



# Scottish autism



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# ABOUT US

*"I think we can learn a lot from the way Scottish Autism runs. Attending the staff conference and the visits to your services gave us a lot of inspiration. Not to mention the fantastic performance from your drama group. We also learned a lot from your services – many things to learn – and many things that we recognised as common ground."*

**Ruth Peters Lehm,**  
Director of Heimdal, Aarhus, Denmark

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Scottish Autism is dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with autism.

Although we are principally a service provider, maximising and disseminating knowledge both internally and externally is a key part of our approach to the delivery of high quality services.

We offer support for the whole family through Knowledge Share seminars, our online support programme Right Click, and via our Autism Advisors who are on hand to provide emotional and practical support to families when they need it most.

We are the largest provider of autism-specific services in Scotland and a leading authority and advocate for good practice. Collaborating effectively with the Scottish Government, local authorities and other organisations, we help to inform practice, strategy and policy on autism in Scotland.

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



This year saw another step forward in the evolution of our Charity's governance – a move from a 'membership' model to a 'trust' model. Although Scottish Autism's membership was always relatively small, a disproportionate amount of time and cost was incurred administering it.

Under the Companies Act, members were entitled to attend and vote on resolutions at the AGM. However, over the last few years we struggled to reach quorum at AGMs and the majority of those attending were our own Board members. We already had a far more active group of 'supporters' who engage with us in various ways other than through formal membership. With this in mind, we proposed, and the Board agreed, to alter the organisation's legal structure from a membership model to a trust model, whereby the only Company Members are the Trustees (the Board). This reduces our administrative duties significantly – rather than managing several hundred membership records, we need only manage a maximum of twelve Trustees.

Moving to a trust model, whereby Board members (Trustees) are recruited based on the skills required, is also a more democratic approach and effectively widens our recruitment base to the eligible population of Scotland. Extending our potential recruitment base in this way also ensures wider issues of diversity and equality are addressed.

We are still very much committed to engaging with parents, professionals and organisations in Scotland and beyond. We continue to communicate with the autism community through our Knowledge Share seminars and Right Click, our online parent/carer support programme. This year has seen us develop

new relationships with external organisations such as Edinburgh Airport and the Royal National Institute of Blind People Scotland (RNIB), working together to ensure the best quality of life for individuals with autism.

We also saw the departure from our Board of Jill Robinson. Jill is a practising GP and although a recent addition to our Board, she brought important skills and knowledge to it. We'd like to thank her for her contribution and wish her well.

**Dr. Paul Prescott**  
Chairman

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



Despite the continued squeeze on public spending and the consequent pressures on our customers, the Scottish local authorities, we have maintained our financial stability while continuing to invest in knowledge management systems, our autism support services and our in-house research programme. Scottish Autism has produced an impressive list of achievements that I can only briefly touch on in this message.

Our main strategic thrust is in the quality of our service. In 2011 we adopted the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) as our quality tool and I am delighted to report that in May 2013 we achieved the Committed to Excellence award from Quality Scotland. Work began immediately toward the next level – Recognised for Excellence. Scottish Autism was also shortlisted in the LaingBuisson Independent Specialist Care Awards and in the National Autistic Society's Autism Professional Awards. Our Practitioner Research Programme was awarded 'highly commended' in the annual Care Knowledge Awards.

This year has seen advances on a number of fronts around research and evidence-based practice both within Scottish Autism and with our Autism Alliance UK partners. We had two papers published in a special Scottish edition of the Good Autism Practice Journal.

We have also strengthened our links to the international autism community. Below are some of our activities over the year:

- Jackie Latto, Director of Autism Services and Charlene Tait, Director of Development, travelled to Denmark to share practice in areas of mutual interest such as stress reduction and the promotion

of wellbeing for people with autism. We were subsequently delighted to welcome our new Danish friends on a reciprocal visit in February 2014.

- Scottish Autism sent ten staff members to the Autism Europe Congress in Budapest in September 2013 where we gave two poster presentations and one poster plus oral presentation.
- We were part of the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership summit at Stormont.
- I delivered the keynote address at a Special Needs Summit at Western Kentucky University in October 2013.
- Jasmine Miller, Principal of New Struan School, presented at an international autism conference in Nanjing, China.

I cannot end without mentioning something that has touched our hearts: The Tree and the Abbey – a musical show that tells the social history of Fife (with a high level of artistic licence!). This show featured actors between the ages of 17 and 40 from our Fife services in the key roles, with staff members taking on supporting roles. It was performed twice at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe to great acclaim. Well done and congratulations to all involved!

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our staff for their hard work and continued dedication to moving the organisation forward in the quality of the services we provide – supporting and enabling people in Scotland living with autism.

**Alan Somerville**  
Chief Executive Officer

# TIMELINE 2013 2014

**APRIL  
2013**

Over 1,000 people share our 'Fly the Flag' for World Autism Awareness Day on Facebook  
First Knowledge Share Seminar of new series takes place in Glasgow

**MAY  
2013**

Alan Somerville and Charlene Tait attend Autism Summit in Stormont with the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership

**JUNE  
2013**

Achieve 'Committed to Excellence Award' from Quality Scotland  
Visit to Aarhus, Denmark to share practice on promoting emotional wellbeing for people with autism  
Practitioner research commences

**SEPTEMBER  
2013**

Staff present at the Autism Europe Congress in Budapest  
Our first attendance at the Scottish Learning Festival with the Autism Toolbox

**AUGUST  
2013**

Scottish Autism service users and staff give two performances of 'The Tree and the Abbey' at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe

**JULY  
2013**

New Scottish Autism blog launches  
We move from a membership to a trust model of governance  
Colin Low is appointed Property Business Partner

**OCTOBER  
2013**

Our Transition Service receives a Gold Healthy Working Lives Award  
Alan Somerville presents at a Special Needs Summit in Kentucky, USA  
Jasmine Miller, New Struan School Principal, attends an international autism conference in China

**DECEMBER  
2013**

Work begins with a young illustrator with Asperger's Syndrome to develop 'Understand Autism' animation  
Formed partnership with Edinburgh Airport to develop a support service for individuals and families accessing the airport

**JANUARY  
2014**

Scottish Autism is shortlisted in LaingBuisson's Independent Specialist Care Awards and NAS Autism Professional Awards  
Our Practitioner Research Programme is 'Highly Commended' in the Care Knowledge Awards

**NOVEMBER  
2013**

Two Scottish Autism papers appear in the Scottish edition of the Good Autism Practice Journal

**FEBRUARY  
2014**

We host a Q&A post-film discussion at the Glasgow Film Theatre following the screening of a film about autism  
We welcome Danish visitors for a tour of our services  
Annual Staff Conference  
One Stop Shop Fife celebrates its one-year anniversary  
Staff E-learning pilot commences

**MARCH  
2014**

The Tree and the Abbey wins a NAS Award for 'Most Creative Community Project'  
One Stop Shop Lanarkshire celebrates its one-year anniversary  
Scottish Autism produces the Autism Strategy on behalf of Argyll & Bute Partnership

# QUALITY, INNOVATION AND VALUE IN OUR SERVICES

**QUALITY**  
We believe that truly positive and sustainable outcomes are achieved when we take the time to build up a deep understanding of each individual. Across our services we consider how each person thinks, learns and processes information in order to develop a personalised support plan. Taking into account individual strengths and motivations, we enable people to obtain outcomes which are meaningful to them.

