

Chief Executive

Candidate Recruitment Pack - June 2025



Down's
Syndrome
Scotland

helping people realise their potential

LHH



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Welcome from Andrea Tonner, Chair of Down's Syndrome Scotland

Thank you for your interest in the position of Chief Executive at Down's Syndrome Scotland, a charity I'm immensely proud to have served as Chair since 2023. This organisation is very close to my heart, as it is to all of our colleagues and volunteers, and it's a real privilege to be part of such a vibrant, committed community. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to introduce a truly rewarding opportunity to lead a charity that makes a profound difference in the lives of people with Down's syndrome, and their families and carers, across Scotland.

At Down's Syndrome Scotland, we believe in the potential and value of our fellow citizens who just happen to have an extra chromosome. Our organisation was established to improve the quality of life for everyone in Scotland with Down's syndrome by the advancement of education, health and citizenship and we do this by providing a range of services, influencing public policy and changing attitudes. For more than 40 years we have led a 'movement for change' to bring about a more inclusive, more rewarding and more equal Scotland for people with Down's syndrome. Our Chief Executive is crucial to the success of our mission, amplifying our ambition, honing our strategy and championing all that we do in order to encourage a society that fully accepts, includes and values people with Down's syndrome.

Our outgoing Chief Executive, Eddie McConnell, has been an outstanding leader since undertaking the role in 2019, guiding Down's Syndrome Scotland with deep compassion and integrity, boosting our voice and embedding a culture that truly reflects our values.

His legacy leaves us in a position of strength, and we are now looking for a Chief Executive who can build on the progress

we've made under Eddie's leadership and ready us for the next stage of our charity's development at what I believe is a very exciting time.

Like so many charities operating in the disability space, we are experiencing substantial increases in demand for support which presents us with the challenge of maintaining the progress we've made in a sustainable way. The vital services we provide have never been more needed and it is imperative that we continue to evolve and innovate in our practice and delivery in order to meet the needs of families and ensure that people with Down's syndrome can fulfil their potential as active and contributing citizens.

We are looking for a proactive leader who has experience of strategic direction setting and service redesign and an understanding of the complexities and nuances involved in running a charity or not-for-profit organisation. You'll be a confident communicator who is as comfortable meeting with key stakeholders and partners as you are leading, motivating and collaborating with our fabulous staff team and dedicated volunteers. And you will be truly passionate about and invested in our mission, building meaningful relationships with our 1,500 members, ten local branches and the DSS Experts Group of adults with Down's syndrome and making sure that everyone's voice is heard.

If you have a passion for creating a society that is open, accessible and inclusive of people with Down's syndrome, and you have the skills and knowledge to steer us into our next chapter, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Andrea Tonner
Chair, Down's Syndrome Scotland



Welcome from Eddie McConnell, Chief Executive (Outgoing) of Down's Syndrome Scotland

I am writing this having just returned from the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, where Down's Syndrome Scotland won two awards for our very own garden. Now, there's a sentence I didn't imagine myself writing six years ago when I first took on the role of Chief Executive. But that's the beauty of this job – no two days are the same. I can say sincerely that this has been the most meaningful chapter of my career, not only because of the many exciting journeys it has taken me on but because I get to work right alongside people with Down's syndrome and their families, making sure they are living their best possible life. What an immense privilege that is.

As Chief Executive, it has been my responsibility to shape and implement our strategic goals: supporting the needs of the whole family; facilitating the personal development of individuals with Down's syndrome; influencing policy that advances the inclusion of people with Down's syndrome and raising awareness of the potential of people with Down's syndrome, who have so much to teach us. This is a unique organisation because we work with a very defined group of people, and every day I learn something new from them.

Though we have made huge progress over the years in challenging outdated views about Down's syndrome, the unfortunate fact remains that people with Down's syndrome still face significant societal barriers. I have seen it through my work at DSS and I have also experienced it on a more personal level as the dad of a brilliant 22-year-old young man, Finlay, who rocks that extra chromosome. I know first-hand the joys, challenges and aspirations that come with being part of the Down's syndrome community. So much of the work we do at Down's Syndrome Scotland is about breaking down barriers and sharing with the world just how remarkable people with Down's syndrome are, and we will not stop until everyone

living with Down's syndrome in Scotland, and those supporting them, are given the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential. We want them to live in a world where they are seen, respected and encouraged to thrive.

The best thing about being Chief Executive is that you are in a position to really make a difference. To work at a strategic level, influencing Scottish Government to make better laws and better provisions, and amplifying the voices of those within the Down's syndrome community. Over the past six years, I have led a team of deeply committed professionals and volunteers – people who give their whole hearts to this cause and bring creativity and courage to all that they do – and together we have grown the visibility of the charity, expanded our services and supported people with Down's syndrome and their caregivers through some of the trickiest times in recent history, most notably during the Covid-19 pandemic. I'm so proud of all we have accomplished, and grateful beyond measure to have had the chance to serve a community that in return has given me infinitely more.

