

Scottish
autism

Enriching Lives

ANNUAL REVIEW 2013



Contents

“I have enjoyed a professional association with Scottish Autism for many years. Throughout this time I have had the opportunity to see first-hand the continuous development of autism knowledge and practice across the organisation that results in positive outcomes for children and adults who access New Struan School and a wide range of services for adults on the spectrum.

As part of the Scottish Strategy for Autism, I am leading on a project that originated within the organisation. The Microsegmentation project aims to deliver a more detailed understanding of the intricacies of the autism spectrum and the needs of people and their families across the lifespan.

This type of innovative thinking is the hallmark of an organisation that not only delivers high quality services but works to make a lasting contribution to the growing body of knowledge related to the autism spectrum.

I would like to congratulate Scottish Autism on the developments and progress made throughout the year and wish them continued success for many years to come.”

Professor Tommy MacKay

About Us	04
Chairman’s Report	06
Chief Executive’s Report	08
Timeline	10
Delivering Change	12
Gathering Evidence	16
Improving Lives	18
Encouraging Innovation	24
Sharing Knowledge	26
Driving Quality	28
Doing More	30
Growth Summary	34
Contacts	35

About Us

Scottish Autism is Scotland's national autism charity. We exist to help those diagnosed with autism lead full and enriched lives and become valuable members of their community.

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition and so we make it our mission to enable people living with autism through their whole life journey. We do this in our capacity as a:

Service Provider

We provide a wide range of innovative services across Scotland for both children and adults that focus on improving quality of life. We recognise that each person has a unique set of needs and so personalised support plans are created which are centred on an individual's own strengths and motivations and on achieving outcomes which are meaningful to them.

Lifeline for Families

We have a dedicated team of experienced Autism Advisors who are on hand to provide emotional and practical support for families at times when they need it most. Whether via our Advice Line or our new online support programme Right Click, we offer a first response to those looking for information, advice and support in order to manage the day-to-day challenges of autism.

Advocate for Good Autism Practice

Disseminating our knowledge and experience of autism and effective practice is a key strand of our work. Through our community Knowledge Share seminars and effective collaboration with the Scottish Government, local authorities and other charities, we help to inform practice, strategy and policy on autism in Scotland.



Chairman's Report

The period covered by this report, 2012-13, continued the trend of the last few years, with a mixture of opportunity and progress set against a background of economic gloom.

Our customers, the Scottish local authorities, continue to face severe budgetary constraints, and this has inevitably been passed on to us. However, the Scottish Government's Strategy for Autism is progressing in an encouraging way. Scottish Autism continues to work in partnership with the Government in developing the Strategy, as a contractor in delivering major projects and as an advocate representing the interests of people with autism and their families and carers.

There have been changes in Scottish Autism's Board with the departure of David Clark, a long serving member, and indeed a former Vice-Chair. We thank David for his distinguished contribution to the organisation over many years. We have been joined by Kenneth Wardrop, formerly Head of Economic Development for the City of Edinburgh, who brings many business related skills to the Board.

Scottish Autism's Board continually seeks the highest quality in its systems of governance and requested a review of the organisation's compliance with legislation. Following requests to various charity networks for information on regulatory checklists, it became clear that this type of information was not readily available. Scottish Autism subsequently developed its own legislative and compliance template. This details our regulatory obligations, internal responsibility for conformity, as well as how Scottish Autism currently evidences observance of its obligations. This will prove invaluable in our management of risk and also in evidencing the key areas of governance and leadership within the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) – Scottish Autism's adopted quality management tool.

Scottish Autism continues to achieve high standards for service delivery as reported by the Care Inspectorate and by this measure we can demonstrate 'clear water' between ourselves and other organisations in the autism sector. In the coming year, we look forward to continued success in the delivery of excellent and innovative services to people living with autism in Scotland.



Dr. Paul Prescott
Chairman

“Scottish Autism continues to achieve high standards for service delivery as reported by the Care Inspectorate and by this measure we can demonstrate ‘clear water’ between ourselves and other organisations in the autism sector.”



Chief Executive's Report

As the aftermath of the financial crisis continues, we must reconcile ourselves to the prospect of the financial pressures on our customers and ourselves being a permanent feature of our working environment, rather than, as in the past, a period of temporary constraint to be weathered like a passing storm.

Scottish Autism continues to strive for cost savings and to work with our customers to innovate in our service delivery, so as to deliver more for less, and preserve the unique services which are the hallmark of specialist providers such as ourselves.

