AUTISTICA

England & Wales · Charity number 1107350

Details

Other names	NAAR (UK), NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR AUTISM RESEARCH (UK), AUTISM SPEAKS
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	05184164
Registered	2004-12-20
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Suite B 6 Honduras Street London EC1Y 0TH
Phone	02038574340
Email	info@autistica.org.uk
Website	http://www.autistica.org.uk/

Activities

Objects: TO ADVANCE EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM, INCLUDING BY (1) THE PROMOTION, FACILITATION AND SUPPORT OF RESEARCH INTO ALL ASPECTS OF AUTISM AND (2) THE DISSEMINATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS, SO AS TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS REGARDING ALL ASPECTS OF AUTISM;TO FURTHER THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF AUTISTIC PEOPLE, BY PROVIDING THEM WITH TRAINING, COURSES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK EXPERIENCE AND BY THE PROVISION (TO EMPLOYERS AND AUTISTIC PEOPLE) OF TRAINING AND FACILITIES TO ENABLE AUTISTIC PEOPLE TO ACQUIRE AND DEVELOP SKILLS SO AS TO ENHANCE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKPLACE;TO ADVANCE HEALTH AND RELIEVE SICKNESS, INCLUDING BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS, INTERVENTIONS AND RESOURCES TO IMPROVE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG AUTISTIC PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES;THE FURTHERANCE OF ANY OTHER CHARITABLE PURPOSE WHICH OPERATES TO BENEFIT AUTISTIC PEOPLE AS THE TRUSTEES IN THEIR ABSOLUTE DISCRETION SEE FIT.

Activities: We are the UK's leading autism research and campaigning charity. Our Mission is to create breakthroughs that enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives. We do this through

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research, shaping policy and working with autistic people to make more of a difference.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability
- **Who:** People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** NOT DEFINED. IN PRACTICE WORLDWIDE.
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£1,845,400	£2,509,590	£1,981,255	30
2024-03-31	£2,995,880	£1,900,053	£2,645,445	21
2023-03-31	£1,543,626	£1,797,914	£1,549,618	21
2022-03-31	£1,501,242	£1,497,067	£1,830,862	24
2021-03-31	£2,011,577	£1,591,119	£1,784,801	18

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Stephen James Boyle	Chair	2021-03-18
Caroline Copley		2024-02-22
James Feeney		2024-02-22
Katharine Harle		2024-02-22
Katherine Anne Hudson		2021-03-18
Lynn Hawkins		2022-02-08
Peter George Dilnot		2023-05-09
Professor Anna Michelle Remington		2024-09-19
Professor William Polmear Locke Mandy		2024-09-19

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AUTISTICA

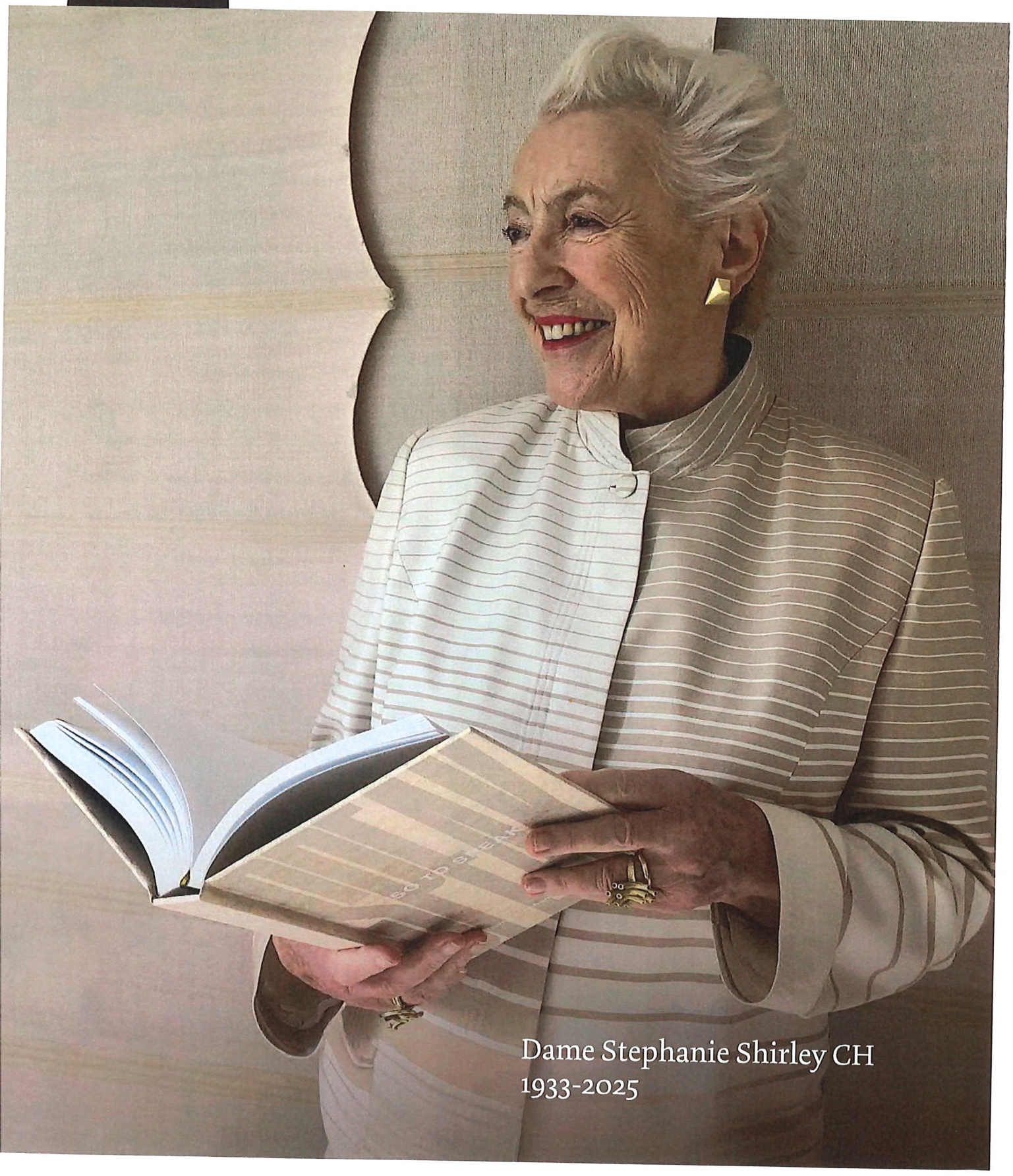
England & Wales - Charity number 1107350

Accounts

Autistica funds research, shapes policy and works with autistic people to make more of a difference

Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2025
Company no. 05184164

autistica



Dame Stephanie Shirley CH
1933-2025



Dame Stephanie Shirley CH 1933-2025

Our incredible founder Dame Stephanie Shirley sadly died in August this year. We knew her as 'Steve', the nickname she used in order to be taken seriously in the masculine world of technology where she made her fortune. Motivated by the needs of her autistic son, Giles, Steve set up three autism charities: Priors Court - a school, and Autism at Kingwood - supported living for adults. Realising the need for evidence to drive change, she founded Autistica in 2004. She remained deeply engaged with our work until her death.

Everyone at Autistica is immensely proud to have Steve as our founder. Her values and beliefs are embedded in our charity and drive our commitment to innovative problem solving, acting with urgency and embracing difference. She leaves behind an incredible legacy for autistic people and their families that will continue to change lives for generations to come.

We have published a full tribute to her life and philanthropic work on our website.

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Our trustees, honorary supporters and leaders help make our vision a reality by overseeing and managing all of the charity's life-saving and life-changing work.

Honorary roles

President
Dame Stephanie Shirley CH

Trustees

Chair
Stephen Boyle

Honorary Treasurer
James Feeney

Matthew Harris (retired as Treasurer in November 2024)

Caroline Copley

Matthew Davies (retired May 2024)

Peter Dilnot

Professor Jonathan Green (retired November 2024)

Katharine Harle

Lynn Hawkins

Katherine Hudson

Professor Will Mandy (appointed September 2024)

Professor Anna Remington (appointed September 2024)

Charity management

Chief Executive Officer
Dr James Cusack

Director of External Affairs
(On maternity leave June 2024 – April 2025)
Rebecca Sterry

Interim Director of External Affairs
(June 2024 – April 2025)
Analiese Jackson

Director of Income Generation
Jennie Chambers

Director of Research
Dr Amanda Roestorf

Director of Finance
(On maternity leave November 2024 - present)
Joanne Merchant

Interim Director of Finance
(November 2024 – present)
Alexandra Haxton

Auditors

Azets Audit Services, First Floor, River House,
1 Maidstone Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 5RH

Bankers

Metro Bank, One Southampton Row,
London WC1B 5HA

Registered office

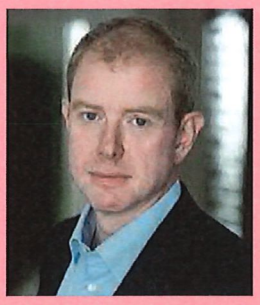
Suite B, 6 Honduras Street,
London EC1Y 0TH

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autistica.org.uk

Charity registration no. 1107350
Company registration no. 05184164

Statement from the Chair

The charity celebrated its 20th anniversary this year. This is an amazing milestone, and one that helps us to look at the progress we have made, and the growth we have seen in that time. To have transformed from a small research funder into one of the top 4% of charities in the UK is a major feat given the challenges faced by the sector in recent years. As a major player, we now have the ability to drive funding and influence policy more than ever before.



"We need to hold the course and focus on what works. That means trusting in evidence-backed solutions, not easy short-term answers."

Stephen Boyle

All the Autistica board and team were deeply saddened by the recent loss of Dame Stephanie Shirley, our inspirational founder, long-term supporter and biggest cheerleader. Steve lived an amazing life as a refugee, entrepreneur and philanthropist, and I highly recommend reading her eye-opening 2012 memoir Let It Go for the details.

On a personal note, I remain very grateful for the support and advice she gave me when I became chair and, like the rest of the team, for the memories and good wishes many of our supporters have shared since her death. She remains an inspiration to us, and we will continue the work she started with pride.

The last year saw some changes on the board, as several longstanding trustees reached the end of their terms of office, but I am extremely proud of the calibre of the new trustees who have joined us, reflecting Autistica's ever-stronger reputation and the impact of the team's work on the 2030 Goals. But one thing has not changed: the trustees and I remain committed to supporting the team as it develops scientifically-backed solutions to make life better for all autistic people in the UK.

We welcomed two highly respected autism academics as trustees; Professor Will Mandy and Professor Anna Remington. They have taken over from Professor Jonathan Green who retired in November. I'd like to thank Jonathan for his dedication to the Board, and for helping to drive forward our scientific ambitions over many years. Increasing the scientific skillset on the Board will provide us with the skills and experiences that we need in order to support James and the team in delivering the 2030 goals.

Trustee Matt Davies retired from the Board in May 2024 after six years supporting us with our campaigning and communications work. His experience and networks have been invaluable in growing our brand and public awareness.

Finally, we also welcomed our new treasurer James Feeney, who has been taking over from Matthew Harris since early 2024. Matthew has been an excellent treasurer, and steered us through some challenging financial times, including the pandemic, leaving us in a strong position going forward.

By contrast, the Autistica team is settled, and is making excellent progress towards delivering our contribution to the 2030 Goals. These Goals are now well-established and the path to solving the challenges they pose is clear. So too are our values as an organisation. We want all autistic people to have the same chances in life as their neurotypical friends and families. I have never felt more confident in Autistica's ability to find good solutions for all autistic people, and I remain hugely proud of the progress we are making.

But as we enter the second half of the decade amidst political change here in the UK and elsewhere, as a society we need to hold the course and focus on what works. That means trusting in evidence-backed solutions, not easy short-term answers. And it means each of us playing our part to implement those solutions. It's not enough to know what to do: we need to do it.

Stephen Boyle
Chair of Trustees

Statement from the CEO

Seeing our Goal plans come to life this year is very exciting. Over one hundred companies across the UK are now making changes to their employment practices following their participation in the Neurodiversity Employers Index (NDEI®). And thousands of autistic people, families and professionals are using the Autistica Tips Hub to learn more about autism, themselves and their loved ones.



"It has felt necessary to have a strong voice this year on a number of issues that affect the lives of autistic people."

Dr James Cusack

Our team has been crucial to these successes, as has the shared culture that we have established over recent years. We embrace diverse expertise, we challenge to find solutions and we act with urgency. We will continue to lead by example as a neuroinclusive employer.

We have also played a vital role in a large number of external projects this year, lending our expertise to help research projects to have a greater impact, or to ensure research is at the heart of non-academic endeavors, such as collaborations with other autism charities. You can read more about these in the Research section of this report.

It has felt necessary to have a strong voice this year on a number of issues that affect the lives of autistic people. The dangerous narratives around 'overdiagnosis' of autism that we have heard from the US government, and certain members of our own administration have made headlines this year and lack a real understanding of the facts. There are over 200,000 people on the waiting list for a diagnosis in the UK, and we want to help the government to find a way to address the backlog, and most importantly to provide evidence-based support to those who desperately need it. This will be a focus for us over the next year.

We continue to be grateful to the trusts and foundations that support our work, often over multiple years which allows us to plan, design and launch projects with real impact. I'd also like to thank the loyal donors who enable our work to happen through regular gifts or as members of the 2030 Club. This year we also received a record level of pro-bono support thanks to our relationships with creative agencies, advertising companies, and consultancy firms. This external expertise is invaluable as a small charity for ensuring best practice and growing our public profile.

As we head into 2026, our vision of a happy, healthy, long life for autistic people is looking more tangible than ever before. But these are challenging times, and we need to continue to bang the drum for evidence to ensure that this progress actually benefits autistic people.

Dr James Cusack
Chief Executive Officer

At Autistica, research is at the heart of everything that we do. We know that it has the potential to transform everyday lives by making sure that treatments, support and services work for autistic people.

Because right now autistic people face far too many inequalities. Most autistic children and adults wait years for a diagnosis, and when they finally receive one, there is little, if any, appropriate support. They experience avoidable challenges throughout education and face low rates of employment. They are more likely to have poor mental health and physical health throughout their lives. And negative attitudes and inaccessible environments can leave many feeling like they just don't fit into this world.

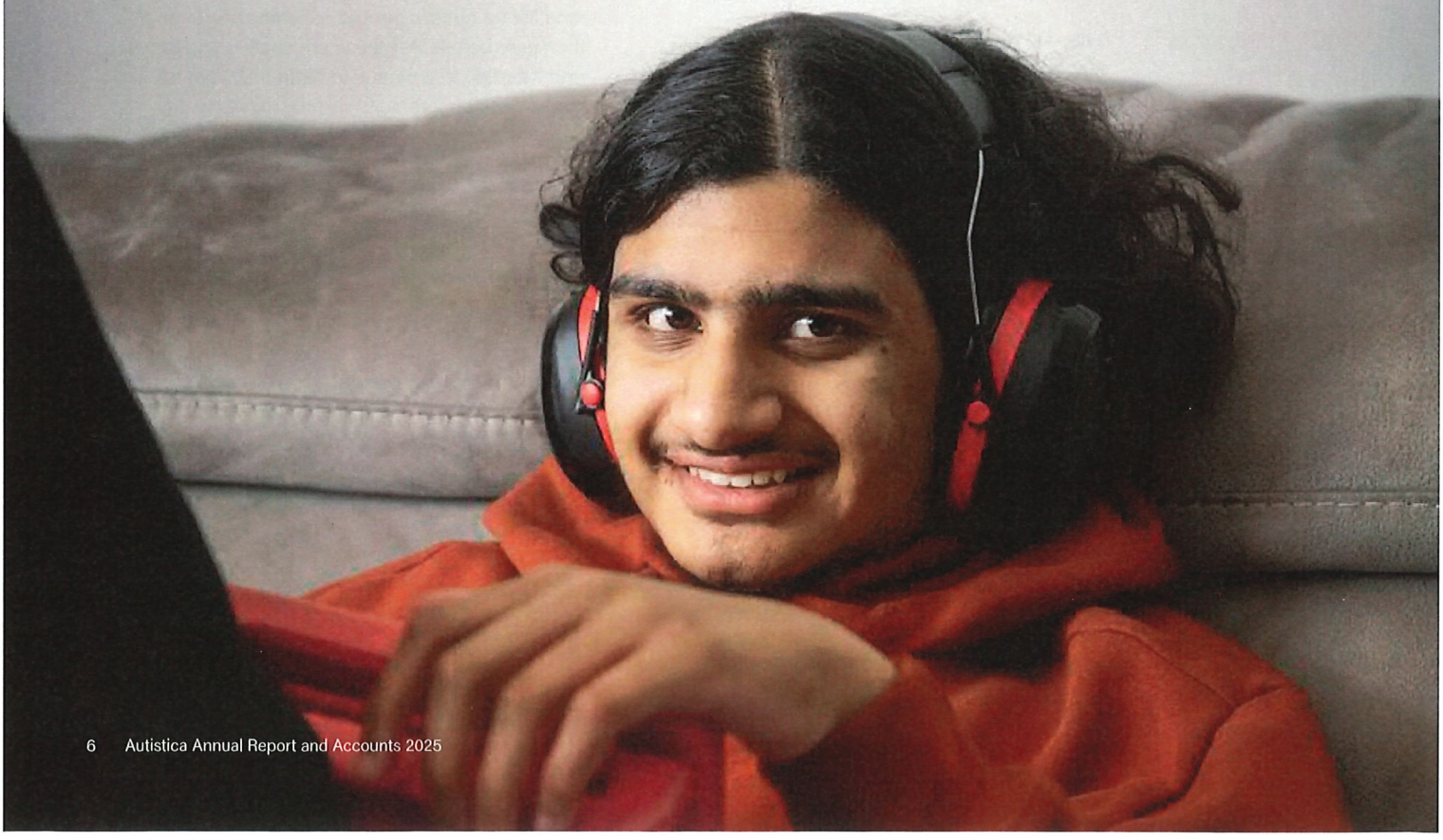
But it doesn't have to be this way.

We have six Goals for 2030 that set out our vision of a different world; one where autistic people can access the right support, live in an inclusive and accepting world, and find fulfilling and sustainable work. These goals are not only visionary and ambitious; they are also achievable.

Research and the development of evidence-based solutions is at the core of each of these goals, but so too is working in partnership and campaigning for change. Autistica works in partnership not only to achieve a step change in the amount of resource focused on autism research, but also to ensure that research funding is directed to the areas of greatest need. We act as the bridge between autistic people, the research community and other funders of autism science.

We also work with key partners in positions of influence over policy and execution to make sure that the evidence generated by the research we support is put into action. Because research without implementation can never result in impact.

Our unique approach is driven by and developed with autistic people and families. It can and will make more of a difference for autistic people in both the short and long term.



Our vision, mission, values and goals

Our vision

is a world where every autistic person lives a happy, healthy, long life.

Our mission

is to create breakthroughs that enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

We do this by funding research, shaping policy and working with autistic people to make more of a difference.

Our Goals

By 2030:

all autistic people will have proven **support from day one**

the **employment rate** for autistic people will double

autistic people will have proven treatments for **anxiety**

public spaces will be more accessible for neurodivergent people

every autistic adult will be offered a yearly, tailored **health check**

attitudes to autistic people will change

Our values

We embrace diverse expertise

- Our team are **diverse** and we support them to be the best they can be.
- We collaborate as a team and with a wide range of stakeholders, always including autistic people.
- We believe that diversity of thought and experience is the only way we can make real and lasting change.

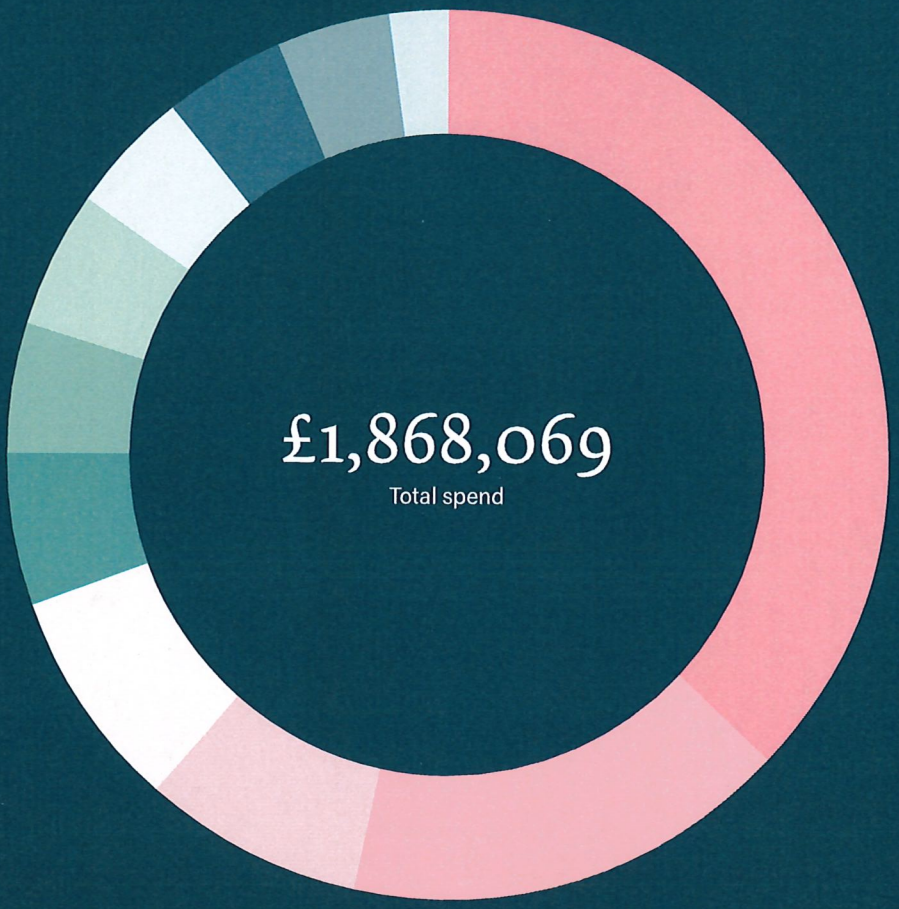
We challenge to find solutions

- We speak up when evidence suggests a need.
- We find solutions, however big or complex the problem.
- We influence change because we're trusted.

We act with urgency

- Research can take time, but that doesn't stop us from taking action now.
- We work hard, but efficiently.
- We are not afraid of taking risks and failure, we learn from it and move on quickly.
- We're driven by a shared aim of improving the world for autistic people.

2024-25 Charitable activities spend



£694,698
Changing attitudes about autism

£304,589
Support from day one

£150,407
Overheads and support

£148,081
Proven treatments for anxiety

£103,277
Doubling employment

£92,970
Governance

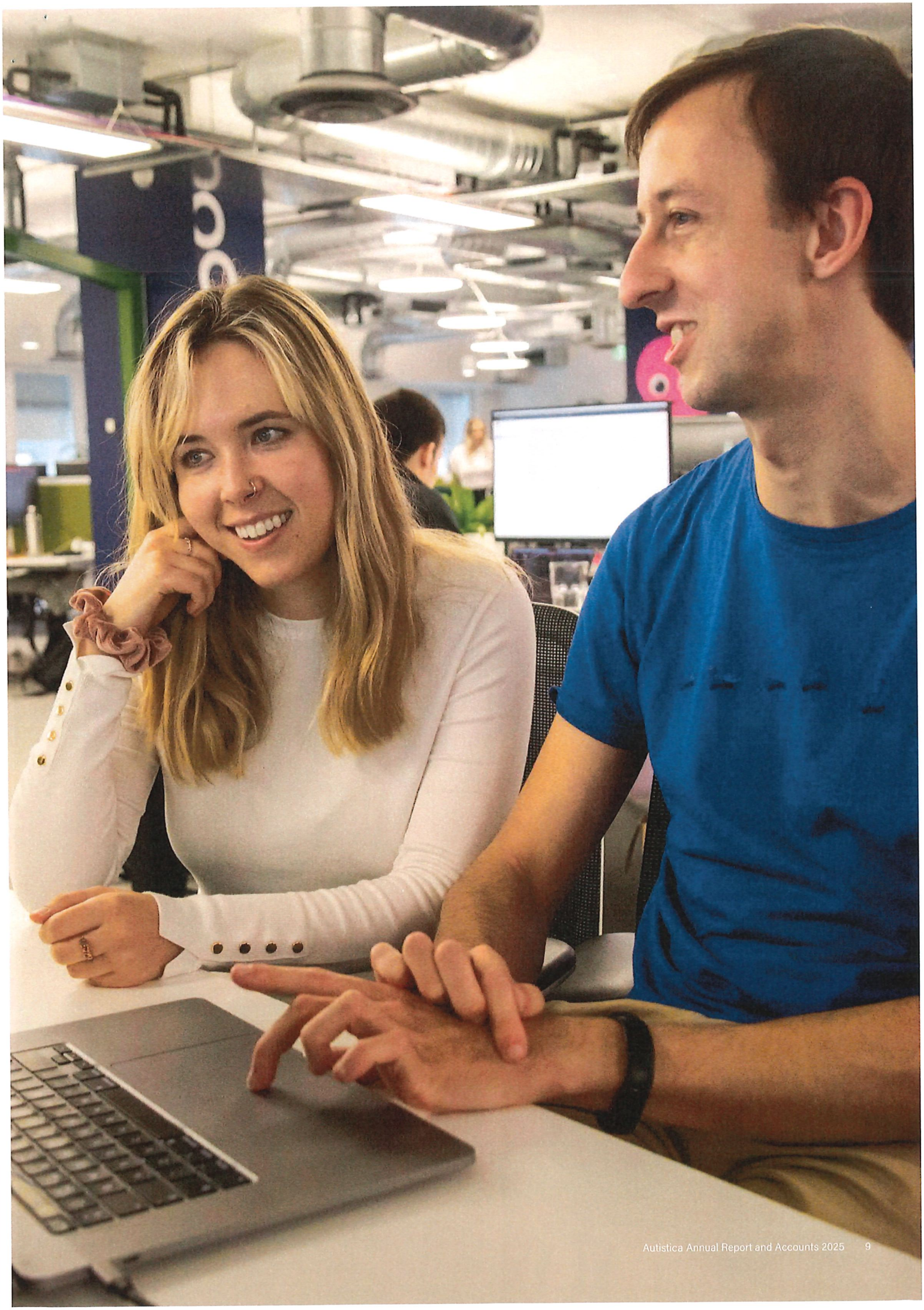
£91,246
Accessible public spaces

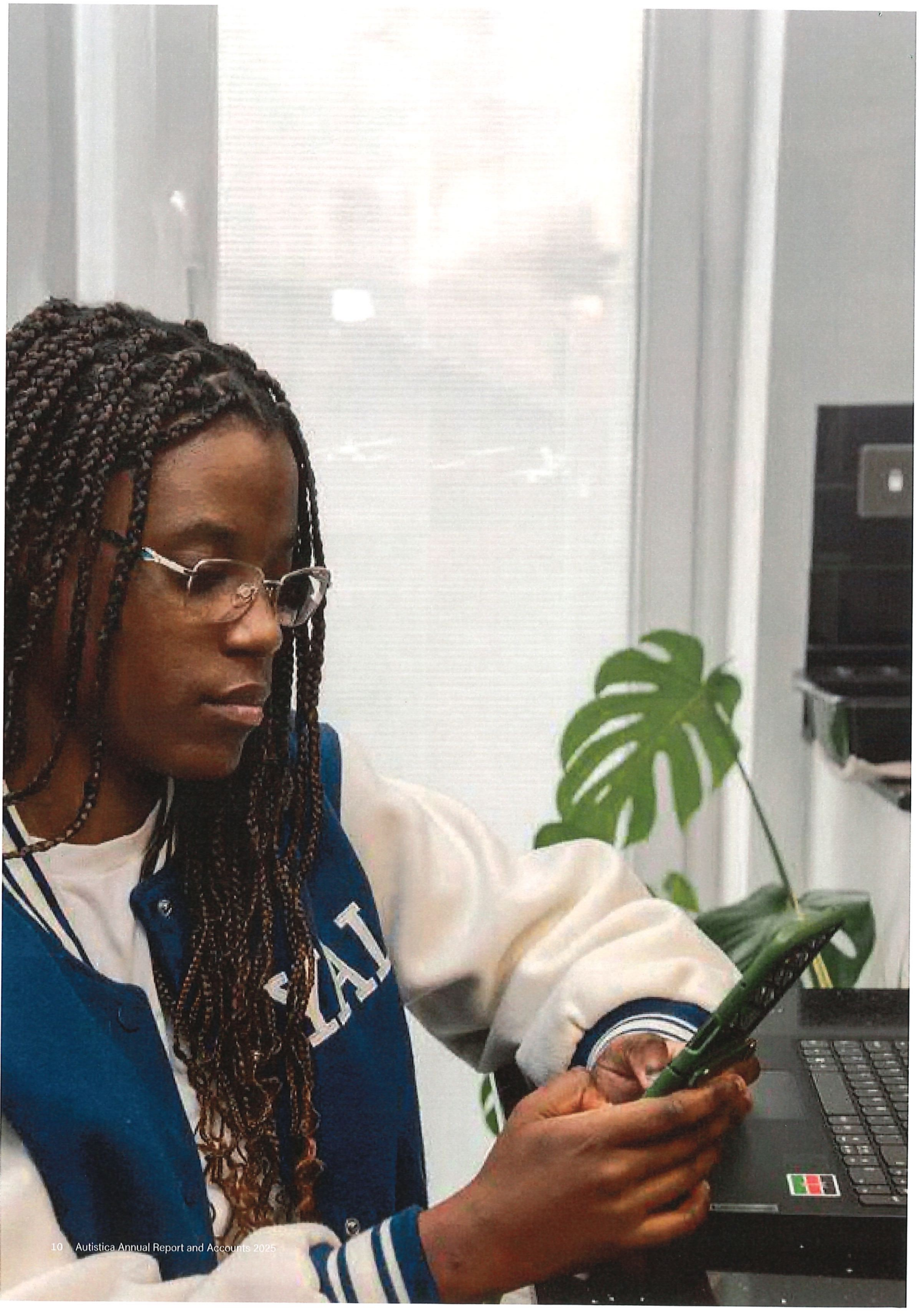
£83,018
Tailored annual health checks

£81,674
Research growth

£80,149
Public affairs & campaigns

£37,960
Embracing Complexity





Our 2030 Goals drive everything we do from research through to policy, campaigning and partnerships. Here is an overview of the progress we have made this year in these areas.

Meaningful, sustained employment

- The Neurodiversity Employers Index (the NDEI®) survey launched publicly in the summer of 2024 with 118 participating organisations of all sizes, spanning 10 different sectors.
- The findings which were published in the NDEI® Market report in December were widely publicised. The report revealed a number of insights including the proportion of companies that have a neuroinclusion strategy, reports of discrimination and the experiences of employees who request accommodations.

Making public spaces more accessible

- We have been working on a project with 650 autistic people and family members to understand the barriers to using public transport. A report of recommendations was released in May 2025 with significant engagement from transport companies across the UK.

Yearly, tailored health checks

- We are reaching the end of the trial of an annual GP health check for autistic people, co-funded by NHS England and led by Newcastle University. The results are due in late 2025.

Support from day one

- In December 2024, we launched the *Autistica Tips Hub*, a free app to help people find reliable autism tips and evidence-based resources. The community told us that searching for reliable information about autism online was often overwhelming. The Autistica Tips Hub features Everyday Tips, Professional Tips, and Mental Health and Wellbeing Tips. In the first three months the app had 2000 downloads.
- In October 2024 Autistica ran the report, *Not a Priority* which revealed a postcode lottery in autism diagnosis, with waiting lists reaching five and a half years in some areas. The process of requesting this information also highlighted a lack of information in many areas.

Proven treatments for anxiety

- We saw the successful launch of a research funding from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) which came out of the priority setting exercise we carried out in 2016 where anxiety was a top ten priority for autism research. This research aims to develop research into adapted Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for autistic adults.
- As part of the Autistica Tips Hub we have created a range of Mental Health and Wellbeing resources, for autistic people, their families and the professionals who support them.
- Our anxiety app *Molehill Mountain* remains a popular resource, supporting autistic people to learn about and manage their anxiety.

Changing attitudes to autism

- Our campaign, *see us as individuals, not stereotypes*, ran during World Autism Acceptance week across digital billboards, and on social media with an amusing look at common myths. We worked with autistic people to develop messaging that would have cut-through with a non-autistic audience, focusing on stereotypes including empathy, sense of humour and small talk.
- We brought on board three celebrity ambassadors this year to support our work to change public attitudes. This is in addition to a number of online influencers who help to amplify our messaging.

Our research

"Being involved in research has had a significantly positive impact on my mental health and my self-worth. It is so empowering, and I would recommend it to anybody!"

Josh who took part in a diagnosis research project at the University of Birmingham

How we make a difference (our charitable activity)

- We shape research, projects, services, society, and policy
- We fund research, and projects
- We deliver research, products, and insights
- We disseminate research information to key audiences

Autistica's 2030 Goals set out ambitious programmes of work to make a difference to the everyday lives, wellbeing, and life outcomes of autistic people and their families. The methods underpinning our mission aim to shape research, services, society, and policy to improve the lives of autistic people and their families. We fund and deliver high-quality research and projects, develop innovative products and insights, and ensure that research findings reach the audiences who can use them to drive change. Our work is guided by our 2030 Goals to create breakthroughs in areas that matter most to the autistic community. These goals require a combination of innovative solutions, and research-led approaches, and government investment to services and systems that support long-term change that delivers support for autistic people and families. To meet them, we continue to evolve our ways of working to be more agile, proactive, and collaborative.

Our research strategy is grounded in a clear theory of change and driven by our mission to enable autistic people to live happy, healthy, long lives. We achieve this through strategic partnerships, independent research governed by strong ethical standards, and a focus on policy impact. We fund work that is community-prioritised, unique, and excellent, delivered by our in-house team, through partnerships, and via grant funding of academic and clinical research innovations.

Research Funding and development

Over the past year, Autistica made significant progress across our 2030 Goals, reinforcing our commitment to ethical, high-quality, and community-driven research. As a charity, we raised £1.85m to deliver our 2030 Goals projects. This funding helped to support our commitments to research grants and delivering high quality research in-house through our expert research team. In 2024, we made more of a difference to support autistic people and families by addressing creating best practice guidance for diagnostic assessment pathways, providing evidence-based tools and resources for support from day one, creating neuroinclusive employment and workplaces, designing a framework for neuroinclusive mental health services, identifying barriers to public transport, and supporting research on tailored health checks for autistic adults. These are some highlights from key areas of our work.

NDEI® survey and Market Report

Following the successful early access trial in October 2023 to April 2024, we completed the first annual data collection of the NDEI® in summer 2024. Our NDEI® Market Report 2024 highlighted key findings from the employers and employees who participated, across 118 UK organisations. The organisations featured in that report employ between 5 and 30,000 people and span 10 different sectors.

From the 2024 data, we identified several differences between the experiences of neurodivergent employees compared to their neurotypical colleagues. Critically, it was revealed that:

- Only 30% of participating organisations have a clear neuroinclusion goal and strategy in place.
- Almost one in three (29%) participating neurodivergent employees have experienced discrimination in the workplace related to their neurodivergence.
- Neurodivergent employees are less likely to feel comfortable requesting accommodations than their neurotypical colleagues. Accommodations can make a crucial difference in a neurodivergent individual's chances of success in a role.
- There is a strong desire from employees to take part in neurodiversity specific training, so that they can better support their colleagues.

The reception to the NDEI® Market Report 2024 was overwhelmingly positive, with extensive online coverage. You can read more about this in the section "Communicating to empower and create change".

Launch of Autistica Tips Hub

In December 2024, we launched the Autistica Tips Hub for autistic people, families, and professionals. The Tips Hub is a free app designed with and for autistic people and professionals, designed to help people find reliable autism tips and evidence-based resources. The app was created to address a priority need of the neurodivergent community, that it's often overwhelming to find reliable information online, such as for understanding autistic strengths and challenges, finding post-diagnosis knowledge and support, understanding mental health and finding evidence-based tools to support everyday life.

The Tips Hub was designed with, and for, autistic people, their families and professionals who work with autistic people. What really sets this app apart from other resources is that it was co-designed with autistic people and families and focused on providing high-quality evidence-based information on priority topics identified by autistic people and families. The information is not just for the community, but also for professionals to improve knowledge, understanding and acceptance of autistic people and, ultimately, improve access to services and support.

The Tips Hub is the convergence of three smaller hubs into one convenient app. The content found in the Tips Hub has been created with three distinct audiences in mind:

- Everyday Tips, which have been created specifically for autistic people and their families and are focused on the topics that autistic people have told us matter most to them. Everyday Tips cover everything from diagnostic and post-diagnostic support, through to financial well-being and resilience, gaming, and resources that assist with activities that someone may face day-to-day.
- Professional Tips, which have been specifically created for professionals who support autistic people and their families. These tips are designed to help professionals to be more inclusive in their work and services and cover a range of topics to better understand autism.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Tips, for autistic people, their families and the professionals who support them. These tips are devised for people to better understand the complex challenges related to mental health and autism. This section includes proven tools and resources that can offer support or self-advocacy.

Partnerships – collaboration and commissioning funding

Our research partnerships remained strong, with 18 completed projects, 18 active ones, and over 30 grant applications submitted – leveraging a total value of £2.35m in research funding. Here are some of the key successes from our partnerships.

We advised London School of Economics (LSE), in collaboration with the Autism Alliance, to co-create a review of the economic costs of autism and publish a report on mitigations and interventions to better support health and wellbeing outcomes of autistic people and families.

We conducted a rapid systematic review of autism diagnostic screening and triage tools and created a guidance report, for NHSE, on the effective use and risks of these tools in autism assessment pathways.

Based on our 2017 James Lind Alliance research prioritisation, we saw the successful launch of a research funding call from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme. The funding aims to develop research to address "clinical and cost-effectiveness of a NICE-recommended high intensity cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) protocol which has been adapted for autistic adults compared to the un-adapted equivalent".

In partnership with the National Autistic Society, Autism Alliance, and Ambitious about Autism, we supported quality assurance evaluation and monitoring of the Autism Central Peer Educator Programme for Parents, Carers and Personal Assistants. The programme, in its third year of service delivery in 2024, has provided 1-2-1 and group sessions for over 10,000 families across the country.

Autistica network and insight group

Our research is powered by the insights, voices, experiences, and expertise of autistic and neurodivergent people, their families, and a wide range of professionals. This year, we've been inspired by the generosity and enthusiasm of those who have helped shape our work – whether by sharing lived experience, offering professional insight, or co-producing research with us.

We're especially grateful to our co-production partners, who played a vital role in shaping research design, delivery, and dissemination. Their input ensures our work remains grounded in real-world needs and priorities. Hundreds of autistic people and families took part in studies, shared feedback, and helped us build tools and resources that reflect what matters most to them. Together, this community continues to drive our mission forward, ensuring that everything we do is informed, inclusive, and impactful.

