

# Scottish Autism News

## A Lifeline of Support

Scottish  
autism  
WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE  
ARE VALUED

During these challenging times, the provision for support and advice is in high demand within the autistic community. Enquiries to our Autism Advice Line have already doubled since the outbreak of the pandemic.

The need for a listening ear from someone who understands is vital. When you support the Autism Advice Line, you are helping to provide just that. Our team of experienced community advisors are equipped to signpost to the support that is available, offer emotional and practical advice, and provide help with the ever-changing Covid-19 information.

But we need your help to do more. For many families, like Karen's, the Autism Advice Line provides a lifeline in times of crisis.

Like approximately 56,000 people across Scotland, Karen's 16 year old son is autistic. His past experiences of education in his younger years were filled with anxiety and sensory processing challenges which resulted in him being home-schooled for a number of years.

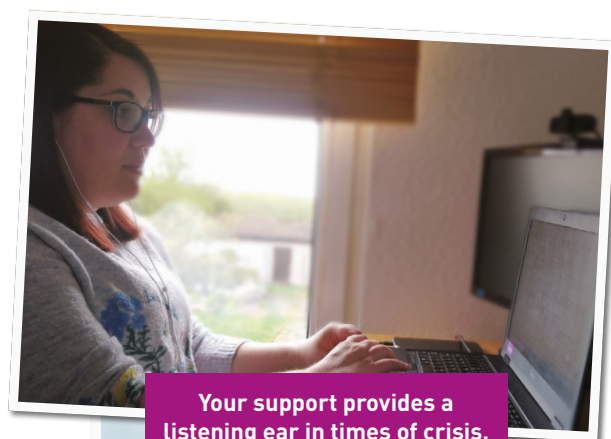
Prior to the global pandemic, he was making monumental progress in his life; he attended a weekly college course and attended school once a week.

When the country was moved into lockdown, his world was sent into turmoil as he struggled to adapt to the changes in routine. Karen didn't know how to help her son with the challenges he faced so she contacted the Advice Line for help.

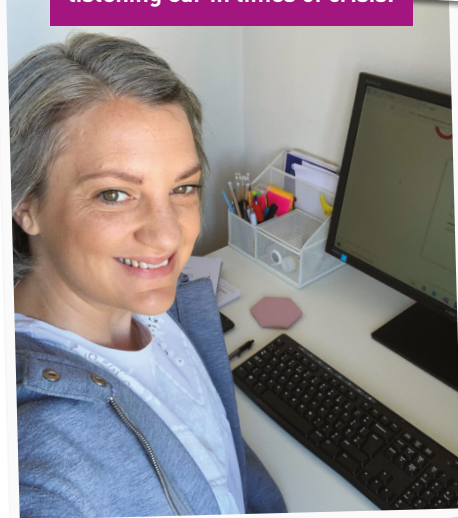
Karen said, "When we reached out to contact Scottish Autism for help, they responded so quickly. My son has been getting regular emails from Zofia over the last few months and I can't over emphasise how much they have helped him, they have literally changed his life. They have helped us so much as a family and I don't know where we would be without them."

Scottish Autism is dedicated to enriching the lives of autistic people like Karen's son. We also campaign to improve public awareness, acceptance and understanding of autism. With your support, we can do more together.

To make a donation and support the Autism Advice Line, please visit [www.scottishautism.org/donate](http://www.scottishautism.org/donate) or email [fundraising@scottishautism.org](mailto:fundraising@scottishautism.org). If you are in need of support and wish to speak with one of our advisors, please call 01259 222022, email [advice@scottishautism.org](mailto:advice@scottishautism.org) or visit [www.scottishautism.org](http://www.scottishautism.org) to chat via our live webchat.



Your support provides a listening ear in times of crisis.



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Scottish Autism News is produced twice a year.

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# Autistic Community Receives Vital Pandemic Support



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot



Scottish Autism was delighted to receive funding from the Scottish Government to develop an extended offering of our Autism Advice Line, known as 'Advice Line Plus'. This funding enabled adaptations to be made to our support services by increasing the operating hours for our Advice Line and providing 'Chat Calls' when people needed vital support. In addition, Covid-19 support resources and information was developed, along with printable and digital Autism Alert Cards, a range of informative online events, a LiveChat function on our website and online forums for direct support.

We also gratefully received funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to enable us to continue to support the autistic community throughout the pandemic with our extended services and support.

Scottish Autism was also delighted to receive a donation from Barclays 100x100 UK Covid-19 Community Relief Programme to develop an online coaching and counselling service to support autistic people and their families who've been adversely impacted by the pandemic. This new service, launching later in the year, will support autistic people and their families through Covid-19 and help them transition to a new normal when lockdown and social distancing measures eventually come to an end.

