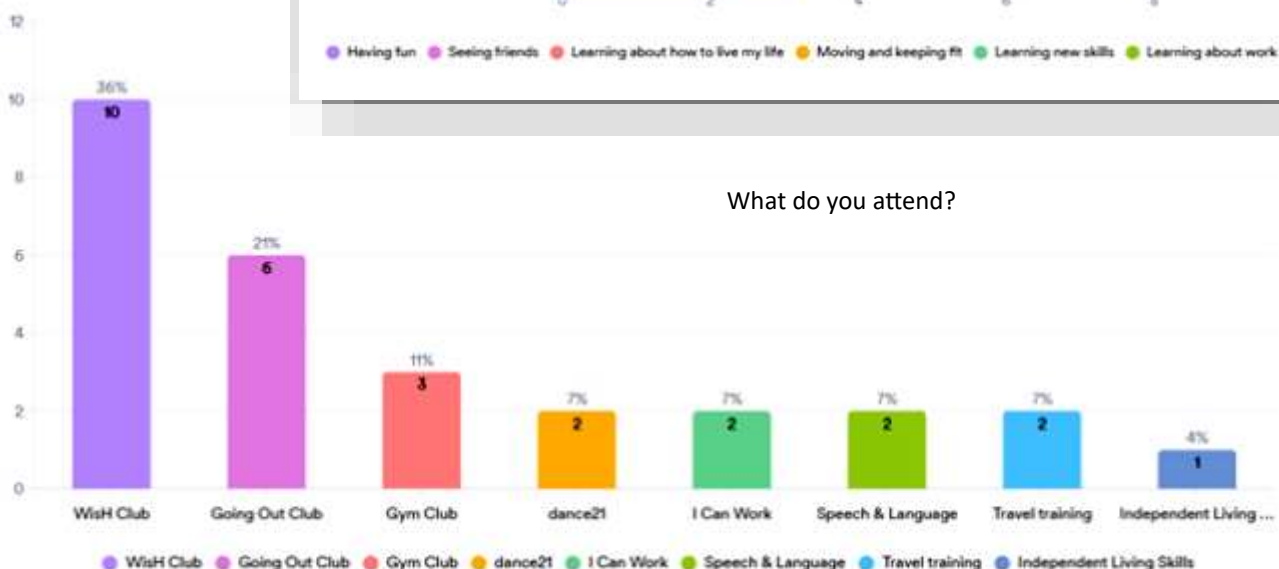
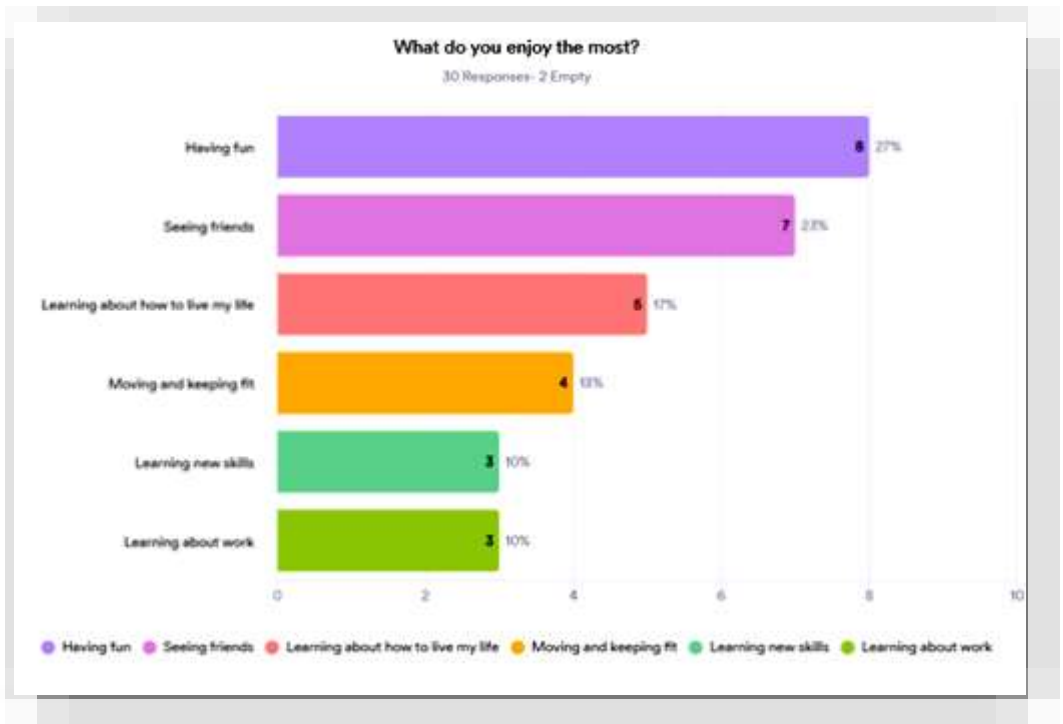