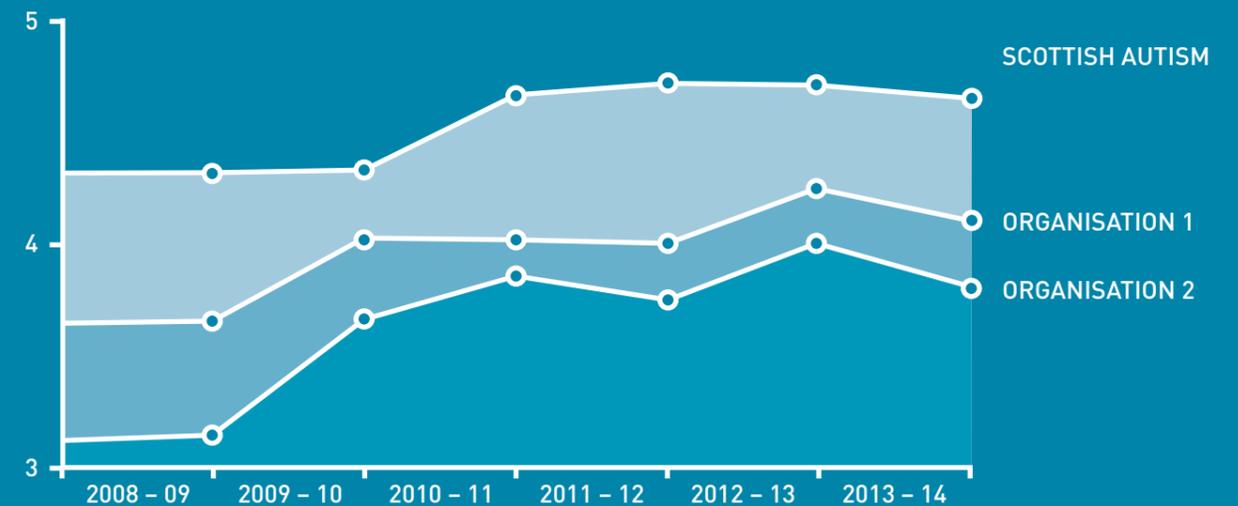
**QUALITY**  
Since 2008 we have consistently scored the highest overall mean grades in our Care Inspectorate reviews in comparison to the two other national autism-specific service providers in Scotland. This reaffirms the success of our highly personalised approach.

**INNOVATION**  
As our knowledge of autism continues to expand and develop, so too does our practice. We continually seek to review and where possible improve on our practice, supporting individuals in new and creative ways.

**VALUE**  
Despite an economic climate where budgets continue to be cut, we strive to deliver more for less while preserving the unique features of our service. In this sense our services offer excellent value to both our customers and the individuals that we support.

From Orkney to the Borders we celebrate achievements big and small. By sharing these success stories with you in the forthcoming pages, we hope to illustrate the quality, innovation and value that our services offer.

CARE INSPECTION RESULTS



# CENTRAL AREA SERVICES

## FIONA'S COMMUNITY

Fiona lives in a residential service in Clackmannan where she enjoys taking part in a wide range of activities. Being supported to take part in an activity outside of the service has increased Fiona's confidence. Fiona began volunteering every Sunday at her local church coffee morning – here she has a range of responsibilities from serving coffee to clearing tables. The role has enabled Fiona to develop good social relationships and become a more active member of her community.

Carefully planned support from our staff enabled Fiona to take on this challenge. Although our practitioners still attend the coffee morning with her, they have been delighted to take a step back as Fiona's independence and confidence grows.

## GARTINNY NATURE GROUP

Individuals who attend Gartinnny Nursery, our vocational day service in Coalsnaughton, and have a particular interest in nature and conservation, have the opportunity to be part of the Nature Group. The group works on a number of environmental projects in partnership with community groups such as the local Rangers, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and neighbouring schools.

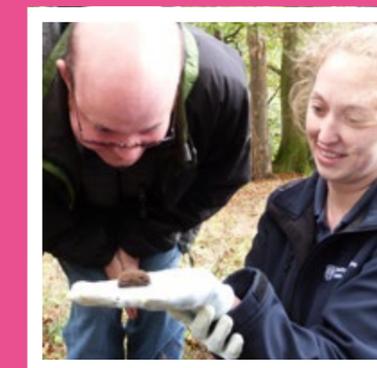
A novel and creative project, Gartinnny Nature Group gives members the opportunity to learn horticultural techniques, to develop communication skills, to meet new people and build confidence. Local press coverage has helped to reinforce the value and importance of their work.

When asked about what he likes about being part of the group, Peter Griffith says, "I like being outdoors and seeing different things like birds and animals."

## CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Colin attends Chrysalis, our day service in Clackmannan. He is supported in activities, learning new skills and developing his communication. After settling in well, we were approached by the local authority to provide respite support for Colin.

This provision has allowed for continuity and consistency in the support Colin receives. His mum Jillian, says, "Chrysalis has given Colin the chance of lifelong learning and to be part of the community. There is consistency and understanding of his autism, attention to detail and the support I receive from the amazing staff enables me to work and relax when he attends his day service and respite. I know he is in a safe, happy environment with staff who understand Colin and his complex needs."



Peter gets up close with a pipistrelle bat

# LOTHIAN AND BORDERS SERVICES

## SENSORY DEVELOPMENTS

Lothian Area Services received two generous donations this year that have allowed Parkside Court in Dalkeith and Lothian Day Service in Musselburgh to enjoy the benefits of new sensory rooms.

Parkside Court received a donation from Mr and Mrs Mitchell, parents of an individual in the service. An underused spare room has now been transformed into a tranquil space that is used to relax and unwind. It is much appreciated with people commenting, "It makes me happy and cheery" and, "I think it is grand, super, amazing, relaxing, good, good, good."

The second donation came from Edinburgh Airport and it has been used to develop and improve the sensory room in Lothian Day Service, providing a calming environment for everyone. These donations and the subsequent development they afford allow us to improve the services we offer and create a positive impact on the quality of life of the individuals we support.

## GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

John Knox, an Autism Practitioner at Lothian Day Service in Musselburgh, was shortlisted in the National Autism Champion Awards run by Autism Network Scotland. He is an example of our dedicated team of staff who go above and beyond in the support they provide.

As well as working with individuals on a one-to-one basis, John has run a music group within Lothian services for over 10 years. Discussing the benefits of music John says, "One individual particularly enjoys the sound of guitar playing and singing. He does not communicate verbally and uses only one sign for 'please'. When I play he becomes animated and will bang on a drum, stand up, dance and clap his hands. These skills have enabled him to join the music group with others. Music making has been crucial in supporting his communication and self expression."

## MOVING FORWARD

Konor had a smooth transition from school into our Lothian Day Service in Musselburgh. Consultations with Konor's parents, social work and his school were central to the success of the move.

Gradually, Konor has been introduced to new activities including a regular walk in the local community. In his last year of school, going for walks was something that Konor struggled with due to issues with wearing shoes. With carefully planned support, Konor is now able to walk with staff in the local area with his shoes on.