Speaking about the new coaching and counselling service, our Deputy CEO, Charlene Tait said: "From the outset we will work with individuals and families to empower them to set their own goals and priorities to address some of the challenges that the pandemic has had upon their mental health and wellbeing whilst supporting them with the transition back to school or work beyond Covid-19."

Find our Covid-19 support resources at [www.scottishautism.org/covid19](http://www.scottishautism.org/covid19) and view our Advice Line Plus event videos at [www.scottishautism.org/alp-events](http://www.scottishautism.org/alp-events).

# Research Collaboration with University of Edinburgh



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

Centre for  
Practice  
Innovation



Dr Joe Long

Scottish Autism is delighted to announce that along with the University of Edinburgh, we have been awarded a collaborative PhD Studentship by Medical Research Scotland to undertake ground breaking research on communication between autistic people.

The partnership with Scottish Autism will allow the researchers to observe interactions in the 'real-world' context of day-to-day support practice. This will build on Scottish Autism's own programme of practice research led by Dr Joe Long. Establishing what makes effective and enabling interactions, and what might hinder communication with autistic people will have important implications for support in social care and education. The research team will produce resources for practitioners based upon what they find.

Dr Joe Long noted the value of collaboration, stating: "Scottish Autism is always keen to work with academic colleagues to produce research evidence that is relevant and applicable in services. The commitment of our colleagues at Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre to inclusive research makes the partnership a natural fit. Collaborative studentships such as this help us to ensure that the next generation of autism researchers understand the day-to-day dynamics of autism services and engage supported autistic people and practitioners in the research process. We are looking forward to working together."

This research collaboration came about at the same time as our Centre for Practice Innovation was awarded seed funding from The John and Lorna Wing Foundation for research that will work towards a relational understanding of autism support. The funding will support a partnership with the University of Strathclyde to investigate what constitutes enabling interactions between practitioners and supported autistic people.

The interactions and relationships between supported autistic people and the social care practitioners that work with them are often overlooked in research literature. Yet these relationships have a huge impact on the wellbeing of autistic people in supported living services.

For more details visit [www.scottishautism.org/news-and-blogs](http://www.scottishautism.org/news-and-blogs)

## Struan's Residential Sensory Garden Revamp

A Classroom Assistant at New Struan, Mhairi, used her initiative to live out the school's values of trust, pride, happiness and flourish to undertake a complete revamp of the residential sensory garden. Mhairi has been coordinating this since lockdown began as she was re-deployed to the Residencies during the period of school closure. The pupils were delighted when they returned to school and really got involved too.



The garden had been in need of a makeover for some time and as the young person Mhairi supports frequently enjoys being outdoors, particularly in the sensory area of the garden, she asked to get involved in the project.



Mhairi painted the large wall and laid fresh bark as well as creating a new sand pit. She added a decking area, a swing, painted pots and straightened out the slab area. The school's sensory garden is her next stop, what a busy lady indeed. Thank you Mhairi!



Kyran, a pupil at New Struan School said "I love the new sensory garden and my favourite part is the porch area."

## Fake-away in Fife



Zoe and Diana, both supported in Fife Services love a McDonald's takeaway. During the lockdown though this just wasn't possible, so staff supported them both to recreate the experience. Thanks to donated McDonald's packaging arranged by Fliss, Regional Manager, and some meticulous planning by the staff, Zoe and Diana had a very authentic looking takeaway! Not only did they have the real packaging but staff members Necole and Yasmine had great fun pretending to be employees with their very own McDonald's name badges to add to the experience.

Diana also really enjoyed colouring in the Smurf's burger picture while she ate her meal. It really was just like being at McDonald's!

Their reactions to the fake-away experience were captured on film and you can watch them here: <http://bit.ly/FakeawaySA>

## New Struan's New Think Pod

Pupils are enjoying being back at school and using a new space which has been created thanks to generous donations and a variety of fundraising activities throughout 2019. We have installed a new flexible learning space called a Think Pod at New Struan School. This is a multipurpose environment that pupils can use for: 1:1 learning sessions; working collaboratively on projects; connecting with peers in other classes and accessing supervised online and digital resources for individual school work.

As you can see, some of our young people have been familiarising themselves with the Think Pod and are excited to start utilising this space more. It's already proving popular with pupils as Head Teacher Lucy Chetty tells us:

"Pupils are even visiting the space when they arrive at school in the morning, before heading into class, because they enjoy the area so much."





## Helen's Happy Hiatus

During the pandemic, Argyll and Bute Council contacted us to provide emergency support for an autistic individual. We supported Helen on an outreach basis although our new service at Campbell Street, Helensburgh, was used as a base during the day.

It was a really positive experience for Helen and her family. Our team were able to offer her some semblance of normality with structure, support and reassurance, easing transition to her new service.

