

Downright Special Update – December 2024

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Christmas Holidays 🎅

Friday sessions are finished until January 10th and our staff will be having a well-deserved break from Friday 20th December. We will however continue to monitor the office emails, phone messages and social media. If you need any information or support, then please do get in touch. There might be a short delay in getting back to you, but we will do our best to help!

Email office@downrightspecial.co.uk, phone 01482 420160 or ask questions in the closed Facebook group for parents/carers: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DownRightSpecialNetwork>.

We will be back in the office week commencing 6th January.

New Website!

We were delighted to launch our new website in November! The website has been redesigned to make it easier than ever for families, professionals and supporters to connect with the charity, stay up to date with what we are doing and learn about the difference we make.

You can look here: <https://www.downrightspecial.co.uk/>

What you'll find:

- **Information about the charity.** Find out what we do and the difference we make
- **Updates and events.** Stay connected with our latest newsletters, social events and training
- **Knowledge & Resources.** Lots of useful resources to download and links to other useful information

- **Support us.** Ways to get involved including fundraising, how to donate and information about volunteering
- **Contact Us.** Find out how to get in touch, discover our social media channels, get directions to our centre, download a referral form

We hope you like the new look which features images of quite a few of our families. Over time we will update it to include even more of you.

Please do explore the website and share your thoughts – we would love your feedback!

Welcome to our new volunteers

We are delighted to welcome Jess Shields (Jack's mum) to the team! Jess is helping in the office and with awareness week planning.

We have also welcomed Louise Brown to the team. Louise will be helping at social events so if you haven't already met her at the Christmas parties you are sure to meet her very soon!

Vacancies

Health Lead

Sadly, Sam Findlay will be leaving us next year (date to be finalised), so we are currently recruiting for a new Health Lead. See our website for all the details and how to apply. <https://www.downrightspecial.co.uk/vacancies/>.

Please share as much as you can as we want to make sure we find the right person to fill this vital role. The closing date is 6th January 2025.

Volunteers

We have two opportunities for new volunteers to join the team:

- **Social Media Content Creator** – can you help with writing and publishing our social media posts?
- **Trustee** – Would you like to join the board of trustees to help the future of the charity?

Hours will depend on the role and your own availability. If you are interested in getting involved email gillian@downrightspecial.co.uk and we can arrange to have an informal chat. You can read the role descriptions on our website: <https://www.downrightspecial.co.uk/vacancies/>

Awareness Week

Family Event – Please tell us what you'd like to do!

Thank you to everyone who gave suggestions for how we might get together as a community to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. We have narrowed it down to three of the most popular type

of suggestions and Louise has put a poll on our Facebook group. Please vote for the option you like the sound of best! We have Disco or Talent Show or Walk & Picnic but feel free to give other ideas too.

Social Media Theme – Superhero Supporters

The theme of this year's Awareness Week campaign from the DSA is all about support. For our social media we would love to hear all about your own **superhero supporters**. Who have you come across that has been really helpful – it could be a family member or friend is always there for you to lend a hand or to just listen, a teacher or TA who has gone the extra mile for your child, a brother or sister who is super -supportive, a doctor or nurse who 'gets it' or someone who has been a brilliant advocate for the Down syndrome community or for you child. We will send you more details in the new year about how to submit your photos and description of the person you would like to celebrate as your Superhero Supporter!

Fundraising Pack

As usual we will have a fundraising pack available to download and we will be encouraging schools, businesses and families to get involved by wearing their #LotsOfSocks, having a coffee morning or bun sale or whatever other ideas you have to raise awareness in this special week.

Downright Special Social Events

This term it has been all things Christmas with our Christmas Crafts morning in November and our two Christmas parties this month. It was fantastic to see so many families at each event!

We are already well underway with planning events for 2025 and have listened to the feedback from the survey but if you have any questions or suggestions for social events then please email social@downrightspecial.co.uk.

Bowling Party – Hollywood Bowl

11am-1pm Sunday 26th January 2025

Bookings open in January so keep an eye out for the email with all the details!

DOWNRIGHT DANCE CLUB for 11-25yrs

Mondays **6.30pm -7.30pm** at The Sports Hub, Wolfreton Secondary School.

We return on Monday 6th January and have space for 2 more to join us. The first two sessions are free for anyone who'd like to give it a go. After that it is £5 per session, invoiced half-termly.

If you are interested in coming along then please complete a registration form using the link below.

<https://forms.office.com/e/A0S9VXzx4K>

Any questions? Email office@downrightspecial.co.uk or give us a call on 01482 420160.