The abuse suffered by patients at the Winterbourne View Hospital serves as a timely warning of where a focus on cost to the exclusion of all else may lead. The delivery of quality services to vulnerable people by well-trained and motivated staff, in order to maximise quality of life, should be the goal of any enlightened nation in the 21st century. Scottish Autism remains determined to pursue a quality agenda, investing further in our quality management systems, the training of our staff, our knowledge management

systems and the dissemination of our autism expertise through our Knowledge Share seminars, our online support programme Right Click and our Autism Support Team.

The Scottish Government's Strategy for Autism requires that people with autism have access to services which understand their needs and are able to deliver in ways specifically related to their autism. We have known for many years that our services are able to do just that, but now we must prove it to our customers. We also intend to prove that it is more cost effective for the nation to get it right the first time, rather than have the state pick up the cost of damaged lives in the mental health system, in social deprivation and, in some unfortunate cases, the criminal justice system. In order to do this we are heavily engaged in a number of research and development projects including:

- The Microsegmentation Study – led by professors Tommy MacKay and Martin Knapp, which aims to identify the escapable costs of autism;
- The Database and Screening Project – led by Dr Ken Aitken, which aims to identify routes to earlier identification of autism;
- The Action on Autism Research Seminar Series (University of Strathclyde);

- Collaboration with the North East Autism Society and Autism Wessex on assessment frameworks; and
- Membership of the Research Subgroup of the Scottish Government's External Reference Group.

In conclusion, despite the financial pressures on our customers, we believe that the provision of quality, autism-specific services continues to be not only in the best interests of the individuals concerned, but ultimately the most cost-effective solution for the nation. Evidencing this thesis is the theme of much of this review and of our development efforts in the coming year.



Alan Somerville
Chief Executive Officer



Timeline

2012

April 2012

- First Knowledge Share Seminar in Edinburgh
- New Moray Service launched
- Autism Alert Card initiative starts in Central Scotland

June 2012

- Healthy Working Lives initiative launched

August 2012

- David Mundell MP visits Respite and Short Breaks Service at Clannalba
- Pupils start at new autism base in Elgin Academy

October 2012

- Orkney tender won
- Angela Murray appointed as Finance Manager

December 2012

- Funding received from the Autism Development Fund for strategic projects
- Professor Malcolm K Sparrow visits us from Harvard
- Final phase of property review

February 2013

- First One Stop Shop launched in Fife
- Dr. Joseph Long appointed as Researcher in Residence

May 2012

- Nessie Swim Challenge raises over £4,500

July 2012

- Public Health Minister, Michael Matheson, visits New Struan School

September 2012

- Right Click online parent support programme launched
- Kenyan Massai Warriors visit New Struan School

November 2012

- Visit to European Parliament with Celtic Nations Autism Partnership
- Knowledge Management article published in *Autism Europe Link* magazine

January 2013

- New website launched for New Struan School
- Autism Support Team celebrates 20th anniversary

March 2013

- Orkney service launched
- One Stop Shop opens in Lanarkshire
- Staff conference takes place in Dunfermline

2013

Delivering Change

In November 2011, the Scottish Government and COSLA cemented their commitment to improving the lives of people with autism and their families with the launch of the Scottish Strategy for Autism. The strategy outlined 2, 5 and 10 year goals underpinned by 26 recommendations which together aim to improve services and access to services for people on the autism spectrum in Scotland.

Scottish Autism continues in its role as:

Partner

Working with Scottish Government in the monitoring and development of the Scottish Strategy for Autism.

As a leading authority and advocate for good autism practice, we played an important role in informing the strategy and continue to do so in terms of maintaining momentum in delivering on the two-year goals. We are represented on the overarching ASD Reference Group which monitors and tracks improvements in service provision and also on two of the sub groups – Achieving Best Value for Services and Research.



Fresh Thinking on Autism Strategy

We were delighted to welcome Professor Malcolm K. Sparrow from Harvard's John F Kennedy School of Government to Scotland to stimulate discussion on the best way to approach the challenges we face in delivering the goals set out in the Strategy.

Professor Sparrow addressed a cross-section of professionals and individuals from within the autism community, drawing out themes and approaches from his book *The Character of Harms: Operational Challenges in Control*. This included us looking at ways to breakdown large and complex projects involving many different stakeholders into more manageable tasks.

The event provided the opportunity for reflection and helped us to view the challenges we face in a new light. It inspired and opened us up to new ways of thinking in terms of how we define and approach the Strategy giving us fresh resolve to tackle the issues and achieve the best outcomes for people with autism.