This is a community I will always be part of. However, the time has come for me to pass the leadership baton on as Down's Syndrome Scotland moves into a new chapter. If what we stand for resonates with you, you have the experience we are looking for and you fancy taking on what has comfortably been the best job I've ever had, please don't hesitate to apply. We have created a beautiful garden – now join us and help it to bloom even more.

Eddie McConnell

Chief Executive (Outgoing), Down's Syndrome Scotland



[Watch our video](#)





Advertisement

Down's Syndrome Scotland - Chief Executive

Location – Flexible, including home working
Salary – £60,000 to £70,000

Down's Syndrome Scotland is the only charity in Scotland dedicated to supporting people with Down's syndrome and their families and carers, throughout their lives. We are looking for a Chief Executive to take us forward in our mission of ensuring that people with Down's syndrome who live in Scotland are living their fullest, most vibrant lives.

This is a fantastic opportunity for an empathetic, credible leader who is seeking a purpose-driven role in an organisation committed to celebrating the potential of every person with Down's syndrome in Scotland, and effecting lasting, positive change for them and their families. Working in collaboration with our Board of Trustees, you will be responsible for evolving and delivering our vision and strategic plan, building on our legacy of advancing the inclusion of all people with Down's syndrome in Scotland and ensuring that their families and carers receive robust support.

Equality and inclusion underpin everything we do, so we are looking for someone who can champion these principles with authenticity. You will lead and work collaboratively with our Board of Trustees and diverse group of staff and volunteers, driving the values of sensitivity, understanding, professionalism, pragmatism, openness, respectfulness and trustworthiness. Relationship building will come naturally to you, and you will confidently engage with the Scottish Government and public bodies in Scotland to influence national policy and advocate for the change that people with Down's syndrome want to see. As our figurehead, you will be the ambassador for our fundraising efforts, constantly thinking of ways to further raise our profile and meeting with key donors and funders to safeguard the long-term financial resilience of the charity.

The ability to drive service redesign and organisational change is crucial, so we are looking for someone who has experience of doing so in a previous role as a senior leader in a mission-led organisation. Your knowledge of the issues affecting the charitable and not-for-profit sector will mean that you understand the importance of stakeholder relations, partnerships and outreach. You will be pragmatic and responsible, using your financial nous, effective resource management and analytical skills to help us make a meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve. Importantly, you will take a human rights centred approach, demonstrating a deep understanding of the inequalities experienced by under-represented groups in Scotland.

If you are aligned with our mission and have the knowledge and experience to help us shape a more inclusive Scotland, we would love to hear from you.

Applications

To apply, please submit a tailored CV and a covering letter (no longer than two pages), outlining your relevant skills and experience for the role, by **midnight on Sunday 13 July 2025**.

For a confidential, informal discussion about the role please contact Fizza Islam, LHH at **+44 (0)141 220 6460** or email ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com



Who we are

We have over 40 years' experience of supporting people with Down's syndrome and their families.

Down's Syndrome Scotland is a small, committed charity, established in 1982 to support people with Down's syndrome, their families and their carers. We also engage with professionals who work with people with Down's syndrome in health, social care and education. We are the only charity in Scotland dedicated solely to supporting people with Down's syndrome and their families and carers, throughout their lives. Currently, we have ten branches located throughout Scotland, which are run by parent volunteers and offer a range of activities and initiatives as well as being a support network for parents, family members and carers.

The majority of our staff have lived experience of Down's syndrome, which is why we can provide "all through life" support nationally across Scotland. We know what we are talking about.

We also know that every person with Down's syndrome is a unique individual, full of potential. Our mission is to help everyone we work for to reach their fullest potential through our different services, to celebrate that potential, and influence public policy by calling out inequality when we see it. We have your back.

Our vision is of a society that fully values and includes people with Down's syndrome.

Our purpose is to improve the quality of life of everyone with Down's syndrome living in Scotland.

Our mission is to support families and people with Down's syndrome to reach their full potential by providing a range of services, influencing public policy and by changing attitudes.

What we have heard, listened to and are actively responding to are the 'Big 4' that people with Down's syndrome, their families and carers want us to prioritise: **Better Health, Employment, Transition Planning and Community Living.**

The critical support and services we provide to families in need and individuals with Down's syndrome is made possible by the incredible work of our volunteers and our ability to raise funds through individuals, organisations, trusts and foundations, alongside core funding from the Scottish Government. We are hugely appreciative of the funding we secure from a wide range of Trusts and Foundations who have supported us over many years. Their belief in our work is as important as their continued funding of our programmes and services.



[Watch our video](#)



The Role: Chief Executive

The Chief Executive of Down's Syndrome Scotland leads the organisation in its mission to support families and people with Down's syndrome to reach their fullest potential by providing a range of services and programmes, influencing public policy and by changing attitudes.