Transitions can be challenging as it can be difficult to take the strategies learnt in the school environment and apply them to a different environment. However, Konor has coped very well in adapting to his new surroundings thanks to the strategies developed by staff in collaboration with his parents and multi-disciplinary team.



Martine at Parkside Court likes the new sensory space

# FIFE AREA SERVICES

## THE TREE AND THE ABBEY

A group of individuals from our services in Fife performed two shows at the renowned Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The Tree and the Abbey is thought to be the first play performed at the Fringe where the majority of the cast have autism.

A highly personalised approach to developing the drama was used. Individuals were supported to utilise their own experience to create characters they identified with. Staff and service users were involved in everything from painting stage sets to playing musical instruments.

Performing at the Festival required a considerable amount of passion, commitment and hard work from all the cast members. This was recognised when they were awarded the National Autistic Society's Autism Professional Award for 'Most Creative Community Project'.



Performing The Tree and the Abbey at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe

## SWIM CHALLENGE

Individuals at the Woodend Day Service in Cowdenbeath, along with some of the staff there, took part in the Nessie Swim Challenge. Working in teams, they swam the length of Loch Ness to raise money to buy swings for their garden. Staff made posters and charts to highlight each individual's progress. Everyone enjoyed receiving gold stars for each length they swam and the visual system was also motivating for service users who sometimes struggle to get into the pool.

All those who took part enjoyed working towards their own targets and some individuals continued to swim once the challenge ended. Everyone achieved their goals and were awarded medals for their hard work and dedication. A photograph and a short article appeared in the local newspaper to record and acknowledge their achievement.

## SUMMER GETAWAY

Staff and individuals from Blue Central, our day service in Dunfermline, headed up to Perth for their annual trip to Teen Ranch. With a range of activities on offer such as horse riding, canoeing and archery, the break was a chance to try new things. When offered the opportunity to work independently at activities, many individuals were keen to work on their own – highlighting increased confidence levels.

Service users spent three days and two nights on this exciting getaway, making the most of every moment. Those who attended for the first time reported that it was an amazing experience that allowed them access to activities they never thought they would enjoy.

# TAYSIDE AREA SERVICES

## A IN THE PARK

Dundee Services annual "A in the Park" event was held at Crombie Park, near Dundee.

Individuals who use the service helped to plan the day. They decided the food they would like, the activities they wanted available and they worked to publicise the event. Giving service users the opportunity to be closely involved in the day helped to foster a sense of ownership while enabling them to develop organisational skills. A barbeque was enjoyed by all and there were plenty of games such as rounders, toss the welly and frisbee. The day was a great success with everyone commenting on how much they enjoyed it.



A great day was had by all at A in the Park

## PASTURES NEW

In the summer of 2013, our Dundee service moved to a new building that offers more space and facilities for the individuals we support. The new, centrally located day service includes an art room, sensory room, IT room, life skills kitchen and a large social area. Each service user had a transition plan for the move and this was used to determine the way and time at which they would be introduced to their new surroundings. These plans were crucial in enabling everyone to settle in. The new, larger building has meant that more individuals are able to access the service and we are delighted to welcome new faces.

## THE VALUE OF WORKING WITH OTHERS

As part of our partnership work with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), which is supported by funding from the Scottish Government Autism Strategy, some of our practitioners have been trained to identify vision problems. In our Tayside service, Sandra suspected that Fiona might have issues with her vision. With support, Fiona was able to attend the eye clinic, cope well with a home visit and then attend a full eye test at her local opticians where it was confirmed that she required glasses.

Fiona considered the different glasses available and opted for a purple pair with matching chain allowing her to wear them around her neck. As an avid reader, getting the correct glasses has had a big impact on Fiona's quality of life, allowing her to continue reading without straining her eyes.

# WEST OF SCOTLAND AREA SERVICES

## HELPING OTHERS

Part of our West of Scotland service includes a team in Oban who run a Saturday Club and provide Outreach and Family Support. The Outreach and Family Support service enables young people to be involved in their community.

One way this is achieved is by supporting individuals to assist local residents with their shopping. The young people collect shopping lists of required items from residents, go to the relevant stores to purchase the goods and then deliver them. This innovative approach has enabled the young people to develop a sense of purpose and responsibility, and to become valued in the community. It has also helped enhance numeracy and writing skills.

## A SMART MOVE FOR MARK

Mark attends the Abbie Resource Day Service in Glasgow and although he has good verbal ability, he struggles with some areas of communication such as expressing pain, illness, feelings or emotions. He also has difficulty understanding some aspects of social interaction and in recognising danger. Using a Smart Board – a large, touch-screen interface – staff supported Mark to develop a better understanding in these areas.

The Smart Board is easier for Mark because it does not require the fine motor skills needed for a computer mouse. Once he gained confidence with the new equipment, staff introduced him to educational programmes that raise awareness of hazards in the home and in the community. Mark has also benefited from completing life-skill programmes that focus on shopping, money and accessing public transport – all helping to improve his independence.

## CREATIVE MINDS UNITE

A creative writing group at the West of Scotland service gets people together each week to write poetry, short stories and limericks. Coordinated by a creative writing teacher, the group gives participants a chance to explore emotions, develop their writing skills and build confidence. After working on individual pieces of writing, participants can read their work to the rest of the group. This gives members of the group an opportunity to listen to and encourage each other.

One group member, Chris Weatherston, says, "Being creative is a very good thing and the writing group makes for an interesting time." Another member, Paul Ritchie, says, "Ideas come from within and the writing group is a good opportunity to expand and develop these ideas."



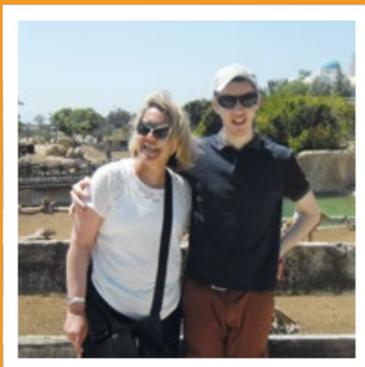
Chris enjoys the Creative Writing Group

# SOUTH WEST AREA SERVICES

## PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY

Helen and Euan access our supported living service in Lanark. Keen for a summer holiday, they decided that they wanted to go somewhere with a good climate, pools and water slides. Helen asked to be close to a beach, with shops and cafés nearby so that they could both go shopping. Following discussions with staff where they were presented with different options, they all agreed on the Aqua Magic Rock Gardens in Benidorm.

The practitioners who support Helen and Euan have excellent working relationships with them, and understand their likes and motivations. The way in which the practitioners carefully communicated the options to Helen and Euan and made sure that they understood their expectations, meant that the holiday was a great success. Helen and Euan are now looking forward to their next one!



Helen and Euan had a brilliant holiday

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Cafe Kudos, our vocational day service in the heart of Carlisle, is a thriving coffee shop that is firmly established in the community. Since joining the team, Joe has made considerable progress. He found his introduction to the cafe very challenging at first – he struggled with making eye contact and isolated himself. Joe was also wary of the coffee machine and intimidated by the kitchen.