Advocate

Representing the interests of people with autism, their families and carers.

We understand autism and the challenges people face in receiving a diagnosis, finding reliable information and accessing services that meet their needs. As such, we make it our priority to listen to the autism community and ensure that their voices are heard. We had the opportunity to do just that during a Health and Sport Committee meeting in the Scottish Parliament where we came together to review the Strategy and highlight progress and the challenges that remain.

Contractor

Bidding for funds to deliver new services.

We are involved in a number of strategic projects which we believe will have positive and lasting outcomes for individuals and families living with autism in Scotland.

These include...

Delivering Change

One Stop Shops

The Scottish Government has funded Scottish Autism, Autism Initiatives and the National Autistic Society Scotland for a period of two years to deliver six new One Stop Shops around the country. We are taking the lead in two locations, Fife and Lanarkshire. The One Stop Shops provide people with autism, their families and professionals with information and advice about autism. The experienced staff are also there to give guidance on available services in the area and how to access them. In addition to acting as an information hub, we have established positive relationships with other groups and agencies, collaborating in order to understand and respond to the needs of the local autism communities.

National Autism Mapping Project

As a priority, the Public Health Minister intends to roll out Autism Co-ordinators across Scotland with the aim of developing strategic action nationally and locally and co-ordinating service provision. We are involved in the first step, along with Autism Initiatives and the National Autistic Society Scotland, to deliver a snapshot of what is happening locally in the form of a Service Map for each Local Authority.

RNIB

We are working on an innovative project with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) to investigate the needs of people who have a visual impairment along with a diagnosis of autism. This follows concern that sight problems may go unidentified because an individual is unable to recognise or communicate the issue and because of limited knowledge and understanding on the part of professionals and carers. Together with the RNIB and Edinburgh Napier University, we are developing a 'vision toolkit' that will help staff working with people with autism to identify potential sight problems and to highlight the importance of good eye care.

Family Planning Association

Relationships of all kinds can be fraught with complexity for people on the spectrum which is why we have teamed up with the Family Planning Association (FPA) to support individuals and families to learn about growing up, sex and relationships. As well as working directly with young people and their families, the FPA provides training for frontline professionals to develop the skills and confidence to deliver sex and relationship education. The six new One Stop Shops are acting as a base from which this new programme of work will be rolled out.

Autism Trainer Award

The Autism Trainer Award is a customised award validated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority which builds on an earlier piece of work involving Scottish Autism and The National Centre for Autism Studies at the University of Strathclyde. The aim of the award is to improve the standard of non-award-bearing training in autism amongst professionals. It is initiatives such as these that ultimately will result in improved and consistent practice on the ground, driving up standards in autism service provision on a national level.

Autism Toolbox

The Autism Toolbox was first launched in 2009 throughout Scotland's schools as a resource for teachers in mainstream schools to support children and young people with autism. As well as being part of the original team of authors, Scottish Autism has since been appointed to adapt and update the toolbox and to develop a web-based resource to increase accessibility to information and examples of good practice. The content is being developed in consultation with a wide cross-section of professionals, families and individuals on the spectrum and is due to be launched in Spring 2014.



Gathering Evidence

For the past four years, Scottish Autism has been investigating how to demonstrate formally the positive impact that our autism-specific services have on people's lives. We know that our specialist services cost more than providing 'generic care' and that this proves a challenge to cash-strapped local authorities but we firmly believe, and are intent on evidencing, that our increased cost does in fact represent improved value for money.

This is a very significant task, integrating our knowledge management systems, our quality management systems and the evolution of our practice. We therefore have a number of workstreams proceeding in parallel.

At an international level, we are seeking collaboration with other countries with a view to better understanding their research and practice, and in particular the interface between medical and social paradigms. At a national level, we are involved in a number of strategic projects, as described earlier, in support of the Scottish Strategy for Autism which we began last year.

Within Scottish Autism, our newly appointed Researcher in Residence, Dr. Joseph Long (right), is gathering knowledge and evidence from across our services – more of which is below.

Between these levels are other related tasks and workstreams. One such project is the development of objective standards to measure the improved quality of life of our service users (including New Struan School's pupils) and thus confirm the impact of our services. We are actively collaborating on this project with colleagues from south of the border – the North East Autism Society and Autism Wessex. It is increasingly apparent that we share the same challenges and aspirations and that there is mutual benefit from maximising the resources of our respective organisations.

