



## **Autistica**

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending  
31 March 2022

# Contents

03	Honorary roles and charity management
04	Statement from the chair
06	Statement from the CEO
07	Objectives and activities
09	Year at a glance
10	Review of the year
12	Our research
14	Driving public policy
16	Communications
17	Funding and support
18	Looking ahead
19	Public benefit and impact
20	Structure, governance and management
23	Statement of trustees' responsibilities
24	Independent auditor's report to members
28	Statement of financial activities
29	Balance sheet
30	Statement of cash flows
31	Notes to financial statements
44	Committees and advisory committees
45	Thanks

## **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**

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**Bankers**

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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 taking 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

				Year ending 31 March 2022	Year ending 31 March 2021
	Notes	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total Funds £	Total Funds £
<b>INCOME FROM:</b>					
Donations	2	975,313	521,573	1,496,886	2,005,822
Investment Income		4,356	-	4,356	5,755
Total Income		<u>979,669</u>	<u>521,573</u>	<u>1,501,242</u>	<u>2,011,577</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>					
<b>Costs of Raising Funds</b>					
Costs of generating donations	3	252,160	166	252,326	278,074
Cost of events	3	<u>34,219</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,219</u>	<u>3,898</u>
		286,379	166	286,545	281,972
<b>Expenditure on Charitable Activities</b>					
Grants for medical research	4	580,038	146,093	726,131	740,873
Medical research dissemination	4	<u>445,667</u>	<u>38,724</u>	<u>484,391</u>	<u>568,274</u>
		1,025,705	184,817	1,210,522	1,309,147
Total Expenditure		<u>1,312,084</u>	<u>184,983</u>	<u>1,497,067</u>	<u>1,591,119</u>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) BEFORE GAINS AND LOSSES ON INVESTMENTS AND TRANSFERS</b>					
Net gains on investments		(332,415)	336,590	4,176	420,458
Transfer between funds	14	<u>41,885</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>41,885</u>	<u>77,264</u>
		288,640	(288,640)	-	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		(1,889)	47,950	46,061	497,722
Total funds brought forward		<u>1,461,794</u>	<u>323,007</u>	<u>1,784,801</u>	<u>1,287,079</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u>1,459,905</u>	<u>370,957</u>	<u>1,830,862</u>	<u>1,784,801</u>

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	
		£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	8		-		-
Investments	9		<u>501,542</u>		<u>459,657</u>
			501,542		459,657
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Debtors - amounts falling due within one year	10	108,484		236,517	
Cash at bank		<u>1,560,880</u>		<u>1,920,084</u>	
		1,669,364		2,156,601	
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	<u>(305,366)</u>		<u>(662,446)</u>	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			<u>1,363,998</u>		<u>1,494,155</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			1,865,540		1,953,812
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	12		<u>(34,678)</u>		<u>(169,011)</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			<u><u>1,830,862</u></u>		<u><u>1,784,801</u></u>
<b>RESERVES</b>					
Unrestricted funds - general	13	1,459,905		1,379,794	
Designated funds	13		-		82,000
Restricted funds	14		<u>370,957</u>		<u>323,007</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	15		<u><u>1,830,862</u></u>		<u><u>1,784,801</u></u>

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

		2022 £	2021 £
	Notes		
<b>Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities</b>	16	<u>(363,560)</u>	<u>587,795</u>
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Bank interest		4,356	5,755
<b>Net cash from investing activities</b>		<u>4,356</u>	<u>5,755</u>
<b>Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>		(359,204)	- 593,550
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,920,084	1,326,534
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>		<u><u>1,560,880</u></u>	<u><u>1,920,084</u></u>

# 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.

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

<b>2 INCOME</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
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
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,496,886</b>	<b>2,005,822</b>
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Gifts in Kind</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
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
	<b>5,082</b>	<b>197,998</b>

