

# ANNUAL REPORT



## 2016

 **Autism plus**  
ADDING VALUE TO LIVES

# CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

2015/16 has been a difficult year for the sector with increasing pressure on public sector finances and a resulting downward pressure on fees. The social care sector has experienced further pressure as a result of the former Chancellor's announcement regarding the introduction of the National Living Wage (NLW).



We have argued for many years that our front line care staff are underpaid and so the announcement was warmly received. However, the cost of implementing this increase has hit our sector hard given that the bulk of our costs relate to staff. Whereas, in other sectors, employers may be able to mitigate the impact of the NLW (for example by raising prices and cutting costs), our pricing and our staff ratios are set by the public sector. This means that our ability to increase our revenue is extremely limited and we also have very little flexibility with regard to the cost of providing care, particularly as reducing the quality of that care is unacceptable. Social care is unique in this regard and it is hoped that the government will realise the additional burden this places on providers such as us over the next four year period (as NLW continues to rise to its full rate) and will make sufficient funding available, particularly as local authorities seem to be unable, or unwilling to do so.

Our performance during the year has resulted in a loss of £57,248. This includes the cost of the management restructure which was undertaken which had a negative impact on our performance this year but will be to the long term benefit of the organisation. Given the above pressures on our business I believe the management team have worked extremely hard, both in maintaining the quality of our provision and in mitigating the risk of further losses.

In line with FRS 102 we have undertaken a valuation on the Exchange Brewery (as of 31 March 2016) resulting in an increase value of 97% over the initial purchasing price. The revaluation of this asset has contributed to a positive adjustment in the accounts for the year 2014/15 increasing the surplus from £138,052 to £367,305. As the accounts for the year 2014/15 were filed last year this adjustment has been noted and approved by the board in this year's accounts.

Our operational performance has remained on track and our core business has benefited from a number of improvements in management and systems. I am delighted to report that we have received a consistent level of 'Good' ratings from the Care Quality Commission during the year. We are committed to striving for continuous improvement across the service.

During the year our Chief Executive took on the Chairmanship of the Hidden Impairments National Group (HING) and joined the Westminster Commission for Autism that will publish its first report during the summer entitled 'barriers to health'.

I would like to thank all our staff and my colleagues on the board for their tireless efforts during the year.

Charles Lindsay  
Chairman  
Autism Plus Limited

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The year 2015/16 has been another year of challenge and opportunity. The changes introduced to our business are beginning to have a positive impact in terms of driving up quality standards and by way of the introduction of new and exciting enterprises.

Our core care business has held up well despite the downward pressure on cost as a consequence of austerity measures and the squeeze on public sector budgets by central government. The government needs to recognise that social care is in crisis and providers are rapidly running short of resources and cannot continue to prop up loss making services. The underfunding of social care, if not addressed urgently will have an adverse impact on the NHS that is itself in great difficulty. Whilst we welcome the merging of health and social care budgets the combination of two leaking pots into one bucket is a recipe for catastrophe.

In terms of quality, the introduction of external quality audits to supplement our internal processes has helped the front line staff to be better prepared for inspections by our regulatory body. This step together with a supreme effort by our staff and management team has led to a consistent level of 'Good' inspection gradings from the Care Quality Commission.

Our focus on meeting the needs of all service users and in supporting their families has led to many good news stories and complimentary comments from families and other stakeholders. Our new range of social enterprises are showing strong signs of gaining strength within a short period of time from their establishment. They will have an increasing future role to play in supporting our mission and will provide many opportunities for employment with support.

The days, weeks and months ahead will prove to be a challenge, but I remain confident in our ability to rise to the challenge, as we have in previous years by continuing to focus on driving up the quality of provision and in being innovative and creative when providing solutions to improve the lives of those we serve.

May I take this opportunity to thank all our staff, trustees and stakeholders for their unstinting support and dedication. I look forward to working with you all in the year ahead.

