

Scottish Autism News

Affinity Service

Scottish
autism
WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED



The Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for most people. We have seen enquiries to our Autism Advice Line almost treble as many autistic people and their families struggle with their mental health and wellbeing.

To help deliver extra support for autistic people and their families who've been adversely impacted by the pandemic, Scottish Autism was delighted to receive funding from the Barclays 100x100 UK Covid-19 Community Relief Programme, Scottish Government and the Scottish Power Foundation. This funding has allowed us to launch an online assisted decision making service, Affinity.

Affinity is delivered with key partners **AT-Autism** and a number of professionals and practitioners. They work with and alongside autistic people and their families, to address specific challenges, worries or concerns, with the aim of supporting the transition to a new normal once lockdown and social distancing measures eventually come to an end.

Over 100 participants have already benefited from using the service. Affinity can offer free, personalised support online to assist with the following:

- Assisted decision making; we will work alongside you to set goals that are meaningful to you and support you to take action to achieve these goals.
- To manage stress or problem solve; we will work with you to empower you to make the changes that are important to you.

To discuss whether Affinity could support you or your family, or if you are looking for advice or guidance, please contact our Autism Advice Line:

- Call **01259 222022**
- Email **advice@scottishautism.org**
- LiveChat **www.scottishautism.org**

Through Affinity, autistic people and their families can continue to get the support they so desperately need in times of crisis. Affinity is the perfect place to help autistic people get a better sense of self and move towards a more meaningful, fulfilling life. I feel honoured to have witnessed some profound transformations in the Affinity work.

- Jonathan Drury
Coach, Mentor and Dialogue Facilitator

More Inside

- **Support our campaign for the world's first commissioner for autistic people and people with a learning disability**
- **National Post Diagnostic Support Service - New support service for autistic people and families**
- **Autitude Magazine - Sign up now!**

Scottish Autism News is produced twice a year.

If you would like to unsubscribe, please contact us on 01259 720044 or email marketing@scottishautism.org

Our Voice Our Rights – campaign calls on political parties to commit to the world’s first Commissioner for autistic people and people with a learning disability in Scotland



#OurVoiceOurRights

Time to make rights a reality for autistic people and people with a learning disability.

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National
Autistic
Society
Scotland

Scottish Autism, ENABLE Scotland and the National Autistic Society Scotland are three national charities working alongside autistic people and people who have a learning disability and their families to campaign for much-needed change.

Our Voice Our Rights is a campaign to make Scotland the best country in the world for autistic people and people with a learning disability. A country where human rights are respected and upheld; a country where everyone has equal access to the services and support they need; a country where autistic people and people with a learning disability are active citizens and are fully supported to fulfil their potential.

That’s why in the lead up to the Scottish Parliamentary Elections, we were calling on all the major political parties in Scotland to commit to a Commissioner for autistic people and people with a learning disability. We are delighted to update that the campaign has resulted in a strong cross-party commitment to a Commissioner. This is great progress, but there is still much work to be done.

We’re keen to hear about your thoughts on the campaign, answer any questions you might have, and provide assistance for those who want to get right behind the campaign. Contact us visiting www.OurVoiceOurRights.org and click on the ‘Contact Us’ tab and fill out the form.

Find out more: www.ourvoiceourrights.org

National Post Diagnostic Support Service Launch

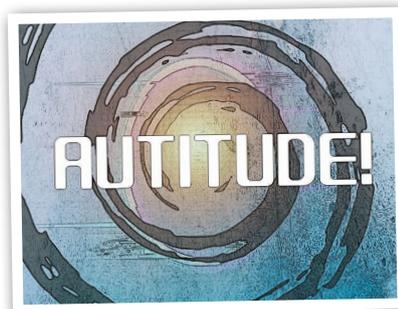


A new service, launched in December 2020, aims to support newly diagnosed people across Scotland to understand and embrace their identity as an autistic person. Funded by the Scottish Government, the service is delivered in partnership with national charities Scottish Autism, National Autistic Society Scotland, Autism Initiatives Scotland and Autistic People’s Organisations; Autistic Mutual Aid Society Edinburgh (AMASE), Autism Rights Group Highland (ARGH), Triple A’s and the Scottish Women’s Autism Network (SWAN). This service will focus on ensuring that autistic children and adults, as well as their families, are empowered with the information and support that they need after a diagnosis, whilst also providing autistic led peer support.

The service will be piloted for six months and you can find out how to access support by visiting Different minds. One Scotland website:

www.differentminds.scot

Autitude Magazine



Autitude magazine is a new and exciting collaboration between Scottish Autism and the very talented, autistic illustrator, Ash Loydon. Published every four weeks, you can read each edition of Autitude on the Scottish Autism website. Packed with stunning illustrations supplied by Ash, an eclectic mix of articles, reviews, cartoons, and a jam packed schedule of online events. Read the first few issues of Autitude here: bit.ly/Autitude

Most importantly, we are calling for contributions from autistic people for future editions - share your interests, your art or your experiences. This magazine is for you! Send your contributions to autitude@scottishautism.org to be included in Autitude.