Research governance – our scientific review and expert review panels

To achieve our 2030 Goals, we know that how we work is just as important as what we work on. That's why we've continued to evolve our research approach by embracing agile, proactive, and innovative ways of working that allow us to respond to emerging needs and opportunities.

This year, we embedded new governance structures across both our in-house and externally funded research to ensure consistency, rigour, and alignment with our values. These frameworks are designed to uphold the highest standards of ethical practice, scientific excellence, and real-world relevance.

Our research is guided by a robust framework that includes independent expert advisors, governance steering groups, and lived experience involvement panels. These groups provide critical oversight and insight at every stage – from research design and delivery to dissemination – ensuring that our work is not only methodologically sound but also meaningful to the autistic community. Their role as independent peer reviewers has been instrumental in shaping our research, driving continuous improvement, and ensuring that every project we fund or deliver offers value for money, measurable impact, and a clear contribution to our long-term goals.

"I was diagnosed later in life and if I had this app when I'd been diagnosed I probably wouldn't have felt so alone and overwhelmed at the diagnosis."

Tips Hub user



"I'm beyond proud that my wife and I are now official Ambassadors for Autistica, the UK's leading autism research and campaigning charity.

Hopefully together we can try and change things to make sure the process becomes easier, families get the support they need, and kids can be comfortable being the people they truly are."

George Lewis,
Autistica Ambassador

We continue to work with government and NHS bodies to drive forward our 2030 Goals, and ensure they follow through on historic commitments that affect autistic people and families.

Driving public policy

This year, our original plan for engaging with the Government was completely turned on its head with the announcement of a snap election. The six-week timeframe between the start of the election campaigning period and election day itself meant that we needed to be reactive and ready to work with the incoming Government far faster than initially anticipated.

With the announcement of the newly elected Labour government bringing new opportunities to the table, Autistica proactively worked with The Autism Alliance UK, National Autistic Society, and Ambitious about Autism to create a joint submission to the 2024 Budget process led by the Treasury. This proposal called for the Government to prioritise autism in policy, reflecting the scale and significance of autism within the UK population, the unacceptable inequalities autistic people face, and the importance of positioning autistic people's experiences as the litmus test of public services. It also placed a great emphasis on the need for investment in 'what works' research led by the voices of autistic people.

Not A Priority: The crisis in autism assessment and support

In early 2024, Autistica made requests under the Freedom of Information Act to all 42 NHS Integrated Care Boards in England and 120 providers of NHS autism services.

This process revealed that many areas do not hold clear, retrievable information about autism assessment waiting times, or conversion rate to diagnosis; a problem exacerbated by increased commissioning of privately-run companies out of scope of the Act.

The key findings from the FOI request demonstrated very clearly that:

1. Both children and adults face a postcode lottery, with waiting lists reaching five to five and a half years in some areas.
2. The most frequently reported waiting time for an assessment outcome for children is 1-1.5 years. For adults, this rises to 2-2.5 years.
3. There is significant variation in conversion rates across the country for both children and adults, ranging from almost 100% down to the high teens.
4. Support after diagnosis is often significantly lacking and often relies heavily on signposting and basic information resources.
5. Around 1 in 5 children's assessment providers and 1 in 3 adult assessment providers offer no additional support after a diagnosis compared to the support already available with no diagnosis.

These findings formed the basis for a special report that highlights the assessment and diagnostic crisis currently facing the UK. *Not A Priority: The crisis in autism assessment and support* was subsequently picked up by a number of media outlets and was crucially highlighted in an article in The Guardian.

The findings included in the report were also crucial in informing the decision to create a joint letter from the Chief Executives of the National Autistic Society, Autism Alliance, Autistica, Ambitious about Autism and the Autism Centre of Excellence at Cambridge to Stephen Kinnock in October, following a report by the Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel De Souza, which described how long waits are 'robbing' children and young people of their childhood and potential.

"In my view, it's the leading charity for assisting autistic people through research. Autistica helps develop better government policies, and enables truly important research that brings about change and support for autistic people."

Sir Christopher Ball, Autistica donor



Communicating to empower and create change

We share the latest research and expert opinion in an accessible and engaging way on our website, and through our webinars, email news and social media content. This year we created a film to articulate the aims of our 2030 goals and launched a major attitude-change campaign. We also brought on board some high-profile ambassadors to share our messages with new audiences.

"I felt empowerment and I was so excited to be using the app. I don't know if everyone would feel the same levels of excitement but for me I truly did. I felt like each time I went into it I'd find something new"

Tips Hub user

Our World 2030: an award-winning film
This year, we were proud to bring to our community and supporters an award-winning short film that articulated our mission, vision and 2030 Goals: Our World, 2030.

Created with production company Neck of the Woods, the two-minute short film has been created to highlight the challenges faced by autistic and neurodivergent people and demonstrate the ways in which Autistica's groundbreaking research and ambitious 2030 Goals are enabling autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Our World, 2030 was brought to life with a cast of neurodivergent actors who are passionate about Autistica's groundbreaking research. The cast included the new Autistica Ambassador Bradley Riches. Our World 2030 won the £1-£2.5million category at the 2025 Smiley Charity Film Awards. The film was judged based on cinematography, script, acting, emotional response and concept and the judges said that Our World 2030 "explains humanely and respectfully what it's like to be neurodivergent" and that it successfully "breaks down the cliches of charity films". We have profiled the real-life stories of five of the actors featured in Our World 2030, which speak to their lived experiences and the realities they face when accessing public spaces, healthcare, and employment. You can find their stories on our website.

World Autism Acceptance Month
For World Autism Acceptance Month 2025, we launched a campaign in conjunction with creative agency House 337 that used humour to tackle outdated autism stereotypes head-on. Despite growing awareness, outdated assumptions and myths still shape how society sees autistic people. Our campaign, *see us as individuals, not stereotypes*, was a category-breaking push to get people laughing and, most importantly, seeing autistic people as individuals, not stereotypes.

The Out of Home billboards featured four common stereotypes that we wanted to subvert. These were displayed over the course of two weeks in London, Birmingham, Dundee, Newcastle, Leeds, Birmingham, Newcastle and Southampton, courtesy of support from media company Ocean Outdoors.

The film was directed by BAFTA-winning and Emmy-nominated filmmaker Sindha Agha, through the production company The Corner Shop. Of her involvement, Sindha said: "Our project was created by autistic creatives and their non-autistic collaborators who listened with open, curious minds. I'm really proud of the result."

The campaign was received positively by the community and external audiences alike. It was chosen as Ad of the Day by UK media news website, The Drum, and was also curated as an Ads of the World Editors Choice for 2025.

Launch of Autistica Ambassadors programme
In May, we were thrilled to announce Bradley Riches as our first celebrity Autistica ambassador. Bradley is best known for his role as James McEwan in the Netflix drama series *Heartstopper*. He was also a contestant on *Celebrity Big Brother 2024*. Bradley has since been a massive champion of Autistica and has talked about his experience working with us on several television chat shows such as Lorraine and Jeremy Vine. He also featured as a main protagonist in *Our World 2030*.

In December, stand-up comedian, actor, writer and presenter George Lewis and education consultant Harriet Brettall were announced as Autistica's two newest Ambassadors. George and Harriet are parents of three children, two of whom are autistic, and they know first-hand how challenging it is to navigate the UK autism assessment and diagnostic process. We are so excited to work with George and Harriett to advocate for better diagnostic and educational outcomes for autistic children.



NDEI® coverage and media influence

The first Neurodiversity Employers Index – NDEI® Market Report illustrates key insights and trends from the organisations that participated in this gold-standard evidence-based framework.

The market report garnered significant interest from media outlets across the UK, with 71 individual pieces of coverage across several publications, including the Financial Times, the Yahoo! Syndicate and the Microsoft News Network.

This report in conjunction with last year's Department for Work and Pensions-backed Buckland Review of Autism Employment has subsequently led to Autistica starting to position itself as thought leaders in neuroinclusive employment practices and had been referenced by multiple media outlets approaching the organisation for comment. Additionally, the report has introduced our new in-house training and consultancy offerings to a broad corporate audience.

Funding and support

The fundraising climate continues to be hard, with a record decline in donations in the UK in 2024. Despite this, we have had some wonderful financial wins this year, and continue to work hard in delivering exceptional stewardship to our current partners as well as securing new partnerships.

£478,537
Corporate

£405,852
Gifts in kind

£386,290
Major donor and special events

£303,305
Trusts

£93,391
Other income

£63,897
Challenge events

£53,203
Investments

£30,985
Legacy

£29,940
Individuals

Trusts & Foundations
We saw a decline in our gifts from Trusts & Foundations this year in contrast to our amazing financial results last year. That said, we secured a new multi-year gift from The National Lottery Community Foundation. We have delivered a key partnership with Motability Foundation to support research into the barriers autistic people face when accessing public transport with the report being publicised in June 2025.

Corporate
We're delighted to continue our work with the Aviva Foundation. The focus of our three-year partnership is on empowering autistic people to develop financial wellbeing and resilience, while supporting professionals to understand how to make financial products and services more inclusive to autistic people.

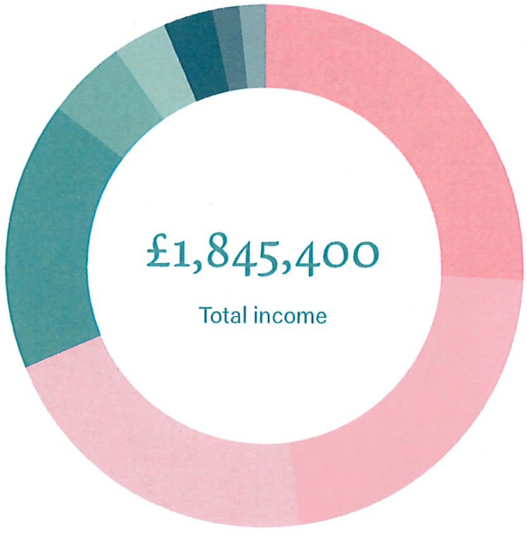
We continued to work closely with companies on our employment 2030 goal and are proud to continue working with London Stock Exchange Foundation on employability skills for autistic people.

With the support of our Autistica Play Ambassadors, we continued to work closely with the Games industry. We are especially grateful to our long-standing partner GamesAid, whose continued support is so crucial in helping us deliver our 2030 Goals. In December 2024, we once again took part in the Jingle Jam, uniting the world's best games, creators and their communities to make the world better for children and young people. In only two weeks, together we raised over £285,000.

Major Donors
We held a Gala event at The Guildhall, London, in November to celebrate Autistica's 20th Anniversary, raising over £120k as well as opening up doors to new relationships. The event was a very special one, celebrating everything we have achieved so far, as well as our aspirations for the future. This year we have continued to work hard on widening our supporter networks which has also led to some wonderful new major donor relationships.

Community & Challenge Events
We have continued to benefit from supporters participating in our challenge events, with the London Marathon continuing to be our most popular. With this in mind, we have invested in more London Marathon places for 2026 so we can grow on this year's financial success.

Individuals & Legacies
Our individual supporters who make regular gifts continue to provide incredible unrestricted and sustainable support to the charity. Regular and unrestricted income is so important to us and we thank our supporters for their contributions. We also received our second legacy gift in Autistica's history, a hugely important gift, enabling us to plan for the future.



Looking ahead

In line with our 2030 Goals, these will be the core areas of focus for the charity over the coming year.

"My son Fred was diagnosed in 2010 when he was two and a half. We were given a pamphlet, a list of local special education needs schools and the number of an autism charity. That was it. Research is important so that you have proven support people can turn to."

Jeff Saul, a star fundraiser who completed his 12th marathon for Autistica this year



Changing attitudes
We will continue our work to understand public attitudes and how to change them with public polling in May 2025. Using these findings, we will leverage our relationship with advertising agencies, PR firms, celebrities, influencers to run a major public campaign that helps to shift perceptions.

Accelerating our work on anxiety
We want to scope ways to make progress in the prevention of anxiety given the significant research we have undertaken or funded in this area. We also want to obtain funding to redevelop the already popular Autistica Molehill Mountain app.

Finding solutions for diagnosis & support
The topic of diagnosis is dominating the media and political debate. This feels like a crucial time to find sustainable ways to tackle the long waiting lists for diagnosis and crucially provide evidence based support to those who need it. We also plan to take a joined up approach to campaigning on this topic with other leading autism charities.

Growing the Autistica Tips Hub
We see the Tips Hub as a vital source of trusted information for the community that we serve. Over the next 12 months we want to add more resources and bring more people into the app, encouraging them to not just consume information, but also contribute.

Building on the success of the NDEI®
Following its launch we want to see new and returning companies from a range of sectors taking part in the NDEI®. We want to refine the commercial offer to these companies, which involves training and consultancy as an add-on to the Index. And we want to see a year-on-year improvement in neuroinclusion with the companies that we work with.

Growing income
Given the current financial pressures facing families, we will continue to focus on major donor and trust and foundation income. We'll also grow our income from challenge events, with more places in the 2026 London Marathon than ever before.

Strong governance
Over the last three years we have radically evolved to ensure that we can do higher quality work, at a lower cost while impacting our beneficiaries more rapidly and increasing our ability to fundraise. It is now critical that we have the processes in place to undertake research independently, and sustainably. This includes embedding robust ways of working, through agile programme management, and high-quality in-house research expertise, underpinned by strong research governance, compliance and ethical practice, and transparent financial management.

Public benefit and impact

The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in relation to the charity's aims and objectives. The trustees consider it important to demonstrate to supporters and others interested in our work that the research we have funded will support breakthroughs, create tangible progress, and enhance understanding.

Autistic people and families are at the heart of work, our national research network and embedded within our wider governance processes. By involving our community, we can create breakthroughs that enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Autistic people and family members play an active role across our work. The Autistica Network provides autistic people with the opportunity to be involved in research as participants and advisers. It also gives researchers a valuable resource to recruit to their studies.

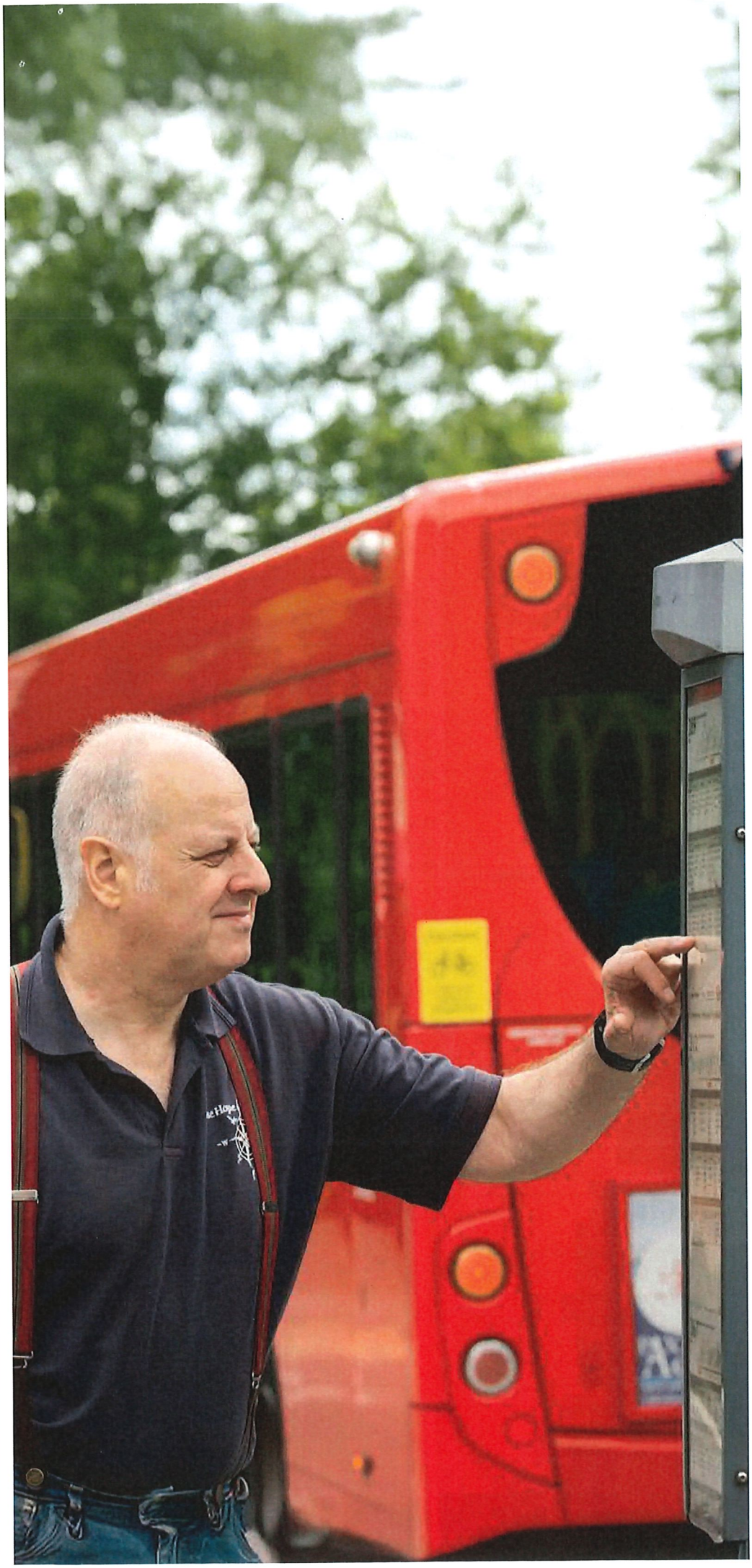
Our Insight Group provide more specialised input to our and others' work, including co-designing research studies, providing advice on how to best involve autistic people in studies, and reviewing research proposals to help make sure we support only the best quality research.

We know how important it is that scarce resources are deployed on research that is not just important to families but is also of the highest quality, internationally competitive and does not inappropriately duplicate investment made elsewhere.

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities we are committed to the highest possible standards of research governance. Independent peer review underscores all the research that we fund, deliver and collaborate on.

Autistica is regulated by the Fundraising Regulator. We are committed to best practice in fundraising and customer service. We promise to keep our supporters informed about our work and to treat their information with respect.





"This research highlights key barriers to choosing public transport for a journey, including uncertainty, inconsistency, and overwhelming sensory environments and presents recommendations for change. User research like this is essential in shaping a more inclusive and accessible future for public transport."

Chelsea Fleming, Innovation Manager at Motability who funded the Neurodivergence and Public Transport project.

Structure, governance and management

"Molehill Mountain is like a safety valve for me. If I feel my panic rising, I can pull out my phone and it's there. I can put whatever I want into it, and nobody's going to tell me that its a ridiculous thing to be worried about."

Margot, user of the Autistica app, Molehill Mountain

How we are governed

Autistica was registered as a charity in December 2004 and its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were adopted on 20 July 2004. Autistica is incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 as a company limited by guarantee having no share capital. For the purposes of this Act, the chair and other trustees (none of whom receives any remuneration) are the directors of the company. A full list of trustees, together with other legal and administrative information, can be found at the front of this report.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year and additionally relies on sub-committees to provide further oversight of the work of the charity (see page 42). Each is chaired by a trustee. All key decisions, including the allocation of funds for research, are taken at full meetings of the trustee board.

On 31 March 2025 there were 9 members of our trustee board. Trustees may serve for up to two terms of three years and are appointed in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Matthew Davies retired from the board in May 2024, and Matthew Harris and Jonathan Green retired in November 2024.

The following issues are addressed by the trustees during the year:

- developing and reviewing the organisational strategy
- reviewing progress against our business plan
- agreeing and monitoring an annual business and financial plan
- the award of all grants for research
- the risks the charity is facing in delivering its plans
- the impact of the charity's work

Each year the skills and expertise required within the trustee board are reviewed to help the charity deliver its objectives. If gaps are identified or a vacancy occurs, new trustees with the appropriate skills and experience are identified. All trustees are offered a full induction when they join, and trustee training is available to keep trustees up to date with the environment in which the charity operates.

How we are managed

The chief executive is responsible to the board of trustees for the management of the charity. The director of income generation, director of finance, director of external affairs and director of research report to the chief executive. Remuneration for senior staff is set at market rates and reviewed annually by the board.

The offices of the charity are registered in Islington.

Risk management

The trustees formally consider the major risks faced by the charity as part of a risk management strategy that comprises:

- an annual review of the risks faced by the charity in delivering its plans
- the establishment of systems and procedures to manage those risks identified in the review
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential negative impact on the charity should those risks materialise
- raising awareness, amongst staff and trustees, of the risk of fraud and the steps to mitigate that risk to the charity
- increasing team capacity to mitigate cyber fraud, seeking expert advice and raising awareness of risks among staff

The charity has identified a number of key risks this year, including cybersecurity; rising costs as a result of the high level of inflation, and; income diversification and improving national and international collaborations in autism research. Our loyal donor base and compelling external relationships put us in a strong position to maintain income and influence and continue supporting UK autism research. We actively seek new partnerships within and beyond autism science and build pro bono support to increase capacity.

Financial Performance
Total income for the year was £1,845,400 (2024: £2,995,880) the year-on-year fall in fundraising income is primarily due to the £1 million received from Dame Stephanie Shirley in 2023/24.

The cost of raising funds was £641,521 (2024: £476,955). We spent £1,868,069 (2024: £1,423,098) on charitable activities including £615,676 (2024: £699,626) on in-house Goals research and £1,252,393 (2024: £723,472) on external research grants.

The overall net expenditure on operating activities was £664,190 (2024: net income £1,095,827). This expenditure was planned following the net income in 2024 in order to deliver both our 2030 Goals and our overarching strategy.

Reserves
The Trustees review the reserves policy annually. The Trustees concluded that the charity should hold a level of free reserves sufficient to sustain operations during periods of reduced income and to ensure that liabilities associated with planned or unplanned cessation of activities can be discharged. This is a refinement from prior years, when the reserve level was set as equivalent to six months of operating costs, and in the view of the Trustees more closely aligns with the purpose for which reserves are required.

Consequently, at the 31st March 2025, the Trustees regard the target level of free reserves to be in the range from £600,000 to £700,000 (March 2024: £750,000). This reflects a range of risks to projected income and an estimate of the level of liabilities in the event of a cessation.

At 31 March 2025 the charity had free reserves excluding designated funds of £632,684 (2023-24: £1,089,441). Our designated funds were £448,678 (2023-24: £495,597). At 31 March 2025 the charity had restricted reserves of £899,893 (2023-24: £1,060,407).

Investments
Autistica follows a conservative policy in regard to the management of cash and investments.

The Charity should aim to have a balance in the current account of no more than three times the FSCS compensation limit currently set at £85,000. Recognising that balances can vary day to day, the absolute maximum to be held in the current account is £500,000.

Cash outside of the current account should be held in individual interest-bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers which benefit from the government Financial Services Compensation Scheme (currently up to £85,000), using the Insignis cash management platform. The maximum amount per deposit account should not exceed £100,000. These can be a mix of instant or close to instant access and longer-term access accounts.

A maximum of 50% of total cash or £1,100,000, whichever is lower, can be held in regulated money market funds with an AAA rating from Fitch and/ or S&P Global, provided that the funds offer instant or close to instant access.

A maximum of 25% of total cash or £750,000, whichever is the lower, can be held in equities or other funds in line with the asset investment policy. These should be managed by a regulated asset manager. At present we have no investment funds which relate to this element of the policy due to liquidating these funds in 2022-23.

The investment policy is reviewed annually at the Finance Committee and any updates reviewed by the Board of Trustees. The distribution of the cash balance is reviewed by the finance committee, which meets four times a year, and is included in the quarterly finance updates to the full Board of Trustees.

Going concern statement
The trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Approval
The report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to smaller entities. The trustees' report and financial statements were approved by the board of trustees on 25 September 2025.

On behalf of the Board



James Feeney
Treasurer
25 September 2025

Statement of trustee's responsibilities

Statement of disclosure to auditors
The trustees (who are also directors of Autistica for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report) and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware.
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.



Stephen Boyle
Chair of Trustees
25 September 2025



"We learned a huge amount from participating in the NDEI®. It was reassuring to know that we are doing some really good work. Our high score confirmed that we were on the right track. Taking part gave us the right toolkit to build on our work. It gave us a roadmap for what's next and a sense of excitement for what was possible."

Helen Mariner, deputy chief executive of Active Oxfordshire (pictured below)



Independent auditor's report to members

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Autistica (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 24, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud
Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud (continued)
We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (ie. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report
This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Michelle Wilkes FCA Azets Audit Services
Senior Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants
For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services,
First Floor,
River House
1 Maidstone Road,
Sidcup, Kent,
DA14 5RH

Date: 2 October 2025

Statement of Financial Activities, including Income and Expenditure

for the year ended 31 March 2025

Income from	Notes	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Year ended 31 March 2025 Total Funds £	Year ended 31 March 2024 Total Funds £
Donations	2	1,134,862	581,535	1,716,397	2,955,079
Other trading activities - Fundraising event		75,800	-	75,800	-
Investment Income		53,203	-	53,203	40,801
Total income		**1,263,865**	**581,535**	**1,845,400**	**2,995,880**
Expenditure on					
Costs of raising funds					
Costs of generating donations	3	566,149	-	566,149	455,859
Cost of events	3	75,372	-	75,372	21,096
		641,521	**-**	**641,521**	**476,955**
Expenditure on charitable activities					
Grants for Goals research	4	-	30,854	30,854	699,626
Research expenditure	4	1,126,020	711,195	1,837,215	723,472
		1,126,020	742,049	1,868,069	1,423,098
Total expenditure		**1,767,541**	**742,049**	**2,509,590**	**1,900,053**
Net movement in funds		**(503,676)**	**(160,514)**	**(664,190)**	**1,095,827**
Total funds brought forward		1,585,038	1,060,407	2,645,445	1,549,618
Total funds carried forward		**1,081,362**	**899,893**	**1,981,255**	**2,645,445**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

Comparative Statement of Financial Activities, including Income and Expenditure

for the year ended 31 March 2024

				Year ended 31 March 2024
Income from	**Notes**	**Unrestricted**	**Restricted**	**Total Funds**
		£	**£**	**£**
Donations	2	2,040,621	914,458	2,955,079
Investment Income		40,801	-	40,801
Total income		**2,081,422**	**914,458**	**2,995,880**
Expenditure on				
Costs of raising funds				
Costs of generating donations	3	455,859	-	455,859
Cost of events	3	21,096	-	21,096
		476,955	**-**	**476,955**
Expenditure on charitable activities				
In-house Goals research	4	323,927	375,699	699,626
External research grants	4	536,941	186,531	723,472
		860,868	562,230	1,423,098
Total expenditure		**1,337,823**	**562,230**	**1,900,053**
Net movement in funds		**743,599**	**352,228**	**1,095,827**
Total funds brought forward		841,439	708,179	1,549,618
Total funds carried forward		**1,585,038**	**1,060,407**	**2,645,445**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	£	2025 £	£	2024 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8		-		-
Current assets					
Debtors - amounts falling due within one year	9	234,858		253,014	
Cash at bank		2,110,235		2,786,820	
		2,345,093		**3,039,834**	
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(363,838)		(329,037)	
Net current assets			**1,981,255**		**2,710,797**
Total assets less current liabilities			1,981,255		2,710,797
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	11		-		(65,352)
Net assets			**1,981,255**		**2,645,445**
Reserves					
Unrestricted funds - general			632,684		1,089,441
Designated funds	12		448,678		495,597
Restricted funds	13		899,893		1,060,407
Total funds	**14**		**1,981,255**		**2,645,445**

Approved by the board of trustees on 25 September 2025 and signed on behalf of the board

J Feeney

James Feeney
Honorary Treasurer
Company Registration Number: 05184164

Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities	15	(729,788)	1,145,447
Cash flow from investing activities			
Bank interest		53,203	40,801
Net cash from investing activities		53,203	40,801
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		(676,585)	1,186,248
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		2,786,820	1,600,572
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**2,110,235**	**2,786,820**

Notes to financial statements
for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee in the United Kingdom. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 4 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are set out on page 6.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

b) Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Donations and grants receivable are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Investment income is accounted for when received. Tax recoverable on investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

Other income is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Gifts in kind and donated services are included at the open market value of the goods or services provided.

c) Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

It is categorised under the following headings:

- Raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes expenditure associated with in-house goals research and external research grants. Grants payable are accounted for at the point that either conditions for receipt have been satisfied or the post being funded is filled.

d) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

e) Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing over £5,000 are capitalised. Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

• Computer equipment	33%	straight line
• Other equipment and fittings	25%	straight line

f) Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

g) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves appropriate for the charity, in the current circumstances, to be able to continue as a going concern.

h) Redundancy and Termination costs
Termination and redundancy costs are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

i) Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty
The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies that have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements:

Bad debts
Debtors are regularly reviewed for recoverability. Any debts which in the opinion of trustees are not recoverable are provided for as a specific bad debt.

The are no key assumptions concerning the future and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

2. Income

	2025	2024
	£	£
Donated income	665,113	1,741,323
Gifts in kind	405,852	238,057
Challenge events	63,897	61,241
Unrestricted income	1,134,862	2,040,621
Restricted donations	581,535	914,458
Total Donations	1,716,397	2,955,079

	2025	2024
Gifts in kind	£	£
Charitable activities, administrative support costs	4,500	950
Charitable activities, publicity support	600	-
Charitable activities, disseminating information on autism and autism research	308,000	99,595
Costs of activities for generating funds, challenge events	92,752	137,512
	405,852	238,057

Event income, as shown in other trading activities on the Statement of Financial Activities, includes funds raised from the sale of tables at Autistica's 20th Anniversary Gala as well as winning bids from the auction held on the night. Donations received or pledged from the event are included in donations above.

3. Cost of raising funds

Costs of generating donations	2025	2024
	£	£
Website, database, literature and PR costs	11,448	19,249
Other fundraising expenses	100,406	23,118
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	54,238	73,151
Staff costs (note 7)	400,057	340,341
	566,149	455,859

Cost of Events	2025	2024
	£	£
Challenge events costs	19,740	6,510
Other event costs	46,281	9,541
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	9,351	5,045
	75,372	21,096

4. Expenditure on charitable activities

Grants for Goals research	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
SHAPe	-	82,500	82,500	-
Call for Proposals (COMRAD)	-	-	-	19,913
Embracing Complexity	-	-	-	(260)
KTP	-	-	-	65,352
NIHR Goldsmiths	-	-	-	65,167
NIHR Bath	-	-	-	53,560
NIHR's Research Programme for Social Care	-	-	-	10,254
SCDA Homelessness	-	-	-	2,387
Committed grants from prior years - conditions not met or projects cancelled	-	(51,646)	(51,646)	(52,958)
Governance costs (Note 5)	-	-	-	32,705
Grant Administration costs (Note 6)	-	-	-	171,526
Staff costs (Note 7)	-	-	-	331,980
Total Grant expenditure	-	30,854	30,854	699,626
External research expenditure	516,839	248,583	765,421	358,786
Governance costs (Note 5)	92,970	-	92,970	32,705
Administration costs (Note 6)	121,568	-	121,568	-
Staff costs (note 7)	394,643	462,613	857,256	331,981
Total Research expenditure	1,126,020	711,195	1,837,215	723,472
	1,126,020	742,049	1,868,069	1,423,098

5. Governance costs

	2025	2024
	£	£
External audit	15,490	15,523
Trustees' liability insurance	3,530	3,274
Consultancy & recruitment costs	-	500
Other governance costs	-	426
Allocation of administrative support costs (Note 6)	1,870	2,522
Staff costs (Note 7)	72,080	43,165
	92,970	65,410

No Trustees were paid during this period (2024:nil). One Trustee received reimbursements for travel expenses and meeting costs totalling £585 (2024 : Two Trustees received reimbursements for travel expenses and meeting costs totalling £1,156)

Governance costs were allocated equally between activities in Charitable Activities (Note 4).

6. Administrative support costs

The following administrative support costs are allocated between other categories of expenditure as detailed below.
Costs are attributed directly where possible and the balance is allocated based on time spent by trustees, staff and consultants.

	2025	2024
	£	£
Telephone	2,423	-
IT Expenditure	34,201	30,631
Stationery, copying, postage and other office expenses	5,875	5,356
Staff recruitment and professional development	25,269	35,706
Rent and rates	55,718	77,351
Accountancy	550	45,202
Other	14,904	14,716
Staff costs (note 7)	48,087	43,282
Total support costs	187,027	252,244
These are divided:		
Generating donations (Note 3)	54,238	73,151
Events (Note 3)	9,351	5,045
Charitable activities (Note 4)	121,568	171,526
Corporate governance (Note 5)	1,870	2,522
	187,027	252,244

7. Staff costs

	2025	2024
	£	£
Salaries	1,211,038	947,748
Social security costs	133,667	104,817
Pension costs	32,776	26,095
Redundancy Costs	-	12,089
	1,377,481	1,090,749
These are allocated:		
Generating donations (Note 3)	400,057	340,341
Charitable activities	857,256	663,961
Corporate governance (Note 5)	72,080	43,165
Administration - support costs (Note 6)	48,087	43,282
	1,377,480	1,090,749

The charity employed 20 full-time and 10 part-time staff members during the year to 31 March 2025 (2024: 16 full-time and 5 part-time). Staff costs are allocated between the various activities according to time spent.

	2025	2024
The amounts disclosed above include the following number of highly paid employees:	no.	no.
£60,001 - £70,000	1	1
£70,001 - £80,000	1	1
£90,001 - £100,000	1	-

The total amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel is £440,050 (7 employees) (2024 - £344,280 (5 employees)). The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise those individuals listed on page 3.

8. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment	Other equipment and fittings	Total
Cost	£	£	£
As at 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025	2,760	1,285	4,045
Depreciation			
As at 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025	2,760	1,285	4,045
Net book value at 31 March 2025 and 31 March 2024	-	-	-

9. DEBTORS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade Debtors	26,144	47,719
Other debtors	28,341	-
Prepayments and accrued income	180,373	205,295
	234,858	253,014

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	131,194	40,566
Other creditors	13,158	8,315
Grant commitments (see Note 11 below)	185,658	246,427
Accruals and deferred income	33,828	33,729
	363,838	329,037

11. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Grant commitments (see table below)	-	65,352

	Less than 1 yr	More than 1 yr	Total
	£	£	£
At 1 April 2024	246,427	65,352	311,779
Grant provision released (conditions not met)	(7,889)	(25,390)	(33,279)
Commitments now due within one year	20,959	(20,959)	-
Paid in year	(73,839)	(19,003)	(92,842)
As at 31 March 2025	185,658	-	185,658

12. DESIGNATED FUNDS

Current year	Balances b/f £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balances c/f £
Unfunded projects scheduled for 2025-2026	495,597	448,678	(495,597)	448,678
	495,597	448,678	(495,597)	448,678

Unfunded projects scheduled for 2025-2026
Amounts have been designated from general unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2025 to cover unfunded expenditure for planned and budgeted projects taking place in 2025-2026

Prior year	Balances b/f £	New designations £	Designations released £	Balances c/f £
Unfunded projects scheduled for 2024-2025	-	495,597	-	495,597
	-	495,597	-	495,597

Unfunded projects scheduled for 2025-2026
Amounts have been designated from general unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2025 to cover unfunded expenditure for planned and budgeted projects taking place in 2024-2025

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

Current year	Balances b/f £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balances c/f £
Support from day one	288,196	196,169	(314,843)	(13,284)	156,238
Doubling employment	31,029	97,080	(28,603)	-	99,506
Proven treatments for anxiety	187,526	91,000	(148,081)	14,822	145,267
Accessible public spaces	103,067	103,067	(91,246)	583	115,471
Tailored annual health checks	150,715	(4,345)	(366)	2,232	148,236
Changing attitudes about autism	9,999	-	-	-	9,999
Embracing Complexity	130,705	40,208	(126,754)	-	44,159
Research growth	159,170	58,356	(32,155)	(4,354)	181,017
Total restricted funds	1,060,407	581,535	(742,049)	-	899,893

Prior year	Balances b/f £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balances c/f £
Support from day one	355,034	264,246	(331,084)	-	288,196
Doubling employment	43,250	20,000	(32,221)	-	31,029
Proven treatments for anxiety	-	202,772	(15,246)	-	187,526
Accessible public spaces	-	111,492	(8,425)	-	103,067
Tailored annual health checks	181,000	4,345	(34,630)	-	150,715
Changing attitudes about autism	9,999	-	-	-	9,999
Embracing Complexity	118,896	57,642	(45,833)	-	130,705
Research growth	-	253,961	(94,791)	-	159,170
Total restricted funds	708,179	914,458	(562,230)	-	1,060,407

See explanatory notes on page 39

Restricted funds are funds where the donor has specified the funds must be spent on a particular project as listed below.

Support from day one

Many autistic people and families fight for a diagnosis expecting it will unlock the support that they need. But most will receive no support at all. This affects them for years to come. They are unable to reach their full potential in education, work, and relationships. They go on to face avoidable challenges in everyday life and their mental and physical health suffers. This is a practical plan to ensure every autistic person receives support from day one

Doubling employment

Fewer than 3 in 10 autistic people have a job, one of the lowest employment rates of all disabled groups. Autistic people are also more likely to be in roles below their skill level or in unstable employment. Being unemployed excludes people from society. It limits their means to support themselves or become financially resilient to live automously and plan for the future, and severely negatively impacts their mental health and life outcomes.

Proven treatments for anxiety

Nearly half of all autistic children have an anxiety disorder and 7 in 10 autistic adults have one or more mental health conditions across their lifetime. Without the right support early on, this anxiety can remain with them for life and lead to further mental health problems. The healthcare system is set up to accept anxiety as part of autism but we disagree. Tackling anxiety is one of the most important things we can do to change the life chances and life expectancy of autistic people. Our goal is to fund and shape research that informs evidence-based treatments for anxiety that are specifically designed for autistic people. Our plan sets out our commitments to achieve this goal alongside the UK government, National Health Service (NHS), and specialist services. We have set out practical steps to prevent anxiety and promote good mental health from the start, and better understand the experiences of autistic people in inpatient care to prevent crises.

Accessible public spaces

Too many neurodivergent people are overwhelmed by public spaces. That is because they experience differences in the way they process sensory information, such as sound and light. Environments can impact life chances if schools, workplaces, and healthcare services are inaccessible. And autistic people can lack independence and become isolated if they cannot go shopping or enjoy sports and leisure facilities. But small adaptations can go a long way in making an environment safe and accessible, even enjoyable and engaging. By 2030 we aim to have adapted existing public spaces so that they are more inclusive for neurodivergent people. We are also working with industry partners on new developments that are designed with neurodiversity in mind.