Practitioner Research

Most research on autism is produced by scientific and clinical researchers. However, there is also a great deal to be learned from the experiences and knowledge of our own teams in the context of everyday practice. Joe Long has therefore trained a team of practitioner researchers, drawn from a range of services, in order to document the outcomes of support strategies and strengthen our evidence-informed ethos. This approach means that the research agenda is guided by the needs and concerns of our own practitioners, service-users, and their families.

Our initial projects are focusing on two key themes:

- Voice, Communication and User-Participation in Autism Services
- Friendships, Relationships and Sexuality among people with ASD

The team have developed a comprehensive set of research instruments and are already undertaking case studies, focus groups, surveys and interviews across our services.

Scottish Autism recognises the importance of capturing evidence and analysing outcomes in a systematic way. This allows us to reflect on our practice, learn from each other, and create resources and outputs that help us develop our services and feed into a wider bank of knowledge about autism.



Improving Lives

Delivering services that enable and encourage individuals with autism to become successful learners and active participants in their local community lies at the heart of what we do. We take a very flexible approach in the design of our services taking account of the unique needs and aspirations of each individual. Our skilled and dedicated workforce devise individual support and education plans focused on improving quality of life and developing potential.

Education

Spotlight on New Struan School

We know that individuals with autism can be successful learners and so we strive to provide the structured and supportive environment which enables them to meet and exceed expectations.

At New Struan School, our residential and day school in Alloa, the vision is for our pupils to be 'Included, Confident Learners in the Community.' It became clear after a period of consultation that this was the aspiration of the staff, the pupils and their families

when coming to the school and it is this vision which underpins everything we do.

Our current School Improvement Plan concentrates on a number of key projects falling under five themes:

- Learning and Teaching
- Partnerships
- Information Communication Technology
- Environment
- Vision and Leadership

Under Learning and Teaching, we have been exploring assessment frameworks to find the most effective and efficient way of tracking pupil progress. We have developed a system called Learning Tracks that enables us to create a baseline for pupils in literacy/communication, numeracy, health and wellbeing and then monitor and track progress in these areas. Alongside this we have combined Individual Education and Care Plans to create a new Personalised Learning Plan that is used across the 24-hour residential school. These individual plans capture targets from Curriculum for Excellence, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and communication, social understanding, sensory processing and flexibility of thought.



Other highlights:

- 7 pupils enrolled and 8 graduated
- 84 national qualification units with SQA attained
- New website and prospectus launched
- School's catering team received Healthy Living Award
- School achieved the Bronze Award for Healthy Working Lives
- Parent conference on 'Transitions out of school'
- Visit from Kenyan Maasai Warriors

Spotlight on Elgin

Over the past year we have been developing our innovative new service in Elgin which has included the establishment of a new autism base within Elgin Academy. Using the expertise we have developed over 36 years of running New Struan School, we are able to deliver specialist education within a mainstream environment. We currently have five pupils who have settled into their new surroundings and are meeting learning objectives. Where possible the pupils are included with their peer group for selected subjects. The teachers and staff at the autism base are supported by experienced staff from New Struan School and benefit from their skills and knowledge to ensure continuous professional development.

Our service in Elgin also includes a residential element for some of the pupils who are housed in fully supported accommodation. Here the emphasis is on continued learning, including the development of independent living skills and social skills in the community.

"We feel since Callum (below) moved into his house he has come on loads. He's gained a lot of independence by going out in the community with staff, taking part in activities and mixing more with his own peer group at school. Also, in his house, staff give him more space and Callum is doing chores to be more independent knowing he can do a lot for himself. Staff are there to guide him not do it for him."

Parent



Improving Lives

Day and Vocational Opportunities

Spotlight on Woodend Resource Base, Cowdenbeath

We were delighted to officially open our first purpose-built day service in Cowdenbeath which allows us to provide a diverse range of meaningful opportunities for adults with autism in Fife. Our Day and Vocational Services across Scotland are flexible and varied so as to offer a mixture of learning, leisure and social activities that enable each person to have fulfilling experiences and reach their own potential.

The new Woodend Resource Base offers a contemporary and light environment and features a large life-skills kitchen/dining area, therapy, sensory, music and art rooms, social hub and other multipurpose areas for up to 13 individuals. There is also a large garden that has been developed with the help of volunteers from RBS and Lloyds TSB and through excellent links made with the local community.

Staff worked hard to create a calming environment to help with the transition to Woodend and this, coupled with the use of effective communication tools, has meant everyone has settled in.

The flexibility of the new building has already demonstrated a wealth of advantages when creating personalised support plans and in promoting independence and choice.