It has been a gradual process but with support and encouragement from staff Joe has realised that people are interested in him and now he frequently initiates conversations and consequently has forged real friendships. Joe goes to the door to help older customers to their seats and is very attentive, taking orders independently and using the coffee machine and till with very little guidance from others. Joe continues to make impressive progress, excelling in new tasks as his confidence and abilities increase.

## UNDERSTANDING AUTISM

Early in 2013 we welcomed a new individual into our housing support service in Biggar. Before this he was supported in an environment that was not meeting his needs and it was clear that he could be better supported by practitioners who understand autism and could truly understand him.

A well-planned and structured transition took place. With clear timeframes agreed and targets set, our practitioners worked closely with this young man to ensure knowledge and consistency were transferred to his new environment. He has successfully made the transition and is developing good relationships with his team. He has personalised his own flat and is beginning to regain some of the skills and motivation that were lost during previous periods of uncertainty in his life.

# ORKNEY SERVICES

## QUALITY TIME

The staff team in Orkney supported Jamie, a young man who accesses Orkney's supported living service, to prepare for a visit from his dad.

On the morning of the visit Jamie's support worker made a picture board using clocks and pictures to show him what was going to happen later that day. Staff arranged for Jamie and his dad to go out for lunch and then go swimming in the evening. Jamie was very content in his dad's company and his dad mentioned that he had seen a massive change in Jamie in the last year. Thanks to the careful and well-considered plans of the team, the weekend had maximum benefit for both Jamie and his dad.

## MY HOLIDAY

"My support worker, Keira, and I went to Alton Towers. Keira helped me to pack and get up early the next morning so that we could get the 7.50am flight from Kirkwall to Edinburgh.

We got a train to Manchester Piccadilly and then another train to Stoke-on-Trent. I had three full days of support and I need support when I am going somewhere new to help me cope with any changes to the planned journey.

On the Saturday, Keira and I went to Alton Towers and I met my friend Oliver there. On Sunday we went back to Alton Towers because there were so many rides. On Monday we travelled in different directions, Keira headed to Edinburgh and then by plane to Kirkwall while I went to Newcastle.

I stayed in Newcastle for seven nights and during this time I used the on-call manager in Orkney for support if I felt anxious. On the following Monday I got the train from Newcastle to Edinburgh and then a plane to Kirkwall." Charlie Breakspear

## RAISING AWARENESS

A celebration of autism took place in our Orkney Service. The event, which saw local residents pop in for a hot drink and a chat, was set up to help raise awareness of autism in the community. A range of information about autism was on display for visitors to read and the event also marked the one year anniversary of the service.

Speaking about the day Tony McManus, Service Manager says, "We get a lot of people dropping in to our service here in Kirkwall. This event allowed us to give people information about autism as well as tell them about local support available."



Jamie enjoys the climbing wall



# EDUCATION

## CARLO

Carlo is supported in our residential service in Elgin and in our autism base in Elgin Academy. Over the last year Carlo's verbal skills have dramatically improved and he has progressed from using only picture symbols to largely using word symbols.

Carlo can now access the community and is happy for school staff to support him. The team from the residential service has worked closely with Academy staff to ensure a consistent approach is adopted by everyone supporting Carlo. This sharing of information has been instrumental in Carlo's progress.

## MUSIC TO OUR EARS

A number of pupils at New Struan School take part in music therapy sessions. Music therapy offers a specialist, individualised approach based on joint music-making between the therapist and the pupil (playing instruments, singing, sharing and listening). It is based on the understanding that everyone responds to music in some way – it affects our minds, bodies and feelings.

The sessions help to facilitate positive development in communication, emotional wellbeing and support pupils' creativity and self-expression. For Sean, the sessions have had a huge impact on his confidence, seeing him grow from an extremely shy boy who was reluctant to engage, to a pupil who is confident in his approach around the whole school.

## MAKING CHOICES

Food tasting sessions have been introduced at New Struan School. These fun sessions give pupils the opportunity to express their likes and dislikes and influence what goes on the lunch menu.

It is important for pupils to feel like they can impact on change at the school and the food tasting sessions are a good example of experiential learning. Different foods are laid out to be touched, smelled and tasted. The pupils look forward to seeing their selections on the menu in the forthcoming weeks and understand they have an important role to play in decision making in the school.

**newstruan school**  
Included, confident learners in the community

 **3** NEW PUPILS ENROLLED AT NEW STRUAN SCHOOL

 **5** PUPILS GRADUATED

 **77** NATIONAL QUALIFICATION UNITS WITH SQA WERE ATTAINED

\*Average school roll between April 2013/March 2014 was 34 pupils

# RESPITE AND SHORT BREAKS SERVICE

## BEING WITH OTHERS

David came to our respite and short breaks service at Clannalba for an extended stay. At this point he was very withdrawn, often isolating himself from others and unable to cope with changes to his environment. This had a negative impact on his health and wellbeing.

His support team introduced him gradually to new environments and slowly David was able to sit in the same room as others for very short periods of time. This has built up to the point where he is now able to watch an entire film in the company of others.

David regularly goes for long walks and on occasion visits shops for personal items. A huge step forward came when he managed to attend a hospital appointment, a very unfamiliar environment, with support staff. David still has a few hurdles to overcome but he is making great progress.

## WHAT MATTERS TO ME

*"When I first came to Clannalba, although McDonalds was my most favourite food, I could not go into McDonalds without the support of friends or family. If anything went wrong, I would go into meltdown and become extremely anxious. Now, I can enter McDonalds, have my order ready, communicate with the person serving me, hand over money, wait for the receipt and then pick a table to sit at.*

*"Clannalba has also taught me coping mechanisms, which have enabled me to do food shopping with minimal support. I have also started to learn cooking skills. Since coming to Clannalba, I have been able to go through the interview process and I have a conditional offer for college. I have had to attend several interviews and visits, meeting new people in the process. Without the support of the staff at Clannalba I would not have been able to attempt this."* – Teag Rennie

## A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Luke has been attending our respite service for eight years during weekends and holidays. During this time we have seen Luke develop into a fun-loving and unique person. Luke's mum Alison talks about what the service means for their family:

*"Clannalba has been a lifeline for myself, Luke and the rest of the family. It has enabled me to get an uninterrupted night's sleep, a rest from the continuous care Luke needs and a chance for the family to spend time together doing normal family activities. I think it is a lovely home for our children and as a mum, I can rest and relax when Luke is there, knowing he is happy."*

– Alison Farquhar



**12** INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN ENJOYING OUR RESPITE AND SHORT BREAKS SERVICE FOR OVER TEN YEARS



# TRANSITION SERVICE

## GOLD AWARD

The hard work and enthusiasm of our staff at New Ridgepark, our dedicated transition service, was recognised when they were awarded the Gold Healthy Working Lives Award. In addition to maintaining the standards required for the bronze and silver awards already achieved, staff undertook a number of new challenges to benefit the health of staff and service users. Some of the new initiatives include growing their own vegetables, having regular lifestyle checks and participating in local walks and runs.

## DONALD'S MOVE

In July 2013 Donald left New Struan School to move to New Ridgepark. The transition was carefully planned over a six-month period and involved his parents, school residence staff and the team at New Ridgepark. During this time Donald became familiar with his new support workers who helped him to settle in and adjust to his new home.

