

# Action for Neurodiversity

England & Wales · Charity number 1148790

## Details

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Other names	ACTION FOR ASPERGER'S, AFA
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2012-09-03
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

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Address	9 Darwin House Corby Gate Business Park Priors Haw Road Corby Northamptonshire NN17 5JG
Phone	01536 266681
Email	<a href="mailto:info@actionforneurodiversity.org">info@actionforneurodiversity.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.actionforneurodiversity.org">www.actionforneurodiversity.org</a>

## Activities

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**Objects:** TO OFFER COUNSELLING, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, BEFRIENDING AND AN ADVOCACY SERVICE FOR THOSE PERSONS WHOSE LIVES HAVE BECOME ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

**Activities:** To provide specialist counselling to neurodivergent individuals and those close to them, delivered by counsellors with relevant personal or professional experience and/or additional qualifications, ensuring a deeper understanding of client experiences.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Services, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

## Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-09-30	£150,044	£156,963	-	-
2024-09-30	£152,431	£131,558	-	-
2023-09-30	£213,867	£217,487	-	-
2022-09-30	£193,899	£212,792	-	-
2021-09-30	£228,649	£207,970	-	-
2020-09-30	£168,690	£157,040	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Dr Max Daniel Lowenstein</b>	Chair	2021-01-18
ANTHONY MATHIESON		2012-08-29
Anthony Lewis Hall		2021-01-18
John Galvin		2024-11-17
Sonia Owen		2021-01-18
Steve Watkins		2022-03-07
Suzanne Styles		2024-07-13

**Action for Neurodiversity**

England & Wales - Charity number 1148790

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# Accounts

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# ACTION FOR NEURODIVERSITY

COUNSELLING LIVES AFFECTED BY AUTISM AND ASPERGER'S SYNDROME



## Annual Report

## 2024 - 2025



The majority of our counsellors are individual members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. We are committed to the principles and values set out in the Ethical Framework of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

 **Action for Neurodiversity**, 9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG

 01536 266681  [info@actionforneurodiversity.org](mailto:info@actionforneurodiversity.org)  [www.actionforneurodiversity.org](http://www.actionforneurodiversity.org)



Charity founded in 2008. Charity Commission Registration No: 1148790

**Providing autism-specialist counselling  
to those who live with and/or those who  
live alongside Asperger's  
syndrome/autism who are struggling and  
in need of help.**

Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre

9 Darwin House,

Corbygate Business Park

Priors Haw Road,

Corby,

Northamptonshire

NN17 5JG

**Report of the Trustees for the Period ended:  
30 September 2025**

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## Introduction

The Trustees present their annual report and unaudited financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2025, and confirm they comply with The Charities Act 1993, as amended by The Charities Act 2006, the Trust Deed, and the Charities SORP 2005.

Principle office: Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre, 9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG

## Board of Trustees

- Dr. Max Lowenstein – Chair
- Sonia Owen – Vice Chair
- Anthony Mathieson
- Anthony Hall
- Steve Watkins
- Suzanne Styles
- John Galvin (elected November 2024)

## Patrons

- Dame Vivienne Westwood (deceased 29.12.2022)
- Dr. Barbara Jacobs
- Mrs. Donna Taggart
- Mr. Scott James
- Mr. Gary Numan
- Dr. Luke Beardon
- Mr. Carne Ross
- Steve Silberman (deceased 28.08.2024)

## Independent Examiners

TC Group, The Old Town Hall, Market Place, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4BA

## Bankers

The Co-operative Bank

## Governance

### Governing Document

The constitution was adopted on 01 October 2008, amended on 31 August 2012, and subsequently amended on 22 September 2017; 01 Mar 2022; 23 Jul 2022 and 28 Sep 2023.

### Organisational Structure

Action for Neurodiversity (AfN) is governed by a board of trustees responsible for overall governance, strategic direction, and financial management. Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration.

Day-to-day management of AfN and its projects is delegated to Elaine Nicholson, founder, counsellor, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who implements the trustees' strategy and oversees operations.

Trustees meet quarterly and make key decisions regarding the charity's activities and services, with additional meetings held as needed. The CEO reports regularly on activities, finances, performance, and any significant risks or issues.

The trustees also review governance arrangements to ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place, including safeguarding, financial controls, conflicts of interest, and risk management.

### Trustee Roles

- The chair of the trustees is Dr Max Lowenstein.
- The vice-chair is Sonia Owen. Ms Owen is responsible for aiding Elaine Nicholson with managerial matters.
- Tony Mathieson, Trustee, is responsible for all things that are classed as maintenance/repair/service in the main office building.
- Anthony Hall, trustee, is responsible for strategic guidance.
- Steve Watkins, Trustee is responsible for legal matters.
- Suzanne Styles, Trustee, is responsible for aiding with IT and administration matters.
- John Galvin, Trustee, is responsible for networking and communications.

## **The Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

Trustees are responsible for identifying and recruiting new board members. In doing so, they seek recommendations from volunteers, professional contacts, and individuals within the autism and neurodiversity community to ensure an appropriate mix of experience, expertise, and knowledge.

Appointments are made in line with the charity's governing document and reflect the current needs of the board in terms of skills and experience.

Prospective trustees are invited to attend a trustees' meeting as observers. Subject to confirmation of eligibility and suitability, candidates may then be proposed for appointment at a subsequent meeting. This process allows the board to assess each candidate's ability to contribute effectively to the governance of the charity.

## **Induction and Training of trustees**

All new trustees receive an induction covering the charity's aims, governance, policies, financial position, and legal responsibilities.

They are also provided with relevant Charity Commission guidance, including trustees' duties and public benefit, to ensure an understanding of their responsibilities under charity law.

New trustees are supported by the existing board during their initial months and are encouraged to take an active role in the charity's work in line with their skills and experience.

## **Risk Management**

The trustees review the principal risks facing the charity on a regular basis, including at their quarterly meetings, and have established procedures to manage and mitigate those risks where possible.

The charity has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place for children and vulnerable adults. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out, where appropriate, for trustees, staff, volunteers, and others working on behalf of the charity. Safeguarding training is provided to those whose roles involve working with children or vulnerable adults.

## Objectives

The objects of AfN are set out in the charity's constitution document and are summarised as follows:

*To provide specialist counselling to neurodivergent individuals and those close to them, delivered by counsellors with relevant personal or professional experience and/or additional qualifications, ensuring a deeper understanding of client experiences.*

Our aim serves to enable the furtherance of autistic mental health awareness in both the local and wider community.

## Service Provision

AfN's service is a 24/7 assistance facility for those who need it, via electronic communications and/or face-to-face communications. Clients may contact us at any time via email, hence the "24/7"; this is allowable due to the complex processing that goes with an autistic neurological profile and gives the clients a chance to ask questions and/or share their concerns outside of the counselling sessions.

The charity offers low-cost counselling therapy; we request from clients a payment for their counselling session (currently £43-£65 per hour depending on income). If a client is unable to pay, we offer email support gratis.