"Woodend provides a great model of best practice in autism care for other regions of Scotland."

Helen Eadie, MSP

"I am delighted with Leona's (right) progress since starting Woodend Resource base, and I cannot thank the Scottish Autism staff enough. She seems so happy and I have seen a real change in her with improved communication skills, increased confidence and our home life is now much easier. The staff work closely with me and have a consistent approach. Leona is due to go on her first short break supported by Scottish Autism staff and this is the first time she has been away from me in 20 years. I trust the staff to support her well."
Jean, Parent



Outreach

Spotlight on Dance and Movement Therapy

Our outreach services offer support to adults across Scotland to lead full and active lives within their own communities. In the Lothian and Borders area, we have forged strong links with Queen Margaret University in order to be able to offer art, music, dance and movement therapy to our service users in the region.

Dance and movement therapy is a creative therapy based on body and mind interconnectivity, acknowledging the essential place of the mind-body relationship in becoming self-aware and reaching optimum health and wellbeing. It utilises movement as a tool for communication and the expression of emotion which we find particularly effective with our service users who find it difficult to express themselves verbally and communicate complex inner feelings.

"Sarah (right) already had a keen interest in dance and although apprehensive about a new activity, was keen to engage with the dance and movement therapist. We had some challenges to overcome in relation to the environment and actually getting

there as well as how this impacted her regular routines. It was down to careful planning and providing opportunities for Sarah to familiarise herself with the new environment in advance which helped to alleviate any anxieties and enable her to access this support. Throughout the sessions, Sarah was creative in her exploration of movements and also in using her imagination. The therapist felt she was able to communicate her feelings through movement and in particular enjoyed the relaxation techniques."
Jacqui Brown, Autism Practitioner



"It was really good, and Lada (far right) was really nice."
Sarah, Service User

Improving Lives

Supported Living

Spotlight on Orkney

We provide a range of supported living arrangements across Scotland where individuals are supported within their own home by our experienced practitioners. This year we established a new service in Orkney in order to support three young men, two of whom had been living away from home on the Scottish mainland in order to access specialist care. Now with the new service up and running the two young men, both in their early 20s, were able to return to their home towns in Orkney.

The initial focus of the service is to enable the three individuals to develop skills for independent living and become active citizens within their community. Having a home of their own is a significant transition which has required intensive support but they are responding well to this. A staff team support them to look after the home, do the household chores, shop locally and start to get involved in their community.

"The arrival of this new Scottish Autism service adds hugely to the specialist skills and knowledge in Orkney."

Tom McGuire, Orkney Health and Care

"It was wonderful to see Jamie have a birthday party in the local town hall with friends and family. This interaction highlighted to

me the great benefit of the work we're doing, enabling individuals to be involved and active within their communities and creating opportunities for families to come together. This is what we all hope for in life and our service users deserve this same experience and opportunity."

Sheena Arthur, Regional Manager

"The staff have been fantastic with Jamie, they really are getting to know him and getting him involved with things. I'm delighted."

Lyndsey, Parent

Respite and Short Breaks

Spotlight on Clannalba

Our respite and short breaks service offers a safe and homely environment where children and young adults can come to learn and have fun, providing a positive experience for both the individual and their family.

During the past year, over 50 children, young adults and families have benefitted from our short breaks service. The young people were able to experience being away from home in a safe environment and to mix and socialise with their peer group and often experience new opportunities which would otherwise have been difficult for them. For the families, it is a time to relax and spend time with other family members and friends or perhaps go on holiday themselves.



"Robbie is 15 years old and says he really enjoys coming to Clannalba for short breaks and playing football in the garden. Other respite facilities have not worked out due to Robbie's complex needs and challenging behaviour but now he and his parents are comfortable in the knowledge that we understand Robbie. The individual support plan outlines the details of our approach to ensure Robbie has a fun and positive learning experience during his stay with us."

Fiona Hamilton, Senior Autism Practitioner

Transition

Spotlight on New Ridgepark

Across all of our services, we dedicate time to understanding how transitions, however big or small, affect people with autism and devise strategies that allow our service users to cope better with these changes.

For major life transitions, such as from childhood to adulthood, we have specific Transitional Assessment Services. It is here that we can offer individuals a sustained period of assessment and support in order to build a greater understanding of the person's autism and how this impacts their life and, crucially, identify their future support needs. There is a focus on the acquisition of life skills as well as social development that will enable each person to live more independently in the community.