Staff planned Donald's weekly and longer-term visual schedules, working alongside Lesley, Donald's mum. They built on the effective communication system Lesley already had in place to reflect Donald's new routines and choices. With the use of tailored visual aids and a consistent approach from staff, Donald has made excellent progress and now participates in a range of community activities. Donald has also overcome some hurdles and had his first ever trip to the hairdresser – on subsequent visits he has moved from scissors to the shaver.

## ENSURING POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

For their Christmas outing, Donald and Michael enjoyed a trip to the Pavilion Theatre in Glasgow to see Pinocchio. This was a new experience for both of them and they coped really well with the noises, lights and general stimulation. Donald particularly enjoyed using his

camera throughout and was excited to capture the entire event. Michael embraced the audience participation joining in with all the singing and dancing.

This was a positive achievement for the two young men who, although they were very keen to attend, both struggle with crowds and high noise levels. Careful planning from staff ensured that the experience met their needs and they had a wonderful evening.

OUR TRANSITION SERVICE WAS RATED  
**'VERY GOOD'**  
 ACROSS ALL AREAS IN THE  
 CARE INSPECTION REPORT\*



\* October 2013

From L-R: Claire Ford, Chief Operating Officer of Quality Scotland, David Bradley, Chief Executive Officer of Quality Scotland, Alan Somerville, Chief Executive Officer of Scottish Autism, David Harkins, Quality and Risk Manager at Scottish Autism



## QUALITY INITIATIVES

### PUBLIC SERVICE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

We adopted the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) as a model and system through which to evaluate the quality of our organisation and define and develop areas for improvement. While PSIF is used by many local authorities in Scotland, we are one of only a few third sector organisations to embrace the framework. After a period of intense self-assessment, we were delighted to receive the Committed to Excellence Award by Quality Scotland in June 2013. This award recognises our efforts to improve how we run our organisation and the services we provide for individuals with autism and their families.

This award underlines our commitment to be the best at what we do and to set a standard of best practice across the care sector. We are now embarking on the next level award – Recognised for Excellence.

### AUTISM PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The continuous improvement of our autism practice is a vital aspect of our ongoing commitment to deliver

high quality services. We recently developed and piloted the Autism Practice Improvement Framework (APIF) in relation to this. The framework employs a thematic approach, self-assessment and peer review, and is based on the same rigorous methodology as PSIF. APIF will not only help us deliver continuous improvement in practice, it will generate evidence for our continued progression through PSIF.

## STAFF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### STAFF E-LEARNING

At the start of 2014, we piloted a new e-learning programme for staff with a cross section of our practitioners. This way of providing training online with video content has a number of benefits for staff. Unlike traditional face-to-face learning, it enables participants to revise and revisit the content. As well as the core training videos, the programme captures more advanced knowledge which allows learning opportunities to be extended to more experienced staff members.

In addition, this e-learning programme promotes a culture of continuous learning by providing resources that people can access to support discussions at team meetings and on staff development days.

### ATLASS TRAINING

We have been introducing a new approach – the ATLASS programme (Autism Training with Low Arousal Support Services) – developed by an organisation called Studio 3. It provides a wellbeing based approach to supporting people with autism, with a focus on encouraging those in the support role to identify and reduce stress in the individual's life and their environment. Rather than focusing solely on the person with autism, ATLASS encourages an understanding of the interaction and relationships between care givers, families and others, and how this can impact on an individual with autism.

In order to further our understanding of the ATLASS programme our Director of Development Charlene Tait and our Director of Autism Services Jackie Latto, visited an organisation in Denmark called Heimdal. Heimdal has been using and developing ATLASS for over three years and we learned a lot from visiting their organisation and observing how ATLASS has been integrated into their practice.

Subsequently, an additional 12 members of our staff have taken part in a five-day induction ATLASS course, with eight staff members going on to participate in a more in-depth ATLASS Masterclass.

### STAFF CONFERENCE

Our annual staff conference provided a rich source of professional learning and development this year with staff delivering workshops on a range of innovative practice such as drama therapy and supporting sleep anxieties.

### STAFF SURVEY

Scottish Autism conducts a staff survey every two years in order to engage with our employees, and to measure the thoughts and perceptions of staff on the way we work. The outcomes of the 2013 staff survey were positive and showed improvements on the 2011 survey. The results are being used to:

- identify development needs
- set the agenda for staff forums and team meetings
- influence PSIF activity

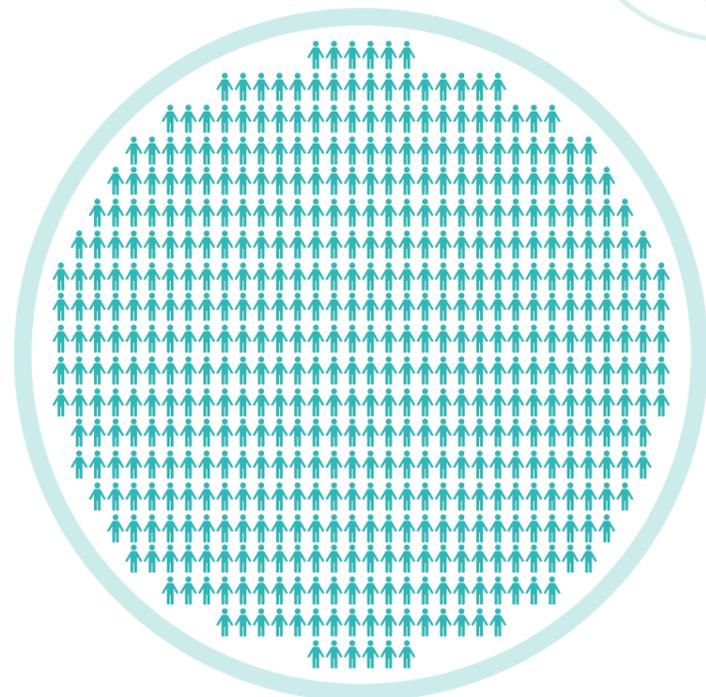
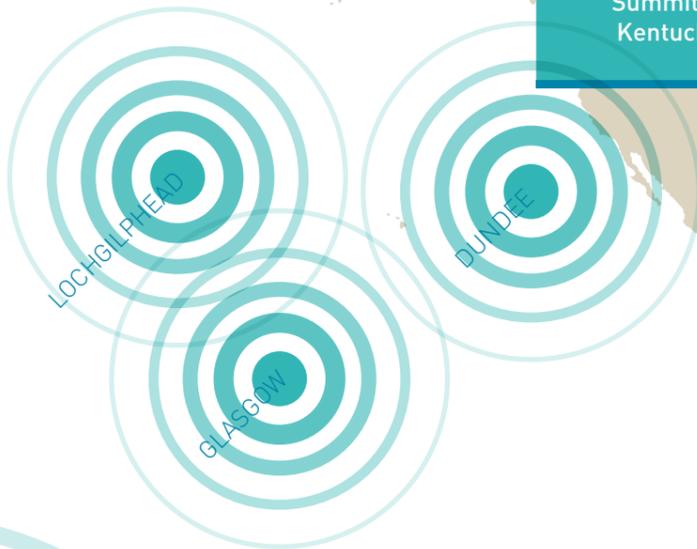
# INNOVATION

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING

We are committed to sharing our skills and expertise in order to maximise the benefits for individuals with autism, their families and the wider autism community. We do this through Knowledge Share seminars, our Right Click programme, and by attending various conferences and events.