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
		£	£
<b>Costs of Generating Donations</b>			
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
		<u>252,326</u>	<u>278,074</u>
<b>Cost of Events</b>		<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
		£	£
Challenge events costs		30,951	967
Other event costs		168	550
Allocation of administrative support costs (Note 6)		3,100	2,381
		<u>34,219</u>	<u>3,898</u>

  

4 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
<b>Grants for medical research:</b>				
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
<b>Total Grant Expenditure</b>	<b>580,038</b>	<b>146,093</b>	<b>726,131</b>	<b>740,873</b>
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
	<u>1,025,705</u>	<u>184,817</u>	<u>1,210,522</u>	<u>1,309,147</u>

# Notes to financial statements

for year ending 31 March 2022

<b>5 GOVERNANCE COSTS</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
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)	<u>8,882</u>	<u>8,664</u>
	<u>42,426</u>	<u>30,348</u>

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.

<b>6 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT COSTS</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
---------------------------------------	-------------	-------------

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.

	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
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)	<u>30,236</u>	<u>28,365</u>
Total support costs	<u>155,009</u>	<u>119,027</u>

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)	<u>1,550</u>	<u>1,190</u>
	<u>155,009</u>	<u>119,027</u>

# 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	<u>20,547</u>	<u>20,920</u>
	<u>937,883</u>	<u>830,693</u>
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)	<u>30,236</u>	<u>28,365</u>
	<u>937,883</u>	<u>830,693</u>

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	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

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	<u>2,760</u>	<u>1,285</u>	<u>4,045</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2022	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net book value at 31 March 2021	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

9 INVESTMENTS	2022	2021
	£	£
<b>Market Value</b>		
As at 1 April 2021	459,657	382,393
Unrealised gains/loss	41,885	77,264
As at 31 March 2022	<u>501,542</u>	<u>459,657</u>
<b>Historical cost</b>	<u>386,995</u>	<u>386,995</u>
<b>Investments at fair value comprise</b>		
Fixed Income	48,855	62,604
Equities	344,153	299,152
Alternatives	92,791	66,842
Cash	15,743	31,059
	<u>501,542</u>	<u>459,657</u>

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
		<u>108,484</u>	<u>236,517</u>

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
		<u>305,366</u>	<u>662,446</u>

12	CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	2022	2021
		£	£
	Grant commitments (see table below)	<u>34,678</u>	<u>169,011</u>

	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	<u>(284,526)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(284,526)</u>
As at 31 March 2022	<u>229,429</u>	<u>34,678</u>	<u>264,107</u>

# 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	<u>82,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(82,000)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>1,461,794</u>	<u>979,669</u>	<u>(1,312,083)</u>	<u>330,525</u>	<u>1,459,905</u>

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	<u>82,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>82,000</u>
	<u>814,807</u>	<u>1,377,249</u>	<u>(1,075,125)</u>	<u>344,863</u>	<u>1,461,794</u>

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	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Balances
	b/f				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 SHAPE, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	-	5,000	-	(5,000)	-
	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	<u>323,007</u>	<u>521,573</u>	<u>(184,983)</u>	<u>(288,640)</u>	<u>370,957</u>

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 SHApe, the Sowerby Health intervention for Autistic People	-	13,000	-	(13,000)	-
	(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	<u>472,272</u>	<u>634,328</u>	<u>(515,994)</u>	<u>(267,599)</u>	<u>323,007</u>

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)
		<u>1,459,905</u>	<u>370,957</u>	<u>1,830,862</u>

	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)
		<u>1,461,794</u>	<u>173,742</u>	<u>1,635,536</u>

	RECONCILIATION OF NET EXPENDITURE TO NET CASH FLOW		
16	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)
		<u>(363,560)</u>	<u>587,795</u>
	Net cash flow from operating activities	<u>(363,560)</u>	<u>587,795</u>

# 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	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>31,050</u>

## **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

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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](mailto:rebecca.sterry@autistica.org.uk) if you have the power to support us. Thank you.

### Autistica

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[autistica.org.uk](https://autistica.org.uk)

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