"Kenneth (above) was finding it difficult to cope with daily life at home and in the community and so came to our transition service at New Ridgepark. The staff began the complex task of identifying where Kenneth's anxieties lay and then identifying priorities and developing an effective support plan that started to address the key challenges he faced. The overarching aim was to increase Kenneth's self esteem and confidence and to enable him to make independent and informed choices for himself.

This required us to introduce new communication strategies as well as a routine, all of which helped to build up a level of trust and security between Kenneth, our staff and his environment. We are delighted to see Kenneth continue to develop and thrive at New Ridgepark and are now working closely with him to develop his social skills and confidence when out and about in the community and across a range of social settings."

Evelyn Swan, Service Manager

"I visit my son Kenneth weekly – the staff are excellent and confident when working with people with autism and this has put my son at ease. The best thing about the service is the staff, the environment, attention to detail and the care and listening."

Andy, Parent



Encouraging Innovation

2013 marks 20 years since our charity appointed Scotland's first field worker to visit families all over Scotland to give them the specialist advice and support they desperately needed.

Today, 20 years and thousands of miles later, our Autism Support Team has three Autism Advisors with over 60 years experience between them. The team responds to enquiries from parents and carers, individuals on the spectrum and people working in the field of autism. Despite the increased awareness of autism and so much information available on the internet, the need for one-to-one advice and support remains high with calls to our Advice Line continuing to increase year-on-year.

We had to think carefully about how we could share our knowledge and experience with more people in a more efficient way and so developed an innovative new online parent support programme, Right Click.

Right Click – The Virtual Autism Advisor

The Right Click programme utilises an e-learning web platform and hosts a range of bespoke videos, support materials and references that aim to equip parents with the knowledge they need to support the development of their child. All participants have the opportunity to access an experienced Autism Advisor. The role of the Advisor in this context is, if needed, to support parents to understand how to personalise learning for their own situation and to best meet the needs of their individual child.



The content and design of the programme have been heavily influenced by a desire to ensure an accessible and flexible approach that is sensitive and positive. There is also an imperative to provide information and support in a way that is not prescriptive but that enables and empowers parents and carers to address the unique needs of their child in the family context.

Alert Card

Following a successful partnership with Strathclyde Police, we teamed up with the Central Scotland Police to launch the Autism Alert Card. We know that individuals on the autism spectrum may present unusually to those without an understanding of autism. This could cause unnecessary stress and difficulty both for the individual with autism and the person dealing with them. The alert card enables those who carry it to identify themselves as having an autism spectrum disorder.

The card highlights how the bearer may have difficulties in talking and listening and may show signs of unusual behaviour. It also includes a named contact who can offer support to help police, ambulance, hospital and other key public service professionals better understand the individual's needs.



Sharing Knowledge

Autism is a complex condition. At Scottish Autism, we are committed to continuous learning, staff development and knowledge sharing to ensure that our practice is not only of the highest quality but that it is informed by the experience and expertise from within our own organisation as well as that of other professionals, nationally and internationally.

Staff Conference

Our own staff conference is a platform from which to showcase best practice, stimulate discussion and bring our staff together to focus and collaborate in meeting the organisation's key objectives. This year we looked at everything from palliative care and supporting sleep anxieties to the benefits of art and yoga for health and wellbeing.

Partnership Working

We recognise the power of the collective and work hard to establish effective partnerships with other individuals and organisations that share our values and ambitions. Towards the end of 2012, we represented Scottish Autism as part of the Celtic Nations Autism Partnership at a seminar in Brussels. Based on our own experiences in Scotland, we were called upon to advise on the key considerations when developing a national strategy for autism as well as to discuss the possibility of a Europe-wide strategy for autism.

Our work with the Autism Alliance also continues, in particular looking at effective assessment frameworks with a view to establishing a system through which to evidence the successful outcomes of autism specific services.

Speaker Platforms

British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) Conference
Representatives from Scottish Autism led a workshop at BILD's annual conference, sharing our knowledge and experience of applying positive behaviour support for individuals with autism. The workshop detailed the rationale for a whole organisational approach towards positive behaviour support underpinned by systematic staff training.

Knowledge Share Seminars

We launched our Knowledge Share series as a means of disseminating our developing knowledge of autism and effective practice with others. The first round saw us come together with parents and professionals to deliver seminars on three topics, over three dates, in three locations: Edinburgh, Greenock and Elgin.

Over 400 people in attendance

"Sharing of real life experiences and working knowledge. Great peer support. Excellent value for money."