Tailored annual health checks

Autistic people experience poorer health than the rest of the population, and tragically many die early. The failure of health and social care forces many to live difficult lives with health problems that can be prevented or treated. Autism is linked with many common health problems. Many autistic people find it difficult to communicate their needs and access healthcare. They may struggle with interoception - the ability to identify and describe physical sensations, or have sensory sensitivities, and difficulties processing information and communicating their needs. If we can prevent health issues by spotting them earlier with an annual health check, we can stop the flow of tragic headlines and enable autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Changing attitudes about autism

How you are perceived and understood matters. It affects your ability to form friendships and relationships, get a job, get the support you need, and live the life you want to lead. Many autistic people feel the need to mask their differences and 'act' their way through life to fit in and access things the rest of us take for granted. We want to build a society that respects and understands difference, and diversity. Our goal is to change attitudes toward autism and neurodiversity.

Embracing Complexity

Our vision is a world inclusive for neurodivergent people. Embracing Complexity brings together organisations working to facilitate evidence-based inclusion of neurodivergent people.

Research growth

Research funding in the year enabled the creation of new roles within the Autistica team to facilitate knowledge sharing and develop skills and capacity building across the wider organisation to achieve our 2030 Goals in a sustainable way. The funding supports salary costs to facilitate 1 year of R&D with practical outcomes to achieve our 2030 Goals. These resources enable us to carry out key projects through in-house research and development activities to drive forward our goals with agile and accelerated development.

14. Analysis of net funds 2025

	General	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
Debtors	134,032	100,826	234,858
Bank at cash and in hand	1,110,873	999,362	2,110,235
Creditors : Due within one year	(163,543)	(200,295)	(363,838)
Creditors : Due after one year	-	-	-
	1,081,362	899,893	1,981,255

Analysis of net funds 2024

	General	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
Debtors	141,429	111,585	253,014
Bank at cash and in hand	1,526,220	1,260,600	2,786,820
Creditors : Due within one year	(117,287)	(211,750)	(329,037)
Creditors : Due after one year	34,676	(100,028)	(65,352)
	1,585,038	1,060,407	2,645,445

15. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025	2024
	£	£
Net movement in funds	(664,190)	1,095,827
Bank interest	(53,203)	(40,801)
Decrease in debtors	18,156	16,357
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(30,551)	74,064
Net cash flow from operating activities	(729,788)	1,145,447

16. Related Party Transactions

An amount of £3,500 was received as donations from related parties during the year. There were no conditions attached to the donations. (2024: None).

17. Guarantee

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee. The Memorandum of Association prohibits any income or property of the company being paid or transferred to the members. Members of the company undertake to contribute a maximum of £1 to cover its liabilities.



Committees and advisory committees

Finance Committee
James Feeney (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Katherine Hudson
Jeff Saul

Projects sub-committee
Stephen Boyle
Prof Jonathan Green (Chair)
Caroline Copley
Katherine Hudson
Prof Anna Remington
Prof Will Mandy

Nominations Committee
Lynn Hawkins (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Katharine Harle

Scientific and Expert Review Panel
Prof Emily Simonoff (Chair)
Prof Sarah Parsons (Vice Chair)
Prof Dermot Bowler
Leneh Buckle
Gyll Curtis-Machin
Prof Lucy Henry
Prof Mark Brosnan
Dr Hannah Hobson
Dr Catherine Jones
Claudia Klaver
Dr Ewelina Rydzewska

Expert advisory groups (in-house research)
Dr Ian Male
Dr Louisa Thomas
Dr Michael Absoud
Kelly Scargill
Bernie Ennis
Teresa Kippax
Chloe Redfern
Lee Foster
Nick Ollerenshaw
Eric Heath
Jenny Shorthouse
Marc Goblot
Jess Jones Nielson
Michael Earl
Sandy Bering
Prof Terry Brugha
Dr Anna Crabtree
Dr Will Farr
Fay Hendry
Prof Rosa Hoekstra
Prof Patricia Howlin
Sarah Jackson
Prof Will Mandy
Prof Mark Mon-Williams
Dr Raja Mukherjee
Dr Heidi Phillips
Prof Andrew Pickles
Dr Venkat Reddy
Dr Marion Rutherford
Dr Louise Rutter
Dr Sam Tromans
Dr Lucy Waldren
Ann Wilson

Thank you to the autism community and all the supporters who make our work possible

We were very grateful for significant support in 2024-25 from:

Trusts & Foundations
Caretech Foundation
David and Ruth Lewis Family Charitable Trust
Edith Murphy Charitable Trust
The Grace Trust
The Motability Foundation
The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
The Souter Charitable Trust
The Waterloo Foundation

Major donors
2030 Club Members
Adrian Binks and Lisa Wood
Philip Astley - in memory of Janet Margaret Astley
Dame Stephanie Shirley
Our 20th anniversary gala committee and the generous supporters who made this event a success

Ambassadors
Bradley Riches
George Lewis and Harriet Brettall

Corporate
Aviva Foundation
House 337
MediaCo
Ocean Outdoor
Shift post
The Cornershop
Time Based Arts
Wave Studios

Games
Autistica Play Ambassadors
GamesAid
Jingle Jam

Autistica
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London EC1Y 0TH
info@autistica.org.uk
autistica.org.uk

Registered in England.
Company No. 05184164
Charity No. 1107350

autistica

Can you help us with our mission?

We can't achieve our 2030 Goals alone.

We need to work in partnership with others who have the power to change laws, transform support and fund innovation.

Contact **info@autistica.org.uk** if you share our vision and want to work together.

Thank you.



AUTISTICA

England & Wales - Charity number 1107350

Accounts

Autistica funds research, shapes policy and works with autistic people to make more of a difference

Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended
31 March 2024

autistica





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Our trustees, honorary supporters and leaders help make our vision a reality by overseeing and managing all of the charity's life-saving and life-changing work.

Honorary roles

President
Dame Stephanie Shirley CH

Trustees

Chair
Stephen Boyle

Honorary Treasurer
Matthew Harris (Honorary Treasurer)
James Feeney (appointed February 2024, Treasurer-elect)

John Carey (retired July 2023)
Caroline Copley (appointed February 2024)
Matthew Davis (retired May 2024)
Peter Dilnot (appointed July 2023)
Professor Jonathan Green
Katharine Harle (appointed February 2024)
Lynn Hawkins
Katherine Hudson

Charity management

Chief Executive Officer
Dr James Cusack

Director of External Affairs
Rebecca Sterry

Director of Finance and Administration
Joanne Merchant

Director of Income Generation
Jennie Chambers

Director of Research
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Company registration no. 05184164

Statement from the Chair

In 2021, Autistica launched six strategic Goals to achieve by 2030, and I am extremely impressed by the progress that has been made since then, but especially this year. To see the 2030 Goals develop into strategic plans in 2022, to full projects with hundreds of partner organisations this year has been exciting to witness.



"It's now clear to see how the plans for each of our six Goals, with the right funding and partnerships can really drive rapid progress for autistic people."

Stephen Boyle

One Goal has seen particularly rapid progress this year. Our plan to double the employment rate for autistic people has seen developments in terms of research, policy and campaigning. As a result, we now have a set of government backed recommendations for employers, and a fully formed product for companies: the Neurodiversity Employers Index (NDEI®). At time of writing, over 400 companies have registered for the NDEI® this summer. It's now clear to see how the plans for each of our six Goals, with the right funding and partnerships can really drive rapid progress for autistic people. And that's testament to the team at Autistica who are working collaboratively with laser sharp focus on these six crucial areas. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them personally for their hard work and commitment to our important cause.

I'm proud to see Autistica's name in the media on an almost weekly basis. Our team is increasingly recognised as the established experts on a range of autism-related topics and often provides robust analysis of breaking research and new data. The charity has also partnered with television producers to work on autism-focused broadcasts, including the hit documentary from Christine McGuiness. This is helping to educate the wider public and change attitudes.

I'd like to thank John Carey, who left the board in July 2023, following six loyal years serving the charity. I will miss him, his generosity, and his wise counsel.

Despite John's departure, we grew the Autistica Trustee Board this year: adding new members, all with valuable personal and professional experience that will benefit the team and the charity. I'm delighted that we are attracting an ever-stronger cadre of trustees.

Finally, I'd like to thank the autistic people and families who share their expertise and experiences to support Autistica, and especially members of the Autistica Insight Group and advisory panels. They ensure our research, campaigns and communications are as accurate and relevant as possible and keep us on track to delivering the greatest impact for autistic people. We continue to commit to finding new ways of doing things to ensure that the needs of all autistic people are represented in our work.

Stephen Boyle
Chair of Trustees

It is easy to take for granted the team we have at Autistica, who work hard to ensure we are always making the greatest impact we can for autistic people. The skills we have in-house are enabling us to run projects from start to finish, involving our fundraising, policy and communications teams at every step, which means we can make even faster progress than we did when previously funding mostly external projects.



"I'm proud to say that more people have joined our mission than ever before this year, and I can't wait to see what we can achieve together."

Dr James Cusack

Delivering our goals requires the generous support of our donors, the right relationships, and a brilliant team. I am delighted with the progress that we have made over the past year. As a team we've worked collaboratively on new values and employee benefits, and are trialling a four-day week, all with the intention of retaining and supporting our brilliant neurodiverse team, building a strong shared culture, and leading by example as a neuroinclusive employer.

In addition to the projects we have been delivering internally, we have also partnered on a large number of external projects, lending our expertise where academics may lack skills themselves, such as with community involvement, policy influencing and communications. This is helping researchers across the company to make real-world impact, that goes beyond publishing their findings in a journal. For a small charity this is allowing us to influence far beyond what we are able to fund ourselves.

We continue to be supported by loyal donors who enable our work to happen. In these challenging and uncertain economic times, we have focused on driving more funding from major donors, trusts and foundations and corporate institutions. Individual donors who give small monthly amounts or take on incredible mountain climbing, or marathon running challenges for us are a valued source of income, and we are so grateful to these supporters who are personally motivated to give back to Autistica in this way.

The relationships we have with other funders and organisations supporting the charity pro-bono ensures that every pound donated is maximised, and in some cases multiplied. We leveraged £1,423,098 worth of research by encouraging funders to support certain projects. And our relationships with creative agencies, advertising companies, and consultancy firms has helped us to secure £238,057 worth of external expertise including gifts in kind, legal advice, national campaigns, and tech project support.

I want to thank all of the people and partner organisations that share our vision of a happy, healthy, long life for autistic people. We can't do this alone. I'm proud to say that more people have joined our mission than ever before this year, and I can't wait to see what we can achieve together.

Dr James Cusack
Chief Executive Officer

At Autistica, research is at the heart of everything that we do. We know that it has the potential to transform everyday lives by making sure that treatments, support and services work for autistic people.



Right now, autistic people face far too many inequalities. Most autistic children and adults wait years for a diagnosis, and when they finally receive one, there is little, if any, appropriate support. They experience avoidable challenges throughout education and face the lowest employment rates of any disability. They are more likely to have poor mental health and physical health throughout their lives. And negative attitudes and inaccessible environments can leave many feeling like they just don't fit into this world.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

We have developed a set of six goals for 2030 that set out our vision of a different world; one where autistic people can access the right support, live in an inclusive and accepting world, and find fulfilling and sustainable work. These goals are not only visionary and ambitious; they are also achievable.

Research and the development of evidence-based solutions is at the core of each of these goals, but so too is working in partnership and campaigning for change. Autistica works in partnership not only to achieve a step change in the amount of resource focused on autism research, but also to ensure that research funding is directed to the areas of greatest need. We act as the bridge between autistic people, the research community and other funders of autism science.

We also work with key partners in positions of influence over policy and execution to make sure that the evidence generated by the research we support is put into action. Because research without implementation can never result in impact.

Our unique approach is driven by and developed with autistic people and families. It can and will make more of a difference for autistic people in both the short and long term.

Our vision, mission, values and goals

Our vision

is a world where every autistic person lives a happy, healthy, long life.

Our mission

is to create the breakthroughs that enable autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

We do this by funding research, shaping policy and working with autistic people to make more of a difference.

Our Goals

By 2030:

all autistic people will have proven **support from day one**

the **employment rate** for autistic people will double

autistic people will have proven treatments for **anxiety**

public spaces will be more accessible for neurodivergent people

every autistic adult will be offered a yearly, tailored **health check**

attitudes to autistic people will change

Our values

We embrace diverse expertise and think differently

- Our team are diverse and we support them to be the best they can be.
- We collaborate as a team and with a wide range of stakeholders, always including autistic people
- We believe that diversity of thought and experience is the only way we can make real and lasting change

We challenge to find solutions

- We speak up when evidence suggests a need
- We find solutions, however big or complex the problem
- We influence change because we're trusted

We act with urgency

- Research can take time, but that doesn't stop us from taking action now
- We work hard, but efficiently
- We are not afraid of taking risks and failure, we learn from it and move on quickly
- We're driven by a shared aim of improving the world for autistic people

Having launched our 2030 Goals in late 2021, the past year has been focused on strategic planning and kickstarting projects and campaigns to achieve them. These are some highlights from key areas of our work.

1

Enabling and leading world-class research

To achieve our 2030 Goals, we kicked off our own internal research projects this year, including the development of a gold-standard neurodiversity employers index and an online information hub for autistic people and families. We have co-funded research projects with the National Institute of Health Research and NHS England and partnered on collaborative research with organisations across the UK. We also continued to support the next generation of autism researchers with funded studentships and training.

Our research strategy enables us to make a difference to the everyday lives, wellbeing and life outcomes of autistic people and their families. Through the accelerated delivery of impactful activity that is underpinned by world-class evidence-based research, we fund activity focused on community priorities. This approach to funding is unique, demonstrably excellent, and ensures that our activities continue to have broad appeal to their relevant audiences.

To support the ongoing delivery of our 2030 Goals, we revised our Research Strategy to better reflect our model of delivery. This review has resulted in us being able to deliver evidence-based research both in-house and in collaborative partnerships, and through grant awards. We achieve impact by building the right relationships with the right audiences and stakeholder groups, with the support of a strong, aligned team and governance board.

We completed the second year of a strategic funding partnership to unlock a further £3.5m funding of research and implementation of healthcare innovations to support autism and learning disabilities communities.

2

Launching the Neurodiversity Employers Index (NDEI®)

In 2024, we were thrilled to launch the Neurodiversity Employers Index (NDEI®). The NDEI®, which is the only gold-standard evidence-based framework that can help organisations attract and retain neurodivergent talent, was co-produced in collaboration with neurodivergent advisors and key industry partners from a range of sectors and sized organisations.

The first 40 organisations took part in NDEI® early access between October 2023 and March 2024. These organisations, considered to be neuroinclusive champions, received their NDEI® scores alongside a tailored reports that set out their roadmap for change to support and empower a neurodivergent workforce.

The NDEI® will be open for submissions from August 2024 and is freely available to all sectors and organisations.

3

Ensuring community involvement

We continue to involve autistic people in everything we do and enable researchers to do the same through the Autistica Network and Autistica Insight Group. We helped to recruit for 57 research projects through the Autistica Network and the Autistica Insight Group shaped the development of 26 research projects. We also worked with autistic people to shape the messaging for two campaigns and to develop the recommendations in the government-led Buckland Review of Autism in Employment.

4

Sharing evidence and campaigning for change

We ran two major campaigns this year – one focusing on the poor outcomes for those in inpatient mental health units, and one aimed at encouraging employers to recognise autistic people's talents in the hiring process. We continued to advise the Department for Work and Pensions regarding the barriers autistic people face in employment, and potential solutions, and health bodies such as NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care. We ran 12 webinars aimed at sharing evidence and experiences with academics, clinicians and autistic people.

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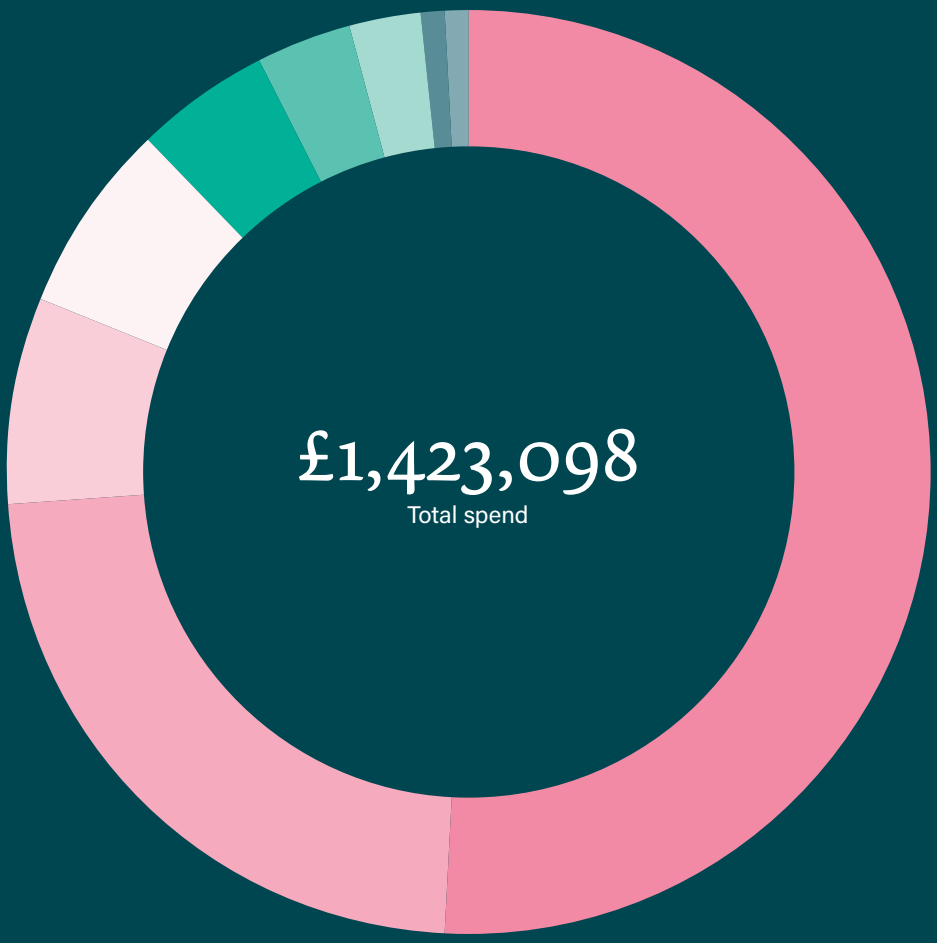
Funding for impact

As part of our fundraising strategy, we have further diversified our income in 23-24, applying to more Statutory funding opportunities as well as launching a new paid-for neurodiversity employment training programme for companies. These new activities have got off to a promising start and we envisage them becoming a key part of our income in future years. This year we secured some new partnerships across Major Donor, Trusts & Foundations and Corporate and we also benefitted from an incredible unrestricted gift of £1 million from our amazing Founder and President, Dame Stephanie Shirley. To receive such a significant gift has really bolstered our income this year, in what continues to be a tough fundraising climate.





2023-24 Charitable activities spend



£723,472
External research grants

£331,084
Support from Day One

£103,411
Communicating research staff & governance

£94,791
Research Growth

£66,206
Doubling Employment

£45,833
Changing attitudes about autism - Embracing Complexity

£34,630
Tailored annual health checks

£15,246
Proven treatments for anxiety

£8,425
Accessible public spaces



Progress towards our Goals

Support from day one

- Successfully completed a proof-of-concept trial of strengths and needs assessments to make sure support can be individually tailored to every autistic person. This Autistica-led project was delivered in partnership with autistica people and families, researchers and NHS partners to review the utility of a digital assessment toolkit and the strengths and needs profiles as a means to unlock supports for in education, healthcare (adult waitlists), and employment.
- Continued building a platform to provide practical support and guidance for autistic people and their families about everyday concerns and needs.
- Started building a platform to provide practical support and guidance for professionals to better support the needs of autistic people and families.
- Co-funded research for social workers to support autistic adults as they grow older.
- Co-funded research to support autistic people in transitions to adulthood.
- Funded research on developing a toolkit to support autistic people with multiple intellectual disabilities in day centres.

Meaningful, sustained employment

- Continued an evaluation of supporting employment transitions for autistic young people from higher education to their first role.
- Funded research to understand how to better support career progression and retirement planning for autistic people.
- Updated the Autistica Neurodiversity Employers Guide which will be continually added to as new evidence and best practice emerges.
- Launched the Neurodiversity Employers Index NDEI® – a gold standard framework to help companies to create neurodiverse and inclusive workforces, based on best practice guidance.

Proven treatments for anxiety

- Partnered on research to better understand eating behaviours and improve health outcomes for autistic people.
- Collaborated on research to develop adapted safety plans for suicide prevention.
- Trialling new approaches that help point us towards anxiety treatments that reduce anxiety for autistic people across their lifespan.
- Continuing ongoing improvements of our anxiety app Molehill Mountain.

Making public spaces more accessible

- Continuing to work with the government, public services, commissioners, local authorities, and public research funders to create environments that are autism friendly and account for the diversity of autistic people's needs.

Yearly, tailored health checks

- Continuing our research to demonstrate the benefits the health checks give autistic people.
- Supporting NHS England as they look to rollout health checks beyond the initial trial.

Changing attitudes to autism

- Kicking off our innovative new research project, the Autistica Autism Attitudes Index, to track and measure how attitudes to autism change over time.

Our research

"I hope research can help autistic people find better coping strategies for things like anxiety and depression. I have a lot of problems with anxiety, and I think that there should be more out there to help us cope with everyday life."

Jackie, autistic adult

How we make a difference (our charitable activity)

- We shape research, projects, services, society, and policy
- We fund research, and projects
- We deliver research, products, and insights
- We disseminate research information to key audiences

Our research strategy

Autistica's 2030 Goals set out ambitious programmes of work to make a difference to the everyday lives, wellbeing, and life outcomes of autistic people and their families. The programmes of research and activities under each goal are focused on areas that can make breakthroughs to improve outcomes for autistic people and families. Some of these programmes of work require large-scale government investment and action, whilst others can be achieved by delivering innovative solutions or via a traditional research-led route. Overall, to achieve these goals, our ways of working are evolving to support agile, proactive, and multi-dimensional innovative approaches.

Our research strategy is driven by our mission to create breakthroughs that enable autistic people to live happy, healthy, long lives. The key enablers that underpin our approach are based on a credible and measurable theory of change to deliver innovation through strategic partnerships, independent research embedded in strong governance and ethical practice, and demonstrate policy impact.

We fund activity focused on community priorities which is unique, demonstrably excellent, with broad appeal to the relevant audiences. We achieve world leading research innovations, knowledge, and progress through high quality evidence-based research that is developed by our in-house team of expert researchers, strategic research partnerships, and grant funding awards.

Partnerships – collaboration and commissioning funding

In 2023 we continued to build on relationships with NIHR and NHSE to commission funding in priority areas for autism and learning disabilities related to health and social care and innovations that make a difference to autistic people's lives. We supported a number of other research partnerships across the UK as well as international collaborations related to emotional resilience for autistic young people, the costs of undiagnosed autism and adhd, improved understanding of autism in the criminal justice system, autistic burnout, masking and wellbeing, transitions to adulthood, employment, menopause, physical health, adapted safety plans for suicide prevention, accessible public spaces, and improved resources for social care support of autistic people. We conducted a review of tools used for autism diagnostic screening and triage in a report for NHSE that set out guidelines for best practice to improve autism assessment pathways. We worked with Internet Matters, Ambitious about Autism, and the Autism Society for America to review the benefits and risks of online gaming for neurodivergent young people. on a Neurodiversity in Gaming and delivered a report to NHSE In partnership with the Autism Alliance and the National Autistic Society and other UK charities, in the second year of a three-year trial to deliver peer education over 5,000 autistic families were helped to understand more about autism diagnosis, navigating the system, and signposting to resources. In total our research partnerships supported £6,604,402 of external funding for autism research and innovation.

Research Funding and development

We received a funding award from the UKRI Medical Research Council Charity Grant Scheme of £378,033 to support our grants to Early Career Researchers who are focused on autism research. We continued to support over £150,477 in research grants to develop innovations on mental health, delivering a home-based parent-focused intervention to support communication in autistic children, develop research knowledge and resources to better understand ways of including autistic people with complex needs, and developing knowledge about barriers to employment outcomes and career progression for autistic adults. We collaborated with Ambitious about Autism to co-funded research delivery and evaluation of a programme to help autistic young people to transition from higher education to employment. Our social care partnership with Caretech Foundation and the NIHR, in the third and final year of this grant scheme in 2023 awarded grants over £131,368 to develop a toolkit for social workers to support autistic people with multiple intellectual disabilities and who are non-speaking, conduct research to empower autistic people in transitions to adulthood, and develop training and resources for social workers to better support autistic adults in older age.

As a charity, the funding that we receive helps to support our in-house expert research team. Not only does financial support help us to build capacity, it also enables us to embed new skills within the team and develop evidence-based innovations that make a real difference. We developed and trialled the Neurodiversity Employers Index NDEI®, created the framework for an employment readiness programme to support autistic young people into work, and delivered a proof-of-concept evaluation of a digital strengths and needs assessment tailored to personalised supports for autistic and adhd people. We campaigned to change negative attitudes and

stigma about autism and created awareness of autistic meltdowns to break the cycle of avoidable inpatient detention and poor life outcomes. We commenced development of tips hubs to provide evidence-based resources for autistic people and families, and professionals who work with them, to support every life and wellbeing outcomes – the hubs will launch in Summer 2024. Through our Embracing Complexity coalition with over 60 charity partners, we supported co-produced community research to identify priority topics for research to support neurodivergent people.

Autistica network and insight group

Our research would not be possible without the support and involvement of autistic and neurodivergent people and their families, supporters, and the many expert professionals who contribute to shaping our work. So many people have generously and enthusiastically contributed to the work outlined above and provided expert guidance and insights, as professionals and lived experience experts to support our mission. We are especially grateful to our co-production partners who advised our research design, delivery and dissemination, and the hundreds of autistic people and families who took part in research to shape this work.

Research governance – our scientific review and expert review panels

To support our 2030 Goals, our ways of working need to continuously evolve and improve to support agile, proactive, and multi-dimensional innovative approaches. Our research framework embodies a robust process for research funding and strategic governance. The delivery of in-house research has been supported by independent expert advisors as governance steering groups and lived experience community involvement groups. They provided guidance and oversight on the development, design, delivery and dissemination of research, to ensure its relevance and benefit to autistic people and families. Their role as independent peer reviewers was invaluable in shaping our work, from building new knowledge to continuous improvement, to ensure our research meets the highest standards of ethical research practice, scientific rigour and research excellence, value for money, impact, and alignment with our 2030 Goals.



Driving public policy

We continue to work with government and NHS bodies to drive forward our 2030 Goals, as well as developing our asks for the incoming Government.



"I believe this report provides a way forward that does not require vast sums of public money but that can produce a radical improvement of autistic employment rates and a radical transformation of autistic people's lives. I call on everyone to now make this happen."

Sir Robert Buckland KC's foreward in The Buckland Review of Autism Employment.

Leading the conversation on autism and employment

Over the past year, we have supported Sir Robert Buckland's Review of Autism Employment, gathering insights from employers, charities and the autistic community on the barriers autistic people face throughout their careers. The final report was published on 28 February 2024, with Sir Robert and the Minister for Disabled People speaking at a well-attended launch event at Deutsche Bank as well as coverage on BBC television and radio throughout the day. We are now working with the Department for Work and Pensions to establish a Task Group to drive forward the Review's 19 recommendations.

Making public spaces more accessible

The Autistica Inclusive Spaces Plan was published in early 2024, setting our commitments and recommendations for making public spaces more accessible for neurodivergent people. We are continuing to promote the British Standards Institution's PAS 6463 across our projects and networks, and to work with stakeholders to advise on the simple adjustments that can make spaces more inclusive.

Influencing the NHS and Government bodies

We continue to be a key player in a number of government and NHS committees, as the charity that feeds in the latest evidence. We sit on autism-specific advisory boards for NHS England, the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education. This year, we worked with other autism charities to contribute to DHSC's ongoing development of the Autism Strategy statutory guidance, which will soon be published for consultation, as well as developing joint messaging to tackle the growing crisis in autism waiting lists. We have also fed into a range of NHS England projects, including the new all-age framework for autism assessments and guidance on meeting the needs of autistic adults in mental health services.

Setting research priorities across neurodiversity

We manage the Embracing Complexity coalition of charities supporting neurodivergent people. This spring, we published the results of a year-long priority setting exercise for research on neurodivergence; these include intersectionality, stigma, self-advocacy and mental health. This process was led by the new Embracing Complexity Advisory Group, establishing a direct link between Embracing Complexity and the neurodivergent community for the first time.

International advocacy

Our reach and influence is not solely limited to the United Kingdom. Our CEO, James Cusack, currently sits on the board of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR), a US-based organisation that aims to promote and disseminate the highest quality autism research globally.



We will only achieve our 2030 Goals if we share the latest evidence and inspire others to take action. Our campaigning this year has focused on mental health and employment. Our webinar series and monthly email news continues to cover a wide range of issues that we know matter to autistic people.

"So many autistic people want to be able to work but don't even get a chance to discuss their challenges. Better employer knowledge of autism would mean a higher rate of employment. It would benefit all of us."

Cheshia, autistic adult

The inpatient mental health crisis: Break the Cycle

In the lead up to Christmas, we ran a campaign that highlighted the large number of autistic people in inpatient mental health units. The campaign shared striking black and white imagery of autistic people facing years in inpatient mental health units, and was supported by a number of moving stories from Autistica Insight Group members who themselves had been detained under the Mental Health Act. The campaign called for better prevention, understanding and evidence. The ask for government was to deliver on the research action plan promised in the 2021 Autism Strategy. Break The Cycle continued into early Jan, with digital billboards across London, Liverpool and Glasgow. The campaign attracted lots of positive feedback, and a number of replies from local MP's thanks to our supporters making use of the letter template published on our website. The campaign was developed pro-bono by Ogilvy Health and their neurodiversity network ReWired with billboard space donated by Clear Channel.

Employment: Buckland Review launch, NDEI® launch & Unseen CV campaign

We were thrilled that Autistica Neurodiversity Employers Index – NDEI® received so much focus in the Government-led communications surrounding the Buckland Review of Autism in Employment. As a result, the NDEI was featured in much of the Review-related media.

To coincide with the launch of NDEI®, we ran a campaign to draw attention to the neurodivergent talent that too often gets overlooked by employers in the screening and interview process. Unseen CV used a selection of simple imagery featuring blank CVs calling for employers to learn how to benefit from neurodivergent people's skills. The campaign helped to drive hundreds of employers to register for the NDEI®, and garnered support from a number of celebrities and social media influencers. This campaign was developed with the creative agency House 337 who continue to support our communications and campaigning, and secure pro-bono advertising via Ocean Outdoors.

Thanks to all of this activity we have seen around 5,000 people visit our NDEI® landing page, and over 400 organisations registered for the NDEI®. We've also had over 1500 individual registrations for the Employers Guide to Neurodiversity and the associated employer mailing list. This enables us to deliver regular updates on best-practice in neuroinclusion to a broad range of businesses.

World Autism Acceptance Week (1-4 April 2024)

We celebrated World Autism Acceptance Week across the month of April. The first week was dedicated to highlighting the barriers and opportunities associated with employment, which was used as a hook to collaborate with influencers and drive media attention.

The rest of the month focused on celebrating involvement in research and encouraging our community to join the Autistica Network. We shared a series of short videos of people who have been involved in our own research in order to demystify research and show that participating in research leads to driving understanding and acceptance. As a result, more than 1200 people joined the network and are now participating in studies.

Shaping the media and changing attitudes

This year the media has focused heavily on the crisis surrounding diagnosis waiting times, and the resulting lack of support. Our CEO, Dr James Cusack, has spoken across the BBC and beyond on the issue, sharing our views that we need a complete redesign of the process, grounded in research. We have also acted as a consultant with a range of media producers to ensure documentaries and media coverage is authentic, evidence-based and involves a range of credible experts.

Sharing the latest evidence with Autistica webinars

Our webinars are increasingly popular, and provide an accessible way for autistic people, families and professionals to access the latest evidence-based information. We ran 12 webinars this year, with over 1397 attendees.

Funding and support

The various financial pressures over the last few years, and the current political and economic climate has led us to further diversify our income streams in 23-24. We have had some fantastic financial wins this year, including securing multi-year funding, providing us with the opportunity to make great progress with our 2030 Goals.

£1,202,826
Major Donors

£851,070
Trusts

£500,711
Corporate

£238,057
Gifts in kind

£61,491
Events

£51,435
Individuals

£40,801
Investments

£33,517
Other Income

£10,000
Legacy

£5,972
Gift Aid

Trusts & Foundations
We had a great year in Trusts & Foundations benefiting from the continued support of our existing key partners including the Waterloo Foundation and the CareTech Foundation. We were also delighted to receive strategic funding from the Peter Sowerby Foundation to support the growth of our in-house research team, as well as an incredible donation from the Motability Foundation to support research into the barriers autistic people face when accessing public transport. This year we also expanded the Trusts & Foundations team's remit to cover statutory income which led to significant support from UK Research & Innovation (UKRI). Overall, this has meant our income has gone from £367,072 in 22-23 to £851,070 in 23-24 which is a fantastic achievement.

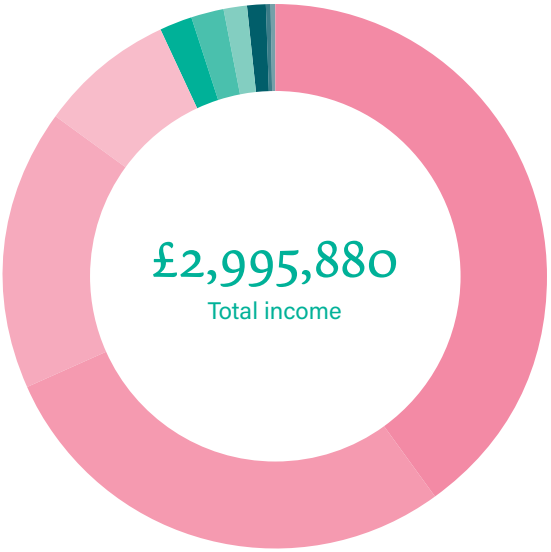
Corporate
We were hugely excited to welcome the Aviva Foundation as our newest partner. The focus of our three-year partnership is on empowering autistic people to develop financial wellbeing and resilience, while supporting professionals to understand how to make financial products and services more inclusive to autistic people. We continued to work closely with companies on our employment 2030 goal and are proud to continue working with London Stock Exchange Foundation on employability skills for autistic people. We also launched a new strand to our corporate income stream, providing practical neurodiverse employment support to companies through the launch of our neurodiversity training programme.

With the support of our Autistica Play Ambassadors, we continued to work closely with the Games industry. We are especially grateful to our long-standing partner GamesAid, whose continued support is so crucial in helping us deliver our 2030 Goal. In December 2023, we took part in the Jingle Jam, the world's biggest gaming charity event which raised an astounding £215,000 in only two weeks. The money raised will go towards our mental health 2030 Goal.

Major Donors
We were delighted to benefit from an incredible unrestricted gift of £1 million from our Founder and President Dame Stephanie Shirley, to mark her 90th Birthday in 2023. We held a celebratory event for Dame Stephanie at the Palace of Westminster in September 2023, which led to numerous gifts from existing and new supporters and was our most successful Major Donor fundraising event in Autistica's history. We also held a couple of other special events in the year to aid our in-year new business activity, as well as secure a strong start to 24-25.

Community & Challenge Events
We have continued to benefit from supporters participating in our challenge events, with the London Marathon continuing to be our most popular, raising over £50,000 in April 23. We also benefitted from our community partners hosting fundraising events, including the Ravens Ball, who run a bi-annual ball in Scotland.

Individuals & Legacies
Our individual supporters who make regular gifts continue to provide incredible unrestricted and sustainable support to the charity. Regular and unrestricted income is so important to us and we thank our supporters for their contributions. We also received our first legacy donation from a long-term supporter, John Pattisson, who was heavily invested in our work. We are incredibly grateful to John for this long-lasting legacy and his family's continued support.



Looking ahead

"Although Isabella struggles on a daily basis, she is such a happy little girl, who loves to dance and have fun. She may be slightly different to other children, but she also possesses many excellent qualities. I am tackling the London Marathon to raise awareness and funds to assist Autistica, by doing this I am also directly supporting my young daughter and hopefully other autistic individuals."

Steve, Autistica London Marathon participant 2024 (pictured right)

We enter the year with a superb and well-established team in place, an outstanding year in terms of fundraising, and some brilliant new and pre-established relationships in place. These developments have enabled us to progress our 2030 Goals plan.

Implementing our 2030 Goals plans
Having finalised our ambitious and visionary 2030 Goals, we are now rapidly implementing our plans.

We were extremely proud to be able to launch the Buckland Review on Autism Employment this year, which we hope will build a society-wide commitment to doubling the rate of employment for autistic people over a ten year period (2020-2030). A key recommendation in this review was to see the widescale implementation of the NDEI®, which we discuss in more detail on page 8.

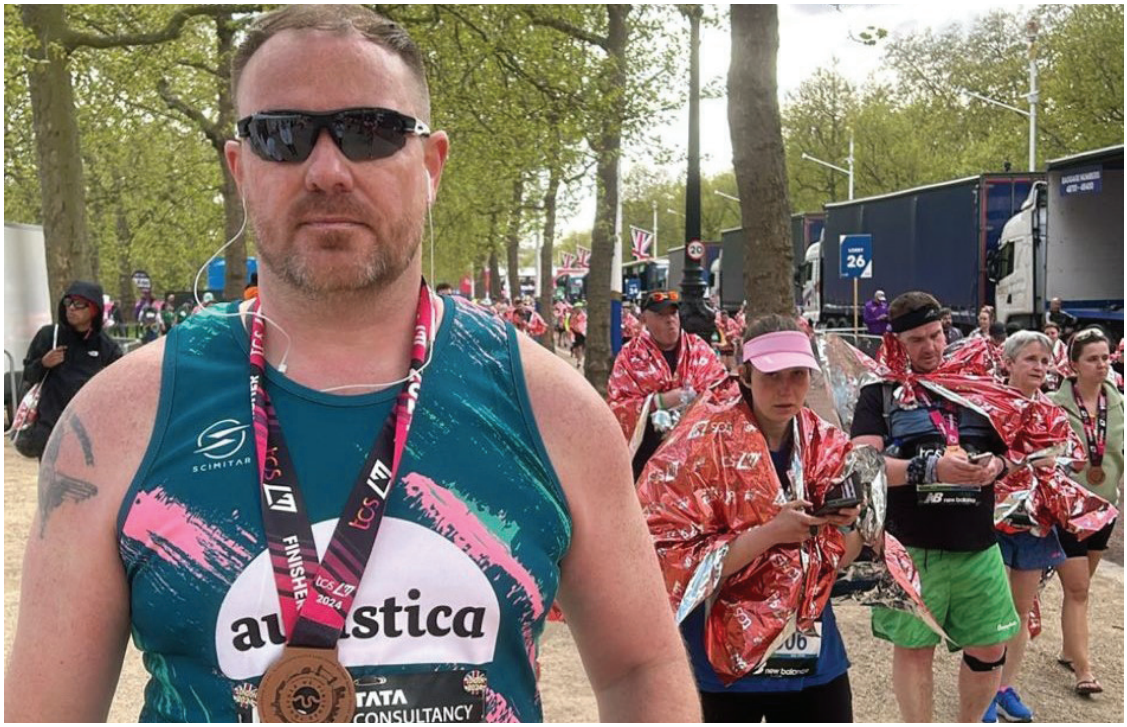
Ensuring that research that has the power to improve lives is able to reach all autistic people is a key priority for Autistica. That is why we will harness the power of Artificial Intelligence and begin to build an accessible Tips Hub. This hub will deliver personalised recommendations that will enable autistic people to understand day-to-day issues, their mental health needs, and will additionally ensure that employers can support autistic people in the workplace.