Sign up here for our next issue: bit.ly/AutitudeSignUp

Scott's Art Travels to South Korea

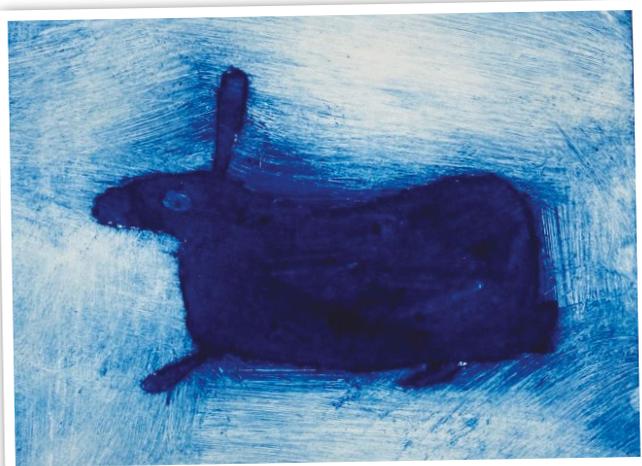
Scott Smith is supported in our West of Scotland Housing Support Service and attends Project Ability which is a visual arts charity and gallery supporting people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions to achieve their artistic talents. During lockdown, Scott, along with his friends from Abbie Day Opportunities, have continued to create amazing art pieces with their art tutor Alison via Zoom. This has allowed them to continue to have contact with each other and enjoy being creative at the same time.

Over the years Scott has received small amounts of commission for art pieces that he has created, which are sold in the Project Ability gallery and online. During lockdown, Project Ability were contacted by a curator at an organisation in Berlin called Berlinklusion who were working with an organisation called Humanoid, based in Seoul, South Korea. Along with two other artists from Project Ability, Scott's art was chosen to be part of an exhibition organised by Humanoid.

The "2020 KOREA-EU Arts and Cultural Exchange Project for Artists with Developmental Disabilities" brought together the works of more than 50 artists from Korea and Europe. Originally an artist trip from Korea to Europe should have taken place but due to Covid-19, the art works were invited to Seoul instead.

We are delighted to say that Scott's painting titled 'Hare' was on display and sold at the exhibition. Speaking about the news, Anne, Autism Practitioner in our West of Scotland service said: "We are all very proud of his achievement and his friend from Abbie Day Opportunities and I thought it would be lovely to share this with everyone."

You can view Scott's painting below and the rest of the exhibition here: bit.ly/ScottExhibit



Scottish Autism Values Award



Well done to Kerry Lafferty, Autism Practitioner, who was nominated by her fellow colleagues and was awarded the Scottish Autism Values Award, at our annual Staff Conference, that took place online, in 2020.

At Scottish Autism we live our values of Contribution, Collaboration, Compassion and Change-Makers, they are the foundation of what we do and how we do it.

From the onset of lockdown Kerry has really exemplified our values and adapted her support provision in response to these challenging times. She has been pro-active and creative with ideas to keep those we support engaged and feel valued whilst raising funds for care packages for supported individuals and their families. She leads themed Zoom evenings which staff, the people we support and their families all participate in and enjoy. She even dresses up in fancy dress as part of her endeavours. One of her colleagues said that 'her enthusiasm has led to the whole team remaining positive in what are extremely difficult times'; another described her as 'a shining light'.

Congratulations to Kerry and all of our colleagues who were nominated for this award!

Martine's Mug Design

Martine is supported in our residential service in Lothian and during lockdown last year she entered an art competition and was delighted to win! Her winning design was made into a mug which was on sale last year, with 50% of profits going to Martine and 50% going to Able Arts, an organisation supporting autistic people and those with learning disabilities to have opportunities in the creative sector.



Enabling Joy and Happiness through Musical Theatre



At Scottish Autism, we place wellbeing at the heart of our personalised support as we enable autistic people to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. The musical theatre group is one shining example of how we do this. Claire, a Senior Autism Practitioner, discusses the ongoing development of the musical theatre group and the joy and happiness it brings to the individuals we support and also to staff in a short video. The group can't wait to come together again in person. Claire also reflects on the song she has written for this film, and the personal and professional influences behind it. During challenging times, music can really help us stay connected.

Watch Claire's overview on the musical theatre group here: bit.ly/SAMusicalTheatre

Alistair's Artwork

"I'm Alistair Cowell (a.k.a Wee Al) and I attend Abbie Day Opportunities in Glasgow. I have been creating comic stories there since September 2017 and to date I have completed 33 comic stories over three years, which covered issues including bin lorries, strict teachers, dogs and rail fare increases.

This is my drawing, 'United Kingdom Becomes the NHS State', describing what I have felt during the first lockdown in Spring last year.