With best wishes

Philip Bartey  
Group Chief Executive  
Autism Plus and The Adsetts Partnership



# OUR VISION

To create the capability to provide a Model of Excellence that is distinctive, innovative and progressive in meeting the needs of people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. We seek to extend our capability by attracting other specialist players to join us to broaden and diversify provision in terms of other disabilities in a holistic and inclusive way.



# OUR MISSION

To provide innovative and Person Centred solutions for people with ASD and other disabilities irrespective of where and how they live, to improve their quality of life and to extend and exercise their rights to access more control over their lives.



# THE PLUS FACTOR

A group of passionate parents founded Autism Plus 29 years ago, bound by a common cause: wanting the very best for their children who all had autism. Together the parents established a small community for their children to live together. Word of this new service spread and more and more people joined them, all with a shared vision of wanting the best for their children. 29 years later we are now a leading Yorkshire charity, supporting adults and young people with autism and complex conditions.

A decade ago we changed our name in recognition of the 70% of people with autism who have co-occurring conditions and disabilities, and to better reflect the range of additional intervention and support we offer. The Plus Factor is our commitment and focus in making a difference in someone's life, to continuously improve what we do, use person centred approaches and offer real progression routes for the individuals we support.



*As we look to next year and celebrate 30 years of Adding Value to Lives, our ethos remains same - to support autistic and disabled people on a 'whole life' basis to gain more control over their lives.*

# OUR YEAR



We hosted 'Think Autism' a regional conference for Yorkshire & Humber, to discuss the progress against the National Adults Autism Strategy and look at how as a region we can share good practice.



*"The training provided by Autism Plus to our team previously was the start of a major culture shift within the museum that has led us to where we are now"*  
Kelham Island, Sheffield following our training course in autism awareness.



Our weekly lunch clubs in Hull provided 3,120 meals to vulnerable people.



We reached out to 155 older people living with dementia in Kirklees through our Dementia Reading Friend group.



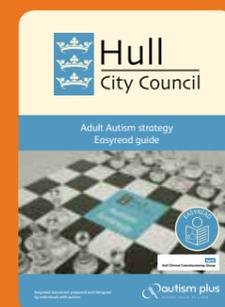
Our Chief Executive, Philip Bartey became a member of the Westminster Commission for Autism.



31,147 visits to our website

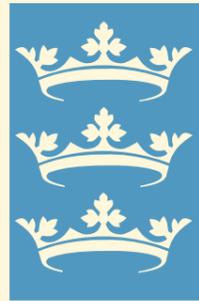
Our carbon footprint - through solar panels at our head office in Sheffield we saved 10,024.9kg of CO2 emissions.

We supported 530 people to live more independent lives.



We worked with Hull City Council to design the Hull autism strategy, a member of staff who has Aspergers designed the document.

# UNDERSTANDING AUTISM



Hull  
City Council

Adult Autism strategy  
Easyread guide



Easyread document prepared and designed  
by individuals with autism

Autism plus  
ADDING VALUE TO LIVES

Our Training Enterprise team has been working closely with local authorities over the past couple of years on the implementation of the National Adults Autism Strategy. We have supported local authorities to understand the needs of local people and to ensure that local strategies reflect these needs. We were delighted to work closely with Hull City Council and Nik Fenning in our marketing team to develop an autism friendly easy read version of Hull Adults Autism Strategy.

In addition to writing and developing the easy read strategy we ran consultation events across Hull asking local people if the strategy fully reflected their needs.



”FIRST ROUTES IS AT THE HEART OF OUR PROGRESSION  
TOWARDS CONFIDENCE BUILDING AND EMPLOYMENT”

Luke started accessing support from the Autism Plus Community service in 2013 following a difficult transition from school into adulthood. By 2015 Luke had spent 18 months with the Community support team building his confidence and life skills, it was then that decided he felt confident enough to begin looking for a job. He was certain of two things – he wanted a job and the job he wanted was to drive! First Routes began supporting Luke by helping to increase his confidence, preparation for interviews, and focusing on identifying the types of roles available. Together, Luke and First Routes began discussing what he was looking for in a job, including what he wasn't looking for! They came across an advert for a part time job at a Rotherham charity driving a mini bus for people with disabilities, he decided to apply for the job and he not only secured an interview - he got the job.