In addition to the two new initiatives above, we will also be launching two new indexes that will help us measure our effectiveness as we head towards 2030. The first will mean we can effectively understand attitudes to autism and neurodiversity and what approaches change them for the better. The second will measure how effectively mental health settings and approaches are accommodating autistic people and meeting their needs.

Fixing the assessment, diagnosis, and support crisis
As at March 2024, the amount of people waiting for an autism assessment is sitting at 183,000: that's bigger than the population of Swindon and enough to fill Wembley twice over. This figure demonstrates how fundamentally broken the system is. Doing more of the same won't work. We are calling for a fundamental rethink of how we carry out diagnosis underpinned by research and development. We want to see diagnosis take a wider view in terms of understanding neurodiversity, neurodivergence, and individual needs with a view to ensuring autistic people get the support they deserve quicker. This will be a key focus for the year ahead.

Building our income and enabling our amazing team
Last year we had a record year in terms of income, and that is testament to the way our community has rallied behind our goals, with Autistica raising almost £3 million. This year, we hope to build on this success by rolling out the NDEI® as a commercial product to fuel our work on employment, and by building links with statutory funders to find new solutions to the diagnosis crisis facing autistic people.

Over the last year we have enjoyed record levels of staff retention at Autistica. We have worked with our team to understand how we can build a more enabling workforce and, as part of this, we are proud to have launched a trial of the four-day week. We believe that this change could help us to build and sustain a happy, healthy, stable and high-quality team. This trial will be reviewed in the autumn.



The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in relation to the charity's aims and objectives. The trustees consider it important to demonstrate to supporters and others interested in our work that the research we have funded will support breakthroughs, create tangible progress, and enhance understanding.

Autistic people and families are at the heart of work, our national research network and embedded within our wider governance processes. By involving our community, we can create breakthroughs that enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.



Autistic people and family members play an active role across our work. The Autistica Network provides autistic people with the opportunity to be involved in research as participants and advisers. It also gives researchers a valuable resource to recruit to their studies.

Our Insight Group provide more specialised input to our and others' work, including co-designing research studies, providing advice on how to best involve autistic people in studies, and reviewing research proposals and Autistica Research Festival submissions to help make sure we support only the best quality research.

We know how important it is that our resources are deployed on research that is important to families. That's why we ensure that our research is of the highest quality, is considered to be internationally competitive, and does not duplicate investments made elsewhere.

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities we are committed to the highest possible standards of research governance. Independent peer review underscores all the research that we fund.

In addition to the Scientific Review Panel which scores and deliberates on all our research proposals, we are fortunate to benefit from independent scientific advice from world-leading experts in neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism.

Autistica is regulated by the Fundraising Regulator. We are committed to best practice in fundraising and customer service. We promise to keep our supporters informed about our work and to treat their information with respect.



"The NDEI® is the first thing that has given me real hope that things are changing: employers, attitudes, and wider society. It opens up opportunities I didn't have. There is no doubt in my mind this is going to be life-changing for autistic people."

Emma, Autistic adult
(Pictured left)

Structure, governance and management

"It feels good to see an app that was designed for us autistic people. For the first time I felt heard in my concerns and difficulties, not like generic anxiety apps that don't take autism into account."

Molehill Mountain user

How we are governed

Autistica was registered as a charity in December 2004 and its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were adopted on 20 July 2004. Autistica is incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 as a company limited by guarantee having no share capital. For the purposes of this Act, the chair and other trustees (none of whom receives any remuneration) are the directors of the company. A full list of trustees, together with other legal and administrative information, can be found at the front of this report.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year and additionally relies on sub-committees to provide further oversight of the work of the charity. Each is chaired by a trustee. All key decisions, including the allocation of funds for research, are taken at full meetings of the trustee board.

Since 1 April 2023, two trustees have retired from the board having served the maximum terms of six years: John Carey in July 2023 and Matthew Davis in May 2024.

The following issues are addressed by the trustees during the year:

- developing and reviewing the organisational strategy
- reviewing progress against our business plan
- agreeing and monitoring an annual business and financial plan
- the award of all grants for research
- the risks the charity is facing in delivering its plans
- the impact of the charity's work

Each year the skills and expertise required within the trustee board are reviewed to help the charity deliver its objectives. If gaps are identified or a vacancy occurs, new trustees with the appropriate skills and experience are identified. All trustees are offered a full induction when they join, and trustee training is available to keep trustees up to date with the environment in which the charity operates.

How we are managed

The Chief Executive is responsible to the board of trustees for the management of the charity. Director of Finance and Administration, Director of External Affairs, Director of Income Generation. and the Director of Research report to the Chief Executive. Remuneration for senior staff is set at market rates and reviewed annually by the board.

The offices of the charity are registered in Islington.

Risk management

The trustees formally consider the major risks faced by the charity as part of a risk management strategy that comprises:

- an annual review of the risks faced by the charity in delivering its plans
- the establishment of systems and procedures to manage those risks identified in the review
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential negative impact on the charity should those risks materialise
- raising awareness, amongst staff and trustees, of the risk of fraud and the steps to mitigate that risk to the charity
- increasing team capacity to mitigate cyber fraud, seeking expert advice and raising awareness of risks among staff

The charity has identified a number of key risks this year, including the stability of our current staff team after a year of significant change; rising costs as a result of the high level of inflation, and; the medium-term effect of Brexit on income, income diversification and improving national and international collaborations in autism research. Our loyal donor base and compelling external relationships put us in a strong position to maintain income and influence and continue supporting UK autism research. We actively seek new partnerships within and beyond autism science and build pro bono support to increase capacity.

Financial Performance
Total income for the year was £2,995,880 (2022-23: £1,543,626). The year-on-year increase was due to a generous donation from Dame Stephanie Shirley as well Corporate and Trusts performing particularly well.

The costs of raising funds was £573,386 (2022-23: £302,483). The rise in costs is due to a review in the year of how we allocate costs, so it is more reflective of the charity as it stands today. We spent £1,423,098 (2022-23: £1,495,431) on charitable activities including £699,626 (2022-23: £774,398) on in-house Goals research and £723,472 (2022-23: £721,033) on external research grants.

The overall net income on operating activities was £1,095,827 (2022-23: -£281,243), which we plan to spend next year in order to deliver both our 2030 Goals and our overarching strategy.

Reserves
The trustees review the reserves policy annually and consider the charity should hold free reserves of approximately £750,000 which includes a £50,000 contingency (2022-23: £700,000) to cover six months' operating costs. At 31 March 2024 the charity had free reserves excluding designated funds of £1,089,441 (2022-23: £841,439). The designated funds were £495,597 (2022-23: £NIL). At 31 March 2024 the charity had restricted reserves of £1,060,407 (2022-23: £708,179).

Investments
Free reserves and other surplus cash are held in interest-bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers or in regulated money market funds with a maximum of four to six months' operating costs (c.£650,000) held in the current account. Cash outside of the current account should be held in individual interest-bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers which benefit from the government Financial Services Compensation Scheme (currently up to £85,000), using the Insignis cash management platform. The maximum amount per deposit account should not exceed £100,000. These can be a mix of instant or close to instant access and longer-term access accounts.

A maximum of 50% of total cash or £1,100,000, whichever is lower, can be held in regulated money market funds with an AAA rating from Fitch and/or S&P Global, provided that the funds offer instant or close to instant access. A maximum of 25% of total cash or £750,000, whichever is the lower, can be held in equities or funds in line with the asset investment policy. These should be managed by a regulated asset manager. Investments are reviewed by the finance committee, which meets four times a year, and trustees are advised of any recommended changes at full meetings of the trustee board. At present we have no investment funds which relate to this policy due to liquidating these funds in 2022-23.

Going concern statement
The trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Approval
The report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to smaller entities. The trustees' report and financial statements were approved by the board of trustees on 19 September 2024.

On behalf of the Board



Matthew Harris
Honorary Treasurer
19 September 2024

Statement of trustee's responsibilities

Statement of disclosure to auditors
The trustees (who are also directors of Autistica for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report) and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware.
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.



Stephen Boyle
Chair of Trustees
19 September 2024



"It is always wonderful to meet with the other group members and engage with research projects if I can.

A highlight for me was attending an autism and employment round table event last year. There I was able to share my experience of supporting clients in work and talk about the barriers we can face as neurodivergent people in the workplace."

Karen-Anne, Insight Group member (pictured below)



Independent auditor's report to members

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of Autistica (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information
The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees
As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 24, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (ie. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Azets Audit Services Limited

Michelle Wilkes FCA
Senior Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants
For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services,
First Floor, River House
1 Maidstone Road
Sidcup
Kent DA14 5RH

Date : 1 October 2024

Statement of Financial Activities, including Income and Expenditure

for the year ended 31 March 2024

				Year ended 31 March 2024	Year ended 31 March 2023
Income from	**Notes**	**Unrestricted £**	**Restricted £**	**Total Funds £**	**Total Funds £**
Donations	2	2,040,621	914,458	2,955,079	1,527,079
Investment Income		40,801	-	40,801	16,547
Total income		**2,081,422**	**914,458**	**2,995,880**	**1,543,626**
Expenditure on					
Costs of raising funds					
Costs of generating donations	3	455,859	-	455,859	273,083
Cost of events	3	21,096	-	21,096	29,400
		476,955	**-**	**476,955**	**302,483**
Expenditure on charitable activities					
In-house Goals research	4	323,927	375,699	699,626	774,398
External research grants	4	536,941	186,531	723,472	721,033
		860,868	562,230	1,423,098	1,495,431
Total expenditure		**1,337,823**	**562,230**	**1,900,053**	**1,797,914**
Net (expenditure)/income before gains and losses on investments and transfers		743,599	352,228	1,095,827	(254,288)
Net (losses)/gains on investments	9	-	-	-	(26,955)
Transfer between funds	14	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		**743,599**	**352,228**	**1,095,827**	**(281,243)**
Total funds brought forward		841,439	708,179	1,549,618	1,830,861
Total funds carried forward		**1,585,038**	**1,060,407**	**2,645,445**	**1,549,618**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

Comparative Statement of Financial Activities, including Income and Expenditure

for the year ended 31 March 2023

		Year ended 31 March 2023		
Income from	**Notes**	**Unrestricted £**	**Restricted £**	**Total Funds £**
Donations	2	922,792	604,287	1,527,079
Investment Income		16,547	-	16,547
Total income		**939,339**	**604,287**	**1,543,626**
Expenditure on				
Costs of raising funds				
Costs of generating donations	3	273,083	-	273,083
Cost of events	3	29,400	-	29,400
		302,483	**-**	**302,483**
Expenditure on charitable activities				
In-house Goals research	4	658,249	116,149	774,398
External research grants	4	638,343	82,690	721,033
		1,296,592	198,839	1,495,431
Total expenditure		**1,599,075**	**198,839**	**1,797,914**
Net (expenditure)/income before gains and losses on investments and transfers		(659,736)	405,448	(254,288)
Net losses on investments	9	(26,955)	-	(26,955)
Transfer between funds	14	68,226	(68,226)	-
Net movement in funds		**(618,465)**	**337,222**	**(281,243)**
Total funds brought forward		1,459,904	370,957	1,830,861
Total funds carried forward		**841,439**	**708,179**	**1,549,618**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2024

	Notes	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8		-		-
Investments	9		-		-
			-		**-**
Current assets					
Debtors - amounts falling due within one year	10	253,014		269,371	
Cash at bank		2,786,820		1,600,572	
		3,039,834		**1,869,943**	
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(329,037)		(285,647)	
Net current assets			**2,710,797**		**1,584,296**
Total assets less current liabilities			2,710,797		1,584,296
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	12		(65,352)		(34,678)
Net assets			**2,645,445**		**1,549,618**
Reserves					
Unrestricted funds - general	13		1,089,441		841,439
Designated funds	13		495,597		-
Restricted funds	14		1,060,407		708,179
Total funds	**15**		**2,645,445**		**1,549,618**

Approved by the board of trustees on 19 September 2024 and signed on behalf of the board



Matthew Harris
Honorary Treasurer
Company Registration Number: 05184164

Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Net cash (outflow) from operating activities	16	1,145,447	(451,442)
Cash flow from investing activities			
Bank interest		40,801	16,547
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	474,587
Net cash from investing activities		40,801	491,134
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		1,186,248	39,692
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,600,572	1,560,880
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**2,786,820**	**1,600,572**

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee in the United Kingdom. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 3 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are set out on page 6.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

b) Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations and grants receivable are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Investment income is accounted for when received. Tax recoverable on investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

Other income is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Gifts in kind and donated services are included at the open market value of the goods or services provided.

c) Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

It is categorised under the following headings:

- Raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes expenditure associated with in-house Goals research and external research grants. Grants payable are accounted for at the point that either conditions for receipt have been satisfied or the post being funded is filled.

d) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

e) Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing over £5,000 are capitalised. Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

• Computer equipment	33%	straight line
• Other equipment and fittings	25%	straight line

f) Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

g) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves appropriate for the charity, in the current circumstances, to be able to continue as a going concern.

h) Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies that have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements:

Bad debts

Debtors are regularly reviewed for recoverability. Any debts which in the opinion of trustees are not recoverable are provided for as a specific bad debt.

The are no key assumptions concerning the future and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

2. Income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations	1,741,323	611,591
Gifts in kind	238,057	241,941
Challenge events	61,241	69,260
Unrestricted income	2,040,621	922,792
Restricted donations	914,458	604,287
Total income	2,955,079	1,527,079

Gifts in kind	2024 £	2023 £
Costs of activities for generating funds, challenge events	137,512	122,250
Charitable activities, website	-	1,608
Charitable activities, administrative support costs - Unrestricted	950	3,096
Charitable activities, disseminating information on autism and autism research - Restricted	99,595	114,987
	238,057	241,941

The above activities were organised by the charity.
Income from activities organised by individuals and donated to the charity are included in voluntary income.

3. Cost of raising funds

Costs of generating donations	2024 £	2023 £
Website, database, literature and PR costs	19,249	9,629
Other fundraising expenses	23,118	38,290
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	73,151	82,702
Staff costs (note 7)	340,341	142,463
	455,859	273,084

Cost of Events	2024 £	2023 £
Challenge events costs	6,510	15,176
Other event costs	9,541	8,520
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	5,045	5,704
	21,096	29,400

4. Expenditure on charitable activities

Grants for In-house Goals research	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 £	2023 £
Complex Needs Research and Development Hub (COMRAD)	-	19,913	19,913	-
Discover Autism Research and Employment	-	-	-	61,741
Autistica Network (Discover)	-	-	-	41,901
Embracing Complexity	-	(260)	(260)	3,758
Epilepsy Dossier	-	-	-	25,190
Neural markers of emerging autism in infants with epilepsy	-	65,352	65,352	-
NDEI® Knowledge Transfer Partnership	-	65,167	65,167	-
Supporting autistic people as they age	-	53,560	53,560	-
Promoting successful transition to adulthood for autistic people	-	10,254	10,254	-
Developing an autism and homelessness toolkit and training package	-	2,387	2,387	-
Supporting executive functions in infants at risk of autism/adhd	-	-	-	450
Committed grants from prior years - conditions not met or projects cancelled	(52,958)	-	(52,958)	-
Governance costs (Note 5)	32,705	-	32,705	35,968
Grant Administration costs (Note 6)	171,526	-	171,526	193,921
Staff costs (Note 7)	172,654	159,326	331,980	411,469
Total Grant expenditure	323,927	375,699	699,626	774,398
External research grants	236,164	27,205	358,786	273,596
Governance costs (note 5)	32,705	-	32,705	35,968
Staff costs (note 7)	172,655	159,326	331,981	411,469
	765,451	562,230	1,423,098	1,495,431

5. Governance costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
External audit	15,523	28,748
Trustees' liability insurance	3,274	3,260
Consultancy & recruitment costs	500	20,940
Other governance costs	426	7,985
Allocation of administrative support costs (Note 6)	2,522	2,852
Staff costs (Note 7)	43,165	8,151
	65,410	71,936

No Trustees were paid during this period. Two Trustees received reimbursements for travel expenses and meeting costs totalling £1,156 (2023 : One Trustee received £325 for travel expenses).

Governance costs were allocated equally between activities in Charitable Activities (Note 4).

6. Administrative support costs

The following administrative support costs are allocated between other categories of expenditure as detailed below.
Costs are attributed directly where possible and the balance is allocated based on time spent by trustees, staff and consultants.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Telephone	-	1,537
IT Expenditure	30,631	32,414
Stationery, copying, postage and other office expenses	5,356	8,168
Staff recruitment and professional development	35,706	51,530
Rent and rates	77,351	70,615
Accountancy	45,202	71,850
Other	14,716	13,443
Staff costs (note 7)	43,282	35,622
Total support costs	252,244	285,179

These are divided:

Generating donations (Note 3)	73,151	82,702
Events (Note 3)	5,045	5,704
Charitable activities (Note 4)	171,526	193,921
Corporate governance (Note 5)	2,522	2,852
	252,244	285,179

7. Staff costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	947,748	880,697
Social security costs	104,817	102,587
Pension costs	26,095	23,240
Redundancy Costs	12,089	2,650
	1,090,749	1,009,174
These are allocated:		
Generating donations (Note 3)	340,341	142,463
Charitable activities	663,961	822,938
Corporate governance (Note 5)	43,165	8,151
Administration - support costs (Note 6)	43,282	35,622
	1,090,749	1,009,174

There has been a review in the year of cost allocation to reflect an up-to-date estimate of where costs are attributed
The charity employed 16 full-time and 5 part-time staff members during the year to 31 March 2024
(2023: 16 full-time and 8 part-time). Staff costs are allocated between the various activities according to time spent.

	2024	2023
The amounts disclosed above include the following number of highly paid employees:	no.	no.
£60,001 - £70,000	1	-
£80,000 - £90,000	1	1

The total amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel is £344,280 (5 employees) (2023 - £302,791 (4 employees)). The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise those individuals listed on page 3.

8. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment	Other equipment and fittings	Total
Cost	£	£	£
As at 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	2,760	1,285	4,045
Depreciation			
As at 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	2,760	1,285	4,045
Net book value at 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2023	-	-	-

9. Investments

	2024	2023
Market Value	**£**	**£**
As at 1 April 2022	-	501,542
Disposals	-	(474,857)
Unrealised (Loss)/gain	-	(26,685)
As at 31 March 2024	-	-

10. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	**£**
Trade Debtors	47,719	190,702
Prepayments and accrued income	205,295	78,669
	253,014	269,371

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	40,566	21,982
Other creditors	8,315	28,718
Grant commitments (see Note 12 below)	246,427	146,092
Accruals and deferred income	33,729	88,855
	329,037	285,647

12. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grant commitments (see table below)	65,352	34,678

	Less than 1 yr	More than 1 yr	Total
	£	£	£
At 1 April 2023	146,092	34,678	180,770
Grant commitments	151,280	65,352	216,632
Grant provision released (conditions not met)	(47,440)	-	(47,440)
Commitments now due within one year	34,678	(34,678)	-
Paid in year	(38,183)	-	(38,183)
As at 31 March 2024	246,427	65,352	311,779

13. Unrestricted funds 2024

	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Designated	Balances c/f
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds - general	841,439	2,081,422	(1,337,823)	(495,597)	1,089,441
	841,439	2,081,422	(1,337,823)	(495,597)	1,089,441

Designated funds	Balances b/f	New designations	Designations released	Balances c/f
	£	£	£	£
Unfunded projects scheduled for 2024-2025	-	495,597	-	495,597
	-	495,597	-	495,597

Unfunded projects scheduled for 2024-2025
Amounts have been designated from general unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2024 to cover unfunded expenditure for planned and budgeted projects taking place in 2024-2025

Unrestricted funds 2023

	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds - general	1,459,904	939,339	(1,599,075)	41,271	841,439
	1,459,904	939,339	(1,599,075)	41,271	841,439

Designated funds
There were no designated funds at 31 March 2023

14. Restricted funds 2024

	Balances b/f £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balances c/f £
Support from Day One	355,034	264,246	(331,084)	-	288,196
Doubling Employment	43,250	20,000	(32,221)	-	31,029
Proven treatments for anxiety	-	202,772	(15,246)	-	187,526
Accessible public spaces	-	111,492	(8,425)	-	103,067
Tailored annual health checks	181,000	4,345	(34,630)	-	150,715
Changing attitudes about autism	9,999	-	-	-	9,999
Embracing Complexity	118,896	57,642	(45,833)	-	130,705
Research Growth	-	253,961	(94,791)	-	159,170
Total restricted funds	708,179	914,458	(562,230)	-	1,060,407

14. Restricted funds 2023

	Balances b/f £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balances c/f £
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience Mental Health -	25,724	-	(25,190)	(534)	-
Robert Luff Foundation COMRAD	-	20,000	-	-	20,000
Blackrock	-	11,208	-	(11,208)	-
SHAPe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	201,520	-	(20,520)	-	181,000
Fujitsu - Employment guide	-	69,250	-	(26,000)	43,250
Embracing Complexity	65,507	87,631	(3,758)	(30,484)	118,896
Social Care Scoping	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
START	-	358	(358)	-	-
University College - Ambitious about Autism - Education to Employment	-	135,000	(135,000)	-	-
CareTech - Social Care Fund	37,500	37,000	(9,033)	-	65,467
ICF- Sowerby - Digital Breakthrough	-	160,000	-	-	160,000
National Lottery	5,707	-	(4,980)	-	727
National Lottery - Changemakers	9,999	-	-	-	9,999
NHS England	-	73,840	-	-	73,840
Epilepsy Dossier	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Total restricted funds	370,957	604,287	(198,839)	(68,226)	708,179

See explanatory notes overleaf.

Restricted funds are funds where the donor has specified the funds must be spent on a particular project as listed below. All of these grants represent either programme grants for autism research at a particular institution, specific Autistica-led projects or where specified fellowships are awarded for the purposes of supporting individuals engaged in autism research. The Trustees have elected to change the presentation of the restricted funds as at 31 March 2024 as we believe it provides more useful information for the reader. This new format better reflects the way we have been operating in the year ended 31 March 2024.

Support from Day One

Many autistic people and families fight for a diagnosis expecting it will unlock the support that they need. But most will receive no support at all. This affects them for years to come. They are unable to reach their full potential in education, work, and relationships. They go on to face avoidable challenges in everyday life and their mental and physical health suffers. This is a practical plan to ensure every autistic person receives support from day one.

Doubling Employment

Fewer than 3 in 10 autistic people have a job, one of the lowest employment rates of all disabled groups. Autistic people are also more likely to be in roles below their skill level or in unstable employment. Being unemployed excludes people from society. It limits their means to support themselves or become financially resilient to live autonomously and plan for the future, and severely negatively impacts their mental health and life outcomes.

Proven treatments for anxiety

Nearly half of all autistic children have an anxiety disorder and 7 in 10 autistic adults have one or more mental health conditions across their lifetime. Without the right support early on, this anxiety can remain with them for life and lead to further mental health problems. The healthcare system is set up to accept anxiety as part of autism but we disagree. Tackling anxiety is one of the most important things we can do to change the life chances and life expectancy of autistic people. Our goal is to fund and shape research that informs evidence based treatments for anxiety that are specifically designed for autistic people. Our plan sets out our commitments to achieve this goal alongside the UK government, National Health Service (NHS), and specialist services. We have set out practical steps to prevent anxiety and promote good mental health from the start, and better understand the experiences of autistic people in inpatient care to prevent crises.

Accessible public spaces

Too many neurodivergent people are overwhelmed by public spaces. That is because they experience differences in the way they process sensory information, such as sound and light. Environments can impact life chances if schools, workplaces, and healthcare services are inaccessible. And autistic people can lack independence and become isolated if they cannot go shopping or enjoy sports and leisure facilities. But small adaptations can go a long way in making an environment safe and accessible, even enjoyable and engaging. By 2030 we aim to have adapted existing public spaces so that they are more inclusive for neurodivergent people. We are also working with industry partners on new developments that are designed with neurodiversity in mind.

Tailored annual health checks

Autistic people experience poorer health than the rest of the population, and tragically many die early. The failure of health and social care forces many to live difficult lives with health problems that can be prevented or treated. Autism is linked with many common health problems. Many autistic people find it difficult to communicate their needs and access healthcare. They may struggle with interoception - the ability to identify and describe physical sensations, or have sensory sensitivities, and difficulties processing information and communicating their needs. If we can prevent health issues by spotting them earlier with an annual health check, we can stop the flow of tragic headlines and enable autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Changing attitudes about autism

How you are perceived and understood matters. It affects your ability to form friendships and relationships, get a job, get the support you need, and live the life you want to lead. Many autistic people feel the need to mask their differences and 'act' their way through life to fit in and access things the rest of us take for granted. We want to build a society that respects and understands difference, and diversity. Our goal is to change attitudes toward autism and neurodiversity.

Embracing Complexity

Our vision is a world inclusive for neurodivergent people. Embracing Complexity brings together organisations working to facilitate evidence-based inclusion of neurodivergent people.

Research Growth

Research funding in the year enabled the Autistica team to facilitate knowledge sharing and develop skills and capacity building across the wider organisation to achieve our 2030 Goals in a sustainable way. The funding supports salary costs to facilitate 1 year of R&D with practical outcomes to achieve our 2030 Goals. These resources enable us to carry out key projects through in-house research and development activities to drive forward our goals with agile and accelerated development.

15. Analysis of net funds 2024

	General	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
Debtors	141,429	111,585	253,014
Bank at cash and in hand	1,526,220	1,260,600	2,786,820
Creditors : Due within one year	(117,287)	(211,750)	(329,037)
Creditors : Due after one year	34,676	(100,028)	(65,352)
	1,585,038	1,060,407	2,645,445

Analysis of net funds 2023

	General	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
Debtors	78,669	190,702	269,371
Bank at cash and in hand	902,325	698,247	1,600,572
Creditors : Due within one year	(104,877)	(180,770)	(285,647)
Creditors : Due after one year	(34,678)	-	(34,678)
	841,439	708,179	1,549,618

16. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Net movement in funds	1,095,827	(281,243)
Bank interest	(40,801)	(16,547)
Net gains on investments (see note 9)	-	26,955
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	16,357	(160,887)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	74,064	(19,720)
Net cash flow from operating activities	1,145,447	(451,442)

17. Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions during the year to 31 March 2024 (2023: None).

18. Guarantee

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee. The Memorandum of Association prohibits any income or property of the company being paid or transferred to the members. Members of the company undertake to contribute a maximum of £1 to cover its liabilities.

Board Committees

Finance Committee
Matthew Harris (Chair)
James Feeney
Stephen Boyle
Katherine Hudson
Jeff Saul

Nominations Committee
Lynn Hawkins (Chair)
Stephen Boyle

Advisory Committees

Scientific and Expert Review Panel
Professor Emily Simonoff (Chair)
Professor Sarah Parsons (Vice Chair)
Professor Dermot Bowler
Leneh Buckle
Gyll Curtis-Machin
Professor Lucy Henry
Professor Mark Brosnan
Dr Hannah Hobson
Dr Catherine Jones
Claudia Klaver
Dr Ewelina Rydzewska

Expert advisory groups (in-house research)
Dr Ian Male
Dr Louisa Thomas
Dr Michael Absoud
Kelly Scargill
Bernie Ennis
Teresa Kippax
Chloe Redfern
Lee Foster
Nick Ollerenshaw
Eric Heath
Jenny Shorthouse
Marc Goblot
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Prof Andrew Pickles
Dr Venkat Reddy
Dr Marion Rutherford
Dr Louise Rutter
Dr Sam Tromans
Dr Lucy Waldren
Ann Wilson

Thank you to the autism community and all the supporters who make our work possible.

We were very grateful for significant support in 2023-24 from:

Trusts & Foundations
Motability Foundation
The Peter Sowerby Foundation
The Waterloo Foundation
Robert Luff Foundation
CareTech Foundation
Another Way Women's Foundationn

Major donors
Dame Stephanie Shirley
Alexis Maskell
Charles Sharland
Gordon Holmes
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Sir Michael and Lady Christine Bett
Fondation Liber
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London Stock Exchange Foundation (TBC)
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Autistica Play Ambassadors
Jingle Jam
GamesAid

Advisors
ECR Training Academic Experts
Dr Laura Crane (Co-Chair)
Dr Hannah Pickard (Co-Chair)
Dr Alyssa Alcorn
Prof Duncan Astle
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Dr Dheeraj Rai
Prof Anna Remington
Dr Caroline Richards
Prof Sue Fletcher-Watson

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Registered in England.
Company No. 5184164
Charity No. 1107350

autistica

Can you help us with our mission?

We can't achieve our 2030 Goals alone.

We need to work in partnership with others who have the power to change laws, transform support and fund innovation.

Contact **info@autistica.org.uk** if you share our vision and want to work together.

Thank you.



AUTISTICA

England & Wales - Charity number 1107350

Accounts

Autistica funds research, shapes policy and works with autistic people to make more of a difference

Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ending
31 March 2023

autistica





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Our trustees, honorary supporters and leaders help make our vision a reality by overseeing and managing all of the charity's life-saving and life-changing work.

Honorary roles

President
Dame Stephanie Shirley CH

Vice Presidents
Jane Asher
Sir Christopher Ball
Lady Christine Bett
Hugh Merrill MVO

Trustees

Chair
Stephen Boyle

Honorary Treasurer
Matthew Harris

John Carey (retired July 2023)
Matthew Davis
Peter Dilnot (appointed July 2023)
Professor Jonathan Green
Professor Dr Hilde Geurts (resigned July 2022)
Lynn Hawkins
Katherine Hudson

Charity management

Chief Executive Officer
Dr James Cusack

Director of External Affairs (appointed July 2022)
Rebecca Sterry

Director of Fundraising
(on maternity leave: March 2021 to April 2022)
Jennie Chambers

Interim Director of Fundraising
(December 2021 to July 2022)
James Robinson

Head of Research
Dr Amanda Roestorf

Auditors

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Registered office

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info@autistica.org.uk
autistica.org.uk

Charity registration no. 1107350
Company registration no. 05184164

Statement from the chair

I joined Autistica as chair two years ago just as we launched our ambitious 2030 Goals. The progress that has been made in that time is extremely exciting and is testament to Autistica's talented multidisciplinary team and exemplary leadership. But we know that we can't achieve these goals alone. Collaboration is at the heart of our progress to date and is shaping our plans for the future.



"We are always striving to work with partners who can help us make more of an impact per pound."

Stephen Boyle

We recognise that none of our work would be possible without our donors and funders. At a time when many individuals are cutting back on giving, we are extremely fortunate that so many of our donors have stayed loyal to Autistica. Our commitment to you is to ensure that every donation is used in the most effective way possible. We are always striving to work with partners who can help us make more of an impact per pound. For example this year and last year we've secured major top-up funding for grants we have awarded for social care research and in March, we received over £100,000 top-up pro-bono support for our World Autism Awareness campaign on employment.

It's not just funding partnerships that are helping us to make a difference. Our relationships with NHS England, the Department for Health and Social Care, the Department for Work and Pensions and others mean that we are turning research into practice, shaping support and services of the future. We are uniquely placed to give advice based on the latest research and to involve autistic people in the design of services. With this evidence-led approach, we are are helping the NHS and others to prevent crisis, create more effective support, save money and transform lives.

I'm extremely passionate about what Autistica can offer in terms of shaping a better future for autistic people. Thanks to the 2030 Goals, we have a clear pathway, we just need the funding and partnerships to make it a reality. If you can help us whether directly or as a vital connector to people who can, get in touch. We've included contact details on the final page of this report.

Finally, I'd like to thank those who share their expertise and experiences to support the charity, especially the autistic people and family members who make up the Autistica Insight Group and advisory panels. I'd also like to thank the other board members for their guidance over the past year. We said goodbye to two valued trustees John Carey and Hilde Guerts, but are excited to welome Peter Dilnot to the board.

Thank you all for your continued support. I can't wait to see what we can achieve together over the next twelve months.

Stephen Boyle
Chair of trustees

Statement from the CEO

I have been extremely proud of what we have been able to achieve this year in progressing our 2030 Goals, especially our work towards doubling the employment rate for autistic people and providing support for all autistic people from day one. We now have a strategy and clear pathway for achieving each of our Goals. And we're looking to how we can grow our impact as a charity in the coming years.



"Over the past few months we have begun to grow the team to allow us to achieve all that we've set out in our Goal plans."

Dr James Cusack

As part of our goal to double the employment rate for autistic people, we are creating a gold standard measure of neuroinclusion. The Autistica Neurodiversity Employers Index will enable organisations to measure themselves against best practice, with recommendations for improvement, and an annual awards programme. We've also launched a range of free resources for employers and run an awareness campaign to encourage organisations to hire differently. We've also begun work on a major report on autism and employment led by Sir Robert Buckland KC MP with the Department for Work and Pensions which will be released in early 2024 with a set of recommendations for employers in September this year.

To ensure autistic people and families are supported with high quality information we are developing an online evidence-led information hub called the Autistica Everyday Tips Hub. We're also collaborating on research to develop a personal support profiles assessment for autistic adults.

We've also been in high demand from the media who seem to be more interested in autism and neurodiversity than ever before. We've advised on a couple of BBC documentaries and spoken on a hard-hitting Channel 4 Dispatches programme about autistic people in-patient mental health units. This is all helping to change public attitudes about autism.

During and after the pandemic we operated as a small team, but over the past few months we have begun to grow the team to allow us to achieve all that we've set out in our Goal plans. Three of our new roles have been funded by grants. With a growing team and ambitious set of Goals we're looking to the best model of delivery of our work.

Traditionally we have outsourced the majority of our research – funding universities around the country – but given much of our research is about product development or service design, we are increasingly running projects in-house with collaborative academic or corporate partners. Despite a challenging economic climate, we are experiencing an exciting time of growth, one which is sustainable and most importantly, drives rapid progress for autistic people.

Dr James Cusack
Chief Executive Officer

At Autistica, research is at the heart of everything that we do. We know that it has the potential to transform everyday lives by making sure that treatments, support and services work for autistic people.

Right now autistic people face far too many inequalities. Most autistic children and adults wait years for a diagnosis, and when they finally receive one, there is little, if any, appropriate support. They experience avoidable challenges throughout education and face the lowest employment rates of any disability. They are more likely to have poor mental health and physical health throughout their lives. And negative attitudes and inaccessible environments can leave many feeling like they just don't fit into this world.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

We have developed a set of six Goals for 2030 that set out our vision of a different world; one where autistic people can access the right support, live in an inclusive and accepting world, and find fulfilling and sustainable work. And these goals are not only visionary and ambitious; they are also achievable.

Research and the development of evidence-based solutions is at the core of each of these goals, but so too is working in partnership and campaigning for change. Autistica works in partnership not only to achieve a step change in the amount of resource focused on autism research, but also to ensure that research funding is directed to the areas of greatest need. We act as the bridge between autistic people, the research community and other funders of autism science.

We also work with key partners in positions of influence over policy and execution to make sure that the evidence generated by the research we support is put into action. Because research without implementation can never result in impact.

Our unique approach is driven by and developed with autistic people and families. It can and will make more of a difference for autistic people in both the short and long term.

Our vision
is a world where every autistic person lives a happy, healthy, long life.

Our mission
is to create the breakthroughs that enable autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

We do this by funding research, shaping policy and working with autistic people to make more of a difference.



Our Goals
By 2030:

all autistic people will have proven **support from day one**

the **employment rate** for autistic people will double

autistic people will have proven treatments for **anxiety**

public spaces will be more accessible for neurodivergent people

every autistic adult will be offered a yearly, tailored **health check**

attitudes to autistic people will change

Having launched our 2030 Goals in late 2021, the past year has been focused on strategic planning and kickstarting projects and campaigns to achieve them. These are some highlights from key areas of our work.

1

Enabling and leading world-class research

To achieve our 2030 Goals we kicked off our own internal research projects this year, including the development of a gold-standard neurodiversity employers index and an online information hub for autistic people and families. We have also co-funded research projects with the National Institute of Health Research and NHS England and partnered on collaborative research with organisations across the UK, which led to £5.767 million of external funding for autism research. We also continued to support the next generation of autism researchers with funded studentships and training.

2

Ensuring community involvement

We continue to involve autistic people in everything we do and enable researchers to do the same through our research mailing list - the Autistica Network, and the Autistica Insight Group. We helped to recruit for 61 research projects through our 20,000 strong Autistica Network and the Autistica Insight Group shaped the development of 24 research projects. We involved autistic advisors for each of our Goal projects – for example to inform the topic areas in our Everyday Tips Hub and the roll out of an annual health check. We also brought on board a group of autistic advisors as part of the Government Review of Autism and Employment we are supporting.

3

Sharing evidence and campaigning for change

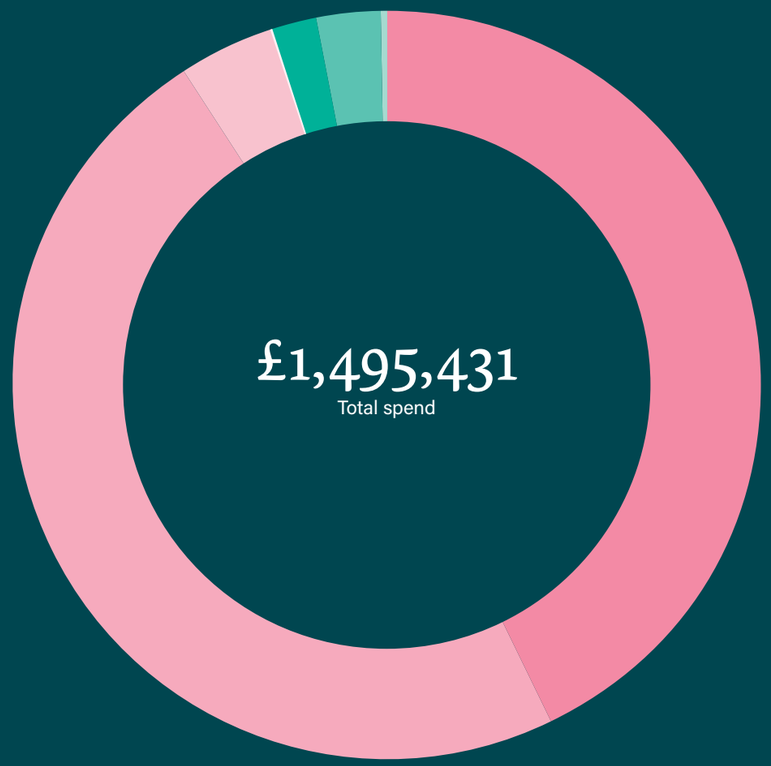
As part of our goal to double the employment rate for autistic people we ran our *Hire Different Campaign* to highlight outdated recruitment techniques that prevent autistic talent from securing employment. We also started work with the government on a review of autism and employment, with a co-authored report due early 2024. We've also continued to advise organisations such as the British Standards Institute who are developing a new neurodiversity standard. We've also shared the latest evidence, personal experiences and expert advice through our monthly webinars with academics, clinicians and autistic people.