I created the picture in October last year to describe the nature of the stringent lockdown that occurred in Spring. The lockdown meant that people could only leave their homes for very limited purposes, citing the 'Police State'. But with that and NHS being mentioned everywhere you go, it is fair to say that the United Kingdom did become the 'NHS State'.

The picture shows a large TV screen with a large NHS logo at the top and blue lights flashing. It is showing a public information film featuring the Chief Medical Officer for England. We see everyone leaving their houses to see the public information film from the large NHS television screen. It was in the evening (just before 8pm), with the city glow shining on the very clouded sky."



Free Will Writing Service

Making a Will is one of the most important things that you can do to ensure that your loved ones are taken care of when you are no longer here. With this in mind we have partnered with McClure Solicitors to offer our supporters a free Will writing service.

When writing your Will, we would be very grateful if you would consider making a donation to Scottish Autism. Every donation helps us to plan for the future and makes a difference to the lives of autistic families and individuals that we support. To find out more, visit www.scottishautism.org/free-will-service

What your Support Means

Thanks to recent support from SAS and kind supporters like you, the autistic people supported at our Abbie Day Opportunities based in Glasgow, have fantastic new smartboards for use.

Smartboards are a creative aid for autistic people to visually express themselves and provides more control for the user to process information and images. As they also display information at a larger scale than a computer screen, it can also be useful for group activities, encouraging social interaction.

Marie Penrice, Senior Autism Practitioner at Abbie Day Opportunities said, *"The new smart boards are of immense benefit to everyone. The new boards mean we can access many more resources as the old one was very much outdated. More of the people we support are using the smartboard, having lots of fun and using educational resources too."*

Find out more about all our current appeals by visiting our website: www.scottishautism.org/current-appeals



Wildflower Power

Grow your own flower power with our new wildflower seeds, available to buy in our online shop now! Not only will your impressive colourful flowers benefit the bees and butterflies, funds raised will help to improve our vocational service and garden centre, Gartunny.

These little seed packets are a lovely gift or treat for yourself, to spread in the garden or window boxes and enjoy in the months to come. The seed packets cost £3 per pack or £5 for two packs.

March-April and August-September are the best times of the year to plant these seeds so visit www.scottishautism.org/wildflower-power to buy yours today!



Partnership Support

- We've received generous donations from the Glasgow team at Direct Line, Professional Beauty Systems and Pro Global which help us continue to provide support services like our Autism Advice Line. Enquiries to our Advice Line have almost trebled in the last year showing that autistic people and their families need support now more than ever.



- A kind donation of £500 from William Grant's Employee Forum, helped to provide gym equipment for the supported people to use at our day and vocational opportunity the Abbie Day Opportunities, Glasgow. The group were delighted and are already getting good use of the equipment.



- We were delighted to receive £5,000 donations from both The Screwfix Foundation and The B&Q Foundation which will upgrade the outdoor space of Balmyre Centre, our day opportunity based in Alloa. By providing outdoor gym equipment, and a safe and comfortable outdoor environment for supported individuals to use, this would provide a beneficial outlet for stress reduction.

- The team at Amazon are generously providing items from a 'Wish List' to many of our services across Scotland. As part of the new partnership, the staff team will also be taking on some fundraising challenges throughout the year.



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

Fundraising Highlights

Thank you to:

- All of our superstar supporters that collectively raised over **£11,000** during February and March in our Power Walk with a Pal fundraiser.
- Nikki Armstrong who bravely shaved her hair off and was generously supported by friends and family, raising a phenomenal **£3,055**.
- Everyone that took part in our Winter Raffle, raising **£410**.
- Niamh McGranaghan who had a Facebook fundraiser to celebrate her birthday and raised **£305**.
- Everyone that supported our Light Up a Window Appeal and left a message for a loved one, raising **£288**.
- Brothers Kyle and Jake, who raised an incredible **£176** whilst taking part in last year's 2.6 Challenge.



Support Us

Your donations and support make a huge difference in enabling autistic people to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. Hear from the people who've already been helped through donations which support our charitable activities like the Advice Line.

I would like to express my gratitude for the additional support provided by Scottish Autism during the pandemic crisis.

I had waited a long time to speak with incredible people who really understand autism.

The walls instantly came down surrounding my diagnosis...

Donate now to help more people receive the support they need in times of crisis. Please visit www.scottishautism.org/donate

Would you like to keep up to date with all the latest fundraising news? Please visit www.scottishautism.org and sign up for our eNewsletter.

Upcoming Online Events

Guest Q&A with Tom Stoltman
25th May

Affinity Event
27th May

National Post Diagnostic Support Service Event
3rd June

Click & Connect

Virtual Art Group:
Every Wednesday until 7th July

Mindful Autism Support Group:
Every Thursday* until 8th July
*Except 3rd June

Virtual Choir Group:
Every Thursday* until 8th July
*Except 20th May & 3rd June

View our full range of online events on our website: www.scottishautism.org/events

www.scottishautism.org

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