



Down's Syndrome Scotland

helping people realise their potential



Strategic Framework 2010- 2013

Our Vision

Is that society accepts people with Down's syndrome as valued individuals in their own right.

Our Mission

Is to promote the interests of people with Down's syndrome and their families in Scotland by influencing public policy and attitudes and by providing a range of services and activities to help those with the condition reach their full potential.

Context for the Framework

External

Established in 1982, Down's Syndrome Scotland is the only charity in Scotland whose work focuses solely on Down's syndrome and its implications. We have links with a number of other organisations in Scotland that have a wider focus e.g. learning disabilities and are a partner of the consortium that formed the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability. We are building better links with our counterpart in England, the Down's Syndrome Association in order to ensure that each of us learn from the experience and activity of the other in the devolved context of education, health and social care and work together on matters reserved by the UK Government, such as benefits, taxation etc.

Within the last few years, the government of Scotland has changed the nature of its relationship with local government – especially in terms of local government funding. Single Outcome Agreements (between local authorities, other local partners and the Scottish Government) that focus on local priorities appear to have increased the disparate nature of services across Scotland. This puts national programmes such as Same As You, which ensured a consistency in approach across Scotland, under increasing pressure when all responsibility for services lies solely with the 32 local authorities and their Community Planning Partners. The increasingly difficult financial environment will continue to worsen the situation for local services.

Internal

Down's Syndrome Scotland is an organisation in transition. At the beginning of 2008 a new Chief Executive was recruited to take the organisation forward to the next phase of its existence. The aspirations of the Executive Committee were for a charity with a higher profile that reached more people affected by Down's syndrome – individuals, families and professionals alike.

The new Chief Executive spent a considerable amount of her first year meeting members and staff and listening to their experience of the charity, its work and their aspirations for the future. A number of issues and aspirations arose:

Early Years:

- ▶ Reinvigorate hospital study days/hospital staff training
- ▶ Update and re-issue guidelines for hospital staff
- ▶ Review and better support the role of new parent contacts
- ▶ Improve links with hospitals
- ▶ Provide a list of good local facilities
- ▶ Provide signing training
- ▶ Employ an Early Years Co-ordinator
- ▶ Produce an Early Years publication
- ▶ Provide information on “ages and stages”
- ▶ Establish a focus group of parents with young children

Other Aspirations/Issues to be considered:

- ▶ Employ local staff
- ▶ Information and support around transitions
- ▶ Supporting members with more complex needs
- ▶ Speech and language provision
- ▶ Training for people with Down’s syndrome/members/professionals
- ▶ Social events to support and encourage friendships
- ▶ Campaigning and raising the profile of the charity
- ▶ Support for independent living

Information:

- ▶ Review what and how information is provided
- ▶ Set a review date for all printed information to avoid it becoming dated
- ▶ Work with branches regarding local authority resources

In addition, participants in the consultation events were asked to consider what they felt was good about the organisation and what could be better.

This is great:

- ▶ Annual Conference
 - Good information
 - Good workshops
- ▶ Publications and resources
- ▶ Newsletter
- ▶ Good initial contact by phone
- ▶ Good help for people with Down's syndrome
- ▶ Staff friendly and helpful including saying "I don't know" and then get back
- ▶ The Training Team and its work

Could do better:

- ▶ The charity always does things for/with "achievers"
 - ▶ More activities for people with more complex needs
 - ▶ More for young parents and young children
 - ▶ Information on welfare rights and benefits
 - Carers' allowance
 - Pensioner parents
 - ▶ Talks on local partnerships
 - Community Health Partnerships
 - Community planning
 - Public Patient Forums
 - ▶ Participate in individual review meetings
- ▶ Newsletter
 - ▶ Web site
 - ▶ Free year's membership
 - ▶ What do staff actually do?
 - ▶ Lack of a published strategic plan
 - ▶ Forum on web site
 - ▶ E-bulletin
 - ▶ Increase membership
 - ▶ Raise the profile of the charity
 - ▶ Better communication with members and branches

The information gathered from staff and members along with a wider context has contributed to the development of this strategic framework for the organisation.

We have targeted some of the issues mentioned above. For example: modernising the image of the charity, with new branding and a more modern and fresh house style for written materials; raising the profile of the charity within the media and holding specific events such as the Shifting Perspectives Exhibition and the screening of the film Heavy Load. We now have a new web site and a monthly e-bulletin.

Due to the economic climate that prevails and is predicted to last for some time, some aspirations may be unlikely to be achieved during the life of this current framework e.g. attaining locally based staff. Nevertheless, we should still acknowledge the importance of them as a goal for the organisation to aim for and consider other developments in the organisation with this in mind.