WE SHARED OUR KNOWLEDGE IN **3 NEW LOCATIONS:** GLASGOW, DUNDEE AND LOCHGILPHEAD



WE MET ALMOST **500 PARENTS, PROFESSIONALS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM** OVER THE COURSE OF OUR 9 KNOWLEDGE SHARE EVENTS

## CONNECTIONS

Building connections internationally allows us to spread our knowledge further but it also presents opportunities to learn from other countries.



Our CEO, Alan Somerville was a keynote speaker at a Special Needs Summit in Kentucky

In our home country we met thousands of education professionals at the Scottish Learning Festival

Our staff travelled to Denmark to share practice and learn more about ATLAS

New Struan School Principal Jasmine Miller attended an international autism conference in China

Alan Somerville attended an autism summit in Stormont as part of the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership

We shared our knowledge at the Autism Europe Congress in Budapest

## RIGHT CLICK

Our Right Click programme continues to go from strength to strength...



PARENTS AND CARERS ACCESSED OUR ONLINE SUPPORT PROGRAMME BETWEEN APRIL 2013 AND MARCH 2014



IN MAY 2013 RIGHT CLICK BECAME **FREE!**

**100%** OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY WOULD RECOMMEND RIGHT CLICK TO OTHERS

*"The course was excellent, informative and very easy to understand."*  
Jon Stirling, Right Click parent

*"This is the most useful information targeted at our needs that I have had."*  
Right Click parent

# RESEARCH

## PRACTITIONER RESEARCH

Our Practitioner Research Programme began in June 2013 when two teams of practitioners went through a series of training workshops on the philosophy, methods and ethics of social research led by our Researcher in Residence, Dr Joe Long. Together these teams devised collaborative research projects on voice, communication, and user-participation in Autism Services, and friendships, relationships and sexuality among people with autism. Throughout Autumn 2013, the teams held a series of focus groups to capture experiences, opinions and insights from practice that can help improve our support in these areas. Since January, practitioner researchers have been undertaking case studies relating to these themes. As well as monitoring the support strategies that we provide, team members have been interviewing the people we support, their families and support staff to gain different perspectives on the key research questions. These initiatives follow our principle of developing research practices that are inclusive, participatory, and rooted in the day-to-day needs of the people that we support.

## AUTISM RESEARCH SEMINARS

Scottish Autism has made a significant contribution to shaping the research agenda for the Scottish National Strategy for Autism since the strategy's inception in 2011. Since November 2013, Scottish Autism has contributed to the organisation and funding for the series of Action on Autism Research seminars hosted by Autism Network Scotland as part of the national strategy. The meetings have brought together the autism research community with leading international researchers, policy makers, government representatives, service providers and people on the autism spectrum and their families. Together these partners have shared their expertise and experience in order to outline research priorities that will ultimately inform the services that are provided for people living with autism in Scotland.

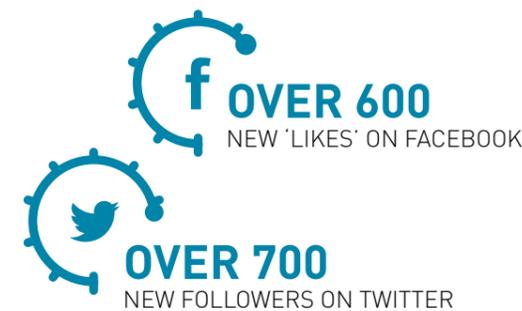
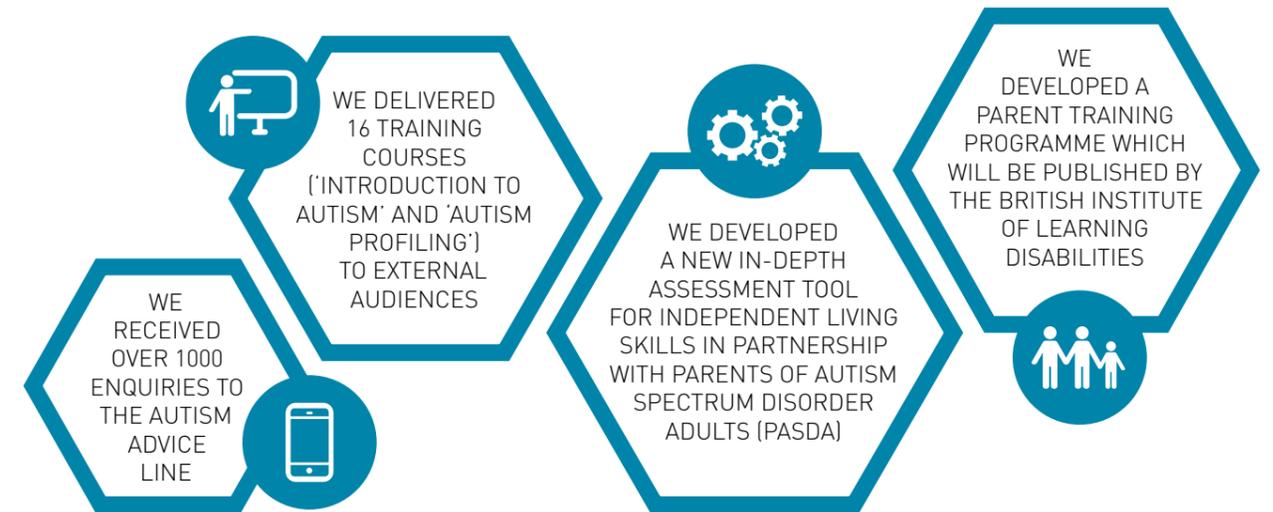
## AUTISM AND SIGHT LOSS

One of our most important initiatives in partnership working has been a joint project with the Royal National Institute of Blind People and Napier University on autism and sight loss. Evidence suggests that sight loss and optometry problems in people with autism are often under-diagnosed. The RNIB has therefore devised a programme of vision awareness training for autism practitioners. The organisation has also developed advanced training for a number of 'Vision Champions' who have the tools to undertake detailed observations to assist in making optometry referrals and auditing how we store information on service users' vision in service documents. Along with our partners at Napier University, we have undertaken a series of research activities to assess the confidence and knowledge of our support teams in detecting vision issues before and after the training. We will also be monitoring the impact of vision awareness training and of our Vision Champions in supporting people through optometry services. This means that we will not only improve the standard of vision support in our services, but have the data to evidence, improve and disseminate the effectiveness of the model and the organisational support needed to ensure best practice in this area.

## GOOD PRACTICE

The outcomes of some of our work were published in the Scottish edition of the Good Autism Practice Journal. Commissioned as part of the Scottish Strategy for Autism, the journal featured two papers from ourselves; one single authored paper on Right Click, our online parent support programme and a second jointly authored paper on the One Stop Shop initiatives.