Delegate

Over 90% of delegates said they would recommend our seminars to others

Presenting real life examples from across the spectrum and from different life stages, we deliver informed, practical information on a range of issues that directly impact on the quality of life and wellbeing of individuals on the spectrum and their families.

Driving Quality

PSIF

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. It has proved very effective in helping us to focus our efforts in the right places and embed a quality agenda within our organisation.

Through the internal assessment process, we identified the following key project streams:

- Disseminating Business Plan
- Service User Participation
- Internal Communications
- Performance Management
- Training

Each area has a distinct action plan with measurable objectives identified. The assessment team also undertakes regular reviews to assess progress and make refinements where necessary.

We have used a number of these projects to apply for the Committed to Excellence Award, which will see our efforts assessed and scrutinised by Quality Scotland in the near future.

Training

We undertook a Business Improvement exercise with a cross section of staff to examine the processes and delivery of training within the organisation. The result was the new 'Learning and Development Team' creating a new process map designed to improve staff experience of the Learning and Development service from inductions and mandatory courses, to personal development plans.

The focus of the team remains to support the delivery of autism specific training as well as CALM (Crisis Aggression Limitation Management) to ensure continued professional development for staff on the ground.

Core Competencies

A complete review of the core competencies we expect from our staff has taken place and will affect every job role and function. This new framework will be used as a basis for reviewing performance, identifying development areas and in the recruitment and selection process.



Healthy Working Lives

Promoting health and wellbeing among the individuals who use our services is an integral part of what we do and this applies equally to our staff. To formalise our commitment and give ourselves a goal, we became involved in the Healthy Working Lives (HWL) initiative. It has been rewarding to see the dedication and interest from our HWL representatives across our regions and the effort displayed in highlighting the importance of health and wellbeing in the workplace.

We are delighted that Scottish Autism's service teams are all working towards a Healthy Working Lives award and that our Head Office and our services at New Ridgepark and in the West of Scotland have achieved Silver Healthy Working Lives awards, while our services in South West, Central and New Struan School have achieved Bronze.

Doing More

It is the generosity and commitment of individuals, groups and organisations who support our work that allows us to do more to improve the quality of life of individuals and families living with autism across Scotland.

"I don't think I would have been able to cope over the last few years without the advice line. I'm so grateful that I've got Scottish Autism's on-going support."
Molly, parent

Whether it is supporting families to try and make sense of the future after a diagnosis of autism or parents struggling with their child's transition to a teenager, we are here to help. Or, it may be an exciting playground development for pupils at New Struan School or new art resources or sensory room equipment – donations are what make it all possible.

THANK YOU to every single person and organisation that has made a donation and supported us over the last year. Here are some highlights:

Personal Donations

Mr and Mrs Mitchell from Haddington, generously donated £5,000 to fit out the sensory room at Parkside in Lothian.

"We were very impressed with all the staff at Parkside and Musselburgh and perhaps the sensory room will be of benefit to them in their jobs as well as the residents".
Mr and Mrs Mitchell

Andrew Dalgarno (right) ran the Big Fun Run in Aberdeen and his employer John Wood Group matched his funds to make over £1,400.

"I chose this charity as my son has Asperger's and so little is understood and dealing with it can be so hard."
Andrew Dalgarno

Corporate Giving

Scottish Law firm, Burness Paull raised over £18,000 by having charity breakfasts, lunches, a Burns Supper, sponsored cycles, runs, a zip slide across the River Clyde and an abseil down the Forth Rail Bridge.

Ion Concept's Team Innova in Edinburgh beat their previous record and raised over £3,500 by running, cycling and quizzing.

Team Effort

A huge thank you to all the teams (from Orkney to the Borders) who took part in the Nessie Swim Challenge and swam the length of Loch Ness (22 miles) in their local swimming pool.

A special thank you to Rachel and Jane Hook who raised £640 and to Barr and Wray Ltd. in Glasgow for their generous donation. It was a great team effort from staff and service users too and in total the challenge raised over £4,500!

Volunteers

Volunteers across Scotland give their time and energy to find unique ways to raise money for Scottish Autism – we say THANK YOU to them all!



Doing More

Trusts and Foundations

Throughout the year, donations from trusts and foundations have helped us to fund a variety of initiatives including:

- **Services** – Providing a much needed social group for adults with autism in the Central Scotland area.
- **Research** – Appointing our Researcher in Residence to deliver a programme of Practitioner Research.
- **Technology** – Funding has allowed us to strengthen and improve Right Click, our online support programme for parents and carers. We have also been able to purchase iPads for individuals who use our services in Fife.
- **Art Therapy** – We continue to provide art therapy sessions at our services in the West of Scotland. Donations from trusts and foundations have been used to pay for an art therapist and art materials.
- **Healthy Living** – A sensory garden in Fife, a cycle shelter at New Struan School and cookery classes at our Hamilton service are just some of the healthy living initiatives we have been able to provide.