# ADULT SERVICES

We are pleased to offer the following services to support adults with Down syndrome. These include:

- Our WisH Club for young people aged 11 to 25.
- The Going Out Club—running once per half term. No upper age limit.
- Dance21 - our dance group for young people aged 12+. There is no upper age limit.
- Our adult speech & language group - this meets every month. One month the young people practice skills at the centre, the following month they put these skills into real life practice - going on a train/bus/to the café. Again no upper age limit.
- Our weekly gym Club at Keighley Leisure Centre.
- Counselling for adults with Down syndrome with Gill Ilys.
- Our 'I Can Work' project.
- Our new Independent Living Skills Project - 'I Can Shop, Cook & Clean'.

## FEEDBACK FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE



## INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS (ILS)

### I Can Shop, Cook & Clean

Over the year three young adults have benefitted from our ILS project, Ayesha, Noor and Charlie. Supported by Nicky they have undertaken a range of activities in our basement where we have created a living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. Attending one day per week they have worked on washing, cooking using the microwave, kettle, toaster and hob, cleaning, ironing, vacuuming, shopping, washing up and travel training.



Funded by Aviva Crowd Fund & Community Fund, Co-op Community Fund, Austin Hope Pilkington Trust and the young peoples direct payments.



During November and December 2024 we worked with Northern Rail to deliver a series of 'Try The Train'

sessions, planning journeys, using trains and learning about safety.

The young people visited Bingley train station, went to Skipton and then to visit the Christmas markets in Leeds.

## I CAN WORK

Our 'I Can Work' project currently offers two placements for adults with Down syndrome aged 18+ at our centre. The aim is to provide input and support until they are ready to progress into a work related placement or, ideally, paid employment.

The young people undertake various work related tasks and projects set at their level, incorporating personal targets in number, time, money, literacy, appropriate behaviours and communication.

Each young person must be willing to travel at least part of their journey to our centre independently or be able to work towards this target.

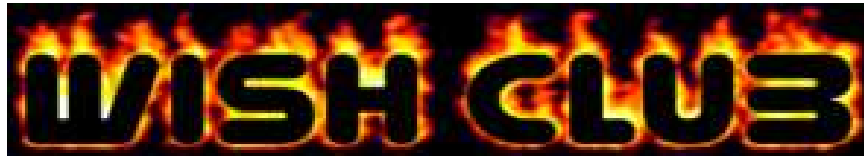
Over the year, Nicky, Claire and Catherine have supported 3 young adults; Ayesha at a work placement at Go Bowling, Shipley where she works in the kitchen, Emerson who has been gaining experience at our centre and charity shop and Charlie, who after graduating from our ILS project moved onto our 'I Can Work' scheme and has also been gaining experience at our centre and in the charity shop. All young adults have been undertaking travel training.



Charlie, Ayesha and Emerson have gained loads of experience working at our charity shop.



## OUR YOUTH CLUB—Weekend is Here



The WisH Club has been through several changes this year. Near the end of 2024 grant funding expired and we began to fund it from reserves. Then, as we made cuts to our services in January, we reduced the club from 4 hours per week to 2 hours per fortnight. Heather Bell, who had been with us for 3 years decided to hand in her notice and left at the end of January.



Nicky and Shabana stepped in as volunteers to help run the club with Charlotte.

In addition, subs were increased from £2 per session to £5 per session. This is classed as a donation.

In May 2025 we were successful in a funding bid to Iron Mongers and, very recently, we have employed to new youth workers, Jake and Sarah and relaunched the club, which is now open every Friday 6 til 9pm.



Over the year the club has provided a wide range of activities including cooking, baking, sports days, summer party, creating sensory toys, dancing, exploring friendships and self care.





In November 2024 the young people had a fabulous visit from Tamar and Laura who were seeking feedback on their brilliant app (the Babble App) created to help encourage increased verbalisations in babies with Down syndrome .

The club is full of equipment: HiFi, pool table, Xbox, TV, DVD player, exercise bikes, karaoke, football table, chill out area with bean bags and comfy couches, air hockey table and large Connect 4. A tuck shop aims to help the young people develop time and money skills.