4

Funding for impact

We have continued to benefit financially from our key long-term supporters, enabling us to start some of our key projects such as our "Personal Support Plans" which will provide autistic people with more information about what their diagnosis means to them. Our partnership with CareTech Foundation continues to help fund our Social Care Action fund which looks into key areas of social care provision that are under researched, with a view to making life changing improvements for those that access adult social care services. And a huge thank you to Fujitsu and all its staff as our partnership came to an end this year after extending the original partnership for another two years - their support and funds have really helped Autistica continue its vital work during a global pandemic and economic instability.

2022-23 Charitable activities spend



£641,358
Research staff and research governance

£721,033
Communicating research, staff and governance

£61,741
Goal: Employment

£450
Goal: Support from day one

£25,190
Goal: Anxiety

£41,901
Autistica Network - research participation

£3,758
Embracing Complexity - charity coalition

Progress towards our Goals

All autistic people will have proven support from day one

- Developing strengths and needs assessments to make sure support can be individually tailored to every autistic person.
- Building a platform to provide practical support and guidance for autistic people and their families about everyday concerns and needs.

The employment rate for autistic people will double

- Launched the Autistica Employers Guide to Neurodiversity which will be continually added to as new evidence and best practice emerges.
- Developing a gold standard benchmarking metric to help companies to create neurodiverse and inclusive workforces, based on best practice guidance.

Autistic people will have proven treatments for anxiety

- Trialling new approaches that help point us towards anxiety treatments that reduce anxiety for autistic people across their lifespan.
- Continuing our support for our anxiety app Molehill Mountain.

Public spaces will be more accessible for neurodivergent people

- Continuing to work with the government, public services, commissioners, local authorities, and public research funders to create environments that are autism friendly and account for the diversity of autistic people's needs.

Every autistic adult will be offered a yearly, tailored health check

- Supporting NHS England as they look to rollout health checks beyond the initial trial.
- Continuing our research to demonstrate the benefits the health checks give autistic people.

Attitudes to autistic people will change

- Kicking off our innovative new research project, the Autistica Autism Attitudes Index, to track and measure how attitudes to autism change over time.

Our research

"Everything I read about autism related to young boys. I wanted to change that.

I've been involved in a few research studies, and fed my experiences into various surveys and campaigns."

Flo, member of the Autistica Insight Group

Partnerships – collaboration and commissioning funding
In 2022 we continued to build on relationships with NIHR and NHSE to commission funding in priority areas for autism and learning disabilities related to health and social care and innovations that make a difference to autistic people's lives.

We supported a number of other research partnerships across the UK as well as international collaborations. We partnered with The National Autistic Society and other UK charities to design and pilot a peer education training programme to support families.

In total our research partnerships brought in £5,766,895 of external funding for autism research.

Research Funding and Development
Through the generous funding made available from our donors corporate partners trusts and foundations, we funded £1.495 million of world leading research in the UK

Autistica network and insight group
The Autistica Network - our email network of people interested in taking part in or learning from research, continued to grow and we now have over 20,000 subscribers including professionals, researchers, autistic adults, parents, educators, policy makers. With over 200 people in the Autistica Insight Group, we supported research through co-production and lived experience insights to shape research that makes a difference for autistic people now and in the future.

Research governance – our Scientific review and expert review panels
Independent peer review from scientific advisers and lived experience experts is crucial to our research governance and funding process. All the research we fund is reviewed independently by our scientific lived experience expert review panels, who provide recommendations on the quality of the research to fit its priorities, fit with Autistica's strategic goals, value for money, opportunity to influence policy, and to make a difference to autistic people's lives. We are incredibly grateful to the time, knowledge, insights and expertise that our advisors freely provide to ensure we have strong governance, and continuously and improve our charitable aims to shape and fund the highest quality autism research.

We have continued to work closely with government and NHS England to drive forward our goals. In April the government announced that we would be supporting them on a review of autism and employment. And we continue to work closely with NHS England to test and implement an annual health check for all autistic people.



"Working with the fantastic charity Autistica, over the coming months we will ask employers, employer groups, groups working with autistic people and autistic people themselves to identify the barriers to job searches and career progression."

Sir Robert Buckland KC MP for The Observer

The Buckland Review on autism and employment
In March 2023, we were announced as the lead charity on this important review, working with the Department for Work and Pensions and Sir Robert Buckland. We have received a huge amount of interest from other charities, employers and autistic people. We expect the review to launch early next year, and expect the recommendations to be applicable to a wide range of employers across the UK.

Developing a plan for health checks with NHS England
Autistic people face poor health outcomes, but these could be avoided with better diagnosis and treatment. With support from NHS England we have been working with Newcastle University to develop and test a health check for autistic people. In January 2023, we brought together different stakeholders, including autistic people, commissioners and policymakers, GPs and researchers in two workshops to understand how this check could be implemented across the NHS. Our plan and the evidence so far was released in June 2023.

Collaborating with charities and government
We continue to be a key player in a number of government and NHS committees, as the charity that feeds in the latest evidence. We sit on autism-specific advisory boards for NHS England, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education. The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021-2026 was released last year by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and encompassed multiple Autistica recommendations. We're working with other autism charities to advise the DHSC, and ensure progress is made.

Embracing Complexity – a neurodiversity coalition
We are thrilled that The Waterloo Foundation have pledged £104,600 to support the Embracing Complexity coalition for the next 3 years. We now have 61 members all working together to improve the lives of those with more than one neurodevelopmental condition. We've run workshops at public facing events to encourage collaboration amongst charities and people with lived experience and continued to run webinars to share the latest research with member charities and their networks. Embracing Complexity is in the process of research development and we've created an Advisory Group of neurodivergent people to help us shape our plans.



Sharing the latest research and drawing the public's attention to issues that matter to autistic people is crucial for driving progress.

"Having adjustments in my interview made all the difference. It's about time some traditions were broken. #HireDifferent #Autism Acceptance Week"

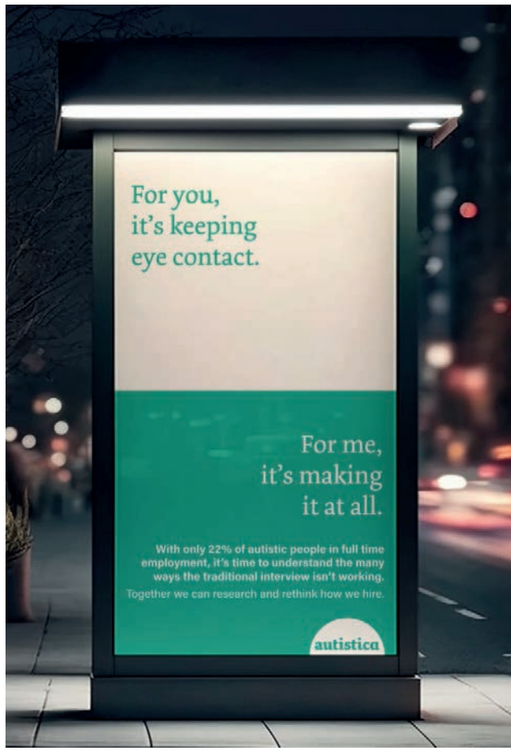
Autistic adult supporting our Hire Different campaign

Highlighting autistic ChangeMakers
Thanks to funding from the National Lottery we've been able to use our platform to celebrate autistic people who are using their own experiences and skills to create change for other autistic people. These autistic changemakers are progressing research, improving support and changing attitudes. We've amplified their voices every month and shared their successes. Given the success of the series, we intend to continue to highlight these individuals and their stories to empower and inspire others in our community and beyond.

Shaping the media and changing attitudes
As the voice of research, we have been asked to advise on a number of media stories and productions. Our Chief Executive was the lead advisor for the highly praised BBC documentary about Christine McGuinness, and advised and appeared on the harrowing Channel 4 Dispatches film about autistic people in inpatient mental health units. Neurodiversity and autism is certainly rising up the media agenda, and we're pleased to see such in-depth journalism being carried out which promotes research and the power that it has to transform lives

Campaigning to get employers to #HireDifferent
In World Autism Acceptance Week 2023 we launched a campaign to help the world understand why interviews aren't working for autistic people. With billboards in cities across the UK and social media videos, quotes and messages we called for employers to make small changes that could make a big difference to autistic talent. We also used the campaign to encourage companies to download the Autistica Employers Guide to Neurodiversity. Thanks to the campaign, over 1000 companies have downloaded this resource.

Autistica webinar series and the Autistica Festival
In 2022 we held the fourth Autistica Research Festival, with sponsorship again from Fujitsu. We had 67 researchers presenting, 10 autistic people sharing their personal experiences and 5000 views of content over the course of the Festival. Despite the success of the event we have decided to change our events calendar next year and instead, spread events throughout the year. Based on audience feedback, we think this might mean less information overload for those attending, and may prove easier to manage internally. We may well revisit the Festival format again in the future.



Funding and support

We are so grateful to our loyal donors, partners, and trusts and foundations who support us to achieve our mission. Many of whom support us for multi-year projects that drive real and lasting change.

£383,416
Trusts

£287,560
Major donors

£273,179
Corporate

£241,941
Gifts in kind

£163, 621
Other income

£69,510
Events

£54,057
Gift aid

£53,645
Individuals

£16,547
Investments

£150
Legacy

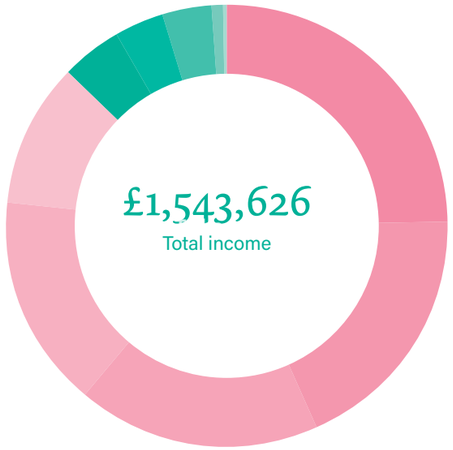
Trusts and foundations
We have a number of long-term funding partnerships in progress which are enabling major projects to make significant progress. With funding from CareTech Foundation, we are running the Social Care Action Fund which is fostering research into important, under-researched areas of social care provision accessed by or impacting autistic adults. The fund launched last year and continues for three years, with the goal of enabling researchers to develop high quality research proposals to submit to the National Institute for Health and Care Research's (NIHR) Research for Social Care Call (RfSC). In addition, we have received significant support from the London Stock Exchange Foundation, who have provided funding towards the development of our Neurodiversity Employers Index.

We also have projects ongoing thanks to funding in 2021-22 from the Peter Sowerby Foundation (for the development of annual health checks for autistic people) and The Maudsley Trust (for our anxiety app Molehill Mountain, developed with King's College London). We have another multi-year partnership with Waterloo Foundation, whose funding is enabling us to lead the unique Embracing Complexity Coalition which brings together 61 charities to better support people who think differently.

Individual donors
We continued to benefit from the generosity of our supporters through one-off gifts, and regular monthly contributions, community fundraisers and those participating in various challenge events, including the TCS Money London Marathon which raised circa £70,000 in October.

Corporate and major donors
Despite coming to the end of our four-year partnership with Fujitsu, the leading tech company continued to show their commitment to neurodiversity in the workplace by sponsoring the development of the Autistica Employers Guide to Neurodiversity released in March 2023. The resources have already benefitted hundreds of companies and generated a pool of 1,000 corporate contacts. GamesAid continued its unwavering support for Autistica, with GamesAid members choosing to support our cause once again.

Our Major Donors and members of our renamed giving club; the Autistica 2030 Club, continue to support us to achieve our Goals, and connect us with others who can fund or progress the Goals further. In turn, we involve them in special events and personalised updates that bring them closer to our work. This year our major donors have made significant gifts that have kickstarted our employment and support Goal projects, including our "Personal Support Plans" project which will provide autistic people with more information about what their diagnosis means to them.



Looking ahead

"Many people of colour were labeled as difficult and disruptive in school and face higher rates of hospitalisations and negative police interactions likely because of undiagnosed neurodiversity. More research can help facilitate the development of more effective support and interventions."

Ben, Autistica Network member (pictured)

Progressing our Goals
We have developed robust plans for achieving four of our goals and will continue to meet the milestones set out in these plans, with project leads now in place on key projects. And we will be pushing hard to get a research plan developed as promised by the government to progress some of the research goals within our plans.

Strengthening our relationships and influence
We know we can't achieve our Goals alone. We'll be using every opportunity to find champions in government, policymaking, business and beyond to ensure that we continue to make progress and reach new audiences. We look forward to the release of the Buckland Review on autism and employment in early 2024 which will establish Autistica as the authority and should bring in organisations who can help us to influence employers across the UK.

Bringing more research and development in-house
Many of the projects within our goal plans involve both research and solution development – for example the development of the Everyday Tips Hub and Neurodiversity Index. Given the range of skills we have at Autistica we are bringing more and more projects in-house. We will continue to monitor and explore the right balance of in-house research and external projects, but intend to always fund and co-fund externally as we do now.

Optimising our income
After reviewing and streamlining the fundraising team this year we are now better placed to push forward with our new business aspirations in 2023-24, including exploring new opportunities to generate income in addition to our standard income streams.

In fundraising our key goal is to ensure we can provide long-term financial stability to the charity therefore we will continue to focus on multi-year partnership opportunities as well as opportunities where we have a greater chance of securing funding.

Growing and developing our team
Over the course of the next year we will be recruiting some members to the research and communications team to enable us to deliver on the Goals projects that we are running in-house. We're also focusing more than ever on staff wellbeing and development, and continually looking to improve how we recruit, support and retain all staff and we especially want to showcase best-practice when it comes to inclusivity of neurodivergent staff.



The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in relation to the charity's aims and objectives. The trustees consider it important to demonstrate to supporters and others interested in our work that the research we have funded will support breakthroughs, create tangible progress, and enhance understanding.

Autistic people and families are at the heart of work, our national research network and embedded within our wider governance processes. By involving our community, we can create breakthroughs that enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.



Autistic people and family members play an active role across our work. The Autistica Network provides autistic people with the opportunity to be involved in research as participants and advisers. It also gives researchers a valuable resource to recruit to their studies.

Our Insight Group provide more specialised input to our and others' work, including co-designing research studies, providing advice on how to best involve autistic people in studies, and reviewing research proposals and Autistica Research Festival submissions to help make sure we support only the best quality research.

We know how important it is that scarce resources are deployed on research that is not just important to families but is also of the highest quality, internationally competitive and does not inappropriately duplicate investment made elsewhere. As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities we are committed to the highest possible standards of research governance. Independent peer review underscores all the research that we fund.

In addition to the Scientific Review Panel which scores and deliberates on all our research proposals, we are fortunate to benefit from independent scientific advice from world-leading experts in neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism.

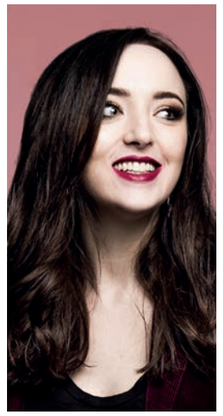
Autistica is regulated by the Fundraising Regulator. We are committed to best practice in fundraising and customer service. We promise to keep our supporters informed about our work and to treat their information with respect.



"After graduating university I found it difficult to find a job, the interview processes never seemed to test the things that should actually matter."

Jacob, autistic data analyst (pictured)

We're getting employers to do things differently.
With our Hire Different campaign, the Autistica Employers Guide to Neurodiversity and work with the Department of Work and Pensions, this year we have educated thousands of employers across the UK about how they can recruit, train and retain autistic talent.



"They include autistic people in the conversation and our love of knowledge and fact-finding means we're actually pretty good at advocating for ourselves - so long as the information is available. Their research enables that."

Fern Brady,
Autistic comedian

How we are governed
Autistica was registered as a charity in December 2004 and its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were adopted on 20 July 2004. Autistica is incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 as a company limited by guarantee having no share capital. For the purposes of this Act, the chair and other trustees (none of whom receives any remuneration) are the directors of the company. A full list of trustees, together with other legal and administrative information, can be found at the front of this report.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year and additionally relies on sub-committees to provide further oversight of the work of the charity (see page 39). Each is chaired by a trustee. All key decisions, including the allocation of funds for research, are taken at full meetings of the trustee board.

On 31 March 2023 there were seven members of our trustee board. Trustees may serve for up to two terms of three years and are appointed in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Professor Dr Hilde Geurts resigned from the board in July 2022 and John Carey retired in July 2023..

The following issues are addressed by the trustees during the year:

- developing and reviewing the organisational strategy
- reviewing progress against our business plan and research strategy
- agreeing and monitoring an annual business and financial plan
- the award of all grants for research
- the risks the charity is facing in delivering its plans
- the impact of the charity's work

Each year the skills and expertise required within the trustee board are reviewed to help the charity deliver its objectives. If gaps are identified or a vacancy occurs, new trustees with the appropriate skills and experience are identified. All trustees are offered a full induction when they join, and trustee training is available to keep trustees up to date with the environment in which the charity operates.

How we are managed
The chief executive is responsible to the board of trustees for the management of the charity. The director of fundraising, director of external affairs and head of research report to the chief executive. Remuneration for senior staff is set at market rates and reviewed annually by the board.

The offices of the charity are registered in Islington.

Risk management
The trustees formally consider the major risks faced by the charity as part of a risk management strategy that comprises:

- an annual review of the risks faced by the charity in delivering its plans
- the establishment of systems and procedures to manage those risks identified in the review
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential negative impact on the charity should those risks materialise
- raising awareness, amongst staff and trustees, of the risk of fraud and the steps to mitigate that risk to the charity
- increasing team capacity to mitigate cyber fraud, seeking expert advice and raising awareness of risks among staff

The charity has identified a number of key risks this year, including the continued impact of Covid-19 on research, fundraising, policy influencing, communications and staff; the stability of our current staff team after a year of significant change; rising costs as a result of the high level of inflation, and; the medium-term effect of Brexit on income, income diversification and improving national and international collaborations in autism research. Our loyal donor base and compelling external relationships put us in a strong position to maintain income and influence and continue supporting UK autism research. We actively seek new partnerships within and beyond autism science and build pro bono support to increase capacity.

"The ideas in this plan have the potential to transform support for autistic people. The Government and NIHR need to join Autistica in doing their bit."

Dr Carole Buckley,
Royal College of General Practitioners on the Autistica support plan.

Financial Performance
The total income for the year was £1,543,626 (2021-22: £1,501,242). It has been a challenging fundraising environment, and thanks to the generosity of our donors we have been able to maintain our income levels.

The cost of raising funds was £302,483 (2021-22: £286,545). We spent £1,495,431 (2021-22: £1,210,522) on charitable activities, including £774,398 (2021-22: £726,130) on grants for medical research and £721,033 (2021-22: £484,392) on medical research dissemination.

We have been able to make use of our reserves in the year to offset the loss on operating activities of £254,288 (2021-22: £4,175).

Reserves
The trustees review the reserves policy annually and consider the charity should hold free reserves of approximately £700,000 (2021-22: £700,000) to cover six months' operating costs plus a contingency of £50,000 (2021-22: £50,000). At 31 March 2023 the charity had free reserves excluding designated funds of £841,439 (2021-22: £1,459,904). Our designated funds were £nil (2021-22: £nil).

At 31 March 2023 the charity had restricted reserves of £708,179 (2021-22: £370,957).

Investments
Free reserves and other surplus cash are held in interest- bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers or in regulated money market funds with a maximum of three to four months operating costs (c. £250,000) held in the current account.

Cash outside of the current account should be held in individual interest-bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers which benefit from the government Financial Services Compensation Scheme (currently up to £85,000), using the Insignis cash management platform. The maximum amount per deposit account should not exceed £100,000. These can be a mix of instant or close to instant access and longer-term access accounts.

A maximum of 50% of total cash or £1,100,000, whichever is lower, can be held in regulated money market funds with an AAA rating from Fitch and/or S&P Global, provided that the funds offer instant or close to instant access. A maximum of 25% of total cash or £750,000, whichever is the lower, can be held in equities or funds in line with the asset investment policy. These should be managed by a regulated asset manager. Investments are reviewed by the finance committee, which meets four times a year, and trustees are advised of any recommended changes at full meetings of the trustee board.

At present we have no investment funds which relate to this policy due to liquidating these funds in 2022-23 in the current financial year..

Going concern statement
The trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern. In addition, we have a significant donation and corporate commitments expected in 2023-24.

Approval
The report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to smaller entities. The trustees' report and financial statements were approved by the board of trustees on 30 November 2023

On behalf of the Board



Matthew Harris
Honorary Treasurer
30 November 2023

Statement of trustee's responsibilities

Statement of disclosure to auditors
The trustees (who are also directors of Autistica for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report) and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102)
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Stephen Boyle
Chair of Trustees
30 November 2023





"It is a constant fight to get support, and not everyone can advocate for themselves. Autistica's Goal to make sure every autistic person gets support from day one is really important."

Chris, Autistica supporter (pictured)

Independent auditor's report to members

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of Autistica (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information
The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees
As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 22, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Independent auditor's report to members continued

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud
Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control..
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (ie. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report
This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Michelle Wilkes FCA Azets Audit Services Limited
Senior Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants
For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services
First Floor, River House
1 Maidstone Road
Sidcup
Kent DA14 5RH
12 December 2023

Statement of Financial Activities, including Income and Expenditure
for the year ending 31 March 2023

Income from	Notes	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Year ending 31 March 2023 Total Funds £	Year ending 31 March 2022 Total Funds £
Donations	2	922,792	604,287	1,527,079	1,496,886
Investments		16,547	-	16,547	4,356
Total income		**939,339**	**604,287**	**1,543,626**	**1,501,242**
Expenditure on					
Costs of raising funds					
Costs of generating donations	3	273,083	-	273,083	252,326
Cost of events	3	29, 400	-	29,400	34,219
		302,483	**-**	**302,483**	**286,545**
Expenditure on charitable activities					
Grants for medical research	4	658,249	116,149	774,398	726,130
Medical research dissemination	4	638,343	82,690	721,033	484,392
		1,296,592	198,839	1,495,431	1,210,522
Total expenditure		**1,599,075**	**198,839**	**1,797,914**	**1,497,067**
Net (expenditure)/income before gains and losses on investments and transfers		(659,736)	405,448	(254,288)	4,175
Net (losses)/gains on investments	9	(26,955)	-	(26,955)	41,885
Transfer between funds	14	68,226	(68,226)	-	-
Net movement in funds		**(618,465)**	**337,222**	**(281,243)**	**46,060**
Total funds brought forward		1,459,904	370,957	1,830,861	1,784,801
Total funds carried forward		**841,439**	**708,179**	**1,549,618**	**1,830,861**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2023

	Notes	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8		-		-
Investments	9		-		501,542
			-		**501,542**
Current assets					
Debtors - amounts falling due within one year	10	269,371		108,484	
Cash at bank		1,600,572		1,560,879	
		1,869,943		**1,669,363**	
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(285,647)		(305,366)	
Net current assets			**1,584,296**		**1,363,997**
Total assets less current liabilities			1,584,296		1,865,539
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	12		(34,678)		(34,678)
Net assets			**1,549,618**		**1,830,861**
Reserves					
Unrestricted funds - general	13		841,439		1,459,904
Designated funds	13		-		-
Restricted funds	14		708,179		370,957
Total funds	**15**		**1,549,618**		**1,830,861**

Approved by the board of trustees on 30 November 2023 and signed on behalf of the board



Matthew Harris
Honorary Treasurer
Company Registration Number: 05184164

Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ending 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Net cash (outflow) from operating activities	16	(451,442)	(363,560)
Cash flow from investing activities			
Bank interest		16,547	4,356
Proceeds from sale of investments		474,587	-
Net cash from investing activities		491,134	4,356
Net increase/(decrease) in cash		39,692	(359,204)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,560,880	1,920,084
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**1,600,572**	**1,560,880**

Notes to financial statements
for the year ending 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee in the United Kingdom. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 4 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are set out on page 6.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

b) Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations and grants receivable are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Investment income is accounted for when received. Tax recoverable on investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

Other income is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Gifts in kind and donated services are included at the open market value of the goods or services provided.

c) Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

It is categorised under the following headings:

- Raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes expenditure associated with grants for medical research and medical research dissemination. Grants payable are accounted for at the point that either conditions for receipt have been satisfied or the post being funded is filled.

d) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The designated fund balance has been represented to ensure that fund balance stated accurately reflects the designation policy adopted by the trustees.

e) Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing over £5,000 are capitalised. Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

▪ Computer equipment	33%	straight line
▪ Other equipment and fittings	25%	straight line

f) Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

g) Leasing commitments

"Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

Rentals payable and receivable under operating leases are charged to the SoFA on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

h) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, but the Trustees recognise that the economic impact of coronavirus still remains unclear. The trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves appropriate for the charity, in the current circumstances, to be able to continue as a going concern.

i) Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies that have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements:

Useful economic lives of tangible assets
The annual depreciation charge for tangible assets is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are re-assessed annually. They are amended when necessary to reflect current estimates, based on technological advancement, future investments, economic utilisation and the physical condition of the assets. See note 8 for the carrying amount of the tangible fixed assets, and note 1(e) for the useful economic lives for each class of assets.

Bad debts
Debtors are regularly reviewed for recoverability. Any debts which in the opinion of trustees are not recoverable are provided for as a specific bad debt.

The are no key assumptions concerning the future and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

j) Fixed Asset Investments

Investments are recognised initially at fair value which is normally the transaction price excluding transaction costs. Subsequently, they are measured at fair value with changes recognised in 'net gains / (losses) on investments' in the SoFA if the shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably. Other investments are measured at cost less impairment.

2. Income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations	611,591	944,646
Gifts in kind	241,941	5,082
Challenge events	69,260	25,585
Unrestricted income	922,792	975,313
Restricted donations	604,287	521,573
Total income	1,527,079	1,496,886

	2023	2022
Gifts in kind	£	£
Costs of activities for generating funds, challenge events	122,250	-
Charitable activities, website	1,608	3,207
Charitable activities, administrative support costs - Unrestricted	3,096	1,875
Charitable activities, disseminating information on autism and autism research - Restricted	114,987	-
	241,941	5,082

The above activities were organised by the charity.
Income from activities organised by individuals and donated to the charity are included in voluntary income.

3. Cost of raising funds

	2023	2022
Costs of generating donations	£	£
Website, database, literature and PR costs	9,629	12,034
Other fundraising expenses	38,290	36,103
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	82,702	44,952
Staff costs (note 7)	142,463	159,237
	273,084	252,326

	2023	2022
Cost of Events	£	£
Challenge events costs	15,176	30,951
Other event costs	8,520	168
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	5,704	3,100
	29,400	34,219

4. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2023	2022
Grants for medical research	£	£	£	£
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience	-	25,190	25,190	96,019
Discover Network	32,860	9,041	41,901	11,504
Ambitious about Autism	-	-	-	3,500
Adolescent Psychoeducation	-	-	-	1
MQ Fellow	-	-	-	-
DARE	61,741	-	61,741	60,786
Embracing Complexity	-	3,758	3,758	11,971
Epilepsy Fellowship	-	-	-	13,412
GP Barriers - Health Checks	-	-	-	15,873
Social Care Development Award	-	-	-	16,681
START	-	450	450	-
Governance costs (Note 5)	35,968	-	35,968	21,213
Grant Administration costs (Note 6)	193,921	-	193,921	105,407
Staff costs (Note 7)	333,759	77,710	411,469	369,764
Total grant expenditure	658,249	116,149	774,398	726,130
Research dissemination	268,616	4,980	273,596	93,415
Governance costs (note 5)	35,968	-	35,968	21,213
Staff costs (note 7)	333,759	77,710	411,469	369,764
	1,296,592	198,839	1,495,431	1,210,522

5. Governance costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
External audit	28,748	12,180
Trustees' liability insurance	3,260	3,248
Consultancy & recruitment costs	20,940	15,600
Other governance costs	7,985	966
Allocation of administrative support costs (Note 6)	2,852	1,550
Staff costs (Note 7)	8,151	8,882
	71,936	42,426

No Trustees were paid during this period. One trustee received reimbursements for travel expenses totalling £325 (2022 : none)
Governance costs were allocated equally against Grants and Dissemination expenditure in Charitable Activities.

6. Administrative support costs

The following administrative support costs are allocated between other categories of expenditure as detailed below.
Costs are attributed directly where possible and the balance is allocated based on time spent by trustees, staff and consultants.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Telephone	1,537	4,561
IT Expenditure	32,414	25,986
Stationery, copying, postage and other office expenses	8,168	4,039
Staff recruitment and professional development	51,530	50,264
Rent and rates	70,615	15,019
Accountancy	71,850	-
Other	13,443	24,904
Staff costs (note 7)	35,622	30,236
Total support costs	285,179	155,009
These are divided:		
Generating donations 29% (Note 3)	82,702	44,952
Events 2% (Note 3)	5,704	3,100
Charitable activities 68% (Note 4)	193,921	105,407
Corporate governance 1% (Note 5)	2,852	1,550
	285,179	155,009

The increase in rent and rates is due to the charity moving into new office accommodation. During the previous financial year, the charity managed without any significant office space following the end of its previous lease in 2020. The increase in accountancy fees reflects the appointment of temporary finance staff to cover for a permanent vacancy which was filled after the year end.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ending 31 March 2023

7. Staff costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries	880,697	829,748
Social security costs	102,587	87,588
Pension costs	23,240	20,547
Redundancy Costs	2,650	-
	1,009,174	937,883
These are allocated:		
Generating donations (Note 3)	142,463	159,237
Charitable activities	822,938	739,528
Corporate governance (Note 5)	8,151	8,882
Administration - support costs (Note 6)	35,622	30,236
	1,009,174	937,883

The charity employed 16 full-time and 5 part-time staff members during the year to 31 March 2023
(2022: 16 full-time and 8 part-time). Staff costs are allocated between the various activities according to time spent.

	2023	2022
The amounts disclosed above include the following number of highly paid employees:	no.	no.
£80,000-£90,000	1	1

The total amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel is £302,791 (2022 - £216,391).
Higher staff costs are explained by an increase in members of the senior team. Any pay rises were in line with sector level trends and were in line with any increases awarded to the rest of the team.
The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise those individuals listed on page 3.

8. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment	Other equipment and fittings	Total
Cost	£	£	£
As at 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023	2,760	1,285	4,045
Depreciation			
As at 1 April 2022	2,760	1,285	4,045
Charge for the year	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2023	2,760	1,285	4,045
Net book value at 31 March 2023	-	-	-
Net book value at 31 March 2022	-	-	-

9. Investments

	2023	2022
Market Value	**£**	**£**
As at 1 April 2022	501,542	459,657
Disposals	(474,587)	-
Unrealised (Loss)/gain	(26,955)	41,885
As at 31 March 2023	-	501,542
Historical cost	-	386,995
Investments at fair value comprise		
Fixed income	-	48,855
Equities	-	344,153
Alternatives	-	92,791
Cash	-	15,743
	-	501,542

There were no material investments in 2022. During the year ended 31 March 2023 the charity disposed of its investment portfolio.

At 31 March 2023, all investments are carried at their fair value. Investments in equities are all traded in quoted public markets, primarily the London Stock Exchange. Holdings in common investment funds, unit trusts and open-ended investment companies are at the bid price. The basis of fair value for quoted investments is equivalent to the market value, using the bid price. Asset sales and purchases are recognised at the date of trade at cost (that is their transaction value).

10. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	**£**
Other debtors	190,702	46,600
Prepayments and accrued income	78,669	61,884
	269,371	108,484

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	**£**
Trade creditors	21,982	33,958
Other creditors	28,718	25,107
Grant commitments (see Note 12 below)	146,092	229,429
Accruals and deferred income	88,855	16,872
	285,647	305,366

12. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2023	2022
	£	**£**
Grant commitments (see table below)	34,678	131,950

	Less than 1 yr	More than 1 yr	Total
	£	**£**	**£**
At 1 April 2022	229,429	34,678	264,107
Grant commitments	61,742	-	61,742
Paid in year	(145,079)	-	(145,079)
As at 31 March 2023	146,092	34,678	180,770

13. Unrestricted funds 2023

	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Unrestricted funds - general	1,459,904	939,339	(1,599,075)	41,271	841,439
	1,459,904	939,339	(1,599,075)	41,271	841,439

Designated funds

There were no designated funds brought forward or at the year-end.

Unrestricted funds 2022

	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Unrestricted funds - general	1,379,794	979,669	(1,312,084)	412,525	1,459,904
Designated funds	82,000	-	-	(82,000)	-
	1,461,794	979,669	(1,312,084)	330,525	1,459,904

Designated funds

£82,000 2021 Future Leader Awards in Epilepsy

14. Restricted funds 2023

	Balances b/f £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balances c/f £
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscienc Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit	25,724	-	(25,190)	(534)	-
Robert Luff Foundation COMRAD	-	20,000	-	-	20,000
Blackrock	-	11,208	-	(11,208)	-
SHAPe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	201,520	-	(20,520)	-	181,000
Fujitsu - Employment guide	-	69,250	-	(26,000)	43,250
Embracing Complexity	65,507	87,631	(3,758)	(30,484)	118,896
Social Care Scoping	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
START	-	358	(358)	-	-
University College - Ambitious about Autism - Education to Employment	-	135,000	(135,000)	-	-
CareTech - Social Care Fund	37,500	37,000	(9,033)	-	65,467
ICF- Sowerby - Digital Breakthrough	-	160,000	-	-	160,000
National Lottery	5,707	-	(4,980)	-	727
National Lottery - Changemakers	9,999	-	-	-	9,999
NHS England	-	73,840		-	73,840
Epilepsy Dossier	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Total restricted funds	370,957	604,287	(198,839)	(68,226)	708,179

Restricted funds are funds where the donor has specified the funds must be spent on a particular project as listed above. All of these grants represent either programme grants for autism research at a particular institution, specific Autistica-led projects or where specified fellowships are awarded for the purposes of supporting individuals engaged in autism research.

Transfers out of restricted funds were restricted donations received after funding was committed to specific projects.

Transfers into restricted funds were donations received as unrestricted and subsequently restricted by request of the donor.

Negative balances against specific projects reflect in-year spend which exceeds restricted funds received, but where further.

14. Restricted funds 2022

	Balances b/f £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balances c/f £
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit	145,347	15,093	(134,716)	-	25,724
Local Engagement	-	-	(208)	208	-
Epilepsy	-	38,500	-	(38,500)	-
Anxiety and Depression in Minimally Verbal Individuals	-	35,699	-	(35,699)	-
University College - Anorexia Nervosa in Autistic Women	-	5,000	-	(5,000)	-
SHAPe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	12,266	189,254	-	-	201,520
Autistic-led Grants	50,000	-	-	(50,000)	-
DARE	-	45,691	-	(45,691)	-
Home Based PECs	-	3,000	-	(3,000)	-
Podcast	-	-	(171)	171	-
Embracing Complexity	44,625	62,975	(42,093)		65,507
MQ Fellow	-	8,000	-	(8,000)	-
Future Leaders Award - Jane Waite	-	40,040	-	(40,040)	-
Social Care Scoping	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
University College - Ambitious about Autism - Education to Employment	23,500	-	(3,500)	(20,000)	-
CareTech - Social Care Fund	10,000	27,500	-		37,500
Adolescent Psychoeducation	2,712	-	(1)	(2,711)	-
National Lottery	9,907	-	(4,200)		5,707
National Lottery - Changemakers	-	9,999	-	-	9,999
COVID 19	19,650	-	(94)	(19,556)	-
NHS England	-	19,747	-	(19,747)	-
Epilepsy Dossier	(20,000)	20,000	-	-	-
WAAM 2021	-	1,075	-	(1,075)	-
Total restricted funds	323,007	521,573	(184,983)	(288,640)	370,957

15. Analysis of net funds 2023

	General £	Restricted £	Total £
Fixed assets	-	-	-
Investments	-	-	-
Debtors	78,669	190,702	269,371
Cash and cash equivalents	902,325	698,247	1,600,572
Liabilities	(139,555)	(180,770)	(320,325)
	841,439	708,179	1,549,618

Analysis of net funds 2022

	General £	Restricted £	Total £
Investments	501,542	-	501,542
Debtors	61,884	46,600	108,484
Cash at bank	972,415	685,736	1,658,151
Liabilities	(75,937)	(361,379)	(437,316)
	1,459,904	370,957	1,830,861

16. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Net movement in funds	(281,243)	46,061
Bank interest	(16,547)	(4,356)
Non-cash donations (see note 9)	-	-
Net (losses)/gains on investments (see note 9)	26,955	(41,885)
Depreciation charges	-	-
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(160,887)	128,033
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(19,720)	(491,413)
Net cash flow from operating activities	(451,442)	(363,560)

17. Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions during the year to 31 March 2023 - none (2022: none).

18. Guarantee

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee. The Memorandum of Association prohibits any income or property of the company being paid or transferred to the members. Members of the company undertake to contribute a maximum of £1 to cover its liabilities.

Board Committees

Finance Committee
Matthew Harris (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Katherine Hudson
Jeff Saul

Nominations Committee
Lynn Hawkins (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
John Carey
Matthew Harris

Network Steering Committee
Prof Dame Sue Bailey (Chair)
Freddie Adu
Dr Carole Buckley
Dr Laura Crane
Prof Sue Fletcher-Watson
Bec Hanley
Prof Francesca Happé
Dr Keren MacLennan
Dr Karen Matthews
Mark Minnot
Prof Jeremy Parr
Jenny Shorthouse
Lisa Wood

Advisory Committees

Scientific Review Panel
Prof Dermot Bowler
Prof Mark Brosnan
Leneh Buckle
Prof Lucy Henry
Prof Catherine Jones
Claudia Klaver
Prof Jonathan Mill
Dr Richard Rowe

Thanks

Thank you to the autism community and all the supporters who make our work possible.