The one to one support from First Routes meant Luke was able to increase his skills and confidence and finally realise his ambition of finding a job.

## SUPPORTING MORE PEOPLE TO MOVE TOWARDS MORE INDEPENDENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

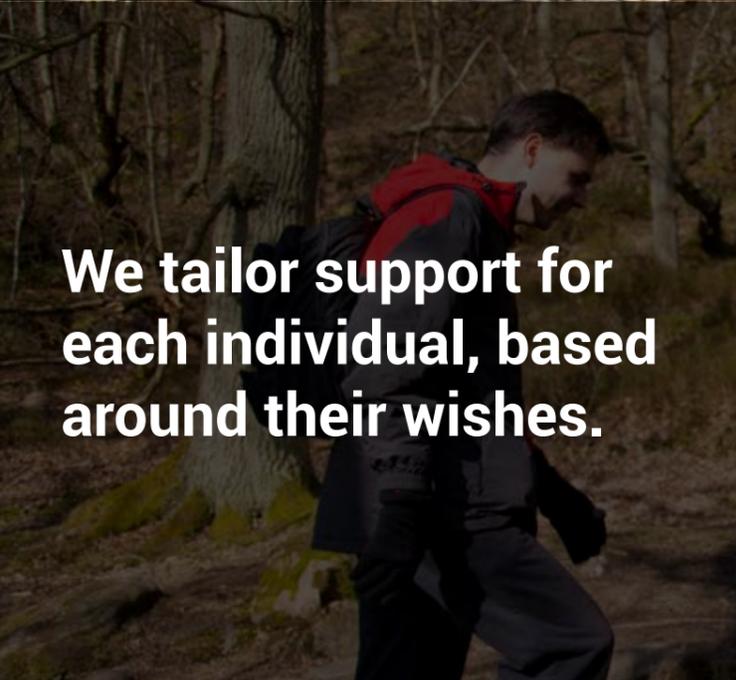
We employed five individuals with autism to co-deliver training in autism to 403 people. This means that more people and more companies have better understanding about autism and the daily issues people with autism face. Our First Routes programme is specialist employment support designed to help increase confidence and employability skills. Many people with autism are able to, and want to work. First Routes help people find the right job and offer support to both the individual and the employer. The First Routes programme is available to anyone accessing support at Autism Plus or can be funded through direct payments, social care packages or many people decide to self-fund.

In 2015/16 the First Routes programme supported seven people into work placements, six people into volunteering roles and three people into paid jobs. Being able to find the right job or gain work experience can have an incredible impact on an individuals confidence and self-esteem, so we continue to work with employers to raise awareness of autism in the workplace and hope to create more opportunities for people with autism.



## We added value to lives

Our social enterprises offer exciting, supported routes to employment. We offer a choice of vocational and administration placements so individuals can choose which industry they would like to work in.



We tailor support for each individual, based around their wishes.



We focus on empowering people to make choices and live their lives independently.

IF YOU FIND A JOB YOU LOVE THEN YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORK A DAY IN YOUR LIFE

SARAH BARTON, PROGRAMME FACILITATOR



My name is Sarah Barton. I have worked at Autism Plus for six years. I work in a small team as a Programme Facilitator, supporting four people who have autism and disabilities at Ashcroft Lodge. I have supported Sally since I started. Sally has autism and Rett syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that affects brain development - she is unable to speak or sign, so right from the beginning I knew that I would need to do my very best to get to know Sally, to understand her needs and how best I could help her live her life as independently as possible.

We're looking forward to celebrating Sally's 40th birthday next year, and later this year we're planning to attend the Rett UK roadshow in Liverpool. There really is something special about my job: to have the privilege of making a real difference in someone's life and helping that person to live their life the way they want to, it doesn't get much better than that.