AfN also offers student counselling at £22.50 per hour with counsellors who are in their last year of training, and emotional support sessions for £17.50 per hour. Emotional support is provided by workers who, though not counselling trained, have a strong experiential background of autism. Emotional Support Workers (ESWs) also partake in AfN training and monthly autism-specialist supervision.

## Funding and Income

AfN remains a donation-led service. Donations from clients for our services, along with a generous donation from Buckles Solicitors, Peterborough, have kept the charity financially stable this year. Full details of accounts can be found on pages 18 - 20 of this report.

## Fundraising

At present, our therapists receive around half of what they would earn in private practice. AfN retains only a small proportion of counsellors' hourly fees to cover essential running costs, a model that has enabled the charity to sustain its work since 2008.

Elaine Nicholson and Sonia Owen continue to give their time voluntarily, undertaking AfN's administration and management without payment. In addition, Elaine contributes approximately £20,000 each year from her own counselling income.

Our ambition is to provide free or low-cost counselling to those who need it most but are unable to afford it. However, until additional funding is secured, we are not yet in a position to offer this support. Increased donations and successful grant funding would make this possible and, to help achieve that goal, the charity continues to engage expert fundraising support to strengthen grant applications and secure further funding.

## Activities

### Customer Relations Management (CRM) System

During the year, we transitioned from our previous CRM system, HubSpot, to Konfidens. While a significant change, Konfidens is designed specifically for counsellors and therapists and is better suited to the charity's needs. We thank Suzanne Styles, Trustee, for sourcing the system and leading the transition.

Statistical data is generated through the CRM system. During the transition period, both systems were used while records were being consolidated, and as a result, some data for this reporting period may be less complete or accurate than expected.

From the next reporting year (October 2025 to September 2026), we will operate solely within Konfidens, enabling more accurate and consistent reporting.

### Human Resources (HR)

HR functions continue to be led by Sonia Owen, Vice Chair, who maintains records for the current team, including DBS checks and training records, and oversees the onboarding of all new counsellors, student counsellors and emotional support workers.

During this period, the charity had 22 counsellors, 4 student counsellors and 3 emotional support workers within the team.

## Safeguarding

This year we welcomed Lynn Findlay on board to support us with the charity's safeguarding endeavours. Lynn joined us to both provide training to our counsellors, student counsellors and emotional support workers, and be available as a safeguarding consultant for anybody needing safeguarding advice.

In addition, the charity signed up to the Independent Safeguarding Service, which provides further specialist support and training opportunities. This helps to ensure that our safeguarding practices remain up to date and in line with current best practice.

## Teen Therapy Project



The Teen Project began in June 2023, when Action for Neurodiversity received funding to provide free, in-person counselling to local neurodivergent teenagers.

The project has enabled the provision of more than 370 hours of free counselling to neurodivergent teenagers who otherwise may not have been able to access the support they needed.

Each young person was offered a series of counselling sessions in which they could talk about what mattered to them in a confidential, empathic and accepting space. Every teenager who came through our doors had their own unique experiences, strengths and challenges, and the counselling was tailored to them as an individual. The work was very much person-centred, adapting to their particular needs, goals and reasons for attending therapy.

### **Project Counsellor Jemima says:**

*'Teenagers that I have worked with in this period are dealing with depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, identity issues, friendship issues, social interaction difficulties, learning difficulties, problems within school and family and relationship problems, which massively affect their well-being.'*

*I have seen such positive results in the young people that I have worked with. Seeing young people start to open up, gain more confidence, increase self-esteem, be happier, more positive and able to cope better is such a privilege.*

*The feedback that I have received from the teens and their caregivers has been so positive. Changes happen when kindness and understanding is offered and young people feel better equipped with the tools to cope.*

*Thank you to all the young people who have allowed me to get to know them. It's been a privilege.*

*Jemima Gee  
Teen Counsellor'*

### **Autistic Empathy**



Autistic Empathy is the charity's friendship and dating community, created by CEO, Elaine Nicholson, for people with autism and Asperger's syndrome.

The platform is monitored daily by an administration and moderation team to ensure a safe and secure environment. This includes reviewing content and maintaining systems behind the scenes. A three-week verification process remains in place to help confirm users' identities and aid security of the community.

Membership has remained stable over the past 12 months, as new user regularly join whilst unverified users are regularly removed. The platform continues to average around four new sign-ups per day and approximately 50 active users daily.

The community can be accessed via the app on iOS and Android or through a web version. A web access link can be requested via email at [info@autisticempathy.com](mailto:info@autisticempathy.com).

## Figures for the reporting period 01/10/2024 – 30/09/2025

### Clients and enquiries

During the 12-month reporting period, the charity received approximately 700 email enquiries, compared with 747 in the previous year. This represents a 6.3% decrease; however, enquiry levels remain broadly consistent.

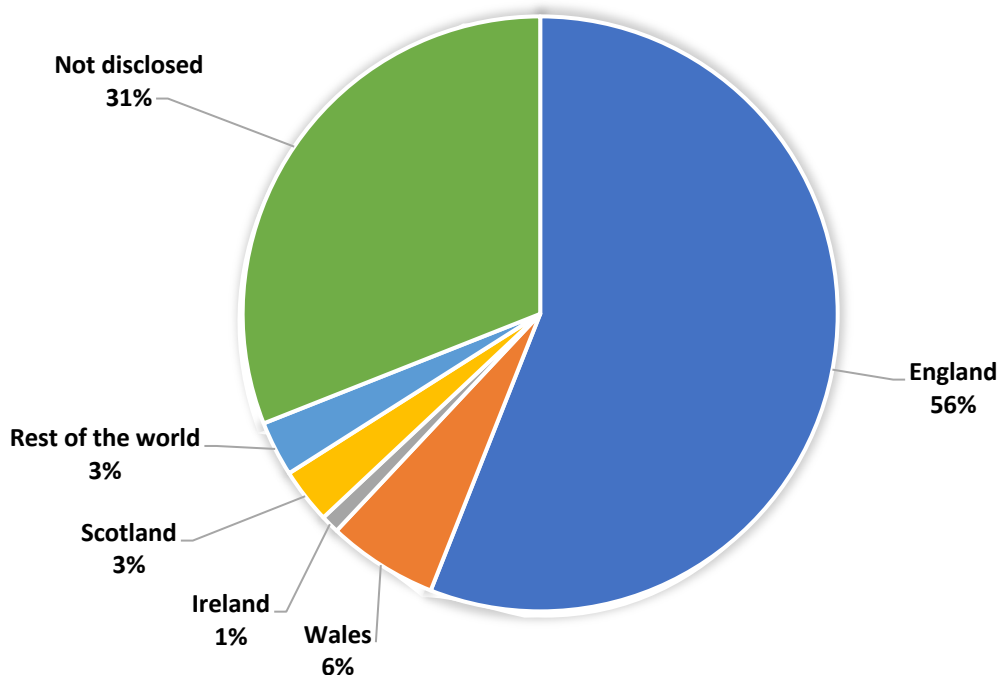
On average, the charity received 58 enquiries per month, equivalent to approximately 13 enquiries per week. It should be noted that not all enquiries result in new clients, as some relate to requests for information, signposting to other services, or individuals who choose not to engage in ongoing support.