Emma Clark, Support Worker said, "Helen was wary about leaving her own flat of 16 years, yet excited about the next chapter in her life. The staff and I kept a consistent message to her about the positives of being in supported housing, having support staff on hand and making new friends within the same accommodation."

Helen's sister Catherine had this to say, "Thank you for all that you've done for Helen. You've kept Helen safe and given her a new quality of life and thanks for the peace of mind that you have given me."

Helen is pictured here enjoying an afternoon tea with her staff before she moved on to pastures new – best wishes to Helen and well done to all of our West of Scotland staff who were involved in supporting her.



## From Orkney to Malawi

In Orkney we support Emily who, through the support of our Fundraising Team and Karen Scholes who is a friend of the family, was delighted to receive a trike some years ago. Emily has thoroughly enjoyed using this to get around on, but last year it needed some expensive repairs.

Jackie who is an Autism Practitioner in our Orkney service, was speaking to Carol Rae, who supports the Kudimba Foundation, a Social Support and Work Assistance Programme, based in Malawi. The foundation was looking for a trike to support young people who have difficulty walking to school.



After some discussion with Emily and her parents, they generously decided to donate the trike to the foundation, reflecting on the fact that Emily has had so much use out of it and thinking about how much joy it could bring to the young people in Malawi. Carol very kindly organised for the repair and transport of the trike to Malawi.

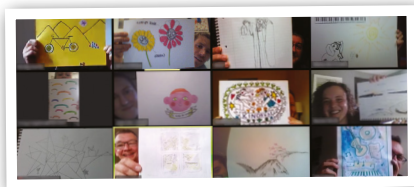
Emily and her parents are delighted that the trike has now reached the boys and girls supported by the foundation. Speaking about their new addition, a spokesperson for the foundation said, "We are incredibly grateful to Scottish Autism in Orkney...our boys and girls will be able to enjoy many autonomous cycling adventures, a novelty for them."

## Lockdown on Camera

When lockdown began in March, it was a huge disruption to the routines of those we support and our staff. Many of our services closed and daily life began to look very different. However, many of our supported individuals used their time in lockdown to be creative and showcase their experiences.

### In Lothian

In May, staff at our Lothian Service began running a weekly virtual art club via Zoom for those we support and our dedicated staff. This was a very inventive way to ensure that everyone could keep in touch, chat with friends and be creative at the same time.



### In Orkney

With the support of family, Callum, who we support on an outreach basis in Orkney, put together a video of his experience of lockdown. He took the opportunity to explore the beautiful island he lives on.

Callum decided to keep a journal and was keen to expand this into a video following a suggestion from staff. He received lovely feedback from friends and family and we think you will enjoy it too – great work Callum!

You can watch Callum's video here: <http://bit.ly/CallumsVideo>

### In West of Scotland

At the start of lockdown parents of those supported in our Abbie Resource Centre formed a WhatsApp group where they shared activities and the fun that their sons' and daughters' were experiencing whilst the Day Opportunity was closed. These have been collated into a wonderful video by a parent which you can watch by visiting this link, where you will be prompted to enter the password 'Abbie':

<https://vimeo.com/436017016>

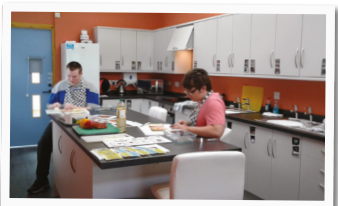
Kerry Lafferty, an Autism Practitioner set up Zoom Thursdays along with her colleagues, to allow supported individuals the opportunity to stay connected.

Kerry also raised £680 for Scottish Autism, enabling the team to visit supported individuals and their families during lockdown, in keeping with Government guidelines. Arriving in fancy dress with balloons, and playing the favourite song of the supported person they were visiting, staff brought some wonderful picnics and afternoon teas for everyone to enjoy.

Scottish Autism would like to thank each and every one of our keyworkers for their commitment, creativity and passion in enabling those we support to have positive experiences during these very challenging months. To see just some of this dedication and the innovative practice that is displayed daily across our services, watch our short video: <http://bit.ly/KeyWorkerTY>

## What your Support Means

Thanks to recent support from Spifox and kind supporters like you, the children and young people of New Struan School now have a brand new Life Skills Room. This wonderful space provides learning opportunities for cookery skills and self-care through use of household appliances such as washing-machines, driers and ironing facilities.



Independence is promoted where possible at New Struan School. Life skills are taught throughout the school years, enabling the young people to have more independence when they move into supported living accommodation in later life.

Liz Speirs, Food Technology Teacher at New Struan School said, "I can't believe what the young people are managing to do already. A huge thank you for making it possible for all our young people to learn to love cooking and be more independent."