# NEXT STEPS

Our work is about helping people to make choices and live independently. This often focuses on taking 'next steps' from learning new life skills to beginning a journey into employment.

Most of the people we support have a diagnosis of autism and a co-occurring condition, so it is important for us to understand how each condition affects the individual, to enable us to provide the best possible support.

The first step for many people once a support system is in place is increasing confidence and life skills. This can be from beginning to make choices and important decisions in their life to getting out in the local community and meeting new people.

**“The fact that my son is able to choose who works with him is very valuable, and makes him feel independent.”**



# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

As part of our holistic support we focus on health and wellbeing and promote healthy lifestyle choices. Socialising and forming relationships can have a positive impact on an individuals wellbeing, so we encourage and promote being in the community and meeting people. In Doncaster we supported people to attend a weekly art therapy class at a local art group called Artistic Spectrum, students art work was exhibited at galleries in the region. A group also attended a creative animation course producing short films thanks to another local organisation called Breaking Beats.

Thanks to funding from Kirklees Council we ran a social club for individuals with autism and Aspergers in Dewsbury and Huddersfield. We reached out to 29 people who were previously feeling isolated in their communities.

155 people attended Dementia Reading Friend groups in Kirklees, helping people living with dementia to stimulate memories and reduce social isolation.

In Sheffield we ran a weekly music group called Drumlines, which was open to anyone with a disability. Drumlines enabled people with an interest in music to come together as a percussion ensemble, expressing themselves through music.

We ran an eight week RHS accredited course called Grow to Sell, at our enterprise Beanstalk Gardens offering young people the chance to find out more about business and working in horticulture.

In Sheffield our disability friendly gym, Access Fitness was accessed by 240 people with disabilities during the year, meaning more disabled people were able to exercise in a safe environment.

We opened a sensory library with thanks to funding from Sheffield City Council and the Autism Innovation Fund. The library was accessed by 43 people who required help in sensory processing, who were able to choose suitable items to take home and trial.

60 disabled people attended our lunch clubs in East Hull which offered nutritional, healthy meals in a social setting. The lunch clubs help to reduce isolation and reach out to people in the community.

## Income

Care Services £8,487,190  
Generated Funds £236,767  
Total £8,741,957

## Expenditure

Care Services £8,755,594  
Cost of operating charity shops £241,634  
Total £8,997,228

## Trustees

C D Lindsay (Chairman)

P J Briggs

Bishop P Burrows

– Resigned 14 July 2014

Professor S M Johnson

– Resigned 29 February 2016

V J Lindsay

I D Oldroyd

P Price

J P Robinson

A D Scott-Jones

D Deasey

– Appointed 12 January 2016

S Fletcher

– Appointed 1 December 2015

Group Chief Executive

P Bartey

Other Senior Staff

J Willcock

Director of Northern Regional Services

T Todd

Director of Finance and Resources

Julie Abbott

Development Director



We would like to thank the following for their support through the year:

## Charitable Trusts

Albert Hunt Trust  
Basil Samuel Charitable Trust  
Blakemore Foundation  
Disability Sports Development Trust  
Fernhurst Trust  
JG Graves Charitable Trust  
May Hearnshaw Trust  
Michael Marks Charitable Trust  
Mitie  
Music Matters  
Peter Sowerby Foundation  
Ryedale District Council  
Sheffield Ward Pot  
The Calmcott Trust  
W G Edwards Charitable Foundation



## Corporate Supporters

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Paycare  
Sheffield Bluecoat and Mount Pleasant  
Tesco  
Waitrose  
Webmart



## Groups

Sheffield Christmas Tree Festival

## Fundraisers and individual donors

Mr Chris Lindsay and family  
Mrs Beale  
Ms A M Cavill  
Paul Yu  
Sally Wheelhouse  
Michael Eversham and family



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It has been printed, trimmed and packaged by individuals with autism and learning disabilities from our print hub at Thorne, South Yorkshire.