Down's Syndrome Manchester
Thrive with us

Early Years Programme Development & Growth Manager (Freelance)

About the Role

Down's Syndrome Manchester (DSM) is seeking a proactive and highly organised Early Years Programme Development & Growth Manager to lead the growth and development of our preschool provision across Greater Manchester.

Following the award of a three-year grant from **BBC Children in Need**, we are embarking on an exciting project to create a sustainable and accessible early years programme for young children with Down's syndrome and their families. Through play, social interaction, specialist support and family connection, we aim to improve outcomes for children while reducing isolation for families.

This role is ideally suited to someone who enjoys building services, developing new opportunities, establishing partnerships and creating sustainable community-based programmes.

Key Responsibilities

Existing Programme Coordination

- Coordinate the smooth operation of DSM's existing preschool group in Cheadle.
- Act as the key point of contact for families, volunteers and session providers.
- Ensure sessions are well organised, welcoming and responsive to family needs.

Programme Development

- Research, develop and launch new preschool sessions in locations across Greater Manchester.
- Identify and secure suitable venues and community partners.
- Explore local demand and opportunities for future programme growth.
- Develop relationships with local organisations, professionals and referral partners.

Engagement and Promotion

- Support the promotion of sessions and encourage participation from families.
- Build relationships with local professionals, services and community networks.
- Work collaboratively with families to gather feedback and identify emerging needs.

Project Management and Evaluation

- Monitor attendance, participation and project outcomes.
- Gather and analyse feedback from families and stakeholders.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of different delivery models.
- Produce recommendations for the future development of the programme.
- Support reporting requirements associated with grant funding.

Person Specification

Essential Experience

- Experience of managing or coordinating projects from development through to implementation.
- Experience of establishing or growing services, programmes, activities or community initiatives.
- Experience of building partnerships and working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders.
- Experience of engaging and building relationships with families, service users or community groups.
- Experience of working independently and managing multiple priorities.
- Experience of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on project outcomes.

Essential Skills

- Excellent organisational and project management skills.
- Strong relationship-building and networking abilities.
- Ability to identify opportunities and take initiative.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to work flexibly and independently.
- Strong problem-solving skills and a proactive approach.

Desirable Experience

- Experience within early years, SEND, family support, health, education or community services.
- Knowledge of Down's syndrome, disability services or inclusive practice.
- Experience of coordinating volunteers.
- Experience of working on grant-funded projects.
- Experience of establishing services or activities across multiple locations.

Personal Qualities

We are looking for someone who is:

- Enthusiastic and self-motivated.
- Approachable and empathetic.

- Solution-focused and resilient.
- Passionate about supporting children and families.
- Able to build trust and positive relationships quickly.
- Excited by the opportunity to develop and grow a new programme.

Contract Details

- **Job Title:** Early Years Programme Development & Growth Manager
- **Contract:** Freelance
- **Hours:** 10–15 hours per month / flexible up to 130 hours per year
- **Rate:** £20 per hour (depending on experience).
- **Location:** Greater Manchester, with a combination of home-based working and attendance at programme venues.
- **Proposed Start Date:** November / December 2026

How to Apply

To apply, please submit your **CV** and a **short covering statement by email,** outlining your relevant experience and why you are interested in the role, to Esther Whitaker, CEO at: **Esther@dsmanchester.org.uk**
Please use the subject line: Early Years Programme Development & Growth Manager

- **Closing Date:** 30th October 2026, 5pm
- **Shortlisting:** Week commencing 2nd November
- **Interviews:** 12th–13th November, office based (M15 5RF)

This role is generously funded by BBC Children in Need.