We were very grateful for significant support in 2022-23 from:

Trusts & Foundations
Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust
Robert Luff Foundation
Caretech Foundation
London Stock Exchange Foundation
The Waterloo Foundation
UK Research and Innovation

Major donors
Lisa Wood and Adrian Binks
Charles Sharland
Gordon Holmes
Dame Stephanie Shirley
2030 Club Members

Corporate
Argus Media
BlackRock
Fujitsu
The employees of Wellington Management Company
House 337
Ocean Outdoor

Games
Autistica Play Ambassadors
DPS Games
GamesAid
UKIE

Advisors
ECR Training Academic Experts
Dr Laura Crane (Co-Chair)
Dr Hannah Pickard (Co-Chair)
Dr Duncan Astle
Prof Bryony Beresford
Dr Rachael Beresford
Prof Mark Brosnan
Prof Sarah Cassidy
Prof Heather Ferguson
Prof Sue Fletcher-Watson
Prof Sebastian Gaigg
Dr Emma Gowen
Prof Jonathan Green
Prof Francesca Happé
Prof Lucy Henry
Prof Emily Jones
Dr Steven Kapp
Dr Hannah Kovshoff
Dr Kathy Leadbitter
Prof Will Mandy
Prof Katie Maras
Prof Sarah Parsons
Dr Dheeraj Rai
Dr Caroline Richards
Dr Stuart Ritchie
Prof Emily Simonoff
Dr Jane Waite



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autistica.org.uk

Registered in England.
Company No. 5184164
Charity No. 1107350

autistica

Can you help us with our mission?

We can't achieve our 2030 Goals alone.

We need to work in partnership with others who have the power to change laws, transform support and fund innovation.

Contact **rebecca.sterry@autistica.org.uk** if you have the power to support us.

Thank you.



AUTISTICA

England & Wales - Charity number 1107350

Accounts

Autistica

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022

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Honorary roles

President
Dame Stephanie Shirley CH

Vice Presidents
Jane Asher
Sir Christopher Ball
Lady Christine Bett
Hugh Merrill MVO

Trustees

Chair
Stephen Boyle (Chair from November 2021)
Gill Ackers (resigned November 2021)

Honorary Treasurer
Matthew Harris

John Carey
Matthew Davis
Professor Jonathan Green
Professor Dr Hilde Geurts (resigned July 2022)
Lynn Hawkins (appointed February 2022)
Katherine Hudson
Heather Kleeman (resigned February 2022)

Charity management

Chief Executive Officer
Dr James Cusack

Director of Fundraising (on maternity leave: March 2021 to April 2022)
Jennie Chambers

Interim Director of Fundraising (April 2021 to November 2021)
Theresa Preston

Interim Director of Fundraising (December 2021 to July 2022)
James Robinson

Head of Research
Dr Amanda Roestorf

Auditors
Azets Audit Services Greytown House, 221–227 High Street
Orpington, Kent BR6 0NZ

Bankers
Metro Bank, One Southampton Row London WC1B 5HA

Registered office
Suite B, 6 Honduras Street London
EC1Y 0TH

020 3857 4340
info@autistica.org.uk autistica.org.uk
Charity registration no. 1107350 Company registration no. 05184164

Statement from the chair

We launched our visionary and ambitious 2030 Goals just as I began my term as chair of Autistica in November. These have primed us not only to continue our strong performance of the last two years despite the pandemic, but also to create even more change and an even bigger impact than ever before for autistic people and families.

I am delighted to take over as chair from Gill Ackers, whose term saw Autistica through some incredibly challenging times and delivered some impressive achievements. Throughout the year, as I have got to know our organisation and our team better, I have found our work to be even more original and higher quality than I previously thought.

Autistica's excellent and committed team is exclusively focused on making breakthroughs that will address the autistic community's most pressing problems. Autistica offers the best hope for current and future generations of autistic people and their families.

It is vital that the work we do aims to and delivers support for the whole of the autism community without a preference for or bias towards any group. My pledge to autistic people and their families is that we will leave no members of the community behind as we strive to enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives. It is precisely this principle that has led us towards six such broad but visionary and ambitious 2030 Goals.

The recognition of individual needs and the requirement for personalised solutions within the Autistica Support Plan and the Autistica Employment Plan are further shining examples of this guiding principle. Similar plans for each the other four 2030 Goals are taking shape and will be published in due course. As with all of our work, these plans are produced in collaboration with autistic people and the wider autism community to make sure we are delivering what is needed not simply what is easy.

Indeed, much of what is involved in our 2030 Goals will be difficult. We cannot meet these goals alone and we are incredibly grateful for the continued backing from all of our supporters. Our donors allow us to do the vital work that moves us towards achieving our mission. Autistic people and their families drive us forward on a daily basis, motivating us and making sure that we always put them front and centre in all that we do. Our research community is ceaselessly dedicated to undertaking world-leading work that can translate to real change. And people across government, the NHS, NIHR and more play a major role in making sure proven evidence is put into practice.

We also recognise that to achieve our bold, challenging goals, we must mobilise an even wider coalition of support than we have previously. From employers to health professionals and from policymakers to the media, we need to ensure that the right people are engaged at every step of the process to help us forge ahead. If you can help us build that coalition, whether directly or as a vital connector to people who can, get in touch. We've included contact details on the final page of this report.

I am genuinely excited for what lies ahead. I believe we will continue to grow in income, influence and impact over the coming years and I am proud to be part of Autistica's future.

Stephen Boyle
Chair of trustees

Statement from the CEO

I have continued to be grateful for and motivated by the immense support of our community. The help and encouragement that we have seen from autistic people and families, researchers, policymakers, and our generous donors, has allowed us to make important progress.

When I became CEO, I was convinced that we can make a real difference with autistic people. Our new 2030 Goals outlined how we want to ensure tangible, positive change for and with autistic people. Over the next decade we want to make sure autistic people get the right support when they need it, that their health needs are met, that they can find meaningful employment and that the barriers of anxiety, accessibility of public spaces and negative attitudes towards autism and autistic people are removed.

To make sure we are able to deliver on our promises, we have made sure we are structured in the way that best allows us to maintain our success. We have welcomed a lot of new, talented people to our team this year and we are embracing new ways of working. We have a new agreement to share office space with MQ: The Mental Health Charity after two years of working from home. The office gives us a base to hold meetings and get the team together while controlling our costs.

All of the work on the Goals means nothing without the ability to implement the change that will make a difference. The last year has seen our influence and impact has continue to grow.

Two of our staff were seconded to NHS England to help shape their new research strategy, published in March 2022, which reflected a lot of our own language and showed the impact we had on its drafting. In another boost for autistic people, this year also saw the publication of the government's new autism strategy which we were also involved in developing. You can find out more about these on page 14.

The work we have done in this area has not gone unnoticed. We are delighted to be working with Sir Robert Buckland KC MP who has been raising the profile of autism research with parliamentary colleagues and civil servants and has led debates in the House of Commons.

Every piece of work we do is underpinned by the members of the Autistica Research Network and our Insight Group. Through both of these groups autistic people and families provide invaluable insight and help shape our projects and decision making.

We are equally thankful to our generous donors and supporters who make our success possible by funding the activities we undertake. Their generosity has meant that we once again out- performed our expectations and we find ourselves in a healthy financial position as we end the year. All of your invaluable support is more important than ever as we strive to achieve our ambitious plans in an environment that continues to be challenging.

As I look into Autistica's future, I have a real belief that this decade can see real change for autistic people. Through our 2030 Goals we can keep punching above our weight as a small charity, ensuring that research makes a real difference to the lives of autistic people.

Dr James Cusack
Chief Executive Officer

Objectives and activities

Real, impactful change relies on credible research and proven evidence. We know that research has the potential to transform the everyday lives of autistic people by making sure that treatments, support and services are based on compelling evidence.

We also know that too many autistic people and their families face a lifelong struggle to access those things. If we want to overcome these inequalities and deliver real change, it requires a coordinated and focused effort.

Autistica works in partnership not only to achieve a step change in the amount of resource focused on autism research, but also to ensure that research funding is directed to the areas of greatest need. We act as the bridge between autistic people, the research community and other funders of autism science.

We also work with key partners in positions of influence over policy and execution to make sure that the evidence generated by the research we support is put into action. Research without implementation can never result in impact.

This is an exciting time for autism research and significant advances have been made in the last decade, including a deeper understanding of autistic strengths, greater awareness of the tragic gap in life expectancy and a marked increase in the amount of autism science globally.

Our part in those advances stems from our ability to deliver the evidence that creates real hope through science. Our unique approach is driven by and developed with autistic people and families. It can and will make more of a difference for autistic people in both the short and long term.

Our Vision, Mission, Values and Goals

Our Vision is a world where every autistic person lives a happy, healthy, long life.

Our Mission is to create breakthroughs that enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

We do this by funding research, shaping policy and working with autistic people to make more of a difference.

Our Values

- We value neurodiversity and believe society, our team and our work is better for it. We include a range of voices in our work and promote inclusive practices.
- We value high performance and understand that to achieve our mission we must work in a solution-focused, high quality and efficient manner.

Our Goals

By 2030:

all autistic people will have proven **support from day one**

the **employment rate** for autistic people will double

autistic people will have proven treatments for **anxiety**

public spaces will be more accessible for neurodivergent people

every autistic adult will be offered a yearly, tailored **health check**

attitudes to autistic people will change

Year at a glance

After a challenging but ultimately productive first year of the pandemic in 2020-21, we have continued to make progress in key areas of our work.

1. Enabling world-leading research

Our research partnerships continued to leverage significant investment, with 12 new collaborations leveraging a total of £1.8 million.

The data we have gathered through our DARE project with University College London has helped us continue to work with companies across multiple sectors and industries to improve recruitment practices and develop best practice guidelines for employing neurodivergent people.

2. Ensuring community involvement

We continue to involve community voices in everything we do and enable researchers to do the same through the Autistica Network and Autistica Insight Group. We carried out more involvement with these groups than ever before this year, helping to recruit for 95 research projects through the Network. The Insight Group shaped the development of 37 research projects - ensuring they are as effective and inclusive as possible.

3. Campaigning for change

Our work with NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care saw significant results with the publication of two separate strategies. Both the respective “Five-year NHS autism research strategy for England” and “National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021- 26” reflected much of the language we use, demonstrating how important the secondment of two of our staff was to the creation and publication of both new blueprints.

4. Funding for impact

In the face of ongoing challenges to the fundraising environment due to the pandemic, we continued to perform above expectations in our income generation. A vital part of our stability has come from the continued support of partners like Fujitsu, Jingle Jam and Herbert Smith Freehills. To make sure we are equipped to continue our growth, we also developed and reshaped our team for the landscape in which we now operate.

Review of the year

This year represents a landmark for Autistica with the launch of our six visionary and ambitious 2030 Goals driven by the autism community. The Goals represent the change we want to see in autistic people's lives, a change we believe we are in a prime and unique position to deliver.

Over the course of November and December we introduced each of our Goals with powerful personal stories of people directly and negatively impacted by the current situation.

Eventually, all six Goals will have detailed plans outlining both what needs to change and how we believe that can happen. In January 2022 we published the first of these, the Autistica Support Plan which focuses on ensuring all autistic people have proven support from day one by 2030.

As the financial year ended the Autistica Employment Plan was being finalised and our Anxiety Plan was in draft stage ready to be sent for review by autistic people, researchers and professionals. This latter stage is vital to making sure the plans are viable and achievable.

A new space and a new approach

In February 2022 we signed an agreement to share office space in central London with MQ: the Mental Health Research Charity. For the first time in almost two years, Autistica has a home. We have moved to a hybrid-working model with most members of staff working two to three days a week in the office, with everyone coming in on a Wednesday. The rest of the time staff work from home.

Our work on the Goals

Support from day one

- Developing strengths and needs assessments to make sure support can be individually tailored to every autistic person.
- Building a platform to provide practical support and guidance for autistic people and their families about everyday concerns and needs.

Meaningful, sustained employment

- Making progress towards understanding adjustments that need to be made to support neurodivergent people.
- Working closely with business leaders to make recruitment more accessible.
- Helping autistic people prepare for employment and the workplace.
- Kicking off the creation of a gold standard benchmarking metric to help companies to create neurodiverse and inclusive workforces, based on best practice guidance and practical solutions.

Proven treatments for anxiety

- Trialling new approaches that help point us towards anxiety treatments that reduce anxiety for autistic people across their lifespan.
- Continuing our support for our anxiety app Molehill Mountain.

Making public spaces more accessible

- Continuing to work with the government, public services, commissioners, local authorities, and public research funders to create environments that are autism friendly and account for the diversity of autistic people's needs.

Yearly, tailored health checks

- Supporting NHS England as they look to rollout health checks beyond the initial trial.
- Continuing our research to demonstrate the benefits the health checks give autistic people.

Changing attitudes to autism

- Kicking off our innovative new research project, the Autistica Autism Attitudes Index, to track and measure how attitudes to autism change over time.

Our research

We work with autistic people to shape our research to make sure we deliver real, impactful change. In the ongoing impact of the pandemic, we continued to drive progress in key areas around support, employment, health checks and mental health.

Partnerships

Our role in research partnerships is wide-ranging. For example, we facilitate research involvement and support researchers to recruit participants and involve the community throughout their research. We also support members of the Autistica Insight Group to participate in governance and oversight boards to ensure that the work we do is of the highest quality and relevance to the autistic community.

Our academic and professional partnerships involve working with world-leading autism research experts to deliver innovative, evidence-led tools, services and recommendations that can support autistic people and their families. In some instances, we work with research teams to communicate their findings to those responsible for policy decisions, to ensure their work achieves tangible change.

Over the last year we entered 12 new research partnerships that leveraged a total of £1.8 million to fund projects focused on a range of critical issues. These partnerships have focused on areas such as improving the delivery of autism diagnostic services, supporting suicide safety plans, developing communication and support frameworks for autistic children with complex needs, understanding the impact of undiagnosed ADHD and autism, supporting autistic young women with anorexia, and developing employment supports and adjustments toolkits for autistic people in the workforce.

As part of our three-year partnership with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) we invited applications for seed funding for social care development programmes aimed at supporting autistic people. The funding was used to help develop applications for the 2022 NIHR Research for Social Care awards, specifically related to research that addresses social care provision for autistic adults. This work is made possible by the generous support of the CareTech Foundation.

We remain in close collaboration with the National Autism Team at NHS England and NHS Improvement to embed evidence in the work they are doing to improve health provision for autistic people. This year we have supported research teams to use evidence to inform future health policy. For example, the Peter Sowerby Trust supported initial funding for a project focused on designing a health checks framework and toolkit that can facilitate annual health checks for autistic people. The project's output then enabled the team to leverage further NHS funding to support the feasibility trial of this research.

We also launched our first Early Career Researcher (ECR) Training Programme, supported by Dr Laura Crane (University College London) and Dr Hannah Pickard (King's College London). The 2021-22 cohort comprised 16 ECRs from 15 universities and clinical research organisations across England and Wales. The programme is supported by 26 established researchers to address topics of inclusive research, designing research to influence policy and communicating science to the public.

The Discover Autism Research and Employment (DARE) programme is a unique collaboration between Autistica and the Centre for Research in Autism Education at University College London to help companies understand how to recruit and retain neurodiverse talent. DARE is currently in its fourth year, building our evidence-base across the employment lifecycle to help us work towards our 2030 Goal of seeing the employment rate for autistic people double. The research has produced evidence-based recommendations on practical topics such as workplace adjustments and disclosure in the workplace. We've been sharing these with senior HR leads at companies such as the law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, and hosting lunchtime talks with staff to give them practical ways to be more inclusive with neurodivergent colleagues.

Our ongoing project with Aston University is helping design a practical way of diagnosing co-occurring mental health conditions in autistic people with learning disabilities and then identifying appropriate support pathways. It is a vital project for the four-in-ten autistic people who have a learning disability in the UK.

Autistica Network

We strive to ensure that every activity we undertake has maximum impact through inclusive research and community involvement in shaping the research we fund and carry out. The Autistica Network brings together autistic people, families, professionals and researchers to do bigger and better research.

Network aims:

- Improving the quality and efficiency of autism research.
- Shaping, funding and facilitating research that meets the priorities of the autistic community and has the opportunity to make a real difference.
- Including autistic research stakeholders throughout the autism research cycle.
- Driving the translation of autism research into real-world change.

In the year to 31 March 2022, we sent 95 research participation opportunities to members of the Autistica Network. Each one offered the chance for members to take part in high- quality research that addresses priority areas for the autism community. This was a 52% increase on last year’s total of 61 opportunities sent to Network members.

In addition, we offered 37 opportunities for the Autistica Insight Group to be involved in shaping and co-designing research, an increase of almost 100%. These included providing input or feedback on research documentation, design and protocols, completing surveys about lived experiences, and taking part in filming, photography or speaking events.

Externally, many involvement opportunities were initial consultation workshops in which researchers shared their ideas and plans with Insight Group members. The group’s valuable feedback allowed them to tailor their research to closely align with community priorities and ensure projects were accessible to the community they wish to recruit.

Driving public policy

Thanks to our rigorous standards for building evidence and focusing on what works, Autistica has rapidly become highly respected for shaping autism policy. We work closely with government bodies and the NHS, feeding into their plans to help make breakthroughs for autistic people.

Making the 2030 Goals a reality

For much of the past year, our main emphasis has been on working with autistic people, families, clinicians and researchers to develop realistic but ambitious plans to make our 2030 Goals a reality. Last autumn, we published the Autistica Support Plan, which outlines our projects and recommendations to ensure that by 2030 every autistic person has access to proven support from day one.

The Support Plan was quickly endorsed by Sir Robert Buckland as he cited it while leading a debate on autism and neurodiversity research. Sir Robert went on to host a second parliamentary debate on autism, showing his continued support for our work.

Influencing government

In recent months, Autistica's narrative has been adopted by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on multiple occasions. Last year's Health and Social Care Select Committee inquiry highlighted shocking treatment of autistic people and people with learning disabilities, particularly in inpatient units. However, we were heartened by ministerial commitments to end the guesswork and prioritise research into properly supporting this group.

The long-awaited national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021-2026 also encompassed multiple Autistica recommendations, including the implementation of annual health checks for autistic people and development of a Research Action Plan for autism research. We look forward to continuing to work with the DHSC to make the Action Plan effective.

Influencing the NHS

At the same time, we saw multiple staff across policy and research seconded to NHS England (NHSE) to support the development of the five-year NHS autism research strategy for England, which was published in March 2022. The strategy adopts our vision (and, indeed, our terminology) of happier, healthier, longer lives for autistic people and sets out the infrastructure necessary for effective and insightful research that aligns with the priorities of the autistic community.

We are delighted that NHSE have also adopted Autistica policy in a number of other areas, notably including LeDeR (the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review) being extended to cover the two-thirds of autistic people who do not have a learning disability. Our close relationship with NHS bodies will be crucial to implementing the 2030 Goals and we are hopeful for further strides in NHS autism policy in the coming months and years.

Embracing Complexity

Embracing Complexity is a coalition of leading UK charities supporting people with neurodevelopmental conditions (NDCs). The coalition is funded by The Waterloo Foundation and managed by Autistica.
Last year, the coalition began a series of Embracing Complexity webinars covering a range

of topics including trauma, socio-economic inequalities, and mental health. With support from the Emerging Minds Network, it launched a Special Interest Research Group focusing on mental health in neurodivergent children and young people.

As highlighted in the coalition's Embracing Complexity in Research report, published in October 2021, there is a stark mismatch between funded research and the priorities of neurodevelopmental communities, as well as multiple obstacles to researching more than one condition at a time. In the coming year, it aims to break down some of these barriers to improve outcomes for people with NDCs. It will also focus on projects aligning with Autistica's 2030 Goals, including a resource sharing tips on making hybrid working more accessible.

Communications

We look to go beyond simply communicating about the projects we fund. We aim to engage our community by enabling them to tell their stories that inform our mission. And we want to inspire and empower autistic people and wider society by sharing the breakthroughs we are making.

A new framework

We used the launch of our visionary and ambitious 2030 Goals as a tool to look at the way we engage with our community. Autistic people are at the heart of what we do and as such need to be represented in everything we communicate. We have been humbled by the willingness of autistic people to come forward and share their stories, both positive and extremely challenging.

Recognition in the media

We saw an increase in media coverage that has positioned us as key commentators on questions around autism research. In September our CEO authored an opinion piece in the Guardian about the Australian Infant Communications and Engagement Study (AICES). The article added vital balance to the debate on the study's results and went on to generate more coverage giving crucial context to the findings. It also resulted in journalists approaching us for comment on other stories throughout the year.

James was also interviewed for radio and quoted several times across major and minor print and digital publications including the BBC, the Daily Mail and The Times on topics ranging from late diagnosis and diagnosis trends in women to the breadth of community views on genetic research in autism.

Engaging our community

We were able to reach even more people this year than ever before. We increased our social media engagement and almost doubled subscribers to our YouTube channel. We ran several very successful live webinars based on topics the community requested. Each one was attended by more than 200 people, showing a steady improvement over last year. The Autistica Insight Group continues to shape our communications and events, feeding into the Autistica Festival line-up and providing stories and quotes that give real-life context to our research and campaigns.

The Autistica Research Festival

The Autistica Research Festival is the UK's leading autism research conference. It brings together autism researchers, autistic people, family members and professionals to discuss innovative research and barrier-pushing involvement and participation work. Our 2021 virtual conference featured more than a dozen speakers with almost 3,000 people registered to attend. With all sessions shared on our YouTube channel after the event we reached more than 1,800 additional people. We are indebted to Fujitsu for their sponsorship of the Festival.

Funding and support

Thanks to our donors, partners, and the trusts and foundations who support us we have been able to maintain the strong position we had at the end of the previous financial year. We continue to be encouraged and motivated by the generosity of everyone who is helping us achieve our mission.

Trusts and foundations

We remain indebted to our valued donors and are also extremely grateful to those who supported us for the first time.

We were delighted to continue collaborating with our partners on multi-year, ground-breaking initiatives. CareTech Foundation is our partner for the Social Care Action Fund which is fostering research into important, under-researched areas of social care provision accessed by or impacting autistic adults. The fund launched this year with seed-funding for three projects to enable researchers to develop high quality research proposals to submit to the National Institute for Health and Care Research's (NIHR) Research for Social Care Call (RfSC).

Through our major partnership with the Peter Sowerby Foundation, we continued to work with Newcastle University to research annual health checks for autistic people. Another multi-year partnership is with Waterloo Foundation, whose funding enables us to lead the unique Embracing Complexity Coalition comprising 61 charities supporting people who think differently. The Maudsley Charity's on-going commitment helped make the first year of the Molehill Mountain app a huge success. The app helps autistic people understand and self-manage their anxiety and has received universally positive reviews.

Individual donors

We continued to benefit from the generosity of our supporters through individual gifts, community fundraisers and those participating in various challenge events, including the Virgin Money London Marathon. The postponed event returned in October 2021 and we had six runners take part. We also had supporters take on their own fundraisers, including one walker who climbed Ben Nevis. Thank you to all our supporters who, despite the challenges last year brought us, still chose to support us.

Corporate and major donors

The Corporate & Games Partnerships team completed the third year of our Charity of the Year partnership with Fujitsu and welcomed them again as the official sponsor of our Autistica Research Festival. We were delighted that the partnership won Corporate Partnership of the Year at this year's Third Sector Awards. We also extended our partnership with DPS Games, established a calendar of online games streaming events and benefited from the continued support of GamesAid. We were delighted to have secured the Jingle Jam partnership with Yogscast, which raised over £274,000 that will be used to support our ground-breaking autism research into the impact of games on autistic children.

Our Major Donors helped us deliver on our unique commitment to tackling the challenges that matter most to autistic people and their families. Their significant gifts have ensured we can continue investing in ground-breaking areas of research and lay the foundations for a radical step-change over the next decade.

Looking ahead

Every autistic person has a different story. What unifies us is our shared mission to ensure that all autistic people live a happy, healthy, long life. Over the next year we will deliver on this by takings steps to ensuring that by 2030 autistic people get the right support and live in a world that accommodates, accepts, and celebrates them.

Implementing our Goals

We will publish our plans for every Goal. We will launch exciting new measures that will enable us to track progress and accelerate change. We will develop personal support profiles to help autistic people get the tailored support they need. This will be underpinned by a new research strategy, which will set out our approach to funding and supporting the work that will make our vision a reality over the next decade.

Strengthening our relationships

The value of our community cannot be understated. They enable us to do the work we do, and they play a huge part in the research we fund and support. We will work ceaselessly to make sure we involve autistic people and families in the best possible ways in everything we do.

Over the coming year we will be working to improve our communication with our community. We will be redesigning our emails, making sure they remain interesting, relevant and of value to everyone who receives them. We will also be working to engage more on social media, using our platforms not just to listen, but to be part of the conversation.

We will continue to nurture our positive relationships with civil servants, build better ones with ministers and develop new opportunities with people well-positioned to enable our mission and change autistic people's lives.

Optimising our income

We have an ambitious new fundraising strategy that will fuel our work on the Goals. Our aim is to increase fundraising income each year over the coming decade by increasing our new business outreach and the number of long-term sustainable partnerships in our fundraising portfolio. Our long-term current partners and supporters will continue to be a vital part of our fundraising success but we must grow and secure new partners in order to achieve all our Goals.

Developing our team

We are more committed than ever to having a happy, thriving, high-performing team. We are committed to our people and are embracing neurodiversity in everything we do.

We will adopt hybrid working practices. Our office share with MQ: The Mental Health Charity gives us the scale to have cost- effective, whole-team conversations in person while also giving the team flexibility to find practices and patterns that work for them.

Public benefit and impact

The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in relation to the charity's aims and objectives. The trustees consider it important to demonstrate to supporters and others interested in our work that the research we have funded will support breakthroughs, create tangible progress, and enhance understanding.

Autistic people and families are at the heart of our research strategy, our national research network and embedded within our wider governance processes. By involving our community, we can create breakthroughs that enable all autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Autistic people and family members play an active role across our work. The Autistica Network provides autistic people with the opportunity to be involved in research as participants and advisers. It also gives researchers a valuable resource to recruit to their studies.

Our Insight Group provide more specialised input to our and others' work, including co-designing research studies, providing advice on how to best involve autistic people in studies, and reviewing research proposals and Autistica Research Festival submissions to help make sure we support only the best quality research.

We know how important it is that scarce resources are deployed on research that is not just important to families but is also of the highest quality, internationally competitive and does not inappropriately duplicate investment made elsewhere. As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities we are committed to the highest possible standards of research governance. Independent peer review underscores all the research that we fund.

In addition to the Scientific Review Panel which scores and deliberates on all our research proposals, we are fortunate to benefit from independent scientific advice from world-leading experts in neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism.

Autistica is regulated by the Fundraising Regulator. We are committed to best practice in fundraising and customer service. We promise to keep our supporters informed about our work and to treat their information with respect.

Structure, governance and management

How we are governed

Autistica was registered as a charity in December 2004 and its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were adopted on 20 July 2004. Autistica is incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 as a company limited by guarantee having no share capital. For the purposes of this Act, the chair and other trustees (none of whom receives any remuneration) are the directors of the company. A full list of trustees, together with other legal and administrative information, can be found at the front of this report.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year and additionally relies on sub-committees to provide further oversight of the work of the charity (see page 44). Each is chaired by a trustee. All key decisions, including the allocation of funds for research, are taken at full meetings of the trustee board.

On 31 March 2022 there were 8 members of our trustee board. Trustees may serve for up to two terms of three years and are appointed in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Gill Ackers resigned from the board in November 2021 and February 2022 saw the board approve the appointment of Lynn Hawkins at the same time as Heather Kleeman resigned.

The following issues are addressed by the trustees during the year:

- developing and reviewing the organisational strategy
- reviewing progress against our business plan
- agreeing and monitoring an annual business and financial plan
- the award of all grants for research
- the risks the charity is facing in delivering its plans
- the impact of the charity's work

Each year the skills and expertise required within the trustee board are reviewed to help the charity deliver its objectives. If gaps are identified or a vacancy occurs, new trustees with the appropriate skills and experience are identified. All trustees are offered a full induction when they join, and trustee training is available to keep trustees up to date with the environment in which the charity operates.

How we are managed

The chief executive is responsible to the board of trustees for the management of the charity. The director of fundraising, director of external affairs and head of research report to the chief executive. Remuneration for senior staff is set at market rates and reviewed annually by the board.

The offices of the charity are registered in Islington.

Risk management

The trustees formally consider the major risks faced by the charity as part of a risk management strategy that comprises:

- an annual review of the risks faced by the charity in delivering its plans
- the establishment of systems and procedures to manage those risks identified in the review
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential negative impact on the charity should those risks materialise

- raising awareness, amongst staff and trustees, of the risk of fraud and the steps to mitigate that risk to the charity

The charity has identified a number of key risks this year, including the continued impact of Covid-19 on research, fundraising, policy influencing, communications and staff; the stability of our current staff team after a year of significant change; rising costs as a result of the high level of inflation, and; the medium-term effect of Brexit on income, income diversification and improving national and international collaborations in autism research. Our loyal donor base and compelling external relationships put us in a strong position to maintain income and influence and continue supporting UK autism research. We actively seek new partnerships within and beyond autism science and build pro bono support to increase capacity.

Financial Performance

Total income for the year was £1,501,000 (2020-21: £2,012,000) the year on year fall reflecting a challenging fundraising environment, notwithstanding the generosity of our donors.

The cost of raising funds was £287,000 (2020-21: £283,000). We spent £1,211,000 (2020-21: £1,309,000) on charitable activities including £726,000 (2020-21: £741,000) on grants for medical research and £484,000 (2020-21: £568,000) on medical research dissemination.

We have been able to balance the expenditure on charitable activities with our income and the overall net income on operating activities was £4,000 (2020-21: £420,000).

Reserves

The trustees review the reserves policy annually and consider the charity should hold free reserves of approximately £700,000 (2020-21: £800,000) to cover six months' operating costs with a contingency of £50,000 in the event of a significant reduction in planned income. At 31 March 2022 the charity had free reserves excluding designated funds of £1,460,000 (2020-21: £1,380,000). Our designated funds were £nil (2020-21: £82,000). At 31 March 2022 the charity had restricted reserves of £371,000 (2019-20: £323,000).

Investments

Free reserves and other surplus cash are held in interest- bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers or in regulated money market funds with a maximum of four to six months' operating costs (c.£650,000) held in the current account.

Cash outside of the current account should be held in individual interest-bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers which benefit from the government Financial Services Compensation Scheme (currently up to £85,000), using the Insignis cash management platform. The maximum amount per deposit account should not exceed £100,000. These can be a mix of instant or close to instant access and longer-term access accounts.

A maximum of 50% of total cash or £1,100,000, whichever is lower, can be held in regulated money market funds with an AAA rating from Fitch and/or S&P Global, provided that the funds offer instant or close to instant access. A maximum of 25% of total cash or £750,000, whichever is the lower, can be held in equities or funds in line with the asset investment policy. These should be managed by a regulated asset manager. Investments are reviewed by the finance committee, which meets four times a year, and trustees are advised of any recommended changes at full meetings of the trustee board.

Going concern statement

The trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Approval

The report has been prepared in accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to smaller entities. The trustees' report and financial statements were approved by the board of trustees on 24 January 2022.

On behalf of the Board

Matthew Harris
Honorary Treasurer
24 January 2022

Statement of trustee's responsibilities

Statement of disclosure to auditors

The trustees (who are also directors of Autistica for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report) and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.
In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102).
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with
the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware.
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Stephen Boyle
Chair of Trustees
24 January 2022

Independent auditor's report to members

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Autistica (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material

misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.
We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report prepared for the purpose of company law for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report and the incorporated Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out on page 24, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above and on the Financial

Reporting Council's website, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud (continued)

We obtain and update our understanding of the entity, its activities, its control environment, and likely future developments, including in relation to the legal and regulatory framework applicable and how the entity is complying with that framework. Based on this understanding, we identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. This includes consideration of the risk of acts by the entity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we designed procedures which included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions

may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation (ie. gives a true and fair view).

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Michelle Wilkes FCA
Senior Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants
For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services,
Greytown House
221-227 High Street
Orpington
Kent BR6 0NZ

Date: 25 January 2023

Statement of financial activities including income and expenditure

for the year ending 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Year ending 31 March 2022 Total Funds	Year ending 31 March 2021 Total Funds
		£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:					
Donations	2	975,313	521,573	1,496,886	2,005,822
Investment Income		4,356	-	4,356	5,755
Total Income		979,669	521,573	1,501,242	2,011,577
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Costs of Raising Funds					
Costs of generating donations	3	252,160	166	252,326	278,074
Cost of events	3	34,219	-	34,219	3,898
		286,379	166	286,545	281,972
Expenditure on Charitable Activities					
Grants for medical research	4	580,038	146,093	726,131	740,873
Medical research dissemination	4	445,667	38,724	484,391	568,274
		1,025,705	184,817	1,210,522	1,309,147
Total Expenditure		1,312,084	184,983	1,497,067	1,591,119
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE GAINS AND LOSSES ON INVESTMENTS AND TRANSFERS		(332,415)	336,590	4,176	420,458
Net gains on investments		41,885	-	41,885	77,264
Transfer between funds	14	288,640	(288,640)	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(1,889)	47,950	46,061	497,722
Total funds brought forward		1,461,794	323,007	1,784,801	1,287,079
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		1,459,905	370,957	1,830,862	1,784,801

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

Balance sheet
as at 31 March 2022

	Notes	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8		-		-
Investments	9		501,542		459,657
			501,542		459,657
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors - amounts falling due within one year	10	108,484		236,517	
Cash at bank		1,560,880		1,920,084	
		1,669,364		2,156,601	
CREDITORS					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(305,366)		(662,446)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			1,363,998		1,494,155
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			1,865,540		1,953,812
CREDITORS					
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	12		(34,678)		(169,011)
NET ASSETS			1,830,862		1,784,801
RESERVES					
Unrestricted funds - general	13		1,459,905		1,379,794
Designated funds	13		-		82,000
Restricted funds	14		370,957		323,007
TOTAL FUNDS	15		1,830,862		1,784,801

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 24 January 2022 and signed on behalf of the Board

Matthew Harris - Honorary Treasurer

Company Registration Number: 05184164

Statement of cash flows
for year ending 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities	16	(363,560)	587,795
Cash flow from investing activities			
Bank interest		4,356	5,755
Net cash from investing activities		4,356	5,755
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		(359,204)	- 593,550
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,920,084	1,326,534
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		1,560,880	1,920,084

Notes to financial statements
for year ending 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies

a. Basis of preparation
Autistica is a company limited by guarantee in the United Kingdom. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 4 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are set out on page 7.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2017, the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 31 March 2018.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

b. Income
All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations and grants receivable are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Investment income is accounted for when received. Tax recoverable on investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

Other income is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Gifts in kind and donated services are included at the open market value of the goods or services provided.

c. Expenditure
All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

- Raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes expenditure associated with grants for medical research and medical research dissemination. Grants payable are

accounted for at the point that either conditions for receipt have been satisfied or the post being funded is filled.

d. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The designated fund balance has been represented to ensure that fund balance stated accurately reflects the designation policy adopted by the trustees.

e. Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing over £5,000 are capitalised. Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

- Computer equipment 33% straight line.
- Other equipment and fittings 25% straight line.

f. Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

g. Leasing commitments

Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

Rentals payable and receivable under operating leases are charged to the SoFA on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

h. Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, but the Trustees recognise that the economic impact of coronavirus still remains unclear. The Trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves appropriate for the charity, in the current circumstances, to be able to continue as a going concern.

i. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies that have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements:

Useful economic lives of tangible assets
The annual depreciation charge for tangible assets is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are re-assessed annually. They are amended when necessary to reflect current estimates, based on technological advancement, future investments, economic utilisation and the physical condition of the assets. See note 8 for the carrying amount of the tangible fixed assets, and note 1(e) for the useful economic lives for each class of assets.

Bad debts
Debtors are regularly reviewed for recoverability. Any debts which in the opinion of trustees are not recoverable are provided for as a specific bad debt.

The are no key assumptions concerning the future and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

j. Fixed asset investments
Investments are recognised initially at fair value which is normally the transaction price excluding transaction costs. Subsequently, they are measured at fair value with changes recognised in 'net gains / (losses) on investments' in the SoFA if the shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably. Other investments are measured at cost less impairment

2	INCOME	2022	2021
		£	£
	Donations	944,646	1,338,908
	Gifts in kind	5,082	-
	Challenge events	25,585	32,586
	Unrestricted income	975,313	1,371,494
	Restricted donations	521,573	436,330
	Restricted Gift in Kind	-	197,998
	Restricted Income	521,573	634,328
	Total Income	1,496,886	2,005,822

	2022	2021
Gifts in Kind	£	£
Charitable activities, website	3,207	-
Charitable activities, administrative support costs - Unrestricted	1,875	-
Charitable activities, disseminating information on autism and autism research - Restricted	-	197,998
	5,082	197,998

The above activities were organised by the charity. Income from activities organised by individuals and donated to the charity are included in voluntary income.

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

3	COST OF RAISING FUNDS	2022	2021
		£	£
	Costs of Generating Donations		
	Website, database, literature and PR costs	12,034	8,245
	Other fundraising expenses	36,103	14,202
	Allocation of administrative support costs (Note 6)	44,952	34,517
	Staff costs (note 7)	159,237	221,110
		252,326	278,074

	Cost of Events	2022	2021
		£	£
	Challenge events costs	30,951	967
	Other event costs	168	550
	Allocation of administrative support costs (Note 6)	3,100	2,381
		34,219	3,898

4	EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	Unrestricted	Restricted	2022	2021
		£	£	£	£
	Grants for medical research:				
	The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience				
	Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit	-	96,020	96,020	77,294
	Discover Network	11,333	171	11,504	7,356
	Ambitious about Autism	-	3,500	3,500	229,447
	Adolescent Psychoeducation	-	1	1	7,263
	Epilepsy Dossier	-	-	-	30,000
	DARE	60,786	-	60,786	113
	Embracing Complexity	-	11,970	11,970	3,043
	COVID 19	-	-	-	3,874
	National Lottery	-	-	-	93
	Epilepsy Fellowship	13,412	-	13,412	-
	GP Barriers - Health Checks	15,873		15,873	-
	Social Care Development Award	16,681		16,681	-
	Governance costs (Note 5)	21,213	-	21,213	15,174
	Grant Administration costs (Note 6)	105,407	-	105,407	80,939
	Staff costs (Note 7)	335,333	34,431	369,764	286,277
	Total Grant Expenditure	580,038	146,093	726,131	740,873
	Research Dissemination	89,121	4,293	93,414	266,823
	Governance costs (note 5)	21,213	-	21,213	15,174
	Staff costs (note 7)	335,333	34,431	369,764	286,277
		1,025,705	184,817	1,210,522	1,309,147

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

5 GOVERNANCE COSTS	2022	2021
	£	£
External audit	12,180	9,460
Trustees' liability insurance	3,248	3,337
Consultancy & recruitment costs	15,600	6,132
Other governance costs	966	1,565
Allocation of administrative support costs (Note 6)	1,550	1,190
Staff costs (Note 7)	8,882	8,664
	42,426	30,348

No Trustees were paid during this period. One trustee received reimbursements for travel expenses totalling £325 (2021: none).