The highest number of enquiries was recorded in January 2025, with 100 enquiries received. March 2025 was the second busiest month, with 70 enquiries. The lowest level of activity was recorded in June 2025, with 42 enquiries, while both May 2025 and July 2025 recorded 44 enquiries each.

To date, AfN has supported approximately 9,010 clients and families. This figure includes all individuals who have accessed AfN's services in any capacity, including counselling, emotional support, signposting, and free email advice.

### Where do our clients come from?

#### By Country

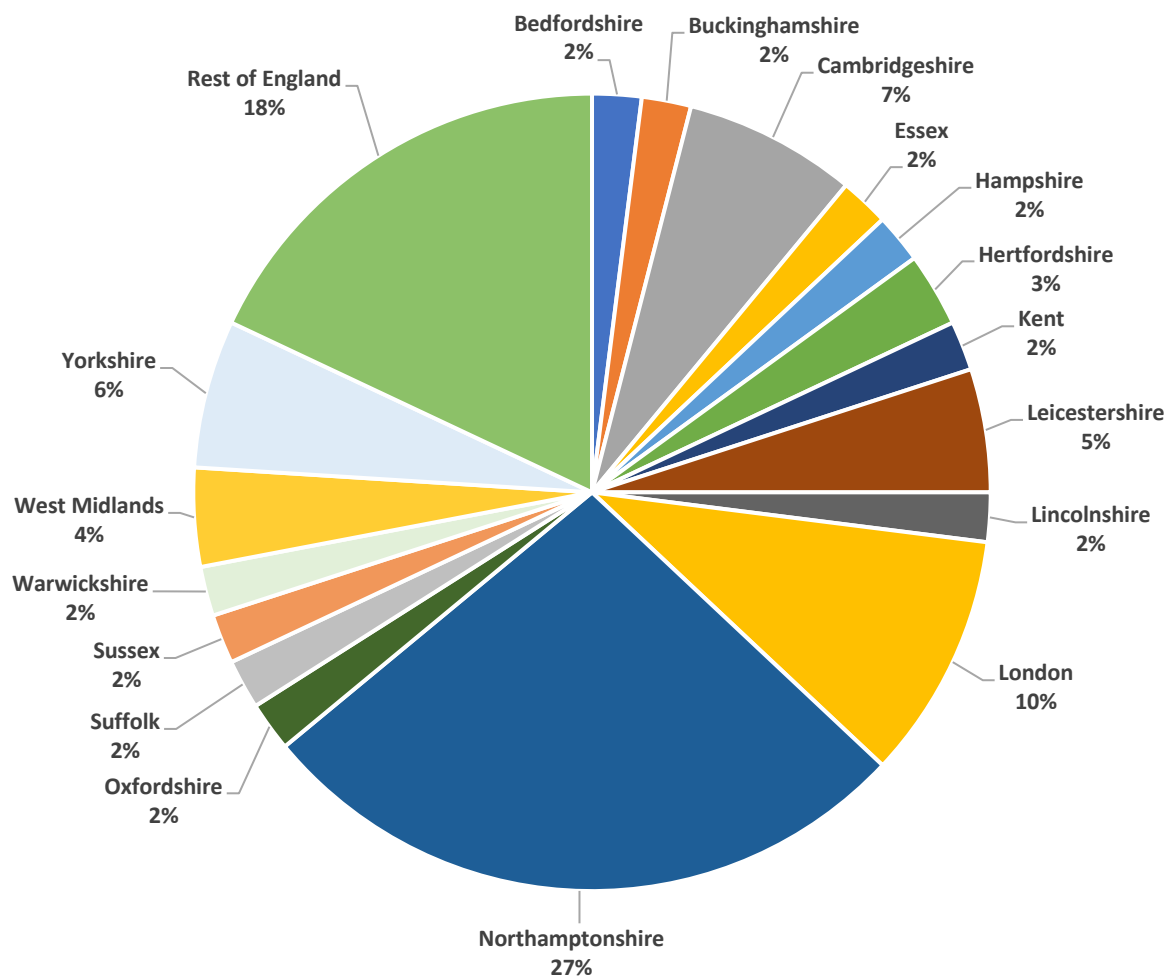


The majority of clients come from England, with the number standing at 56%. Wales represents 6%, Scotland 3% and Ireland 1%. The 31% labelled 'Not Disclosed' indicates that due to client personal preference, the client chose not to divulge their geographical whereabouts.

Thanks to video technology (Zoom/Teams/FaceTime) we have clients from all over the world. The 3% labelled 'Rest of the World' is detailed like follows:

Australia; Bahrain; Belgium; Canada; Channel Islands; Chile; China; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ecuador; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hong Kong; Hungary; India; Isle of Man; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kenya; Kuwait; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Mexico; Monaco; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Palestine; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Rwanda; Samoa; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Slovakia; Spain; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; Tanzania; Thailand; Trinidad and Tobago; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; USA; Vietnam.

### England and the breakdown of the counties



The 18% 'Rest of England' is detailed like follows, for the following geographical areas have fewer than 75 clients accessing the service from these areas:

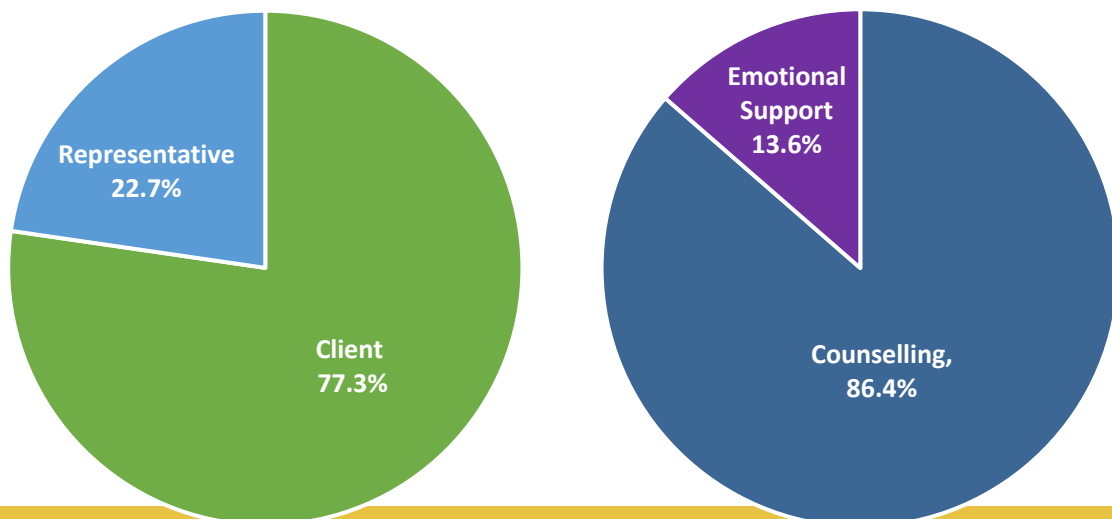
Berkshire; Bristol; Cheshire; Cornwall; County Durham; Cumbria; Derbyshire; Devon; Dorset; Gloucestershire; Greater Manchester; Herefordshire; Isle of Man; Isle of Wight; Lancashire; Merseyside; Norfolk; Northumberland; Nottinghamshire; Rutland; Shropshire; Somerset; Staffordshire; Suffolk; Tyne and Wear; Wiltshire; Worcestershire.