Strategic Themes

Overarching all aspects of our activity are the two strategic themes of **Striving for Excellence** and **Long Term Sustainability**.

We must ensure that in all aspects of our work - from services to families and individuals with Down's syndrome, to the governance of the charity - we endeavour to be the best we can be. We need to ensure that the emphasis of our work is informed by the experience of children and adults with Down's syndrome and their families. Our relationship with our specialist advisers needs new emphasis, thereby ensuring that our work is informed by best practice and up to date research.

Having already achieved Investors in People (IIP) status, during the life of this framework we will endeavour to retain IIP, and to seek accreditation through the Charity Evaluation Service and the Telephone Helplines Association. Achieving these accreditations will ensure that our information service is responding to telephone enquiries to the best possible standard and that the charity is governed, managed and operated to a nationally recognised standard of excellence.

Like any charity with big aspirations, we need to increase our income, especially of unrestricted funds. Whilst grant income enables us to tackle specific areas of short-term project work, we need to fund our ongoing core activity, as well as the back office functions that ensure we comply with the requirements of legislation. In addition, we may feel that project work that proves to be valuable and meets an unmet need ought to become part of our core activity at the end of the project funding term.

Strategic Outcomes

1. Children and adults with Down's syndrome, their parents and families receive appropriate and timely information and support through the ages and stages of their lives.

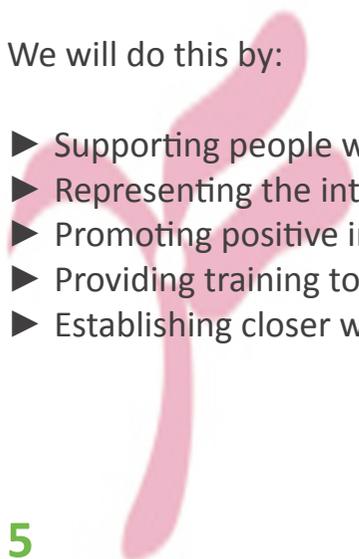
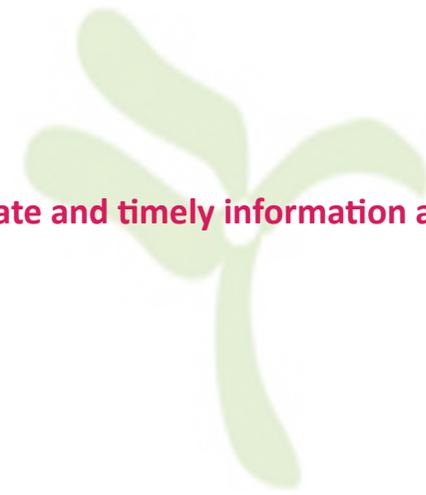
We will do this by:

- ▶ Providing information through telephone, written and electronic communication
- ▶ Responding to requests for personal support when necessary
- ▶ Reviewing and providing better support to parent contacts
- ▶ Providing events for groups of parents

2. The public and professionals' attitudes to Down's syndrome will be more positive and inclusive.

We will do this by:

- ▶ Supporting people with Down's syndrome to promote themselves and their abilities
- ▶ Representing the interests of people with Down's syndrome and their families to policy and decision makers
- ▶ Promoting positive images of Down's syndrome to the general public, professionals and the community at large
- ▶ Providing training to professionals and commercial organisations
- ▶ Establishing closer working with our specialist advisers





3. Provide choices and support for children and adults with Down's syndrome to enable them to develop and reach their full social, physical and intellectual potential.

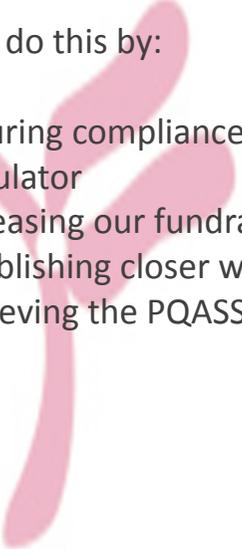
We will do this by:

- ▶ Providing and maintaining a range of support and activity networks for children and adults with Down's syndrome and their carers, particularly through the work of our branches
- ▶ Creating and promoting innovative programmes of service that further the development of individuals with Down's syndrome



4. Down's Syndrome Scotland will be fit for purpose, by being compliant with legislation, striving for continuous improvement and encompassing best practice.

We will do this by:

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- ▶ Ensuring compliance with the Statement of Recommended Practice and the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
 - ▶ Increasing our fundraising activity in a unified way across all areas of the charity
 - ▶ Establishing closer working relationships with our specialist advisers
 - ▶ Achieving the PQASSO Quality Standard



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Down's Syndrome Scotland is a partner organisation in the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities and is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland No. 356717, Charity No. SC011012.

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