# ENGAGING WITH THE AUTISM COMMUNITY



**15** DIFFERENT BLOGGERS SHARED THEIR THOUGHTS, OPINIONS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AUTISM

OUR 'FLY THE FLAG FOR AUTISM' SHARER HAD ALMOST **1,000 SHARES** AND WAS SEEN BY OVER **70,000 PEOPLE**



ON AVERAGE **OVER 800 PEOPLE** READ OUR MONTHLY EZINE

**6** OF OUR SERVICES BEGAN THEIR OWN LOCAL NEWSLETTERS

WE AVERAGED **TWO** NATIONAL PRESS FEATURES AND **SEVEN** LOCAL PRESS FEATURES A MONTH

**TWO** OF OUR PAPERS WERE PUBLISHED IN THE SCOTTISH EDITION OF THE GOOD AUTISM PRACTICE JOURNAL



# VALUE

## WORKING TOGETHER

We recognise the power of the collective and have developed effective partnerships with other organisations and individuals that share our values and aspirations in order to help shape the future of autism practice.

### SCOTTISH STRATEGY FOR AUTISM

#### The One Stop Shops

The Scottish Government funded Scottish Autism, Autism Initiatives and the National Autistic Society Scotland for a period of two years to deliver six One Stop Shops across Scotland. The One Stop Shops that we manage in Lanarkshire and Fife have become well established in these areas, providing much needed information and advice on autism within their local communities.

Both services celebrated their one-year anniversary at the start of 2014, celebrating and showcasing the positive work that has been achieved.

In the first year since opening, our Lanarkshire One Stop Shop has been accessed over 1,100 times and our Fife One Stop Shop has been accessed over 1,500 times!

#### The Autism Toolbox

A preview of The Autism Toolbox, an online resource to support the inclusion of children and young people with autism in mainstream education services, took place at the 2013 Scottish Learning Festival. Funded by the Scottish Government and developed by Scottish Autism with support from Autism Network Scotland, this unique resource provides case studies from Scottish schools and practical examples of support that teaching staff can translate and use in their own school setting.

#### Other Strategy Work

Together with our colleagues in the Autism Alliance UK, we continued work to establish an evidence framework ultimately to inform commissioning of services throughout the UK.

Scottish Autism was asked by the Argyll & Bute Council and NHS Highland Partnership to prepare the autism strategy for the local authority. Given our background of work in the Scottish Strategy for Autism we were well-placed to take the provisions of the national strategy and adapt them for local application. Consultation with the Argyll & Bute Strategy Group helped to shape the document into one which reflects local priorities.

#### External Research Projects

Professors Tommy MacKay and Martin Knapp continue to work on the Microsegmentation Project which was conceived and is being managed by Scottish Autism. The study aims to identify the escapable costs of autism and we look forward to reporting on the outcomes of the project at the end of 2014. We are also working with Dr Ken Aitken and the Scottish Strategy for Autism Research Group on a number of other research initiatives.

#### CELTIC NATIONS AUTISM PARTNERSHIP

We continue to work with CNAP and attended the Autism Summit in Stormont where we shared knowledge and expertise with our allies and colleagues in our closest neighbouring nations.

#### EDINBURGH AIRPORT

We formed a partnership with Edinburgh Airport to develop a 'Travelling with Additional Needs' toolkit for families affected by autism. This forms part of a wider support package to help passengers and their families cope better with what can be a daunting task of navigating their way through a busy airport.

# FUNDRAISING

# THANK YOU!

## DOING MORE

Thanks to the generosity of individuals, groups and organisations, we continue to help more people affected by autism in Scotland. Donations help fund our Advice Line which receives over 1,000 calls a year and Right Click, our online support programme, which supports hundreds of families across Scotland and beyond.

*"The support from the Advice Line has been amazing. I don't know what we would have done without it. We felt there were so many obstacles to getting support and nobody was interested in helping us. The advisors answered all our questions and pointed us in the right direction for help. We will continue to use the Advice Line – it's a lifeline for us."*

— Margaret, grandparent

Fundraising also helps to provide additional resources that can enhance the lives of those we support. Such resources include sensory rooms and gardens, social groups, art therapy, cookery classes and specially adapted furniture.

## INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS

Caroline Morrison raised £1,486 taking part in various fundraising events with her friends, such as the Great North Run, to raise awareness of autism.



Caroline Morrison at one of her fundraising events

Ianthe Sutherland raised £2,000 by running 13 marathons. Ianthe's ten year old nephew has autism, and she witnesses the daily challenges his mother and father face in order to give him as fulfilling a life as possible.

*"My brother and sister-in-law do an amazing job raising Cole, but if it wasn't for the support of Scottish Autism things would be so much tougher. I witness the great work Scottish Autism do, and thought that by challenging myself it might inspire people to donate money to this great cause."* — Ianthe Sutherland



Ianthe Sutherland having completed one of her 13 marathons

## COMMUNITY DONATIONS

The first Barrhead Boys Brigade raised £1,652 after choosing us as charity of the year. They raised money through bag packing and also received matched funds from Santander. The Rotary Club of Oldmeldrum chose Scottish Autism as their charity of the year and raised £3,150 from the Ythan Cycle Run.



Barrhead Boys Brigade

## CORPORATE GIVING

Employees of Chivas Whisky in Dumbartonshire nominated Scottish Autism as their Charity of the Year donating £7,000.

SG Pro Cleaning in Alloa raised £2,400 from a Golf Day at the Dukes Course, St Andrews. Players enjoyed an auction which was generously supported by McTear's Auctioneers.

## LEGACIES

We received a combined £150,628 from various legacies which has supported our charitable services. We use these gifts in many ways to enhance and extend the opportunities we offer to individuals and families living with autism.

## VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to all the volunteers who give their spare time to support Scottish Autism. We greatly appreciate your efforts to help in our services and raise funds across Scotland.

## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

Welsh Family Trust  
South Lanarkshire Council Renewable Energy Fund  
Alexander Moncur Trust  
The Hinshelwood Gibson Trust  
Reuben Foundation  
The Beatrice Laing Trust  
James Wood Bequest Fund  
The Appletree Trust  
The Robert Barr Charitable Trust  
The Gannochy Trust  
The John Liston Scottish Charitable Trust  
The Westwood Charitable Trust  
The Hugh Fraser Foundation

Miss E C Hendry's Charitable Trust  
Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust  
Miss A M Pilkington Charitable Trust  
The WM Sword Charitable Trust  
The W A Cargill Fund  
The John K Young Endowment Fund  
The JTH Charitable Trust  
The Binks Trust  
The Anne Duchess of Westminster's Charity  
The Forbes Charitable Foundation  
South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership Leader Programme  
The Kintore Charitable Trust  
Edinburgh Airport Community Board  
The Stafford Trust  
The Row Fogo Charitable Trust  
The Peter Brough Bequest Fund  
The Albert Hunt Trust  
The Pleasance Trust  
The Souter Charitable Trust  
Western Recreation Trust  
Mrs Maxwell Stuart Charitable Trust  
The Ronald Miller Foundation  
The Sir James Miller Edinburgh Trust  
The Sir Iain Stewart Foundation  
The Tom Lethanby Memorial Trust  
The Oliver Ford Charitable Trust  
William Grant & Sons Distillers Ltd  
The M V Hillhouse Trust  
The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund  
The Crerar Hotels Trust  
West of Scotland Housing Association  
The Russell Trust  
Andrew Paton's Charitable Trust  
Reuben Foundation  
Miss Marion Broughton's Charitable Trust  
PF Charitable Trust  
The Leng Charitable Trust  
Cruden Foundation Limited

# LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

## LOOKING BACK

In 2013/14 income from fees from core charitable activities increased by 2.1% from £20.3m to £20.7m. Overall this growth came from Autism Services, including the first full year of services in Orkney. Grant-funded work under the Scottish Government's Strategy for Autism continued to grow with activities undertaken on projects such as One Stop Shops and the Microsegmentation Research Project. In Education Services pupil numbers again fell with a consequent reduction in fee income.