## Client Satisfaction

AfN once again undertook client satisfaction audits. We continue to evaluate our performance in this way as part of our ongoing commitment to delivering a high-quality service. We encourage all clients to share their feedback—both positive and negative—so we can better understand what we are doing well and identify areas for improvement or change.

The questionnaire used to gather this information was created using Google Forms and distributed via email to a random selection of AfN clients. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all responses were anonymised.

Feedback was received from respondents across a wide range of age groups, providing a broad perspective. Of those who completed the survey, 77.3% were clients, while 22.7% were representatives responding on behalf of a client (including parents, guardians, or carers). The results showed that 85.7% of respondents had sought counselling services, while the remaining 14.3% had accessed emotional support.

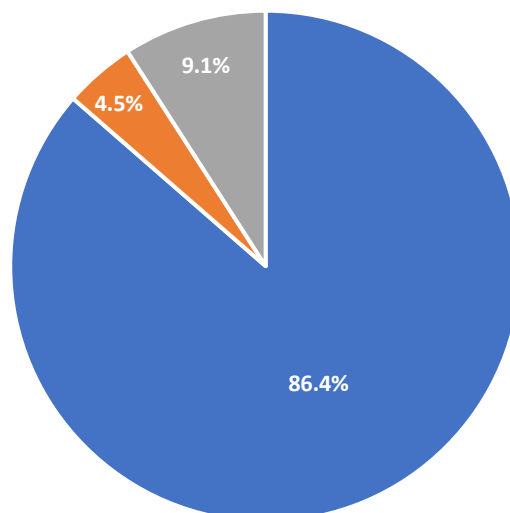


Of those seeking counselling, 78.9% of clients had accessed individual sessions, and 21.1% had accessed relationship counselling.

Having accessed one of our services, 81.8% of clients reported an improvement in their mental health since engaging with AfN. For some, this improvement was significant enough to complete their counselling journey, while others reported meaningful progress while continuing to engage in ongoing therapeutic support.

Feedback from the remaining 18.2% of clients who did not report improvement provided valuable insight into their experiences. This was primarily attributed to individuals being at an early stage in their therapeutic journey, where outcomes have yet to fully develop, and in some cases, a perception that a different therapeutic approach or practitioner match may have been more suitable for their needs. This feedback continues to inform our commitment to ensuring appropriate matching and responsive, person-centred support.

The quality of service provided by Action for Neurodiversity was seen as generally very positive: 86.4% of the clients who responded rated their overall experience with their counsellor or emotional support worker as 'excellent' or 'good', with 4.5% rating as 'Satisfactory', and the remaining 9.1% rated the service as 'Very poor' or 'Needs Improvement'.



- Rated 'Excellent' or 'Good'
- Rated 'Satisfactory'
- Rated 'Very poor' or 'Needs Improvement'

The quality of service provided by Action for Neurodiversity was rated positively overall. Of respondents, 86.4% described their experience with their counsellor or emotional support worker as either 'excellent' or 'good'. A further 4.5% rated their experience as 'satisfactory', while 9.1% reported their experience as 'needs improvement' or 'very poor'.

Feedback from those reporting lower satisfaction highlighted several key themes. These included a perceived lack of structure or guidance within some sessions, which affected feelings of progress; a sense that certain sessions did not fully focus on the client's primary concerns; and perceptions that some work remained at a more surface level rather than exploring issues in sufficient depth. A small number of responses also reflected individual circumstances influencing engagement, as well as differences in expectations regarding therapeutic style and approach.

This feedback is being actively used to strengthen and develop service delivery. In particular, it is informing ongoing work to improve the clarity of therapeutic approaches from the outset, enhance client-practitioner matching processes, and ensure expectations are appropriately explored during early sessions. It is also supporting continued professional development for practitioners, with a focus on maintaining structured, goal-oriented support where appropriate and ensuring clients feel heard, understood, and appropriately challenged within a safe therapeutic framework.

Overall, this feedback is valued as part of our continuous quality improvement approach and contributes directly to enhancing consistency, responsiveness, and client experience across the service.



**ACTION FOR  
NEURODIVERSITY**

COUNSELLING LIVES AFFECTED BY AUTISM AND ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

## Letter from Elaine Nicholson MBE, the CEO of Action for Neurodiversity:

Dear Valued Supporters,

Action for Neurodiversity would like to express its sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to our work during the past financial year: our supporters, friends, family members, volunteers, counsellors, student counsellors, and emotional support workers. Your commitment and dedication remain the foundation upon which our services are built.

Financially, the organisation has maintained a stable position, successfully reducing expenditure while sustaining income at a consistent level - a considerable achievement in the current funding climate for small specialist charities.

Looking ahead, our primary funding priority is to secure increased support from grants, trusts, and community giving. We would respectfully draw the attention of funders to the particular challenges faced by smaller organisations such as ours. Whilst larger charities often attract the greatest visibility, it is frequently the smaller, specialist providers - embedded in their communities and operating with lean resources - who deliver targeted, high-impact support to those who need it most. We would warmly encourage funders to consider how their investment might reach organisations like Action for Neurodiversity.

Finally, particular thanks are due to Sonia Owen, Vice Chair, and to all our trustees, whose invaluable and sustained commitment continues to guide and strengthen the organisation. Gratitude is also extended to TC Group, and in particular to Graham Darbourne, for their consistent professional support.

With sincere appreciation,

**Elaine Nicholson MBE Founder, Counsellor & CEO**

The majority of our counsellors are individual members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. We are committed to the principles and values set out in the Ethical Framework of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

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Charity founded in 2008. Charity Commission Registration No: 1148790

**Action for Neurodiversity**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**Year ended 30 September 2025**

	Unrestricted funds £ 2025	Restricted funds £ 2025	Total funds £ 2025	Total funds £ 2024
<b><u>Incoming resources</u></b>				
<b>Voluntary Income</b>				
Donations and Grants received	31,404	-	31,404	27,476
	31,404	-	31,404	27,476
<b>Charitable Activities Income</b>				
Consultations, diagnosis and assessments	118,640	-	118,640	124,955
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-
	118,640	-	118,640	124,955
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>				
Sale of Merchandise	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>150,044</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>150,044</b>	<b>152,431</b>
<b><u>Resources expended</u></b>				
<b>Activities for Generating Funds Costs</b>				
Opening stock	600	-	600	600
Gifts/Grants given	705	-	705	1,306
Closing stock	(600)	-	(600)	(600)
	705	-	705	1,306
<b>Charitable Activities Direct Costs</b>				
Professional services and Disciple	20,675	-	20,675	14,149
Counselling fees	87,344	-	87,344	92,637
Conference and meeting expenses	1,419	-	1,419	1,742
	109,438	-	109,438	108,528
<b>Charitable Activities Support Costs</b>				
Computer and IT support expenses	12,622	-	12,622	11,634
Postage, printing, stationery and advertising	3,555	-	3,555	12,708
Office rent and other costs	16,961	-	16,961	16,557
Subscriptions	2,667	-	2,667	3,230
Telephone	2,475	-	2,475	2,408
Travel and subsistence	325	-	325	1,143
Bank and paypal charges	2,310	-	2,310	2,152
Insurances	1,707	-	1,707	1,702
Sundry and cleaning	909	-	909	1,525
Depreciation	3,289	-	3,289	2,419
	46,820	-	46,820	55,478
	156,963	-	156,963	165,312
Excess of payments over receipts	(6,919)	-	(6,919)	(12,881)
Funds brought forward	27,971	-	27,971	40,852
Funds carried forward	21,052	-	21,052	27,971