Without such generous support these projects, and many others, would not have been possible.

The impact that the funding from trusts and foundations makes cannot be underestimated and we would like to extend a huge THANK YOU to the following for their support:

Alexander Moncur Trust
Andrew Paton's Charitable Trust
Blair Foundation
Celtic Charity Fund
Children's Aid (Scotland) Ltd
Cruden Foundation Limited
Harold Merton Adams Trust
James Wood Bequest Fund
John Watson's Trust
Leeds Building Society Charitable Foundation
Lord Rosebery Charitable Trust
Miss A M Pilkington Charitable Trust
Miss E C Hendry's Charitable Trust
Miss Marion Broughton's Charitable Trust
Miss P M Ireland Charitable Trust
Mrs Maxwell Stuart Charitable Trust
Northwood Charitable Trust
People's Postcode Trust
South Lanarkshire Council Renewable Energy Fund
South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership Leader Programme
The Albert Hunt Trust
The AMW Charitable Trust
The Appletree Trust
The Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust
The Binks Trust
The Brian Maguire Charitable Trust
The Brownlie Charitable Trust
The Dunclay Charitable Trust
The Enzo Londei Trust
The Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust
The Hugh Fraser Foundation
The James Weir Foundation
The JTH Charitable Trust
The Leng Charitable Trust
The M V Hillhouse Trust
The Mackintosh Foundation
The Margaret Murdoch Charitable Trust
The Martin Connell Charitable Trust
The Moffat Charitable Trust
The Oliver Ford Charitable Trust
The Peter Brough Bequest Fund
The R S Macdonald Charitable Trust
The Ronald Miller Foundation
The Row Fogo Charitable Trust
The Sir James Miller Edinburgh Trust
The Templeton Goodwill Trust
The W A Cargill Fund
Walton Foundation
Western Recreation Trust
William Grant & Sons Distillers Ltd

Growth Summary

In 2012-13 income from fees from core Charitable Activities increased by 5.9% from £19.2m to £20.3m. This growth reflected the first full year of services in Moray, the start of the new service in Orkney and elements of service growth in other areas of Autism Services.

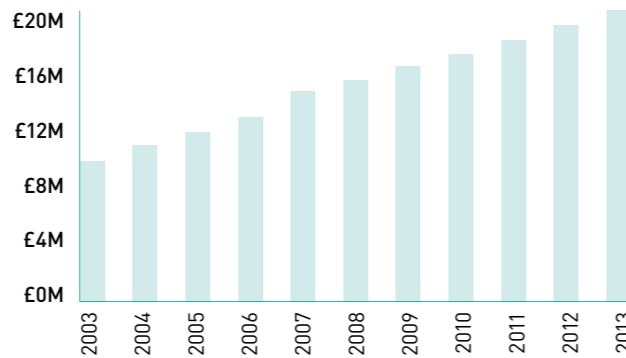
Head Office income also showed growth in the year through grant-funded work under the Scottish Government's Strategy for Autism. In Education Services pupil numbers fell year-on-year with a consequent reduction in fee income. Resources expended on Charitable Activities increased by 7.5% to £19.8m compared to £18.5m. This was ahead of the growth in fee income and reflects the continued need to absorb cost inflation in an environment of frozen fee rates. Fundraising income fell by 12.3% to £340k, with costs flat at £234k.

Reserves continued to grow in the year, although at a slower rate reflecting the continuing challenging environment. In the year the organisation took the decision to authorise expenditure from historic reserves in order to increase resources in the autism support team, the learning and development team and to support investment in maintaining the property portfolio. Expenditure in these areas will commence in 2013-14.

Staff Growth



Ten Year Growth Income



Our Board 2012-13

Dr. Paul Prescott	Ian McPhail
Alison Leask	Colette Robertson
Fiona Greig	Cathy Scott
Susan Clark	Andrew Lester
Jill Robinson	Kenneth Wardrop

Senior Management

Alan Somerville Chief Executive Officer	Sharon Stewart Director of Human Resources
Gordon Laidlaw Director of Finance and IT	Charlene Tait Director of Development
Jackie Latto Director of Autism Services	

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