Resources expended on charitable activities also increased last year – by 4.5% to £20.7m compared to £19.8m. This was again ahead of the growth in fee income and reflects another year of absorbing cost inflation in an environment of frozen fee rates.

Fundraising income increased by 39.2% from £340k to £473k with costs down 13.9% to £201k largely in the area of staffing. Scottish Autism was grateful to receive a number of legacies over the year which boosted income.

## LOOKING FORWARD

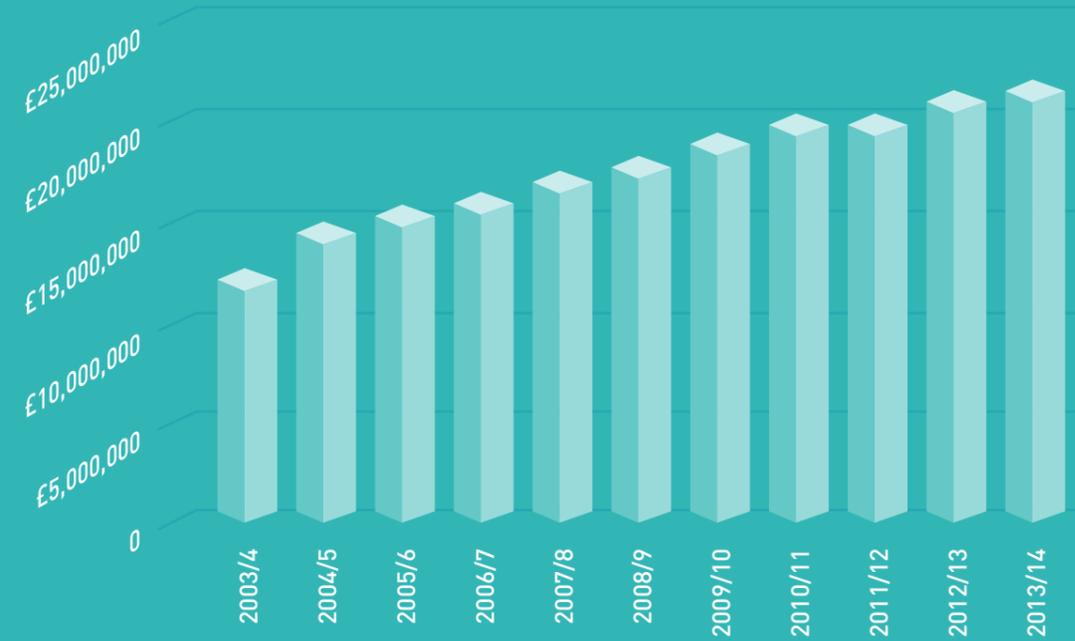
Across our services, we enable individuals with autism to lead the life they choose with a focus on achieving goals which are meaningful to them. As we continue in 2014 and look towards 2015, we will continue to deliver services that are innovative, offer good value and are of the highest quality with practitioners specially trained in supporting individuals with autism.

In particular, recognising the benefits of working together, we look forward to developing further our existing partnerships and establishing new relationships with organisations that share our vision and values. Research will continue to be a focus as we progress our internal research programme and work closely with other practitioners and academic institutions on wider projects.

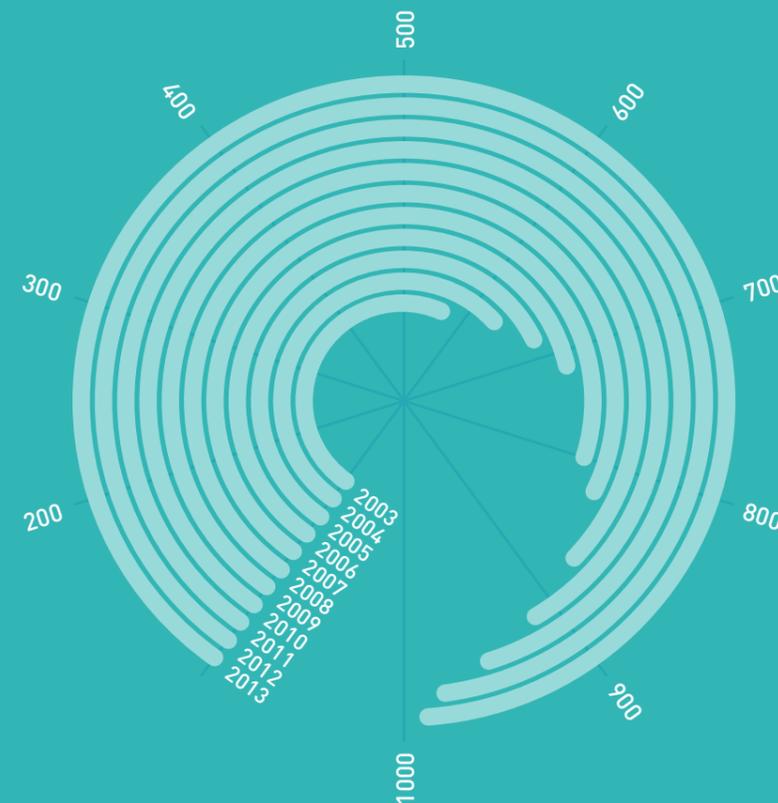
We are delighted that so many families have benefited from our family support initiatives: Right Click, Knowledge Share Seminars and our Autism Advice Line. We will continue to develop these in the coming year.

Whilst this review highlights the many successes from across our organisation, we are by no means standing still. We are fully committed to assessing and improving our practice on an ongoing basis and we will continue to track our progress and the quality of our services through PSIF and APIF.

TEN YEAR GROWTH INCOME



STAFF GROWTH



# BOARD MEMBERS AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT

## OUR BOARD 2013-14

**Dr. Paul Prescott**

**Alison Leask**

**Fiona Greig**

**Susan Clark**

**Ian McPhail**

**Colette Robertson**

**Cathy Scott**

**Andrew Lester**

**Jill Robinson**

**Kenneth Wardrop**

## SENIOR MANAGEMENT

**Alan Somerville**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Gordon Laidlaw**  
Director of Finance and IT

**Jackie Latto**  
Director of Autism Services

**Sharon Stewart**  
Director of Human Resources

**Charlene Tait**  
Director of Development

**Jasmine Miller**  
Principal of New Struan School

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## New Struan School

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## New Ridgemark Transitional Assessment Service

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## Fife One Stop Shop

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## Lanarkshire One Stop Shop

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E: lanarkshireoss@scottishautism.org

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## South West Scotland Area Services

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Lanark ML11 7PT  
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## West of Scotland Area Services

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## Elgin Services

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