Governance costs were allocated equally against Grants and Dissemination expenditure in Charitable Activities.

6 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT COSTS	2022	2021

The following administrative support costs are allocated between other categories of expenditure as detailed below. Costs are attributed directly where possible and the balance is allocated based on time spent by trustees, staff and consultants.

	£	£
Telephone	4,561	5,444
IT Expenditure	25,986	16,740
Stationery, copying, postage and other office expenses	4,039	10,529
Staff recruitment and professional development	50,264	27,933
Rent and rates	15,019	15,156
Depreciation	-	161
Other	24,904	14,699
Staff costs (note 7)	30,236	28,365
Total support costs	155,009	119,027
These are divided:		
Generating donations 29% (Note 3)	44,952	34,517
Events 2% (Note 3)	3,100	2,381
Charitable activities 68% (Note 4)	105,407	80,939
Corporate governance 1% (Note 5)	1,550	1,190
	155,009	119,027

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

7 STAFF COSTS	2022	2021
	£	£
Salaries	829,748	734,377
Social security costs	87,588	75,396
Pension costs	20,547	20,920
	937,883	830,693
These are allocated:		
Generating donations (Note 3)	159,237	221,110
Charitable activities £68,862 is restricted expenditure (2021 £162,700) (Note 4))	739,528	572,554
Corporate governance (Note 5)	8,882	8,664
Administration - support costs (Note 6)	30,236	28,365
	937,883	830,693

The charity employed 16 full-time and 8 part-time staff members during the year to 31 March 2022 (2021: 18 full-time and 8 part-time). Staff costs are allocated between the various activities according to time spent.

The amounts disclosed above include the following number of highly paid employees:

	2022	2021
	no.	no.
£60,000-£70,000	-	1
£70,000-£80,000	2	1

The total amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel is 216,391 (2021 - £161,522). We carefully managed costs associated with key management personnel, but costs have increased due to staff changes and maternity leave costs. The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise those individuals listed on page 3.

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

8	TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	Computer Equipment	Other equipment and fittings	Total
	COST	£	£	£
	At 1 April 2021 and at 31 March 2022	2,760	1,285	4,045
	DEPRECIATION			
	At 1 April 2021	2,760	1,285	4,045
	Charge for the year	-	-	-
	As at 31 March 2022	2,760	1,285	4,045
	Net book value at 31 March 2022	-	-	-
	Net book value at 31 March 2021	-	-	-

9	INVESTMENTS	2022	2021
		£	£
	Market Value		
	As at 1 April 2021	459,657	382,393
	Unrealised gains/loss	41,885	77,264
	As at 31 March 2022	501,542	459,657
	Historical cost	386,995	386,995
	Investments at fair value comprise		
	Fixed Income	48,855	62,604
	Equities	344,153	299,152
	Alternatives	92,791	66,842
	Cash	15,743	31,059
		501,542	459,657

All investments are carried at their fair value. Investments in equities are all traded in quoted public markets, primarily the London Stock Exchange. Holdings in common investment funds, unit trusts and open-ended investment companies are at the bid price. The basis of fair value for quoted investments is equivalent to the market value, using the bid price. Asset sales and purchases are recognised at the date of trade at cost (that is their transaction value).

There were no material investments in 2022. In 2021, investments individually representing greater than 5% of the portfolio held were:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Waverton Global Strategic Bond Fund 'A'	-	24,853
GBP Capital Account	-	28,103

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

10	DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	2022	2021
		£	£
	Other debtors	46,600	178,511
	Prepayments and accrued income	61,884	58,006
		108,484	236,517

11	CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	2022	2021
		£	£
	Trade creditors	33,958	54,589
	Other creditors	250	314
	Grant commitments (see Note 12 below)	229,429	369,300
	Accruals and deferred income	41,729	238,243
		305,366	662,446

12	CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	2022	2021
		£	£
	Grant commitments (see table below)	34,678	169,011

	Less than 1 year	More than 1 year	Total
	£	£	£
At 1 April 2021	369,300	169,011	538,311
Transfers	134,333	(134,333)	-
Grant commitments	10,322	-	10,322
Paid in year	(284,526)	-	(284,526)
As at 31 March 2022	229,429	34,678	264,107

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

13 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	2022				
	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds - general	1,379,794	979,669	(1,312,083)	412,525	1,459,905
Designated funds	82,000	-	-	(82,000)	-
	1,461,794	979,669	(1,312,083)	330,525	1,459,905

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	2021				
	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds - general	732,807	1,377,249	(1,075,125)	344,863	1,379,794
Designated funds	82,000	-	-	-	82,000
	814,807	1,377,249	(1,075,125)	344,863	1,461,794

Designated funds:-

£82,000 2021 Future Leader Awards in Epilepsy

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

14 RESTRICTED FUNDS	2022				
	Balances b/f	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	£	£	£	£
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit	145,347	15,093	(134,716)		25,724
Discover Network	-	-	-		-
Local Engagement	-	-	(208)	208	-
Epilepsy	-	38,500	-	(38,500)	-
Intolerance of Uncertainty	-	-	-		-
Anxiety and Depression in Minimally Verbal Individuals	-	35,699	-	(35,699)	-
University College - Anorexia Nervosa in Autistic Women	-	5,000	-	(5,000)	-
SHAPe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	12,266	189,254	-		201,520
Autistic-led Grants	50,000	-	-	(50,000)	-
Alan Turing Institute - Turing citizen science fellow	-	-	-		-
DARE	-	45,691	-	(45,691)	-
Home Based PECs	-	3,000	-	(3,000)	-
Podcast	-	-	(171)	171	-
Embracing Complexity	44,625	62,975	(42,093)		65,507
AI Summit	-	-	-		-
MQ Fellow	-	8,000	-	(8,000)	-
Future Leaders Award - Jane Waite	-	40,040	-	(40,040)	-
Social Care Scoping	25,000	-	-		25,000
University College - ARFID - Eating disorders & autism	-	-	-		-
University College - Ambitious about Autism - Education to Employment	23,500	-	(3,500)	(20,000)	-
CareTech - Social Care Fund	10,000	27,500	-		37,500
Sowerby - Digital Breakthrough	-	-	-		-
Adolescent Psychoeducation	2,712	-	(1)	(2,711)	-
National Lottery	9,907	-	(4,200)		5,707
National Lottery - Changemakers	-	9,999	-	-	9,999
COVID 19	19,650	-	(94)	(19,556)	-
NHS England	-	19,747	-	(19,747)	-
Epilepsy Dossier	(20,000)	20,000	-	-	-
WAAM 2021	-	1,075	-	(1,075)	-
Total restricted funds	323,007	521,573	(184,983)	(288,640)	370,957

RESTRICTED FUNDS	2021				
	Balances b/f	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	£	£	£	£
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit	270,106	2,593	(115,428)	(11,924)	145,347
Autism Clinical Research Network	74,949	-	(89,667)	14,718	-
Local Engagement	8,027	-	(36,067)	28,040	-
Epilepsy	18,000	2,500	-	(20,500)	-
Intolerance of Uncertainty	-	4,200	-	(4,200)	-
Anxiety and Depression in Minimally Verbal Individuals	-	22,000	-	(22,000)	-
University College - Anorexia Nervosa in Autistic Women	-	13,000	-	(13,000)	-
SHAPe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	(34,312)	57,653	(700)	(10,375)	12,266
Autistic-led Grants	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
Alan Turing Institute - Turing citizen science fellow	-	195,405	(195,405)	-	-
DARE	(2,068)	42,065	(4,203)	(35,794)	-
Home Based PECs	-	23,000	-	(23,000)	-
Podcast	896	-	(1,095)	199	-
Embracing Complexity	38,824	40,000	(32,199)	(2,000)	44,625
AI Summit	2,000	-	-	(2,000)	-
MQ Fellow	-	1,000	-	(1,000)	-
Future Leaders Award - Jane Waite	-	29,960	-	(29,960)	-
Social Care Scoping	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
University College - ARFID - Eating disorders & autism	850	-	-	(850)	-
University College - Ambitious about Autism - Education to Employment	20,000	53,500	-	(50,000)	23,500
CareTech - Social Care Fund	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Sowerby - Digital Breakthrough	-	10,000	-	(10,000)	-
Adolescent Psychoeducation	-	9,975	(7,263)	-	2,712
National Lottery	-	10,000	(93)	-	9,907
National Lottery - Changemakers	-	-	-	-	-
COVID 19	-	50,393	(3,874)	(26,869)	19,650
NHS England	-	57,084	-	(57,084)	-
Epilepsy Dossier	-	-	(30,000)	10,000	(20,000)
WAAM 2021	-	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	472,272	634,328	(515,994)	(267,599)	323,007

Restricted funds are funds where the donor has specified the funds must be spent on a particular project as listed above. All of these grants represent either programme grants for autism research at a particular institution, specific Autistica-led projects or where specified fellowships are awarded for the purposes of supporting individuals engaged in autism research.

Transfers out of restricted funds were restricted donations received after funding was committed to specific projects.

Transfers into restricted funds were donations received as unrestricted and subsequently restricted by request of the donor.

Negative balances against specific projects reflect in-year spend which exceeds restricted funds received, but where further restricted funds were received in the subsequent financial year.

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

15	ANALYSIS OF NET FUNDS 2022	General	Restricted	Total
		£	£	£
	Fixed assets	-	-	-
	Investments	501,542	-	501,542
	Debtors	61,884	46,600	108,484
	Cash and cash equivalents	972,416	588,464	1,560,880
	Liabilities	(75,937)	(264,107)	(340,044)
		1,459,905	370,957	1,830,862

ANALYSIS OF NET FUNDS 2021	General	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
Fixed assets	-	-	-
	459,657	-	459,657
Debtors	58,006	178,511	236,517
Cash at bank	1,237,277	533,542	1,770,819
Liabilities	(293,146)	(538,311)	(831,457)
	1,461,794	173,742	1,635,536

16	RECONCILIATION OF NET EXPENDITURE TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2022	2021
		£	£
	Net movement in funds	46,061	497,722
	Bank interest	(4,356)	(5,755)
	Non-cash donations (see note 9)	-	-
	Net gains on investments (see note 9)	(41,885)	(77,264)
	Depreciation charges	-	161
	(Increase)/decrease in debtors	128,033	195,801
	Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(491,413)	(22,870)
	Net cash flow from operating activities	(363,560)	587,795

Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

17 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related party transactions during the year to 31 March 2022 (2021: none).

18 GUARANTEE

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee. Its Memorandum of Association prohibits any income or property of the company being paid or transferred to the members. Members of the company undertake to contribute a maximum of £1 to cover its liabilities.

19 LEASE COMMITMENTS

The charity had the following commitments under operating leases at the year end:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Due within one year	-	31,050
Due in 2-5 years	-	-
	-	31,050

Committees and advisory committees

Finance committee

Matthew Harris (Chair)
Stephen Boyle
Katherine Hudson
Jeff Saul

Nominations committee

Steve Boyle
John Carey
Matthew Harris
Lynn Hawkins

Network Steering Committee

Prof Dame Sue Bailey (Chair)
Freddie Adu
Dr Carole Buckley
Dr Laura Crane
Prof Sue Fletcher-Watson
Bec Hanley
Prof Francesca Happé
Dr Keren MacLennan
Dr Karen Matthews
Mark Minnot
Prof Jeremy Parr
Jenny Shorthouse
Lisa Wood

Scientific Review Panel

Prof Dermot Bowler
Prof Mark Brosnan
Leneh Buckle
Prof Lucy Henry
Prof Catherine Jones
Claudia Klaver
Prof Jonathan Mill
Dr Richard Rowe

Thanks

Thank you to the autism community and all the supporters who make our work possible.

We were very grateful for significant support in 2021-22 from:

Trusts & Foundations

The Alison Hillman Charitable Trust
Basil Samuel Charitable Trust
CareTech Foundation
The David Family Foundation
Edith Murphy Foundation
Eveson Charitable Trust
The Grey Court Trust
The John Walke Trust
Maudsley Charity
Miss Kathleen Beryl Sleigh Charitable Trust
National Lottery Community Fund
Peter Sowerby Foundation
The Pixel Fund
Robert Luff Foundation
Thriplow Charitable Trust
The Waterloo Foundation

Major donors

Charles Sharland
Dame Stephanie Shirley
Gordon Holmes
Sir Christopher and Lady Ball
Sir Michael and Lady Bett
Members of the 1 in 100 Club

Corporate

Argus Media
BlackRock
Fujitsu
Herbert Smith Freehills
Reynolds Porter Chamberlain LLP
The employees of Wellington Management Company

Games

Autistica Play Ambassadors
DPS Games
GamesAid
UKIE
Yogscast

Individual Giving / Events

Students, staff and parents at Stanley House, Wellington College

Advisors

ECR Training Academic Experts

Dr Laura Crane (Co-Chair)
Dr Hannah Pickard (Co-Chair)
Dr Duncan Astle
Prof Bryony Beresford
Dr Rachael Beresford
Prof Mark Brosnan
Prof Sarah Cassidy
Prof Heather Ferguson
Prof Sue Fletcher-Watson
Prof Sebastian Gaigg
Dr Emma Gowen
Prof Jonathan Green
Prof Francesca Happé
Prof Lucy Henry
Prof Emily Jones
Dr Steven Kapp
Dr Hannah Kovshoff
Dr Kathy Leadbitter
Prof Will Mandy
Prof Katie Maras
Prof Sarah Parsons
Dr Dheeraj Rai
Dr Caroline Richards
Dr Stuart Ritchie
Prof Emily Simonoff
Dr Jane Waite

Can you help us with our mission?

We can't achieve our 2030 Goals alone.

We need to work in partnership with others who have the power to change laws, transform support and fund innovation. Contact rebecca.sterry@autistica.org.uk if you have the power to support us. Thank you.

Autistica
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autistica.org.uk

Registered in England. Company No. 5184164 | Charity No. 1107350

AUTISTICA

England & Wales - Charity number 1107350

Accounts

Autistica funds research, shapes policy and works with autistic people to make more of a difference

Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ending
31 March 2021

autistica





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Our trustees, honorary supporters and leaders help make our vision a reality by overseeing and managing all of the charity's life-saving and life-changing work.

Honorary roles

Patron
Professor Sir Michael Rutter

President
Dame Stephanie Shirley CH

Vice Presidents
Jane Asher
Sir Christopher Ball
Lady Christine Bett
Hugh Merrill MVO

Trustees

Chair
Gill Ackers

Honorary Treasurer
Matthew Harris

Stephen Boyle (joined March 2021)
Dr Sarah Caddick PhD (retired July 2020)
John Carey
Matt Davis
Professor Jonathan Green
Professor Dr Hilde Geurts
Fraser Hardie (retired April 2021)
Katie Hudson (joined March 2021)
Heather Kleeman

Charity management

Chief Executive
Dr James Cusack

Director of Fundraising
Jennie Chambers

Auditors

Azets Audit Services
Greytown House
221–227 High Street
Orpington
Kent BR6 0NZ

Bankers

Metro Bank
One Southampton Row
London WC1B 5HA

Registered office

CAN Mezzanine
7–12 Great Dover Street
London SE1 4YR

020 3857 4340
info@autistica.org.uk
autistica.org.uk

Charity registration no.
1107350

Company registration no.
05184164



The events of the past year have made Autistica's vital work assume even greater importance and urgency. Many charitable organisations have experienced significant falls in donations, as people understandably turned their attention and support towards Covid-related causes. In response, we are sharpening our focus on the critical issues for autistic people.

There has been a welcome spotlight on mental health issues as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, but mental health was already the single biggest challenge faced by autistic people. There is a real risk that – post pandemic – they will be left even more disadvantaged.



"Autistica's work has never been more important than it is right now and the commitment of our loyal donors has never been more appreciated. They have my heartfelt thanks for their ongoing support."

Gill Ackers

Autistic people tend to find changes in routine difficult and need certainty around what will happen in order to cope with day-to-day activities. The onset of the pandemic and associated restrictions on activities and behaviours created enormous uncertainty and exacerbated many of the existing problems.

The pandemic has also accelerated some changes that were already underway, such as the increased use of teleservices for the delivery of healthcare. This has been welcomed by many, but there has been no research into whether it is appropriate for autistic people. Similarly, with mental health services already under pressure from growing demand, the needs of the 'newly-impacted' are stretching them even more.

The initial lockdown in March 2020 prompted an urgent refocus on the immediate support our community needed. This involved practical issues of dealing with increased anxiety – and the difficulties faced by parents of home-schooling autistic children, whilst working from home themselves. Paradoxically, many autistic people were comfortable with the lockdown restrictions that we all had to adapt to. Many anxieties arise from simple acts such as getting on a train, working in an open-plan office or eating in a school canteen. With these everyday hurdles removed during the lockdowns, it is a return to normal that will present a huge challenge.

This is particularly true of the world of work. Autistic people hold a disproportionate number of lower-paid and less secure jobs, the very roles most threatened by the pandemic. It's therefore more important than ever that – as employers address their changing needs for physical workspaces and flexible working – they consider how to do that in a more inclusive way.

The impact of Covid-19 on charities has been mixed. Many charities found their day-to-day work, particularly those focused on service delivery in the community, came to an abrupt halt. Ours didn't, but we did reduce our level of research funding, as many clinical researchers refocused on Covid-19-related activities. Lockdown also meant that some research methodologies were simply not practicable; for example, when face-to-face meetings were necessary. We only fund research when we have the cash available to do so. Hence, in such a challenging funding environment, we adopted a conservative approach when committing to new projects.

In response to the financial pressures our team took a voluntary pay cut and reduced their hours. Inevitably this placed huge pressure on them, since there was no corresponding decrease in workload. Given our flexible approach to working prior to the pandemic, we were reasonably well set up to work from home, but dealing with incoming post and the increased reliance upon technology created new challenges. I am enormously proud of how well the entire staff transitioned to the new working environment and the financial sacrifices they made. Many of our staff found the changes extremely difficult, particularly those home-schooling children. We are so grateful for their continued hard work.

During this difficult time, several of our very committed, significant donors stepped up to support us. Without their loyalty and generosity, we would not have been able to provide the critical services that we did and I'm immensely grateful to them. Their support meant we were able to quickly provide vital resources for those struggling to cope. These included valuable support to parents, carers and autistic people through webinars, website materials, expert insights and access to specialists.

The smooth transition to a new CEO was unquestionably a highlight of 2020. Dr James Cusack steered us skilfully through the most challenging months of the pandemic. Thanks to him, Autistica ended the year with real clarity on the strategy, priorities and resourcing needs for the years ahead.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Dr Sarah Caddick in July 2020 and to Fraser Hardie just after the year end in April 2021. I'm grateful to them both for their wise counsel and support. Just before the year end, we were delighted to welcome Katie Hudson and Stephen Boyle as trustees. They both bring valuable new complementary skills and knowledge to Autistica's board.

We are committed to creating the breakthroughs that will change autistic people's lives for the better. Our priority for the coming year is to sharpen our focus on the critical issues that most impact their health, longevity and happiness.

Gill Ackers
Chair



This year has been incredibly difficult for the autistic people we serve. A cross-charity report, which we were proud to support, comprehensively showed that far too many autistic people and families have been left stranded, with little support in place to allow them to thrive.

That's why I am so proud of how our team responded when Covid-19 hit. We provided information relevant to the pandemic in a matter of days: a huge first for us as an organisation. We are now providing regular webinars and our communications on anxiety have reached tens of thousands of people.



"As society recovers from the pandemic, Autistica must keep delivering research that addresses the appalling inequalities autistic people face. It is essential we have an ambitious vision and strategy to continue to deliver real change for autistic people."

Dr James Cusack

The year brought huge and unprecedented challenges for the team. Like many others, we had to adapt to remote working. I am so impressed and inspired by how they adapted and continued working tirelessly to ensure that we have the funds in place to make a real difference.

The charity sector experienced huge declines in income and we decided not to renew the lease on our office when it expired at the end of 2020, seeing it as an unnecessary expense. It's only thanks to the incredible generosity of our loyal supporters that we entered 2021 with a real vision for how we can transform the lives of autistic people.

In the current environment, it is more pressing than ever that we ensure we are delivering research that addresses the appalling inequalities autistic people face. This year brought home the seriousness of the employment gap for autistic people. The Office for National Statistics produced data (for the first time) showing that only 21.7% of autistic people are in employment. This compares to over half of disabled people (52.1%) and around eight in ten (81.3%) of non-disabled people. In the wake of these shocking statistics, research we funded this year has found ways to bridge this gap, showing employers how they can more effectively recruit autistic people, allow them to disclose their diagnosis, and make reasonable adjustments for them.

Our expertise and knowledge is also helping to place research at the centre of the development of a national autism strategy, setting out the strategic objectives to ensure that work to improve NHS services for autistic people is evidence-based – and that research and clinical communities are more collaborative.

Aligned with that, we launched a three-year partnership with the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR). This will fund research on how to provide safe and effective social care that enables autistic adults to live happy, healthy and long lives. Social care is a huge challenge facing the country generally, but an even bigger crisis for autistic people, where there are no clear definitions of what 'good' looks like.

In addition, we are working to build environments that are accessible for autistic people, test health checks that address health inequalities, and stop early deaths.

As we hopefully exit and recover from the pandemic, it's essential that we ensure we have an ambitious vision and strategy that delivers real change for autistic people over the next decade. That's why we're focusing on developing some ambitious goals and plans in partnership with autistic people, families, researchers, and other stakeholders. These will give us greater clarity than ever, but to deliver on them means we will need to raise more money than ever and this will be a key priority for us in the year ahead.

Finally, I want to thank all our amazing autistic people and family members, generous donors, collaborative partners, brilliant researchers, supportive trustees and tireless and committed staff at Autistica. The past year has been incredibly challenging, but thanks to this unique community of committed individuals, we have made life-changing breakthroughs that will enable autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives. I'm confident that together we can help ensure that the next decade delivers real change for autistic people and their families.

Dr James Cusack
Chief Executive Officer



We know that research has the potential to transform the everyday lives of autistic people by making sure that treatments, support and services are based on the latest evidence. We also know that too many autistic people and their families face a lifelong struggle to access those appropriate support and services. If we want to overcome these inequalities and deliver real change, it requires a coordinated and focused effort.

Autistica works in partnership to achieve both a step change in the amount of resource focused on autism research and to ensure that research funding is directed to areas of greatest need. We act as the bridge between autistic people, the research community and other funders of autism science.

This is an exciting time in autism research and significant advances have been made in the last decade, including a deeper understanding of autistic strengths, greater awareness of the tragic gap in life expectancy and a marked increase in the amount of autism science globally. Our part in those advances stems from our ability to deliver the evidence that creates real hope through science.

Working with autistic people not just as volunteers but as researchers, authors and decision makers in the research community, our unique approach can and will make more of a difference in the short- and the long-term future for autistic people.

Our vision

is a world where every autistic person lives a happy, healthy, long life.

Our mission

is to create the breakthroughs that enable autistic people to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Our values

We believe in:

- Involving autistic people and their families
- Reflecting the diversity of autism
- Supporting the best science and evidence
- Focusing on change and how it happens
- Using our voice to influence and convene others
- Being agile and responsive

How we work

We make breakthroughs by:

- Shaping and growing research across the UK
- Funding new and innovative research solutions
- Campaigning for better services and shaping national policy
- Sharing evidence-based tools, resources, and information

Despite a challenging and uncertain year we've had a number of successes in each of the four areas of our work.

1

Funding new and innovative research solutions
With telehealth becoming much more widely used, we are leading on a pilot study to understand how this switch might affect autistic people and how to ensure healthcare is accessible to all autistic people. This project is in collaboration with NHS England and the Peter Sowerby Foundation.

Our 'citizen science' project on sensory processing with the Alan Turing Institute involves autistic people not just as volunteers, but as researchers, authors and decision makers. The team are developing a digital platform that will allow any autistic person to share their sensory experiences so that we can design a more accessible world.

We worked with companies in the finance, tech and games industries as part of our DARE project with University College London. They supported us to gather data from employees that is helping us to advise them and develop best practice guidance.

2

Shaping and growing research across the UK
We invited applications for seed funding to help develop future adult social care research projects that include autistic people. The intention is to secure further funding from NIHR for larger-scale projects. Social care provided to autistic adults remains almost entirely unevidenced – these grants aim to change that.

We continued to support researchers recruiting for studies across the UK, using the Autistica Network. We helped to recruit for 43 studies, all answering questions that are a community priority. We also helped 19 researchers and other organisations to get insights on their studies or services using the Autistica Insight Group.

3

Campaigning for better services and shaping national policy
We drafted the first NHS Autism Research Strategy for NHSE. This will help us jointly support transformational science and equip services to support neurodiverse communities.

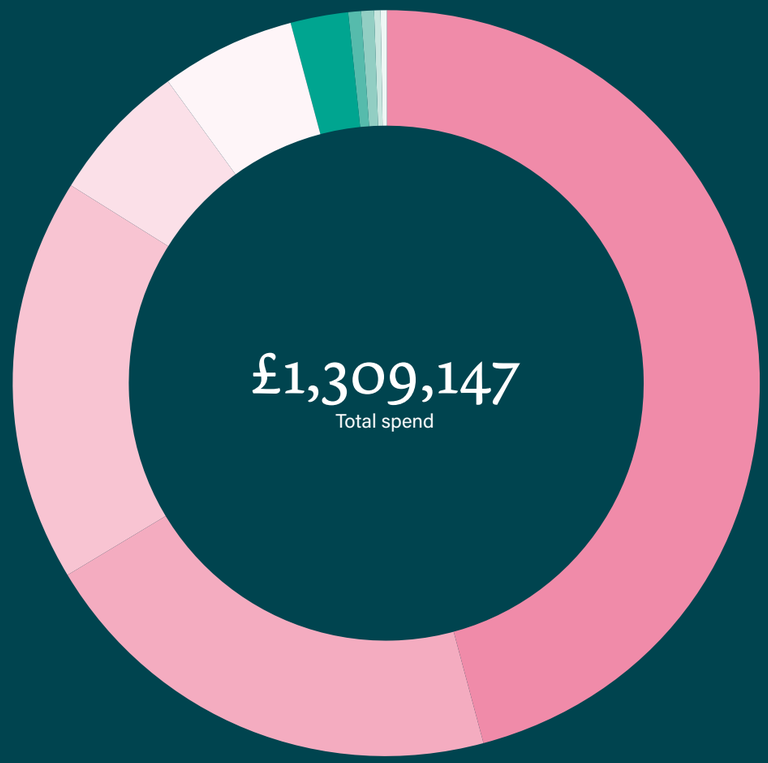
We worked with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure the new Autism Strategy, which was launched in July 2021, included a focus on building policy and services based on solid evidence.

4

Sharing evidence-based tools, resources, and information
A rapid response to Covid-19, delivering online support, tools and events to help the autistic community navigate the pandemic.

Together with a research team at University College London, we launched our Research Toolkit. This makes best practice guidance about conducting accessible and high-impact autism research, including template documents, freely available to the research community.

2020–21 Research spend



£602,902
Scientific staff and research governance

£266,823
Communicating research

£229,447
Ambitious about Autism

£80,939
Grant Administration costs

£77,294
Molehill Mountain

£30,000
Epilepsy Dossier

£7,356
Discover national research network

£7,263
Adolescent Psychoeducation

£3,874
Covid-19 resources

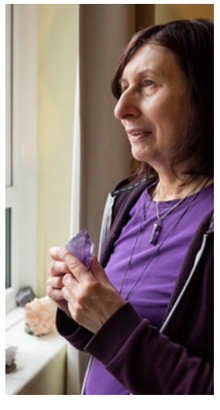
£3,043
Embracing Complexity

£113
DARE

£93
National Lottery community fund

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic meant that our community needed us more than ever this year. Autistic people already faced unacceptable inequalities before the pandemic and data suggests that they have been hit particularly hard by the virus. This year we focused on learning from this data and with a number of research and policy initiatives we have been ensuring that those inequalities do not widen further.

‘Some autistic people report that they will continue to isolate themselves because they cannot face the world as it is.’



Our community
Research conducted during the pandemic shows that autistic people and their families were disproportionately impacted by the lockdown. Covid-19 compounded an already poor quality of life, shortened life expectancy and left many people acutely disadvantaged and isolated.

Despite autistic adults experiencing a greater increase in symptoms of anxiety and depression than neurotypical adults, many were not able to access the support they need, with autism and mental health services cut or non-existent in many areas.

Data from our insight group revealed the autistic community is concerned about what happens next. There are serious fears around the sensory issues of wearing masks and returning to chaotic, sensory-challenging environments. There is also anxiety based on the lack of clarity around social distancing rules and a lack of access to much-needed mental health services.

Some autistic people report that they will continue to isolate themselves because they cannot face the world as it is. They are also deeply concerned about employment after the pandemic. Only 22% of autistic people are in work and the worry from this group is that the employment gap will widen.

Our organisation
Autistica faced multiple hurdles last year: the global pandemic, the most significant economic downturn in 300 years, a sustained pause in clinical research and a profoundly challenging fundraising climate.

Careful and innovative use of our resources and a strong performance from the fundraising team meant that we ended the year in good financial health, but the after-effects of the pandemic will be long-lasting.

Learning from lockdown
It’s possible to learn from the pandemic and use the experience to develop new ways of delivering services. We gathered the data and created a briefing document with recommendations for policymakers and services. Written in partnership with the National Centre For Mental Health, it included evidence of the pandemic’s impact, areas for further research and recommendations for policymakers, including:

- NHS Trusts should ensure that existing crisis services are accessible to people with diverse communication needs
- NHS England should develop plans for preventing and treating mental health conditions in neurodivergent people and ensure services are sufficiently funded
- The DHSC and other government departments should consider how to keep social distancing guidance clear for those who struggle with uncertainty and ambiguity
- Schools, employers and local authorities should assess whether temporary changes have benefited some neurodivergent people and plan how to retain parts of those changes

Already at risk of poor mental health and high rates of suicide, research from Ghent University shows autistic people have reported a greater increase in mental health problems than the rest of the population. They are also concerned the post-pandemic world could force autistic people further into the margins of society.

Embracing Complexity was recognised as the Best Equality & Inclusion Cause Campaign at the 2020 Purpose Awards

In July we launched a new campaign – ‘Know More’ – calling on government, businesses and the public to commit to funding research into improving the lives of autistic people and their families. Led by Charlotte Valeur, then-Chair of the Institute of Directors, Know More calls for investment in research to increase understanding, improve outcomes, cut waiting lists for autism diagnosis and increase access to vital evidence-based services.

Embracing Complexity
‘Embracing Complexity’ is a coalition of leading UK charities aimed at improving outcomes for people with neurodevelopmental conditions (NDCs).

The coalition also responded rapidly to the pandemic. Within the first month of lockdown, it collated members’ guidance and resources on social media and produced a briefing on challenges facing the charity sector ahead of a House of Lords debate.

The coalition also made joint submissions to four Parliamentary Select Committee inquiries, highlighting the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people with NDCs. These prompted the DHSC and NHS England to commission further analysis and direct millions of pounds of investment towards bolstering services for autistic people.

An autumn survey showed that the summer easing of lockdown made very little difference to many of these people. The subsequent #CovidComplexity briefing and campaign highlighted the need for personalisation and choice in a post-pandemic world.

The coalition also raised concerns with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England about the misuse of ‘Do not resuscitate’ orders and the Clinical Frailty Scale in Covid-19 triage, which could have denied life-saving healthcare to some individuals.

“There will be longer term implications for those with learning difficulties who have developed new anxieties during lockdown or who have missed out on the support they require.”

Frances, William’s mum

William before lockdown →



Thanks to the continued support of our donors, trusts and foundations and partners we're in a strong position and remain resolutely focused on improving the lives of all autistic people and their families through world-class research, information and campaigning.

£534,191
Corporate

£386,566
Trusts and foundations

£598,397
Major donors

£127,308
Individuals and community

£197,998
Gifts in kind

£2,083
One-off events

£159,279
Other

£5,755
Investments

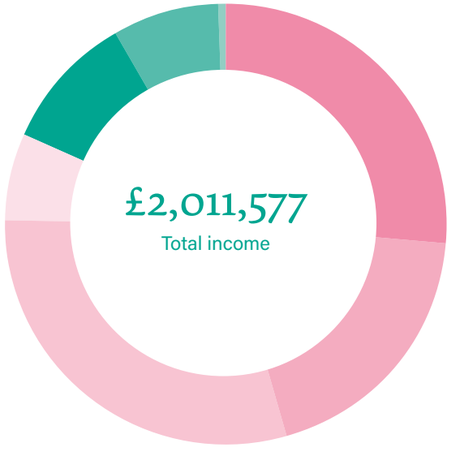
Trusts and foundations
Our Trusts & Foundations team delivered above-target income in what was a very challenging year. Notable successes including securing a new partnership with Caretech Foundation, who are supporting Autistica with £185,000 to fund up to five pieces of social care research.

We were delighted to continue our successful partnerships with the Waterloo Foundation and secured further support from Peter Sowerby Foundation to deliver a pilot looking at the move to telehealth services for autistic people during the coronavirus pandemic. Grants from the Maudsley Charity also supported us with funding to design and launch our Molehill Mountain app.

Individual donors
Throughout the year we benefitted from the generosity and energy of supporters who took part in their own innovative Covid-safe fundraising events, virtual events organized by Autistica and charity sector-wide events. Despite event cancellations, we still had six friends take part in the virtual London Marathon raising £7,000. We also ran our own virtual art event – 'Creative Differences' – featuring artwork from autistic artists and supporters of the charity, combined with a webinar about the value of autistic creativity. The artwork was sold in an online auction to raise funds for Autistica. We're so grateful to the regular givers who continued to donate every month. This year our number of donors increased and our overall target for individual giving was surpassed despite a difficult economic climate.

Corporate and major donors
The Corporate & Games Partnerships team completed the second year of our two-year Charity of the Year partnership with Fujitsu and welcomed them again as the official sponsor of our Autistica Research Festival and the first official sponsor of our World Autism Awareness Campaign, 'Anxiety Breakthroughs.' We continued to secure more DARE (Discover Autism Research in Employment) partnerships with a number of companies, using data and insights to underpin neurodiversity strategies that maximise both business and employee needs. We also launched our first games partnership with DPS Games, established a calendar of online games streaming events and benefited from the continued support of GamesAid.

We continued to benefit from the loyal support of our Major Donors who help us deliver on our unique commitment to tackling the challenges that matter most to autistic people and their families. Their significant gifts throughout a period of profound uncertainty have ensured we can continue investing in ground-breaking areas of research and lay the foundations for a radical step-change over the next decade.



With our wide networks and expertise in evidence building, Autistica has become the thinktank driving autism policy. Throughout 2020, we worked hand-in-hand with the NHS to help them deliver their Long Term Plan commitments to autistic people and are increasingly supporting other public bodies to make more of a difference.

'Autistica and NHS England are now formal partners on studies to ask what post-diagnostic support should look like, identify how digitally-delivered healthcare can be made more accessible and test health checks for autistic people.'

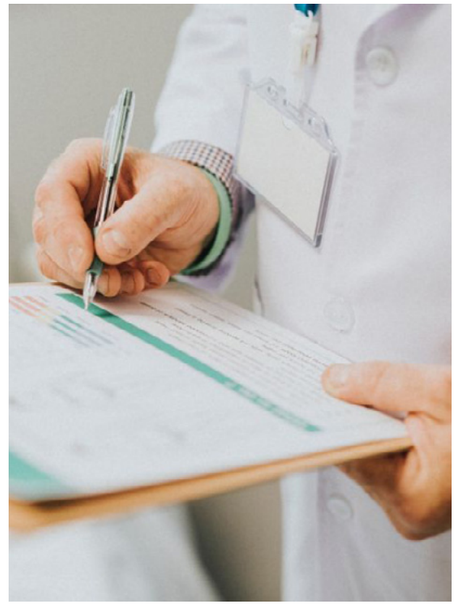
Partnering with the NHS
As part of their secondments with NHS England, our Heads of Policy and Research drafted a ground-breaking NHS Autism Research Strategy and guided the largest ever single investment in NHS services for autistic people. We briefed NHS eating disorder and crisis services on the latest evidence about supporting autistic people and our longstanding recommendation that the deaths of autistic people should be investigated has been reflected in changes to the LeDeR (Learning Disability Mortality Review) programme.

Autistica and NHS England are now formal partners on studies to ask what post-diagnostic support should look like for young autistic people, to identify how digitally-delivered healthcare can be made more accessible and to test health checks for autistic people. We successfully leveraged over three quarters of a million pounds of investment to expand our study of health checks – co-designed with autistic people – by Newcastle University into a full trial.

During the year we also helped the NHS Autism Team to begin using data to guide improvements in NHS services for autistic people.

Influencing the political narrative
Autistica's vision can now be seen across the NHS Long Term Plan and the Government's new Autism Strategy. As a result of our work, the new strategy – which was eventually published in July 2021 – focuses on autistic people's priorities and commits to developing the (long neglected) research and data infrastructure needed to drive lasting changes.

Beyond that, the Government's official proposals for reforming the Mental Health Act used content from Autistica's policy briefings to articulate how the law should balance safeguarding autistic people's mental health and freedom. A new briefing from the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, which we helped prepare, now ensures MPs are better informed about key issues facing autistic people and families.



Our research is conducted in conjunction with autistic people to ensure we deliver real and authentic change. During the year – and despite the pandemic – we continued to drive progress in key areas.

"Being a part of the Citizen Science Project…has truly captured my attention and given me a purpose to see through the pandemic."

Autistic adult working on our project with the Alan Turing Institute

Partnerships

Our role in research partnerships is wide-ranging. For example, we support researchers to recruit participants and involve the community throughout their research. We also place members of the Autistica Insight Group on governance and oversight boards. In some instances, we work with research teams to communicate their findings to those responsible for policy decision making, to ensure their work achieves tangible change.

Over the last year we entered 21 new research partnerships. These leveraged a total of £3.4 million to fund projects focused on a range of critical issues. Our research partnerships have focused on, for example, improving autism diagnosis, understanding skills and training needs of the clinical workforce to support autistic people, developing Covid-19 informational resources, suicide prevention and the impact of the classroom environment quality on educational outcomes.

To coincide with the launch of our three-year partnership with the NIHR we invited applications for seed funding. The funding must be used to help develop applications for the forthcoming NIHR Research for Social Care competition and relate to a research project about social care for autistic adults. Our Grant Development Awards and NIHR Research for Social Care partnership is made possible by the generous support of CareTech Foundation.

Autistica continue to work closely with the National Autism Team at NHS England and NHS Improvement to embed evidence in the work they are doing to improve health provision for autistic people. This year we have supported two research teams to use evidence to inform future health policy. The first of these focuses on the use of remote telehealth methods to provide healthcare to autistic people beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. The second focuses on designing a package of support for autistic adolescents after they receive their autism diagnosis.