## Action for Neurodiversity

## Balance sheet as at 30 September 2025

	Note	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Computer equipment		2,309		4,790	
Office equipment		801		1,609	
Motor Vehicles		-		-	
	3		3,110		6,399
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stock		600		600	
Bank Accounts		17,342		20,972	
			17,942		21,572
			21,052		27,971
<b>LESS: LIABILITIES</b>					
Creditors and accruals		-		-	
			-		-
			<b>21,052</b>		<b>27,971</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY: -</b>					
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	4		-		-
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUND</b>	4		21,052		27,971
			<b>21,052</b>		<b>27,971</b>
			-		-

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and signed on behalf by:

E Nicholson

Date: 2nd May 2026

The notes on the following page form part of these accounts

## Action for Neurodiversity

### Notes to the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2025

#### 1 Accounting policies

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 (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102). The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

##### a) Income and resources expended

Income and expenditure incurred on the operating of the charity is provided for on an accruals basis.

##### b) Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on non current assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follow:

Asset Class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer equipment	5 years straight line basis
Office equipment	5 years straight line basis
Motor Vehicles	25% reducing balance basis

#### 2 Trustees expenses

The trustees received no emoluments (2024 : £nil). During the year, telephone, travel, DBS and other expenses were reimbursed to trustees at cost totalling £1,299 (2024: £331) which were all for charitable purposes.

#### 3 Non Current Assets

	Office Equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Motor Vehicle £	Total £
Cost:				
Brought forward	9,617	25,516	-	35,133
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Carried forward	<u>9,617</u>	<u>25,516</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,133</u>
Depreciation:				
Brought forward	8,008	20,726	-	28,734
Charge for the year	808	2,481	-	3,289
Eliminated on disposals	-	-	-	-
	<u>8,816</u>	<u>23,207</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,023</u>
Net book value:				
At 30 September 2024	<u>1,609</u>	<u>4,790</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,399</u>
At 30 September 2025	<u>801</u>	<u>2,309</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,110</u>

#### 4 Funds movement

	B/fwd £	Income £	Expenditure £	C/fwd £
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	27,971	150,044	(156,963)	21,052
	<u>27,971</u>	<u>150,044</u>	<u>(156,963)</u>	<u>21,052</u>

### Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Action for Neurodiversity, charity number 1148790, for the period ended 30 September 2025.

#### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

#### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

#### Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
  - proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Graham Darbourne FCA  
 TC Group  
 The Old Town Hall  
 Market Place  
 Oundle  
 Peterborough  
 PE8 4BA

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2026







A bespoke counselling service for those who are neurodivergent, or those who live alongside them, and who are struggling and in need of support.

 **01536 266681**

 [info@actionforneurodiversity.org](mailto:info@actionforneurodiversity.org)  [www.actionforneurodiversity.org](http://www.actionforneurodiversity.org)

Office/consulting rooms: Action for Neurodiversity, Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre,  
9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG

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**Action for Neurodiversity**

England & Wales - Charity number 1148790

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# Accounts

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# ACTION FOR NEURODIVERSITY

COUNSELLING LIVES AFFECTED BY AUTISM AND ASPERGER'S SYNDROME



## Annual Report

## 2023 - 2024

**Providing autism-specialist counselling  
to those who live with and/or those who  
live alongside Asperger's  
syndrome/autism who are struggling and  
in need of help.**

Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre  
9 Darwin House,  
Corbygate Business Park  
Priors Haw Road,  
Corby,  
Northamptonshire  
NN17 5JG

**Report of the Trustees for the Period ended:  
30 September 2024**

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### Page Subject

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6	Recruitment and appointment of trustees; Induction and Training of trustees; Risk Management
7	Objectives; Strategies and community activities
8	Activities; Customer Relations Management (CRM) System; Human Resources; Safeguarding; Fundraising
9	Fundraising, continued; Financial; Autistic Empathy
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## Introduction

The Trustees present their annual report and unaudited financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2023, and confirm they comply with The Charities Act 1993, as amended by The Charities Act 2006, the Trust Deed, and the Charities SORP 2005. Principle office: Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre, 9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG

## Board of Trustees

- Dr Max Lowenstein – Chair
- Sonia Owen – Vice Chair
- Anthony Mathieson
- Anthony Hall
- Steve Watkins
- Michael Chard (resigned May 2024)
- Louise Collinson (resigned May 2024)
- Suzanne Styles (elected July 2024)

## Patrons

- Dame Vivienne Westwood (deceased 29.12.2022)
- Dr. Barbara Jacobs
- Mrs. Donna Taggart
- Mr. Scott James
- Mr. Gary Numan
- Dr. Luke Beardon
- Mr Carne Ross
- Steve Silberman (deceased 28.08.2024)

## Independent Examiners

Bulley Davey Accountant, 6 North Street, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4AL

## Bankers

The Co-operative Bank.

## Governing Document

The constitution was adopted on 01 October 2008, amended on 31 August 2012, and subsequently amended on 22 September 2017.

## Organisational Structure

Action for Neurodiversity (AfN) is governed by a board of trustees. The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The trustees meet as a body quarterly and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running AfN and the activities provided by the charity.

The trustees have encouraged the recruitment of volunteers for AfN since charity registration was awarded on 31 August 2012. The volunteers have been deployed for purposes of fundraising, counselling, and assisting the founder, Elaine Nicholson, with various office administration and secretarial tasks.

The day-to-day management of AfN and its various projects is the responsibility of Elaine Nicholson, founder, counsellor, and chief executive officer (CEO) of AfN.

## Trustee Roles

- The chair of the trustees is Dr Max Lowenstein.
- The vice-chair is Sonia Owen. Ms Owen is responsible for aiding Elaine Nicholson with managerial matters.
- Tony Mathieson, Trustee, is responsible for all things that are classed as maintenance/repair/service in the main office building.
- Anthony Hall, trustee, is responsible for strategic guidance.
- Michael Chard, Trustee, is responsible for aiding in HR matters.
- Steve Watkins, Trustee is responsible for legal matters.
- Louise Collinson, Trustee, is responsible for administration matters.
- Suzanne Styles, Trustee, is responsible for aiding with administration matters.

