



**MORE  
CHILDREN  
*GROWING.***

**MORE  
CHILDREN  
*THRIVING.***

**IMPACT REPORT**

**2025/2026**

Registered Charity Number: 1120863



# **OUR VISION.**

**A world where every child with Down syndrome shines with confidence and reaches their full potential.**

# **OUR MISSION.**

**To empower children with Down syndrome through expert support, tailored learning, and joyful connection.**

# **OUR VALUES.**

**We believe in inclusion, celebrate individuality, and champion every child's right to thrive.**

# WELCOME & THANK YOU.

In a world that still too often underestimates children with Down syndrome, Downright Excellent stands as a powerful reminder of what's possible when we focus on potential, not limitations.

This year has been one of continued growth, discovery, and connection. Against a backdrop of persistent stigma and inequality, our families, staff, and volunteers have worked tirelessly to create a nurturing environment where every child is seen, heard, and celebrated. From first words to newfound independence, the milestones we've witnessed are nothing short of extraordinary.

Thanks to the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and wider community, we've delivered life-changing support to families across London. Whether it's through small group therapy, specialist training, or simply offering a safe space for parents to share and connect, your support has allowed us to make a lasting difference. Alongside our dedicated team, I am proud to play a part in driving this mission forward.

Working closely with our families, therapists, educational specialists and supporters has shown me firsthand the strength, resilience, and joy within this community. Every week, I see children discovering new abilities, parents finding hope, and volunteers making a genuine difference. It is a privilege to contribute to an organisation where every action, big or small, helps build a more inclusive world for children with Down syndrome.

We know there is still much to do. But with every donation, every hour volunteered, and every voice raised in support, we move closer to a future where children with Down syndrome are valued, included, and empowered to thrive.

To everyone who has walked with us on this journey, thank you. You are helping to build a more inclusive, compassionate, and joyful world.

James Davis

Chair



# UP TO NOW.

**Supporting Children:** We support children with Down syndrome to develop key communication and life skills, enabling them to maximise their potential.

**Play & Learn (0-4s):** Often families' first experience of meeting other children with Down syndrome, our Play & Learn sessions complement our regular sessions by providing a relaxed and friendly area for pre-school children and their carers to socialise, support each other and learn new skills, including Makaton (a unique language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate) and learn-through-play activities. The early intervention and emotional support, sharing experiences and information with other parents and carers is hugely valued. Families on the waiting list for therapies are invited to Play & Learn until a group vacancy is available.

**Small Group (0-4s):** Through our specialist multi-disciplinary team from backgrounds including health, education, research, communication, Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy and physiotherapy we enable children to understand their own learning style and strengths so they can articulate what they need to succeed in therapy and in their daily lives either in person or online.

**School age groups (5-18):** As children enter school we teach them to understand their own communication and learning styles and their own strengths and needs to enable them to articulate what they need to succeed in therapy and in their daily lives. They build in confidence over the years and

then we teach our children and young people to become more independent in their learning communication and social lives. We use well researched interventions e.g. smiLE therapy. We practise skills like going to a doctor surgery independently, going to the post office, buying a train ticket, ordering food and asking for directions. These are crucial skills for our young people to develop to encourage independence, safety and confidence went out in the community. As the young people mature we teach them about the different kinds of relationships they have with people, the importance of keeping themselves safe in relationships and the skills needed for work.

**Empowering Families:** We support families through our extensive offer of family training and forums, consultations and EHCP support. We have a dedicated WhatsApp group for parents to connect and offer peer to peer support. In addition we also offer pre-school families Makaton training.

**Inspiring Professionals:** We provide expert pre-school and school training opportunities to those who support children with Down syndrome, ensuring a better understanding of the strategies to empower our children to maximise their potential.

**Extension Activities:** We deliver weekly online music & fun fitness sessions to our community of children and young people as well as support their wellbeing through activity days and social outings.





# WHERE WE ARE.

**Right now, Downright Excellent is proud to be a trusted lifeline for families of children with Down syndrome across London.**

**Our services have grown in reach and impact, and we continue to be led by the needs and aspirations of the families we support.**

**Supporting More Families Than Ever:** We now work with over 87 families each year offering therapy, training, and emotional support from the early years through to adolescence. Every child receives tailored, expert-led support in an environment where they are truly seen and valued.

**Delivering Specialist Interventions Every Week:** Our group sessions take place every Friday and Saturday. Led by trained professionals and supported by passionate volunteers, these sessions combine evidence-based practice with joy, creativity and connection.

**Empowering Families:** We equip families with the tools, confidence, and knowledge to support their children beyond our sessions. From Baby Makaton courses to tailored learning plans and one-to-one consultations, we put parents at the heart of every step.

**Training Tomorrow's Experts:** We provide termly school training for staff on the learning profile, speech and language profile, reading, writing, maths and behaviour through our online forums.

**A Community Rooted in Excellence:** Every part of our work is grounded in inclusion, compassion, and high standards. We're not just a support service we're a thriving community where children and families grow together, and where every small step forward is celebrated.



# OUR WORK IN NUMBERS.

**Every statistic tells a story of progress, potential, and the power of community.**

These numbers reflect the impact we've made together through expert support, meaningful connections, and a shared commitment to helping children with Down syndrome thrive.