All members have a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) in place and a care plan in place should they require support with personal care. We are also working on personal targets for the young people across self care skills, friendship skills and appropriate social behaviours. The setting is an ideal place to work on these skills as it is a safe and supportive environment.

Funded by Charlies & Elise Sykes Trust until December 2024, then Iron Mongers from April 2025 until April 2026

**FACEBOOK**  
 The WisH Club  
 Facebook group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/wishclubyouth/>  
 The group is secret and there are some amazing photos shared every Friday evening.



A big thank you to the following volunteers who have helped with the running of the WisH Club over the year:

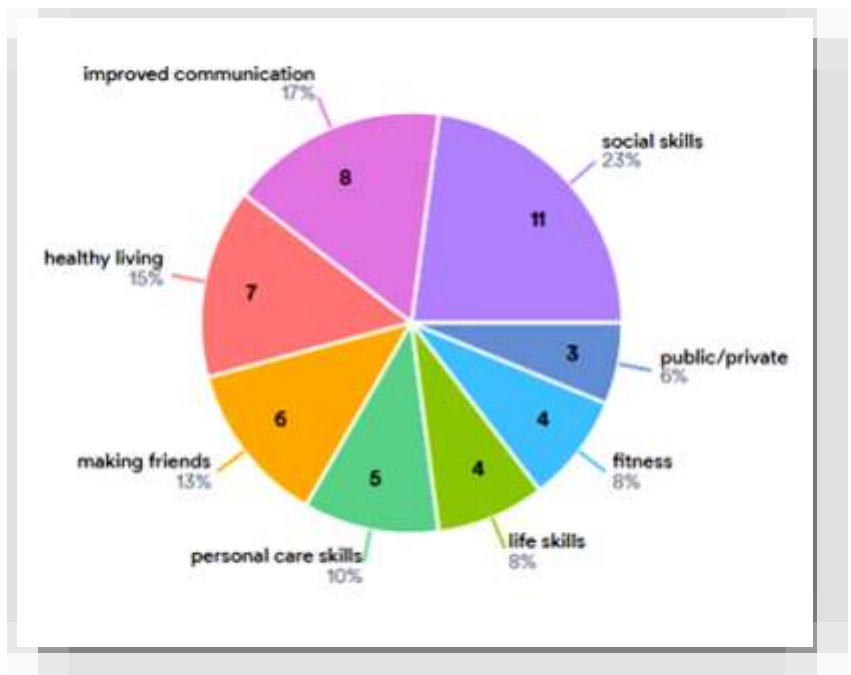
- Noor Alabdullah
- Zymal Ali
- Shabana Khan
- Daniel Champion
- Zunairah Hamayoon
- Lisa Ord
- Nicky Major
- Shona Preston

## FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### Every week activities are planned to address areas of learning

During the year 32 young people, including 5 new to the club, have undertaken a vast range of skill building activities. These have included developing:

- self help skills while cooking;
- confidence building skills - through singing karaoke & fitness activities;
- friendship skills - when playing circle games, interactive games and sharing a movie;
- personal hygiene - pamper nights, painting nails;
- keeping safe skills through specific training sessions to work on public and private body parts and places and appropriate greetings.



### SKILLS WE AIM TO WORK ON AT THE CLUB

For the full report visit:

[www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1](http://www.downsyndromebradford.com/team-1)

Everyone reported that they enjoyed coming to the WisH Club with parents saying:

- *They talk about it all week, counts down the days*
- *S really looks forward to going she has many friends there and has a lot of fun hanging out and playing with her friends. The group seems to be attracting more and more good friends for S*
- *T looks forward to youth club all week as she doesn't stop talking about it*
- *It's a safe space where the young people have a choice to do the things they want with no pressure.*
- *She gets to really practise and secure her understanding of social boundaries which is something she still gets wrong at school sometimes. I think the staff really know how to make it accessible for our kids and how to get it right. Lots of reinforcement. Wonderful really.*
- *She has several friends there that she enjoys being around and doing things with. She has a super time every Friday night. Its the highlight of our week.*

## GOING OUT CLUB

The Going Out Club has been out and about once every half term. It has no upper age limit and is open to everyone with Down syndrome aged 11+.

This year the Club has been to see 'Queen' at Bingley Little Theatre, eaten at The Shama, Bingley, had a 'taster' gym session at Keighley Leisure Centre, and danced at Christmas, Easter and end of school year at Mavericks experiencing a 'night club' night out.