## **The Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

The trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees, but in doing so the trustees seek the views and recommendations of volunteers and respected professionals presently working in the autism community. The trustees believe that this approach will ensure that any new trustees have a good knowledge of autism per se – based on personal, professional, and experiential backdrops.

Potential trustees will be invited to attend trustees' meetings as observers and will be apprised of the charity's aims and objectives, and, if all agreed, they will then be proposed as new trustees at the next trustees' meetings. The process will allow for due consideration of the person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist knowledge and skills.

## **Induction and Training of trustees**

Following an appointment of a new trustee, such persons will be introduced to their new role and given copies of the governing document and a guide to the policies and procedures adopted by AfN. Some publications from the Charities Commission are also provided, including the guidance on charities and public benefit and on the advancement of autism awareness knowledge for the public benefit. This should ensure that new trustees should be aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act.

Initially, new trustees will work and be guided by, existing trustees, and will, within six months, be given the task of heading a project or activity, reporting progress at a trustees meeting that follows within a time frame of 6 months.

## **Risk Management**

The trustees review risk regularly during their quarterly meetings. Appropriate Disclosure and Barring Safeguarding (DBS) checks that are enhanced (formerly CRB) are made for all those who have a connection to AfN, whatever their capacity. Child Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adult safeguarding training courses are made available to those who work with such groups.

## Objectives

The objects of AfN are set out in the charity's constitution document and are summarised as follows:

*To offer a bespoke counselling service for lives over the age of three years which have become adversely affected by the experience of Asperger's syndrome (autism spectrum disorder). This applies to those who have autism, and those who have a close relationship with someone who has autism.*

Our aim serves to enable the furtherance of autistic mental health awareness in both the local and wider community. Additionally, AfN can also provide training.

## Strategies and community activities

AfN's service is a 24/7 assistance facility for those who need it, via electronic communications and/or face-to-face communications. Clients may contact us at any time via email, hence the "24/7"; this is allowable due to the complex processing that goes with an autistic neurological profile and gives the clients a chance to ask questions and/or share their concerns outside of the counselling sessions.

The charity offers low-cost counselling therapy; we request from clients a donation for their counselling session (currently £43-£65 per hour – lower to higher incomes – the client decides where they are on that pricing scale). If a client is unable to pay, we offer telephone and/or email support gratis.

AfN also offers student counselling at £22.50 per hour with counsellors who are in their last year of their training, and emotional support sessions for £17.50 per hour. Emotional support is provided by workers who, though not counselling trained, have a strong experiential background of autism. Emotional Support Workers also partake in AfN training and monthly autism-specialist supervision.

## Activities

### Customer Relations Management (CRM) System

Our client notes and records management remain with the CRM system HubSpot, at the moment. The CRM system remains functional and effective though not quite “fitting” our requirements. Investigations have continued, and a new system has now been found which the charity will be transitioning to during the next reporting period. We hope this will improve the accuracy of the charity’s data and statistics.

Statistical data is gained through analysing emails and the CRM system. Following a number of changes within the organisation during this year, work on the CRM system is ongoing, and it is hoped that the charity will be in a position to provide precise statistical evidence by the time of the charity year 2024/2025.

### Human Resources

During this period the charity has had 20 counsellors, 4 student counsellors and also went from 2 emotional support workers to 3. The charity is always looking to recruit new counsellors and emotional support workers – particularly those who are available to work from the main office in Corby - as the mental health of our autistic clients continues to be a priority.

### Safeguarding

Paul James has remained our safeguarding consultant for this reporting period. Paul has had a career of over 35 years in school leadership and children’s services. He has both provided training to our counsellors, student counsellors and emotional support workers, and continued in the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the charity.

### Fundraising

How do we raise funds? Our therapists are priced out at half of what they would earn privately; AfN “creams” off from their hourly rate, and though this isn’t much, we have sustained ourselves since 2008.

Elaine Nicholson and Sonia Owen also continue to work freely doing the administration/managerial work for AfN, with Elaine also donating approximately £20k pa from her counselling work. The charity also has a voluntary fundraising consultant to help with bid writing.

We would like to be able to provide free, in-person counselling to those who do not have the funds to pay for their counselling but until we can bring in more funds this is not currently possible.

## Financial

AfN remains a donation-led service, although it is hoped that funding from sources such as grants will follow as the charity continues to deploy expert fundraising consultancy. The majority of income is from donations for counselling services as mentioned above.

## Autistic Empathy



In June 2022 we launched Autistic Empathy - a friendship and dating community which has been devised by our CEO, Elaine Nicholson, specifically for people with autism and Asperger's syndrome. It's friendly community with a holistic and welcoming vibe.

The community is heavily monitored, with an admin and moderation team overseeing things on a daily basis. The team regularly check in on the content posted, to monitor for inappropriate language and images.

The team also work hard behind the scenes checking the new users for obvious red flags, validating those who provide ID for verification purposes, dealing with those at the end of

their 3-week trial period who have not provided ID for verification and checking for and dealing with any reports from users as soon as possible.

The community remains a success with lots of members who inform us that they love Autistic Empathy being a smaller app with a holistic community vibe, rather than a bigger app with hundreds of thousands of members which can get overwhelming and have a lot more trouble arising. Members also report appreciating our verification rule to keep users safe. The feedback we get is that it enables them to feel safer because they know that if they are talking to a verified user, they are talking to a real person.

During this last 12-month period, Autistic Empathy has maintained member numbers of between 750 – 1000. This fluctuates a lot with new users joining but also non-verified members being removed on a daily basis. The app is averaging 4 new sign-ups and 75 active members per day.

The community can be accessed by downloading the App from the Apple store for iOS, or Google Play store for Android. It can also be accessed via the web. To access via the web, you can email [info@autisticempathy.com](mailto:info@autisticempathy.com) and ask for a weblink.

### Teen Therapy Project



The teen project has been running since June 2023, when Action for Neurodiversity was fortunate enough to receive funding to provide free in-person counselling to local neurodivergent teenagers.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, I have been able to welcome 34 fantastic young people through the doors of Action for Neurodiversity, to our nurturing sensory counselling room. Each teenager is offered a series of counselling sessions to be able to talk about things that are important to them, in a confidential, empathic space.

Throughout the year, I have spent 197 counselling hours with these young individuals and have had the pleasure of getting to know each person and about their life and experiences. Each person is unique, and has varying needs, goals and reasons for attending therapy. The counselling sessions are tailored to the individual and are very much person-centred.

Young people need to know that support is available and accessible. What we provide at Action for Neurodiversity is unique and tailored to people who are neurodivergent. So many teenagers are waiting long periods of time to receive support or are getting the wrong support; so, to be able to offer free counselling to them is just so critical.

Being heard and respected is important to us all, and for teenagers going through so many changes and seeking a sense of who they are, it is vital. Together we learn to piece together and understand their emotions and experiences and to look at coping mechanisms for life's challenges. We utilise our sensory space at AfN, which contains games and creative activities to discover new possibilities, a sense of self and ways of coping.