**87 Families**

Supported across London



**128k**

Raised through donations



**1,200+ hours**

Hours of specialist training delivered



**96% of Families**

Would highly recommend us



**92% of children's**

Communication skills improved



**96% of Families**

Feel more supported with DEX



**18 years of**

Making a positive impact



**100% of children**

Are excited to attend DEX



**99% of income**

Raised by fundraising

# NOT EVERYONE ACCEPTS OUR COMMUNITY.

Families of the 47,000 people with Down syndrome in the UK face daily discrimination and stigma. Inequalities in our Healthcare, Education and Employment opportunities, proving the biggest challenge isn't ability, but society's attitude.

# Ella Finding Her Voice with DEx

When Ella first joined Downright Excellent at just three years old, her parents were filled with a mix of hope and uncertainty. Like many families new to a Down syndrome diagnosis, they were searching for answers, how best to support Ella's development, where to find specialist advice, and how to help her communicate her thoughts and feelings.

At that time, Ella was mostly non-verbal and easily overwhelmed in group settings. Her parents described everyday activities like doctor's visits or playgroups as daunting. "We just wanted her to be understood," her mum shared. "And for her to feel confident enough to express herself in her own way."

Through DEx's Play & Learn sessions, Ella began to build the foundations of communication in a safe and encouraging space. She was introduced to Makaton, and with the help of speech and language therapists, her parents learned how to use visual cues and signs to support her learning at home. Each week brought small but significant breakthroughs: the first time she signed "more," the day she joined in with a song, the moment she reached for a friend's hand during circle time.

As Ella grew, so did her confidence. She progressed into the Small Groups programme, where she started setting her own goals like asking for help, or choosing her favourite activity. Her therapist, Sandra, encouraged her to reflect on what



worked best for her. "I need to see it again," she would say proudly when she wanted something repeated a small phrase that spoke volumes.

Now nine, Ella is thriving at home and school. She's learning life skills through smiLE Therapy, like how to use public transport, talk to shopkeepers, and navigate the community safely and independently. She recently practised how to book her own doctor's appointment a milestone that once seemed unimaginable.

For her family, the impact of DEx has been transformational. "DEx has changed Ella's world and ours," her dad says. "They haven't just helped her speak, they've helped her be heard."



# YOUR SUPPORT.

Every breakthrough we celebrate at Downright Excellent is made possible by the generosity of our supporters. Whether through donations, volunteering, or fundraising, your commitment helps us provide expert therapy, family support, and life-changing opportunities for children with Down syndrome. Together, we are building a future where every child can shine. Here's how your donated pound goes around!



# WHERE WE WANT TO BE.

**Our vision is bold:** A world where children with Down syndrome are fully included, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential.

At Downright Excellent, we believe every child with Down syndrome deserves the chance to thrive at home, in school, and in their community.

We've come a long way, but we're only just getting started.



## To get there, we want to:

**Expand Our Reach:** We aim to support more families across London and beyond, ensuring that no child misses out due to postcode or income.

**Invest in Innovation:** From digital tools to tailored therapy approaches, we want to stay at the forefront of best practice in Down syndrome support.

**Strengthen Our Training Offer:** By growing our professional development programmes, we can equip more educators, health professionals, and volunteers with the knowledge to make inclusion a reality.

**Secure Sustainable Funding:** Long-term growth needs long-term support. We're building relationships with funders, donors, and partners who share our values and ambition.

**Champion Representation and Rights:** We will continue to challenge stigma, raise awareness, and advocate for systemic change so that our children are not just accepted, but celebrated.

**Together, with your support, we can shape a future where children with Down syndrome are not defined by their diagnosis but by their talents, their dreams, and the extraordinary things they achieve.**



# WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO GET THERE.

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## Grow Our Services

Demand for our tailored support is rising. We need to increase the number of therapy groups, expand our Play & Learn sessions, and develop new programmes for older children and young people transitioning to adulthood.

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## Build a Bigger, Stronger Team

To meet growing needs, we must invest in recruiting and training more specialist therapists, session leaders, and volunteers. Every child deserves individualised support and we need the people to deliver it.

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## Reach More Families

We want every family with a child with Down syndrome to know that Downright Excellent is here for them. That means expanding our outreach, working with local authorities and hospitals, and ensuring access for underrepresented communities.

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## Deepen Professional Training

Empowering families also means equipping professionals. We plan to scale up our training for teachers, support workers, and healthcare professionals so that children with Down syndrome are better supported wherever they go.

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## Secure Sustainable Funding

We cannot grow without resources. We're committed to diversifying our income through trusts, corporate partnerships, regular giving, and community fundraising to ensure long-term impact and resilience.

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## Raise Our Voice

We'll continue to advocate for change through raising awareness of our work and the challenges our families face in society so that the wider world starts to value our children in the same way we do: as capable, creative, and full of potential.

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**With your help, we can build a future where no child with Down syndrome is left behind. Let's take these next steps together.**

# WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT.

We are eternally grateful to the people who make our organisation excellent: our staff, Trustees, volunteers, donors and most of all the children and families, whose determination and effort inspires us every day.

## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

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