Key Areas

Leadership and Strategy:

- To work with the Board of Trustees to further develop the organisation's vision, culture and strategy.
- To be at the forefront of the Down's syndrome family in Scotland, fostering excellent community engagement and relationships.
- To lead and listen to a diverse group of staff and volunteers ensuring that all activity contributes to the vision, purpose and mission.

Influencing Public Policy and Advocacy:

- To credibly engage with Government nationally and locally.
- To influence national policy and advocate for the change that people with Down's syndrome want to see.
- To actively engage with the Scottish Parliament and public bodies in Scotland, e.g. Public Health Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland and Education Scotland.

- To facilitate effective and efficient relationships and service delivery with professionals who work with people with Down's syndrome in a wide range of settings including health, education and social care.

Service Development and Design:

- To ensure the services and programmes delivered by the charity are constantly evolving to meet the needs of families and individuals with Down's syndrome.
- To drive service re-design and organisational change, using expertise and lived experience.

Financial Sustainability and Fundraising:

- To be the ambassador of Down's Syndrome Scotland's fundraising endeavours.
- To support the development of the fundraising strategy.
- To engage with key donors and principal funders.

Communications, Partnerships and Stakeholders:

- To proactively build strong relationships with members, local branches and Branch Chairs, and to engage with the DSS Experts Group of adults with Down's syndrome.

- To work collaboratively with colleagues and the Board of Trustees, ensuring communication encourages the best culture, driving the values of sensitivity, understanding, professionalism, pragmatism, openness, respectfulness and trustworthiness.
- To develop strong beneficial partnerships with others in the sector and beyond, raising our profile further and ensuring visibility of people with Down's syndrome in all areas of Scottish life.
- To recognise and serve all our key stakeholders to advance the mission and purpose of the charity.

Governance and Accountability:

- To manage and report organisational performance to the Board, meeting all compliance requirements - internally and externally.
- To actively manage risk through a dynamic risk management strategy.
- To ensure all within the organisation understand and work to their governance responsibilities.
- To be accountable to the Board of Trustees driving a collaborative and open approach.



The Role: Chief Executive

Person Specification

Experience of:

- Developing and delivering organisational strategy whilst responding to the changing environment.
- Service redesign and associated organisational change – being ready for what's next.
- Developing and delivering a successful business development and fundraising strategy.
- Working as a senior leader in a mission-led organisation.
- Effective resource management, including successful fundraising in the public and /or private sectors.
- Leading and motivating a talented staff team and a wide network of committed volunteers.
- Working at Executive Team level and working with a Board of Trustees.
- Financial control and reporting.
- Working effectively and empathically with a wide range of stakeholders, ideally including government, major funding organisations and strategic partners.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion and the inequalities experienced by under-represented groups in Scotland.

Knowledge of:

- Current developments and issues affecting the charitable and not-for-profit sector.
- The importance of stakeholder relations, partnerships and outreach.
- Advocacy and taking a human rights approach.
- Measuring impact and using information and data to promote change, improvement and growth.
- The learning disability community in Scotland and issues facing people with Down's syndrome in particular.

Personal Qualities

- Friendly and open.
- Credible with peers and partners.
- Proactive and responsible in approach.
- Commitment to continuous improvement.
- Tactful and diplomatic.
- A positive and enthusiastic self-starter.
- A team player.
- Is thorough and pays attention to detail.





Organisation Chart



Conditions & Remuneration

Salary:

£60,000 - £70,000

Place of Work:

Flexible, including home working

Other Benefits:

5% Employer Pension contribution

Membership of the Hospital Saturday Fund

42 days holiday

Timescales:

Closing date for applications: **Sunday 13 July 2025 at midnight**

Interviews with Down's Syndrome Scotland: **w/c 11 August**



How to Apply

To apply for the post, please send a tailored CV and covering letter to ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com

Please note that the covering letter should be no more than two pages of A4 and should summarise your relevant skills and experience and motivations for applying for this role.

If you would like a confidential, informal discussion about the role then please contact Fizza Islam, LHH on **+44 (0)141 220 6460** or email the above address.

Downs Syndrome Scotland is committed to equality of opportunity and to no discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or belief, age, sex, marital or civil partnership status, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, pregnancy or maternity. We are constantly reviewing our approach to ensuring equality and diversity in our applications and would be pleased if you could complete an [Equalities Monitoring Form](#).

Should you require any modifications or wish to speak with a member of our team to discuss any particular circumstances, please email the above address.





LHH Recruitment, formerly Badenoch + Clark, is Scotland's leading Executive Search team. We connect Scotland's top businesses with exceptional candidates – and we do it really well.

We count innovators, creatives and leaders among the professionals we work with, and our clients and candidates span a diverse range of sectors and functions. From procurement and supply chain, medical, engineering, project management, accountancy, legal, transport and business transformation, to banking, the arts, government, technology, marketing and communications, not-for-profit and HR, our expertise is wide-reaching and our reach unparalleled.

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