This was only possible with your help! To find out more about supporting one of our current appeals, visit

[www.scottishautism.org/current-appeals](http://www.scottishautism.org/current-appeals)

## You have the Will power

Making a Will is so important to ensuring your loved ones are taken care of when you are no longer here. Yet less than half of us have a Will in place.

Take advantage of the free service offered by our partners McClure Solicitors, to prepare your Will while leaving a special gift to Scottish Autism.

We are dedicated to enriching the lives of autistic people and enabling their voices to be heard. With your support, we can make this happen. Together we can help autistic people lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives for generations to come!

If you would like to discuss how to leave a gift in your Will to Scottish Autism, please contact us in the strictest confidence - email [fundraising@scottishautism.org](mailto:fundraising@scottishautism.org).

## Partnership Support

- As part of our My Five campaign, we asked autistic people for their suggestions on how to improve their supermarket shopping experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. We collated this feedback and developed guidance and suggested adjustments that supermarkets could make to become a more welcoming and accessible place for autistic people and their families. We have shared this with all major supermarkets and you can find out more at [www.scottishautism.org/myfive](http://www.scottishautism.org/myfive)
- We are delighted to have teamed up with Charitable Travel, where 5% of the cost of a staycation or overseas holiday can be donated to Scottish Autism. This comes at no extra cost to yourself and with so many holidays to choose from, there's something for everyone! Find out more at <https://charitable.travel/scottish-autism/>
- Previous supporters Pop-Up Pros, are again supporting Scottish Autism at their pop-up outdoor food market and beer garden in Glasgow's Candleriggs Square. The family friendly event features a quiet area, with sensory bags, toys and ear defenders available upon request.
- Ceteris Ltd and Inglewood House & Spa, supported the Clacks Business Week Lunch which raised nearly £2,400 to support the provision of Rebound Therapy, drama sessions and animation workshops at our independent day and residential school, New Struan School, in Alloa.



To discuss how we can support your business and build an outstanding partnership, email us at [fundraising@scottishautism.org](mailto:fundraising@scottishautism.org). Keep up to date with all the latest partnership news by following our social media pages.

## Fundraising Highlights

### Thank you to:

- Pupils and staff from Carronshore Primary School, Falkirk walked for autism by organising their own Wallace Wanders event, raising a phenomenal **£2,200**.
- Longstanding supporter George Eggo held a Facebook birthday fundraiser, raising an amazing **£1,666** for our Fife services.
- Hamilton Golf Club raised a wonderful **£1,660** when they organised a "Captains Day" with over 200 participants.
- Loyal supporter Ken Hanley, and his son Keith and grandson Callum cycled a staggering 100km in August, raising a huge **£1,500** for Scottish Autism in honour of Holly, Ken's granddaughter who is autistic.
- Susan Kedley raised a whopping **£1,010** by running a mile each day for 26 days.
- Peter Hobson raised **£227** and a huge amount of autism awareness as he took part in the 5K Walk for Autism every day for a month.



# Get Involved

Throughout this challenging year, many fundraising events had to be postponed or cancelled. If you had booked to take part in any events, please visit [www.scottishautism.org/get-active](http://www.scottishautism.org/get-active) for rescheduled dates or check the individual event website for the most up to date information.

While we are unable to come together this year, why not be a Scottish Autism superstar and do your own 5K awareness-raising Walk for Autism? Visit our website for more information.

Inspired to organise your own fundraising event and need our help? Please contact [fundraising@scottishautism.org](mailto:fundraising@scottishautism.org).



## Upcoming Online Events

**Knowledge Share**  
- Voice, Choice and Participation

**28th October 2020, 9.30am - 11.45am**

**Facebook Live Guest Q&A**  
- Autism and Employability with  
Lauren Davidson

**11th November 2020, 12pm**

**British Institute of Human Rights Sessions**  
- Applying Human Rights

**Session 1 - 13th November, 10am - 11.30am**

**Session 2 - 25th November, 10am - 11.30am**

To find out more, visit [www.scottishautism.org/events](http://www.scottishautism.org/events)



Watch out for more of our Guest Q&A events streamed live on our Facebook page. These events are free to access and all you need is a Facebook account. If you don't have a Facebook account, you can watch our Q&A sessions on our YouTube channel shortly after the event has finished streaming. These events are part of the Advice Line Plus service - an extended offering to our Advice Line to give autistic people and their families further support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

If you would like to watch more of our past online events you can do so by visiting our website: [www.scottishautism.org/alp-events](http://www.scottishautism.org/alp-events)

Make sure you don't miss out on our upcoming online events. Sign up for our e-news today: <http://bit.ly/SAezine>

[www.scottishautism.org](http://www.scottishautism.org)

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