Downright Special Training

What is Sensory Integration? – For all those educating children with Down syndrome

Online, Thursday 16th January 2025, 3.45pm-5.15pm

Cost: £30.00 per setting

(7 additional staff free of charge - up to a maximum of 8 staff in total)

Book here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/downrightspecial/t-ojrqmzv>

Functional Skills for children and young people with Down syndrome – For parents/carers

Online, Thursday 30th January 7.00pm-9.00pm

Cost: £10 per family

Led by Lizzie Huxford, Occupational Therapist, OT4me.

Lizzie will discuss functional and independent living skills for children and young people of all ages. She will discuss the skills needed to help manage both the home and school environment, plus tips for including occupational therapy provisions in your child's EHC Plan.

Book here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/downrightspecial/t-zzaxaxd>

Growing, changing and keeping safe – For schools and parents/carers

Online, Thursday 6th March 2025, 9.30am-1.00pm

Led by Nicola O'Riordan

Cost: £65 per setting (7 additional staff free of charge - up to a maximum of 8 staff in total)

Free for parents/carers

Book here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/downrightspecial/t-zzmkpmr>

TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS AND NURSERIES

Don't forget we also offer bespoke INSET training to nurseries and schools. Contact training@downrightspecial.co.uk for more information.

Downright Special Fridays

Dates for next term (morning groups):

10th, 17th, 24th, 31st January

7th, 14th, 28th February.

7th, 14th, 21st, 28th March

4th April

We ask that you try your best to attend every session please. Many of the activities within lessons are repeated and built on from one session to the next, so the children will make more progress and probably enjoy the sessions more if they regularly attend. Our team put a lot of time and effort into preparing resources, so please email us on office@downrightspecial.co.uk as soon as you can, or give one of us a call/text if you are unable to attend a session.

Afternoon Groups (1pm-2pm)

10th January, 14th February, 14th March

Health News

GP Training Webinar

Sam and Gillian have recently recorded a 15-minute training webinar for GPs to learn all about the care pathway and the important health information they should know about Down syndrome. We are waiting on guidance from the Local ICB on how best to roll it out to all Hull and East Riding GPs so watch this space for news about its launch!

Connect Humber NHS Website <https://connect.humber.nhs.uk/>

This is a new website containing information on Children's Services and Adult Learning Disability Services across the Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust.

It details services supporting the health and wellbeing of children, young people, adults with learning disabilities, and their families across Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire, including:

Learning Disability Services, Health Visiting and School Nursing, Neurodiversity, Children's Emotional & Mental Health Services and Children's Therapies (Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Dietetic Services).

Humber Sensory Processing Hub -<https://sensoryprocessinghub.humber.nhs.uk/>

A reminder that the Humber Sensory Processing Hub is a great resource for sensory processing information and strategies to reduce the impact difficulties can have on children and young people's daily lives.

Fundraising News and Thank You!

Choose Downright Special when you shop at any Co-op store

Downright Special is delighted to be chosen to benefit from the Co-op Local Community Fund for the next 12 months. To support us when you shop please select Downright Special by clicking on the link here: <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/89180>

You can also select us through the Co-op app. Go onto the home page, click on Community, and then scroll down to find Downright Special.

Amazon Wishlist

Buying something from our Amazon Wish List is a really simple way to directly support Downright Special and anything you buy will come directly to us. We have just updated our wish list with lots of much needed items for the next few months. Check it out here: <https://amzn.to/3Bswqi2>

Donations and Grants

We have received the following donations since our October newsletter and we'd like to give a huge thank you to:

- Everyone who shops via Easy Fundraising - £29.14 was received this quarter
- Toria Lee-Ross – raised in memory of her sister Hannah - £200
- Downright Special Christmas Party Raffle - £214
- P& J Whomsley - £50 donation for Roger Coates 80th Birthday
- Anonymous - £100 donation for Roger Coates 80th Birthday
- St Mary's Sixth Form Health and Social Care Students - £9.22 following a talk from Gillian
- Regular Giving/Payroll Giving - total of £25 per month from two donors
- Sandhills Garden Centre Bookcase £71.52
- Halloween Party donations on booking £42.75
- Christmas Craft donations on booking £18.70
- Christmas Party donations on booking £56.05
- George Palmer who donated all the selection boxes for our Christmas parties

We are also delighted to have received the following grants since October, after successful applications for funding:

- The Matthew Good Foundation £10,000 – towards our core costs
- Jospeh Boaz Charitable trust £500 – for social events
- Anonymous Trust £12,500 towards teacher costs and building hire

Suggestions and Ideas

If you wish to chat about anything in this update, have suggestions or ideas for events, training or support you would like, or you'd like to pass on any tips, please do get in touch.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Love from the Team at Downright Special x