Teenagers that I have worked with in this period are dealing with depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, identity issues, friendship issues, social interaction difficulties, learning difficulties, problems within school and family and relationship problems, which massively affects their well-being.

I have seen such positive results in the young people that I have worked with. Seeing young people start to open up, gain more confidence, increase self-esteem, be happier, more positive and able to cope better is such a privilege.

The feedback that I have received from the teens and the caregivers has been so positive. Changes happen when kindness and understanding is offered, and young people feel better equipped with the tools to cope.

Without the funding all this would not have been possible.

Thank you to all the young people who have allowed me to get to know them this year. It's been a privilege.

***Jemima Gee***  
***Teen Counsellor***

### Figures for the reporting period 01/10/2023 - 31/09/2024

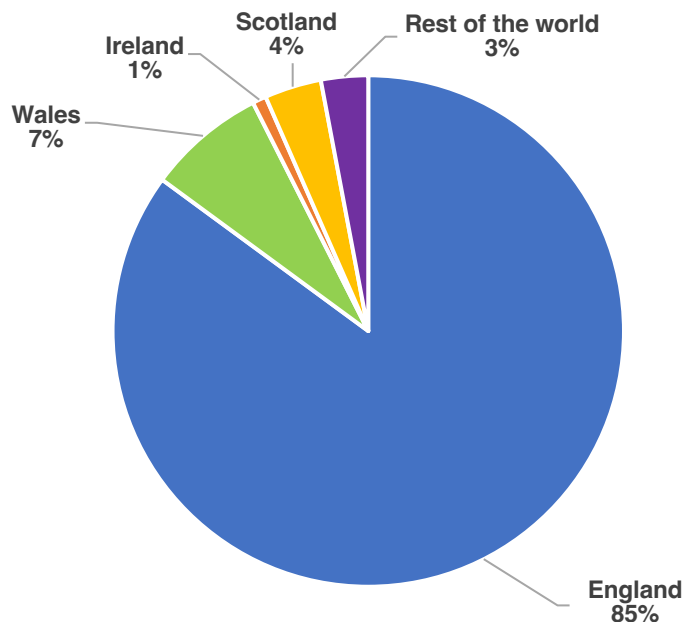
In last year’s AGM report, we reported that for the 12-month reporting period we had received 952 email enquiries. By comparison, for the 12-month period of this report, the charity received approximately 747 enquiries. This represents an average of 62 enquiries per month or roughly 14 enquiries a week. These figures represent a 21% drop in enquiries over this 12-month period.

In terms of month to month, the busiest month was October 2023 (84 enquiries), closely followed by March 2024 with 81 enquiries. The quietest months were February 2024 (47 enquiries) and December 2023 and September 2024, both standing 48 enquiries.

Despite the lower number of enquiries, in terms of the overall numbers on the charity’s CRM system, there were 687 new clients added during this period in total. Clients do not always just come from the enquiries. They might come from an in-house referral, for example (i.e., a current individual client deciding with their partner to have some couples counselling, and the partner becoming a client). Even with the enquiries, it is not a case of one enquiry = one client. Sometimes an enquiry doesn’t progress. Sometimes one enquiry leads to a family coming on board as clients.

### Where do our clients come from?

#### By Country



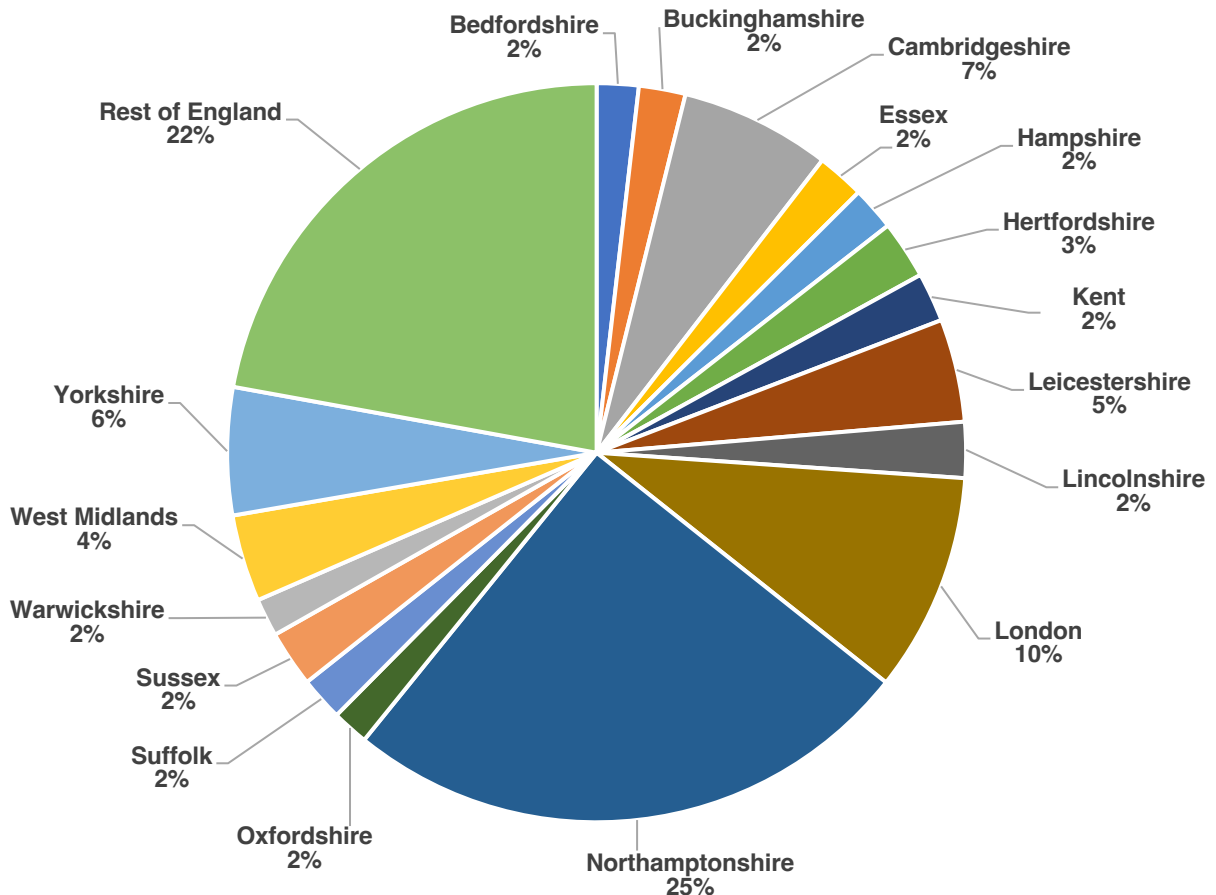
The majority of clients come from England, with the number standing at 57%. Wales represents 5%, Scotland 2% and Ireland 1%

The 32% labelled 'Not Disclosed' indicates that, via client personal preference, they chose not to divulge their geographical whereabouts.