After many years of successful partnership, this year marked the end of Autistica's financial support to the national autism database (ASD-UK) and Database of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Living in the North East (Daslne), led by Professor Jeremy Parr and hosted by Newcastle University. The research databases supported recruitment of participants to many high-quality studies across the UK, developing an influential model of including community members in governance decisions about access to support and was ahead of its time in coordinating participant recruitment.

DARE is our unique collaboration with the Centre for Research in Autism Education at University College London. Its cutting-edge research helps companies recruit and retain neurodiverse talent through evidence-based insights on best practice. In February we published a report featuring research-based insights for companies wishing to attract and support autistic and neurodivergent staff.

The report lists possible adjustments to job roles and management processes, the physical environment and social and cultural practices.

In August we launched a project to develop practical advice and tools to increase the amount of research focused on autistic people with complex needs. The project will create an online resource for researchers – Complex Needs Research and Development Hub (Comrad) – on how to include autistic individuals with complex needs in their work.

World class research

Four in ten autistic people have a learning disability and three in ten speak few or no words. Finding ways to identify anxiety and depression and ensuring timely and effective support will ensure better care and wellbeing for this group. Our ongoing project with Aston University is helping to design a practical way of diagnosing these conditions in autistic people with learning disabilities.

"Thanks to Autistica's support we've been able to make new discoveries about the mental health experiences of autistic women and share those discoveries with hundreds of NHS professionals to help improve services."

Professor Will Mandy, UCL

Autistica Network

The Autistica Network brings together autistic people, families, professionals and researchers to do bigger and better research.

Network aims:

1. Improving the quality and efficiency of autism research
2. Giving autism research stakeholders a voice throughout the autism research cycle
3. Driving the translation of autism research into real-world change

In the year to 31 March 2021, we sent 61 emails to members of the Autistica Network, including 43 emails sharing opportunities for members of our community to take part in high-quality research projects that focus on answering questions that are a community priority.

During the year we offered 19 external insight group opportunities and 15 internal insight group opportunities to members of the Autistica Network. Over 130 individual members of the Insight Group took part in at least one involvement activity. These included our series of Covid-19 surveys, which supported the science and comms teams in reacting to the changes from March 2020 onwards and creating content that reflected our community's needs. Later in the year, Insight Group members fed into the crisis resource that the science and policy teams created for the NHS, sharing their experiences for case studies and reviewing the content and recommendations within the resource.

Externally, many involvement opportunities were initial consultation workshops in which researchers shared their ideas and plans with Insight Group members. The group's valuable feedback allowed them to tailor their research to closely align with community priorities and be accessible to the community they wish to recruit.

"Thank you for doing this research and recognising how difficult it is for us; most people don't get it, they don't understand. So thank you – this is every bit as important as what the doctors, nurses and scientists on the front line are doing."

Insight Group member



We look to go beyond simply communicating about the projects we fund. Through identifying, translating and applying research findings for different audiences, we help to ensure that evidence-based solutions are made available to everyone.

"This is a wonderful short film about #anxiety & #autism voiced by the amazing @FernBrady. This is a really useful short clip to share with schools."

Teacher on Twitter responding to Anxiety Breakthroughs

"I'm struggling with transitioning back into the office due to Covid. I found this helpful to validate my feelings/ struggles and give me ideas of ways to cope. Thank you."

Webinar viewer

Support during the pandemic
We secured two grants for our coronavirus resources and the Autistica Podcast. These enabled us to allocate staff time to producing high quality information for our community and supporters throughout the pandemic. In all we produced some 26 separate resources, comprising web content, podcasts and events. There were over 15,000 visitors to the Covid-19 hub, more than 6,000 webinar viewers and almost 2,000 podcast listeners. We also gained an additional 7,800 email subscribers.

Highlighting anxiety
In April 2021 we ran 'Anxiety Breakthroughs', an information and fundraising campaign for World Autism Awareness Month (WAAM). Fully funded by a Charities Aid Foundation grant and sponsorship from Fujitsu, it included an explainer animation film, a hub of web-based resources, researcher videos, webinars and case studies. These combined to really drive engagement and fundraising, make this our most successful WAAM campaign. The film had 40,000 views and there were 60,000 visits our website during the month, most of these being new visitors. Up-and-coming comedian Fern Brady voiced the animation and shared her own experiences of anxiety.

Recognition in the media
Our 'Know More' campaign on neurodiversity led by business leader Charlotte Valeur was covered by the national media, including The Times, the Independent and Sky News. There was also considerable media attention on the appointment of James Cusack as our CEO, the first openly autistic charity chief executive. We were especially delighted that Radio 2 DJ Ken Bruce – whose son is autistic – was the voice of our Radio Four appeal, our most successful appeal to date.

Engaging our community
The Autistica Network is the UK's national autism research network and our corporate partners Fujitsu have helped us develop the concept for its future. Through an immersive virtual workshop with staff, researchers and Autistica Insight Group members, they are helping us to identify technology that could help us better understand who our members are, track their interactions with us and provide a more personalised experience. We are also exploring the potential for a blog or community platform to transform the Network from a mailing list to a hub, enabling people to connect with others and become involved in our work.

The Autistica Research Festival is the UK's leading autism research conference. It brings together autism researchers, autistic people, family members and professionals to discuss innovative research and barrier-pushing involvement and participation work. Our 2020 virtual research festival in July included a range of sessions showcasing the very latest research. Our wide range of content included Dr Sarah Cassidy, Dr Katie Maras and Professor Jacqui Rodgers as keynote speakers.

For the first time, we included a medical humanities session: 'Taking an interdisciplinary approach to autism and neurodiversity.'

The Festival was attended by over 2,000 people, a quarter of whom were from the autistic community. Delegates were able to choose which sessions to attend, fitting them around their working week and personal interests. The majority of sessions were recorded and shared after the festival.

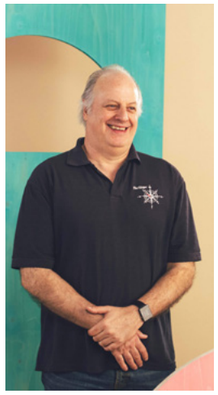
"I downloaded this app to use as something to track my daily anxiety, and to have a record to share during CBT therapy. It was immediately helpful and I started to see what anxiety triggers were for me, I loved the daily tips and am using them. They have been great help while recovering from depression and anxiety."

Reviewer on the Apple App store



Molehill Mountain – the next step
Funded by the Maudsley Charity and the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists, we launched the next phase of our evidence-based app 'Molehill Mountain' in April 2021. The app helps autistic people understand and self-manage their anxiety. With improved functionality and an extended course, it now takes around three months to complete with regular check-ins, although the diary, daily check-ins and tools can be used indefinitely.

We want to ensure that autistic people have a right to the appropriate support and care, sustainable employment, healthcare and mental health treatments – and to be accepted, understood and empowered.



‘The Autistica Network now has over 16,000 members and demand from researchers to recruit from the network is growing.’

The pandemic – and the knock-on effects for our income and fundraising pipeline – highlighted the need to urgently clarify our vision for the future. We have evaluated how we can best accomplish these aims with the resources we have – to ensure we make a tangible difference.

Our future efforts will be focused on tackling several key issues:

- Too many autistic people are offered zero effective support following their diagnosis
- Too many autistic people experience anxiety that places limits on their lives
- Too many autistic people are deprived of meaningful and sustained employment
- Too many autistic people die too young. The reasons for early death are often avoidable
- Too many public spaces are overwhelming for too many autistic people
- Too many people are aware of autism but don’t understand autistic people

Clear goals for major impact

We are in the process of developing a set of ten-year goals. These goals will dictate the research that we support, the policy change that we push for and the communications campaigns that we run. The goals will be supported by an ambitious fundraising and partnerships strategy because we know that we cannot achieve major change alone. We’ll be announcing these goals in autumn 2021, with the aim of engaging existing supporters and bringing in new audiences.

A team to make more of a difference

Recruitment went on hold during the pandemic and as a result our headcount decreased. However, as we recover and set some ambitious long-term goals, we need a team that can develop and execute these new strategies and help us to grow. We are recruiting in all areas of the charity – and expect to increase our headcount from 15 to 24 over the next six months. We are also looking at ways to support, empower and develop our existing staff, who have shown themselves to be hard working, resilient and loyal during this difficult time.

New ways of working for a new world

We moved out of our office at the end of our lease, which fell during the pandemic, and the team went fully remote. This suited many colleagues, although some are keen to get back to meeting in person. We are continuing to consult with the team to understand their preferences for future working. Most of our staff would prefer to work more days at home than in the office and feel that meeting room space is key for any future workspace. We are working with our Trustees to identify potential office solutions that meet our needs as a growing charity, aiming to create an accessible and inclusive working environment for our increasingly neurodiverse workforce.

A diversity that reflects our community

This year we worked hard to increase the diversity on our trustee board and within our team. We also continued to look at ways to broaden the diversity of voices that feed into our work. We have plans to involve more young people in our work through a youth arm of the Autistica Insight Group.

A valued and engaged community

The Autistica Network now has over 16,000 members and demand from researchers to recruit from the network is growing. We feel it is time to build on this success and create a better experience for members who currently receive emails from us.

We are investigating the potential of developing a community hub, which will allow us to engage with members in a more personalised way and enable researchers and community members to tailor their involvement and interactions with us. This will help us to track impact and update and thank participants who become involved. Hopefully this will lead to greater engagement and encourage members to support the charity by taking part in studies, fundraising or simply through spreading the word.

The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit in relation to the charity’s aims and objectives. The trustees consider it important to demonstrate to supporters and others interested in our work that the research we have funded will support breakthroughs, tangible progress and enhance understanding.



Autistic people and their families are at the heart of our research strategy, our national research network and embedded within our wider governance processes. Our overarching aim by doing so is to improve outcomes, giving happier, healthier and longer lives to all autistic people.

Autistic people and family members play an active role on our Scientific Review Panel and the many other advisory structures which oversee our work. Our Annual Health Checks programme has received further funding from NHS England and, alongside our many of our interventions studies, is supported by NIHR’s clinical research network. Through the Autistica Network we provide mechanisms to involve autistic people and families in research as participants, advisers, co-designers and researchers.

We know how important it is that scarce resources are deployed on research that is not just important to families, but is also of the highest quality, internationally competitive and does not inappropriately duplicate investment made elsewhere. As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, we are committed to the highest possible standards of research governance and independent peer review underscores all the research that we fund.

In addition to the Scientific Review Panel which scores and deliberates on all research proposals, we are fortunate to benefit from independent strategic advice from world-leading experts in neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism.

Autistica is regulated by the Fundraising Regulator and a proud member of the Fundraising Standards Board. We are committed to best practice in fundraising and customer service. Through our privacy policies, we promise to keep our supporters informed about our work and to treat their information with respect.



"I'd heard really good things about Autistica and how they involve autistic people, and I wanted future research and information to reflect autistic women's experiences."

How we are governed
Autistica was registered as a charity in December 2004 and its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were adopted on 20 July 2004. Autistica is incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 as a company limited by guarantee having no share capital. For the purposes of this Act, the chair and other trustees (none of whom receives any remuneration) are the directors of the company. A full list of trustees, together with other legal and administrative information, can be found at the front of this report.

The board of trustees meets formally four times a year and additionally relies on a number of board sub-committees to provide further oversight of the work of the charity (see page 41), which are each chaired by a trustee. All key decisions, including the allocation of funds for research, are taken at full meetings of the trustee board.

On 31 March 2021 there were 10 members of our trustee board. Trustees may serve for up to two terms of three years and are appointed in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The board approved the appointment of Katherine Hudson and Stephen Boyle in March 2021. Dr Sarah Caddick stepped down in July 2020 and Fraser Hardie stepped down in April 2021.

The following issues are addressed by the trustees during the year:

- developing and reviewing the organisational strategy
- reviewing progress against our business plan and research strategy
- agreeing and monitoring an annual business and financial plan
- the award of all grants for research
- the risks the charity is facing in delivering its plans
- the impact of the charity's work

Each year the skills and expertise required within the trustee board are reviewed to help the charity deliver its objectives. If gaps are identified or a vacancy occurs, new trustees with the appropriate skills and experience are identified. All trustees are offered a full induction when they join and trustee training is available to keep trustees up to date with the environment in which the charity operates.

How we are managed
The chief executive is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the management of the charity. The director of fundraising, head of communications, head of policy and head of research report to the chief executive. Remuneration for senior staff is set at market rates and reviewed annually by the board.

The offices of the charity are registered in Southwark.

Risk management
The trustees formally consider the major risks faced by the charity as part of a risk management strategy that comprises:

- an annual review of the risks faced by the charity in delivering its plans
- the establishment of systems and procedures to manage those risks identified in the review
- the implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential negative impact on the charity should those risks materialise

The charity has identified a number of key risks this year, including the short term and long-term impact of Covid-19 on research, fundraising, policy influencing, communications and staff; the medium-term impact of a potential recession on our income, and; the medium-term effect of Brexit on income, income diversification and improving national and international collaborations in autism research. Our loyal donor base and strong external relationships put us in a strong position to maintain income and influence and continue supporting UK autism research. We continue to actively seek new partnerships within and beyond autism science and build pro bono support to increase capacity.

Reserves
The trustees review the reserve policy annually and consider the charity should hold free reserves of approximately £800,000 (2019-20: £550,000) to cover six months' operating costs with a contingency of £50,000 in the event of a significant reduction in planned income. At 31 March 2021 the charity had free reserves excluding designated funds of £1,379,794 (2019-20: £732,807). Our designated funds were £82,000 (2019-20: £82,000). We would traditionally designate the surplus above the free reserve threshold towards future research spend but in light of the coronavirus pandemic we agreed to keep the excess in the free reserve until the economic and research impacts were clearer.

At 31 March 2021 the charity had restricted reserves of £323,007 (2019-20: 472,272).



When the rescheduled London marathon was cancelled a group of fundraising friends decided not to put their training to waste and ran solo marathons instead.

Investments
Free reserves and other surplus cash are held in interest-bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers or in regulated money market funds, with a maximum of four to six months' operating costs (c.£400,000–£550,000) held in the current account.

Cash outside of the current account should be held in individual interest-bearing deposit accounts with authorised UK deposit takers which benefit from the government FSCS guarantee scheme (currently up to £85,000), using the Insignis cash management platform. The maximum amount per deposit account should not exceed £100,000. These can be a mix of instant or close to instant access and longer-term access accounts.

A maximum of 50% of total cash or £1,100,000, whichever is lower, can be held in regulated money market funds with an AAA rating from Fitch and/or Standard & Poor's, provided that the funds offer instant, or close to instant, access. A maximum of 25% of total cash or £750,000, whichever is the lower, can be held in equities or funds in line with the asset investment policy. These should be managed by a regulated asset manager. Investments are reviewed by the finance committee, which meets four times a year, and trustees are advised of any recommended changes at full meetings of the trustee board.

Statement on Covid-19
The trustees judge that the coronavirus pandemic was an event that occurred during the financial year ending 31 March 2021. As such, the financial statements reflect the impact of the pandemic as at 31 March 2021. The trustees are aware that they must continue to monitor events and evaluate their impact on Autistica.

The charity is predicting its 2021–22 income to be 20–25% lower than pre-pandemic levels with donations from challenge events, community fundraising, corporate fundraising, and major donors likely to be affected.

A number of donors who have given restricted gifts have signalled their willingness to be flexible in how these gifts are subsequently deployed by the charity, potentially resulting in transfers between restricted and unrestricted funds.

All grants that the charity commits to are supported by reserves held in cash. Therefore, we remain able to complete all previously committed grants in full, subject to the recipient(s) meeting the defined criteria for their studies.

Going concern statement
The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, but the trustees recognise that the economic impact of coronavirus in the medium term remains unclear. The trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Approval
The report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to smaller entities. The Trustees' Report and Financial Statements were approved by the board of trustees on 5 October 2021.

On behalf of the Board

Matthew Harris
Honorary Treasurer
5 October 2021

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

Statement of disclosure to auditors
On 7 September 2020, Wilkins Kennedy (trading as Wilkins Kennedy Audit Services) changed its name to Azets Audit Services Limited. The name they practice under is Azets Audit Services and accordingly have signed their report in their new name.

The trustees (who are also directors of Autistica for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report (including the strategic report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102)
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.



Gill Ackers
Chair of Trustees
5 October 2021

"I support Autistica because their research is improving life for my autistic family members and friends."





Alison and her daughter Naomi were involved in the development of Molehill Mountain (see page 19).

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of Autistica (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion
We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council (FRC)'s Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion

Conclusions relating to going concern
In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information
The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report (incorporating the strategic report and the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report and the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit ; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies' regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of Trustees
As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 24, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims as well as actual, suspected and alleged fraud;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Assessing the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company through enquiry and inspection;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management bias and override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for indicators of potential bias.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the FRC's website. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report
This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Michelle Wilkes FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Azets Audit Services
Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants

223–227 High Street
Orpington
Kent BR6 0NZ

Azets Audit Services Limited

6 October 2021



Statement of Financial Activities, including Income and Expenditure
for the year ending 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Year ending 31 March 2021 Total Funds £	Year ending 31 March 2020 Total Funds £
Income from					
Donations	2	1,371,494	634,328	2,005,822	1,713,075
Investments		5,755	-	5,755	12,144
Total income		**1,377,249**	**634,328**	**2,011,577**	**1,725,219**
Expenditure on					
Costs of raising funds					
Costs of generating donations	3	249,221	28,853	278,074	401,445
Cost of events	3	3,898	-	3,898	12,988
		253,119	**28,853**	**281,972**	**414,433**
Expenditure on charitable activities					
Grants for medical research	4	530,487	210,386	740,873	1,050,167
Medical research dissemination	4	291,519	276,755	568,274	529,604
		822,006	487,141	1,309,147	1,579,771
Total expenditure		**1,075,125**	**515,994**	**1,591,119**	**1,994,204**
Net income (expenditure) before gains and losses on investments and transfers		302,124	118,334	420,458	(268,985)
Net gains on investments		77,264	-	77,264	15,599
Transfer between funds	14	267,599	(267,599)	-	-
Net movement in funds		**646,987**	**(149,265)**	**497,722**	**(253,386)**
Total funds brought forward		814,807	472,272	1,287,079	1,540,465
Total funds carried forward		**1,461,794**	**323,007**	**1,784,801**	**1,287,079**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations.

Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2021

	Notes	£	2021 £	£	2020 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8		-		161
Investments	9		459,657		382,393
			459,657		**382,554**
Current assets					
Debtors - amounts falling due within one year	10	236,517		432,318	
Cash at bank		1,920,084		1,326,534	
		2,156,601		**1,758,852**	
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(662,446)		(649,786)	
Net current assets			**1,494,155**		**1,109,066**
Total assets less current liabilities			1,953,812		1,491,620
Creditors					
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	12		(169,011)		(204,541)
Net assets			**1,784,801**		**1,287,079**
Reserves					
Unrestricted funds - general	13		1,379,794		732,807
Designated funds	13		82,000		82,000
Restricted funds	14		323,007		472,272
Total funds	**15**		**1,784,801**		**1,287,079**

Approved by the board of trustees on on 5 October 2021 and signed on behalf of the board



Matthew Harris
Honorary Treasurer
Company Registration Number: 05184164

Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ending 31 March 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities	16	587,795	(1,159,494)
Cash flow from investing activities			
Bank interest		5,755	12,144
Purchase of fixed asset investment		-	(212)
Proceed from disposal of fixed asset investment		-	206,946
Net cash from investing activities		5,755	218,878
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		593,550	(940,616)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,326,535	2,267,151
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		**1,920,085**	**1,326,535**

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ending 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies

a. Basis of preparation

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee in the United Kingdom. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 3 of these financial statements. The nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are set out on page 8.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2017, the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 31 March 2018.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

b. Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations and grants receivable are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Investment income is accounted for when received. Tax recoverable on investment income is accounted for on a receivable basis.

Other income is included in full in the SoFA when receivable.

Gifts in kind and donated services are included at the open market value of the goods or services provided .

c. Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

It is categorised under the following headings:

- Raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes expenditure associated with grants for medical research and medical research dissemination. Grants payable are accounted for at the point that either conditions for receipt have been satisfied or the post being funded is filled

d. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The designated fund balance has been represented to ensure that fund balance stated accurately reflects the designation policy adopted by the trustees.

e. Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing over £5,000 are capitalised. Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows.

▪ Computer equipment	33%	straight line
▪ Other equipment and fittings	25%	straight line

f. Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

g. Leasing commitments

Assets acquired under finance leases are capitalised and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the expected useful life of the asset. Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding lease liability using the effective interest method. The related obligations, net of future finance charges, are included in creditors.

Rentals payable and receivable under operating leases are charged to the SoFA on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

h. Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, but the trustees recognise that the economic impact of coronavirus still remains unclear. The trustees have carefully considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from the approval of these financial statements. The trustees have concluded that the budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves appropriate for the charity, in the current circumstances, to be able to continue as a going concern.

i. Judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have been made in the process of applying the above accounting policies that have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements:

Useful economic lives of tangible assets

The annual depreciation charge for tangible assets is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are re-assessed annually. They are amended when necessary to reflect current estimates, based on technological advancement, future investments, economic utilisation and the physical condition of the assets. See note 8 for the carrying amount of the tangible fixed assets, and note 1(e) for the useful economic lives for each class of assets.

Bad debts

Debtors are regularly reviewed for recoverability. Any debts which in the opinion of trustees are not recoverable are provided for as a specific bad debt.

There are no key assumptions concerning the future and other key sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

j. Fixed asset investments

Investments are recognised initially at fair value which is normally the transaction price excluding transaction costs. Subsequently, they are measured at fair value with changes recognised in 'net gains / (losses) on investments' in the SoFA if the shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably. Other investments are measured at cost less impairment.

2. Income

	2021	2020
	£	£
Donations	1,338,908	670,679
Gifts in kind	-	57,395
Challenge events	32,586	49,747
Unrestricted income	1,371,494	777,821
Restricted donations	436,330	870,892
Restricted gifts in kind	197,998	64,362
Restricted income	634,328	935,254
Total income	2,005,822	1,713,075

	2021	2020
Gifts in kind	£	£
Costs of activities for generating funds, challenge events	-	1,500
Charitable activities, disseminating information on autism and autism research - unrestricted	-	55,895
Charitable activities, disseminating information on autism and autism research - restricted	197,998	64,362
	197,998	121,757

The above activities were organised by the charity. Income from activities organised by individuals and donated to the charity are included in voluntary income.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ending 31 March 2021

3. Cost of raising funds

	2021	2020
Costs of generating donations	£	£
Website, database, literature and PR costs	8,245	8,909
Other fundraising expenses	14,202	66,596
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	34,517	46,911
Staff costs (note 7)	221,110	279,029
	278,074	401,445

	2021	2020
Cost of Events	£	£
Challenge events costs	967	3,715
Other event costs	550	6,038
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	2,381	3,235
	3,898	12,988

4. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2021	2020
Grants for medical research	£	£	£	£
"The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit"	-	77,294	77,294	258
The Autism Spectrum Database - UK	-	-	-	(513)
Discover Network	-	7,356	7,356	141,531
Ambitious about Autism	229,447	-	229,447	-
Research Databases	-	-	-	(106,824)
SHAPe, The Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	-	-	-	259,469
Adolescent Psychoeducation	-	7,263	7,263	-
Epilepsy Dossier	-	30,000	30,000	-
Research Passport	-	-	-	28,654
DARE	-	113	113	91,246
Autistic-Led Grants - Kabie Brook	-	-	-	1,797
Autistic-Led Grants - Royal Holloway, University of London	-	-	-	1,797
Autistic-Led Grants - Sara King	-	-	-	1,797
Autistic-Led Grants - Joseph Scanlon	-	-	-	1,797
Embracing Complexity	-	3,043	3,043	66,320
City University – Comrad (Complex Needs Research and Development hub)	-	-	-	125,743
University College – ARFID – Eating disorders & autism	-	-	-	6,000
Covid 19	-	3,874	3,874	-
National Lottery	-	93	93	-
Governance costs (note 5)	15,174	-	15,174	15,307
Grant Administration costs (note 6)	80,939	-	80,939	109,998
Staff costs (note 7)	204,927	81,350	286,277	305,790
Total grant expenditure	530,487	210,386	740,873	1,050,167
Research dissemination	71,418	195,405	266,823	208,507
Governance costs (note 5)	15,174	-	15,174	15,307
Staff costs (note 7)	204,927	81,350	286,277	305,790
	822,006	487,141	1,309,147	1,579,771

5. Governance costs

	2021 £	2020 £
External audit	9,460	9,280
Trustees' liability insurance	3,337	3,259
Consultancy & recruitment costs	6,132	-
Other governance costs	1,565	6,440
Allocation of administrative support costs (note 6)	1,190	1,618
Staff costs (note 7)	8,664	10,017
	30,348	30,614

No trustees were paid during this period. No trustees received reimbursements for expenses (2020: £947).
Governance costs were allocated equally against Grants and Dissemination expenditure in Charitable Activities.

6. Administrative support costs

The following administrative support costs are allocated between other categories of resources expended as detailed below.
Costs are attributed directly where possible and the balance is allocated based on time spent by trustees, staff and consultants.

	2021 £	2020 £
Telephone	5,444	6,852
IT	16,740	21,733
Stationery, copying, postage and other office expenses	10,529	6,531
Staff recruitment and professional development	27,933	35,698
Rent and rates	15,156	43,517
Depreciation	161	781
Other	14,699	13,107
Staff costs (note 7)	28,365	33,543
Total support costs	119,027	161,762
These are divided:		
Generating donations 29% (note 3)	34,517	46,911
Events 2% (note 3)	2,381	3,235
Charitable activities 68% (note 4)	80,939	109,998
Corporate governance 1% (note 5)	1,190	1,618
	119,027	161,762

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ending 31 March 2021

7. Staff costs

	2021 £	2020 £
Salaries	734,376	824,638
Social security costs	75,397	86,482
Pension costs	20,920	23,049
	830,693	934,169
These are allocated:		
Generating donations (note 3)	221,110	279,029
Charitable activities £162,700 is restricted expenditure (2020 £145,888) (note 4))	572,554	611,580
Corporate governance (note 5)	8,664	10,017
Administration - support costs (note 6)	28,365	33,543
	830,693	934,169

The charity employed 18 full-time and 8 part-time staff members during the year to 31 March 2021 (2020: 20 full-time and 6 part-time). Staff costs are allocated between the various activities according to time spent.

The amounts disclosed above include the following number of highly paid employees:	2021 no.	2020 no.
£60,000-£70,000	-	1
£70,000-£80,000	2	2
£90,000-£100,000	-	1

The total amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel is £286,479 (2019 – £269,304). The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise those individuals listed on page 3.

8. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment	Other equipment and fittings	Total
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2020	2,760	1,285	4,045
As at 31 March 2021	2,760	1,285	4,045
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2020	2,760	1,124	3,884
Depreciation on disposals	-	-	-
Charge for the year	-	161	161
As at 31 March 2021	2,760	1,285	4,045
Net book value at 31 March 2021	-	-	-
Net book value at 31 March 2020	-	161	161

9. Investments

	2021	2020
Market Value	**£**	**£**
As at 1 April 2020	382,393	573,527
Additions	-	580,765
Disposals	-	(787,498)
Unrealised gains/loss	77,264	15,599
As at 31 March 2021	459,657	382,393
Historical cost	386,995	386,995
Investments at fair value comprise		
Fixed income		
Equities	62,604	87,038
Alternatives	299,152	218,672
Cash	66,842	54,902
	31,059	21,781
	459,657	382,393

All investments are carried at their fair value. Investments in equities are all traded in quoted public markets, primarily the London Stock Exchange. Holdings in common investment funds, unit trusts and open-ended investment companies are at the bid price. The basis of fair value for quoted investments is equivalent to the market value, using the bid price. Asset sales and purchases are recognised at the date of trade at cost (that is their transaction value).

	2021	2020
Investments individually representing greater than 5% of the portfolio held are:	**£**	**£**
Waverton Global Strategic Bond Fund 'A'	24,853	-
UK Treasury 2% 22/07/2020	-	23,858
Waverton Sterling Bond Fund 'A' Inc	-	29,852
GBP Capital Account	28,103	-

10. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	**£**
Other debtors	178,511	370,895
Prepayments and accrued income	58,006	61,423
	236,517	432,318

Other debtors includes £32,314 receivable within more than one year

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ending 31 March 2021

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	**£**
Trade creditors	54,589	24,342
Other creditors	314	1,441
Grant commitments (note 12)	369,300	581,754
Accruals and deferred income	238,243	42,249
	662,446	649,786

12. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2021	2020
	£	**£**
Grant commitments (see table below)	169,011	204,541

	Less than 1 yr	More than 1 yr	Total
	£	**£**	**£**
At 1 April 2020	581,754	204,540	786,294
Transfers	131,683	(131,683)	-
Grant commitments	163,294	96,154	259,448
Paid in year	(507,431)	-	(507,431)
As at 31 March 2021	369,300	169,011	538,311

13. Unrestricted funds 2021

	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Unrestricted funds - general	732,807	1,377,249	(1,075,125)	344,863	1,379,794
Designated funds	82,000	-	-	-	82,000
	814,807	1,377,249	(1,075,125)	344,863	1,461,794

Designated funds
£82,000 2020 Future Leader Awards in Epilepsy

Unrestricted funds 2020

	Balances	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Unrestricted funds - general	534,120	789,965	(1,327,181)	735,903	732,807
Designated funds	497,000	-	-	(415,000)	82,000
	1,031,120	789,965	(1,327,181)	320,903	814,807

Designated funds
£82,000 2020 Future Leader Awards in Epilepsy

14. Restricted funds 2021

	Balances b/f	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
University of Newcastle	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
ASD-UK Research Database	-	-	-	-	-
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience					
Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit	270,106	2,593	(115,428)	(11,924)	145,347
Discover Network	74,949	-	(89,667)	14,718	-
Local Engagement	8,027	-	(36,067)	28,040	-
Epilepsy	18,000	2,500	-	(20,500)	-
Intolerance of Uncertainty	-	4,200	-	(4,200)	-
Anxiety and Depression in Minimally Verbal Individuals	-	22,000	-	(22,000)	-
University College					
Anorexia Nervosa in Autistic Women	-	13,000	-	(13,000)	-
SHAPe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	(34,312)	57,653	(700)	(10,375)	12,266
Autistic-led Grants	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
Alan Turing Institute					
Turing citizen science fellow	-	195,405	(195,405)	-	-
Residential Care	-	-	-	-	-
DARE	(2,068)	42,065	(4,203)	(35,794)	-
Home Based PECs	-	23,000	-	(23,000)	-
Podcast	896	-	(1,095)	199	-
Embracing Complexity	38,824	40,000	(32,199)	(2,000)	44,625
AI Summit	2,000	-	-	(2,000)	-
City University - Comrad					
(Complex Needs Research and Development hub)	-	-	-	-	-
MQ Fellow	-	1,000	-	(1,000)	-
Future Leaders Award – Jane Waite	-	29,960	-	(29,960)	-
Social Care Scoping	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
University College					
ARFID – Eating disorders & autism	850	-	-	(850)	-
Ambitious about Autism – Education to employment	20,000	53,500	-	(50,000)	23,500
CareTech – Social Care Fund	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Sowerby – Digital Breakthrough	-	10,000	-	(10,000)	-
Adolescent Psychoeducation	-	9,975	(7,263)	-	2,712
National Lottery	-	10,000	(93)	-	9,907
Covid-19	-	50,393	(3,874)	(26,869)	19,650
NHS England	-	57,084	-	(57,084)	-
Epilepsy Dossier	-	-	(30,000)	10,000	(20,000)
Total restricted funds	472,272	634,328	(515,994)	(267,599)	323,007

Restricted funds are funds where the donor has specified the funds must be spent on a particular project as listed above. All of these grants represent either programme grants for autism research at a particular institution, specific Autistica-led projects or where specified fellowships are awarded for the purposes of supporting individuals engaged in autism research. Restricted funds were received in the subsequent financial year.

Transfers out of restricted funds were restricted donations received after funding was committed to specific projects. Transfers into restricted funds were donations received as unrestricted and subsequently restricted by request of the donor. Negative balances against specific projects reflect in-year spend which exceeds restricted funds received, but where further restricted funds were received in the subsequent financial year.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ending 31 March 2021

14. Restricted funds 2020

	Balances b/f	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances c/f
University of Newcastle	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
ASD-UK Research Database	-	12,713	-	(12,713)	-
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience					
Mental Health - Anxiety Toolkit	-	270,365	(259)	-	270,106
Autism Clinical Research Network	307,905	-	(204,303)	(28,653)	74,949
Local Engagement	14,553	30,000	(36,526)	-	8,027
Epilepsy	-	23,000	-	(5,000)	18,000
Intolerance of Uncertainty	-	3,000	-	(3,000)	-
Anxiety and Depression in Minimally Verbal Individuals	-	8,500	-	(8,500)	-
University College					
Anorexia Nervosa in Autistic Women	-	1,000	-	(1,000)	-
SHAPe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	147,628	104,200	(283,740)	(2,400)	(34,312)
Autistic-led Grants	15,807	100,000	(7,186)	(58,621)	50,000
Alan Turing Institute					
Turing citizen science fellow	-	50,000	-	(50,000)	-
Residential Care	-	1,000	-	(1,000)	-
DARE	3,452	61,550	(20,052)	(47,018)	(2,068)
Home Based PECs	-	63,214	-	(63,214)	-
Podcast	10,000	-	(9,104)	-	896
Embracing Complexity	10,000	114,087	(85,263)	-	38,824
AI Summit	-	36,625	(15,440)	(19,185)	2,000
City University - Comrad					
(Complex Needs Research and Development hub)	-	5,000	-	(5,000)	-
MQ Fellow	-	-	-	-	-
Future Leaders Award – Jane Waite	-	-	-	-	-
Social Care Scoping	-	25,000	-	-	25,000
University College - ARFID					
Eating disorders & autism	-	6,000	(5,150)	-	850
Ambitious about Autism – Education to employment	-	20,000	-	-	20,000
CareTech – Social Care Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Sowerby – Digital Breakthrough	-	-	-	-	-
Adolescent Psychoeducation	-	-	-	-	-
National Lottery	-	-	-	-	-
Covid-19	-	-	-	-	-
NHS England	-	-	-	-	-
Epilepsy Dossier	-	-	-	-	-
Total restricted funds	509,345	935,254	(667,023)	(305,304)	472,272

15. Analysis of net funds 2021

	General £	Restricted £	Total £
Fixed assets	-	-	-
Investments	459,657	-	459,657
Debtors	58,006	178,511	236,517
Cash and cash equivalents	1,237,277	682,807	1,920,084
Liabilities	(293,146)	(538,311)	(831,457)
	1,461,794	323,007	1,784,801

Analysis of net funds 2020

	General £	Restricted £	Total £
Fixed assets	161	-	161
Investments	382,393	-	382,393
Debtors	61,423	370,895	432,318
Cash and cash equivalents	637,549	802,749	1,440,298
Liabilities	(68,032)	(786,295)	(854,327)
	1,013,494	387,349	1,400,843

16. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Net movement in funds	497,722	(253,386)
Bank interest	(5,755)	(12,144)
Net gains on investments (see note 9)	(77,264)	(15,599)
Depreciation charges	161	781
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	195,801	(186,464)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(22,870)	(692,682)
Net cash flow from operating activities	587,795	(1,159,494)

17. Related Party Transactions

Related party transactions during the period to 31 March 2021 – £0 (2020: £947.06).

18. Guarantee

Autistica is a company limited by guarantee. Its Memorandum of Association prohibits any income or property of the company being paid or transferred to the members. Members of the company undertake to contribute a maximum of £1 to cover its liabilities.

19. Lease commitments

The charity had the following commitments under operating leases at the year end	2021 £	2020 £
Due within one year	-	31,050
	-	31,050

20. Post balance sheet review and Covid-19

Subject to the financial impact of Covid-19 that has arisen in March 2020, the trustees have assessed the operational and financial impact on the charity in the Trustees' Report on pages 12, 14, 22 and in the going concern statement at note 1h.

Board Committees

Finance Committee
Chair: Matthew Harris

Gill Ackers

Matt Davis (joined March 2020)

Jeff Saul (retired August 2019, co-opted as non-Trustee member August 2019)

Vinny Smith (retired March 2020)

Nominations Committee
Chair: Gill Ackers

John Carey

Matthew Harris

Heather Kleeman

Advisory Committees

Scientific Review Panel
Chair: Professor Terry Brugha MD (NUI), FRCPsych

Vice Chair: Professor Christopher Oliver BSc, MPhil, PhD, CPsychol.

Professor Dermot Bowler, PhD

Leneh Buckle

Professor Mark Brosnan, PhD, CPsychol

Professor Lucy Henry, DPhil, DClinPsych

Dr Catherine Jones, PhD

Claudia Klaver

Professor Jonathan Mill, PhD

Professor Courtenay Norbury, PhD

Dr Richard Rowe, MSc, PhD

Thanks

We were very grateful for significant support in 2020–21 from the following:

Trusts & Foundations
(over £5,000 and selected under £5,000)
National Lottery Community Fund
Highway One Trust
CareTech Foundation
The Alison Hillman Charitable Trust
The Eveson Charitable Trust
City Bridge Trust
Masonic Charitable Foundation
Maudsley Charity
The Waterloo Foundation
Peter Sowerby Foundation
Edith Murphy Foundation
The Gerald Palmer Eling Trust
The Stanley Grundy Foundation
The Swire Charitable Trust
The Stevenson Family's Charitable Trust
The Pixel Fund
The Hugh Fraser Foundation
Basil Samuel Charitable Trust

Major donors
(gifts over £5,000)
Adrian and Lisa Binks
Charles Sharland
Dame Stephanie Shirley
John and Margaret Skerritt
Alex Wilson

Corporate
Argus Media
Brunswick Group LLP
Herbert Smith Freehills
Fujitsu
Next plc
The employees of Wellington Management Company

Games
Autistica Play Ambassadors
DPS Games
GamesAid
UKIE

Individual Giving / Events
Students, staff and parents at Stanley House, Wellington College

Advisors
Network Steering Committee
Prof Dame Sue Bailey (Chair)
Freddie Adu
Dr Carole Buckley
Dr Laura Crane
Bec Hanley
Prof Francesca Happé
Sine Littlewood
Keren MacLennan
Dr Karen Matthews
Mark Minnot
Prof Jeremy Parr
Jenny Shorthouse
Lisa Wood

Scientific Review Panel
Professor Dermot Bowler, PhD
Professor Mark Brosnan, PhD, CPsychol
Leneh Buckle
Professor Lucy Henry, DPhil, DClinPsych
Dr Catherine Jones, PhD
Professor Jonathan Mill PhD
Claudia Klaver
Dr Richard Rowe BSc, MSc, PhD

Authored by: Lizzie Wilkinson

Thank you to the autism community and all the supporters who make our work possible.

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Making more of a difference

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