### WEEKLY GYM CLUB

#### FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Following on from our taster session at Keighley Leisure Centre a weekly Gym Club was formed for young people with Down syndrome aged 13+. In December 2024 the club moved to Pinnacle Performance Fitness Studio and the age limit was reduced to 11+.

Sessions currently take place every Tuesday, 4.15 to 5.15pm with Sophie Robinson a fully qualified and very experienced fitness instructor. Parents/carers are asked to stay on the premises and also provide support should any young person need one to one support.

The cost is £5 per session by donation.

Sessions are currently funded by Sports England until December 2025.

Since January 2025 Sophie and James Robinson have donated the use of their gym free of charge however due to poor attendance, an average 3 young people, the club will cease at the end of this year.



# DANCE CLASSES

## TWIRLY21s

Twirly21s is our dance group for young children aged 5 to around 12 years of age. It runs every Saturday, 2.30 to 3.30pm at Footsteps Theatre School, Idle, BD10 8PY. Classes are delivered by Claire King who has a wealth of experience working with young children who have Down syndrome. Dancers are asked to pay £5 (donation) on entry to practice their money skills.

The dancers performed at our Chromosome Rocks #24 event in July 2024 and they now have their own tee shirts.



As children leave our early development groups, aged around 5 to 6, parents can often feel the loss of their regular contact and the opportunity to share experiences and offer mutual support. The class meets weekly and while the children are dancing parents can regain this opportunity over a cup of tea/coffee. Sixteen children and their parents have benefitted this year.

## DANCE21

Dance21 is our older dance group, for young people aged 12 to adulthood. The group dances every Thursday, 6 to 7pm at Footsteps Theatre School, Idle, BD10 8PY. Dancers are asked



to pay £6 on entry to practice their money skills. Classes are delivered by Claire King, alongside Kim Booth, one of our most experienced dance21 members.



21 young people have benefited from sessions this year.

## PERFORMANCES

Dance21 have been really busy this year, performing to music from 'Barbie Girl' at EXPRESSIONS Northern Ballet and our Chromosome Rocks#24 event in July 2024, outside our charity shop in Keighley on World Down Syndrome Day in March 2025 and outside Bingley Little Theatre as part of Bingley Create in May 2025.



## SATURDAY FAMILY SESSION

Throughout the year we have continued to meet on the second Saturday of the month at Bingley Methodist Church, Herbert Street, with the exception of July 2024 and January 2025.

We now have a fantastic group of volunteers to help set up and deliver these sessions; Ruth, Jenn, Heather, Andy, Laura, Heidi, Wendy, Elanor, Lisa, Safia are all fully committed and ensure everything runs smoothly.

Our sessions have included: a visit from Into the Wild, Shabang! Christmas party, World Down syndrome day celebrations and soft play session.

During the morning we also provide several circle and singing sessions including magic bag, parachute, fantastic elastic and a lovely group snack time.



Bouncy castle and soft play September 2024



We all got very wet playing with the tarpaulin when Shabang! visited in November 2024



Christmas celebrations December 2024



Enjoying world Down syndrome day in March after making lots of merchandise to sell at our shop



Mesmerized by the tortoise in May when 'Into the Wild' visited.



## SUPPORT FOR SIBLINGS - SIBZ ZONE

Our Sibz Zone is for brothers and sisters aged 6+. The group runs monthly either face to face at our youth club upstairs at the centre or in the small room at Bingley Methodist Church. It is timed to coincide with our monthly Family Saturday session. Occasionally it is delivered online via Zoom with Elanor.

Siblings young and old thoroughly enjoy the sessions.

Thank you to Elanor Murray for her planning and delivery of these sessions.

The siblings take part in games and crafts and each month an activity is planned to help everyone share experiences, feelings and concerns.



## SUPPORT FOR DADS

Although a target for this year we have not managed to resurrect the 'Dads Group'. However we have an increasing number of dads who attend our Family Saturday sessions.





# SUMMER TRIP TO LIGHTWATER VALLEY AUGUST 2024

On Wednesday 21st August 2024, 15 families (67 very excited people) joined us for a wonderful trip to Lightwater Valley. The coach was packed, with an additional three families arriving in cars. The trip was part funded by Hedley Foundation.



Hedley Foundation



## AIMS FOR 2025/26

- ◆ Raise £130,000 so that we are secure for 2026/27
- ◆ Improve the promotion and training for ALL across the Yorkshire region (ongoing)
- ◆ Staff the charity shop to ensure it is open as much as possible
- ◆ Maintain our level of income and service
- ◆ Celebrate our 25th anniversary



Thank you