Thanks to Skype/Facetime/Zoom technology we have clients from all over the world. The 3% labelled 'Rest of the World' is detailed like so:

Australia; Bahrain; Belgium; Canada; Channel Islands; Chile; China; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ecuador; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hong Kong; Hungary; India; Isle of Man; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kenya; Kuwait; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Mexico; Monaco; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Palestine; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Rwanda; Samoa; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Slovakia; Spain; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; Tanzania; Thailand; Trinidad and Tobago; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; USA; Vietnam.

### England and the breakdown of the counties



The 22% 'Rest of England' is detailed like so, for the following geographical areas have a number of less than 75 clients accessing the service from these areas:

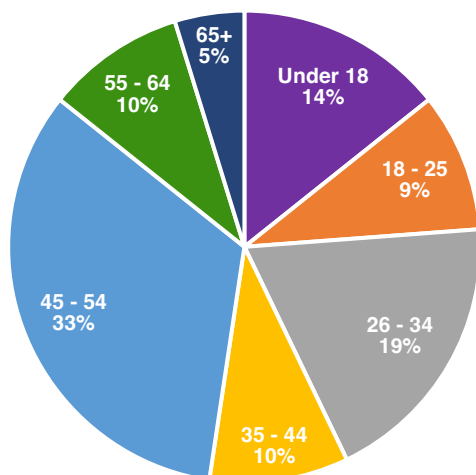
Berkshire; Bristol; Cheshire; Cornwall; County Durham; Cumbria; Derbyshire; Devon; Dorset; Gloucestershire; Greater Manchester; Herefordshire; Isle of Man; Isle of Wight; Lancashire; Merseyside; Norfolk; Northumberland; Nottinghamshire; Rutland; Shropshire; Somerset; Staffordshire; Suffolk; Tyne and Wear; Wiltshire; Worcestershire.

### Client Satisfaction

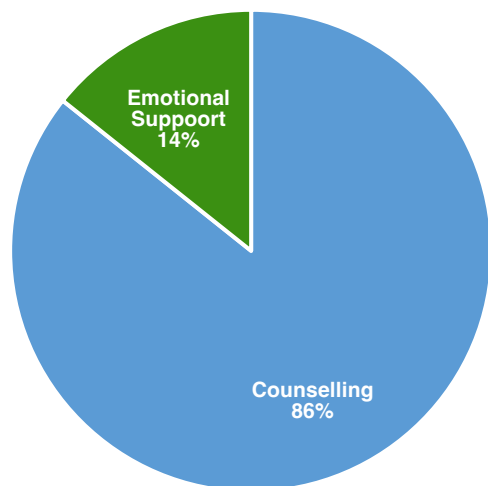
AfN did once again duly undertake client satisfaction audits. We continue to evaluate our performance this way because we continuously strive to provide a high-quality service for our clients. We want our clients to feel heard and always encourage them to give us their comments – good or bad – as it allows us to understand what we are getting right which areas we need to improve on or change altogether.

The questionnaire that was used to elicit information was created via Google Forms, with a link to it distributed via email to random AfN clients. Participation was completely optional. Responses were also anonymised.

Feedback was provided by respondents of all ages giving us a broad range of feedback from across the age groups. Of those who completed the survey, 71.4% were clients and 28.6% were representatives responding on behalf of a client (including parents/guardians/carers). The survey found that 85.7% of clients had sought counselling, with the other 14.3% having sought emotional support.



Client Ages

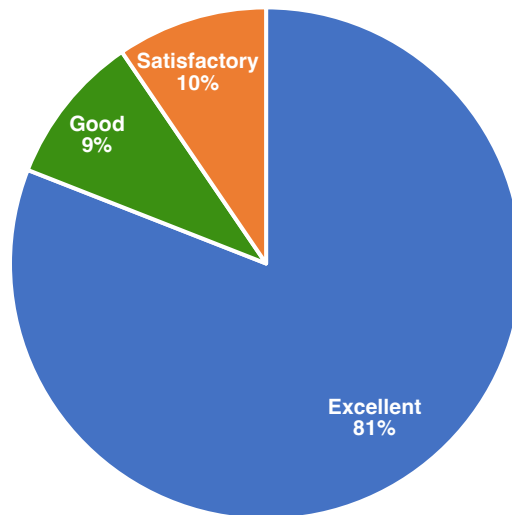


Service Sought

Of those seeking counselling, 85.8% of clients had accessed individual sessions, 9.5% had accessed relationship counselling and the remaining 4.7% had accessed a combination of the two. Having accessed one of our services, 95% of clients felt that their mental health had improved since becoming a client of AfN – with some having improved to the point of finishing their counselling journey and some feeling improvement as they still continue on their counselling journey.

The comments for the 5% who had not felt an improvement showed that this was primarily due to concerns around counsellor or emotional support worker seen not being the right fit for them, so they didn't get what they wanted from the sessions.

The quality of service provided by Action for Neurodiversity was seen as generally very positive: 81% of the clients who responded rated their overall experience with their counsellor or emotional support worker as 'excellent', and 9.5% as good. The remaining 9.5% rated the service as satisfactory, with no respondents rating the service poorly.



**Quality of Service**

Among respondents who rated their experience as satisfactory, the primary feedback highlighted the importance of feeling heard. The charity plans to implement additional training in the second half of 2025 and will consider further training for its counsellors and emotional support workers to enhance their listening skills and ensure they respond in a manner that makes clients feel acknowledged.

**Letter from Elaine Nicholson MBE, the CEO of Action for Neurodiversity:**

Dear Valued Supporters,

I'm reaching out about our unique "small but mighty" organisation that delivers vital services to individuals and families navigating autism and related neurodevelopmental conditions. We describe ourselves as "small but mighty" because despite our modest resources, we've managed to support over 10,000 clients—a number that continues to grow steadily.

Our dedicated team has expanded significantly. We now employ 24 qualified counsellors, 3 counsellors-in-training, and 3 emotional support specialists, all passionately committed to serving the autism community. These professionals generously accept compensation that's 60% below their private practice rates—their dedication is truly extraordinary.

Recently, our new trustee Suzanne Styles has brought fresh energy and expertise to our organisation. As an entrepreneur, coach, and self-taught technology specialist, Suzanne has conducted invaluable research to help Action for Neurodiversity operate more efficiently. Her tireless efforts to maximise our potential have been remarkable. However, this transition has presented unexpected challenges. While ending relationships with longstanding service providers, we've faced unanticipated and substantial final invoices. Though we've managed to settle these debts, the financial impact has been devastating—we are now in a precarious position. Without immediate financial intervention, we cannot sustain operations beyond March 2027. Should our organisation cease to exist, a truly innovative service would be lost. Our approach works and our systems are well-established; unfortunately, autism support remains an underrepresented cause in the charitable funding landscape.

Action for Neurodiversity pioneered specialised counselling for neurodivergent individuals, though many may remember us as Action for Aspergers when we began in October 2008. Our growth from just 20 clients in 2012 (when we officially registered with the Charity Commission) to thousands today stands as compelling evidence of our effectiveness and the critical need for our services. We hope everyone interested in our work recognises this remarkable journey.

I earnestly request that you share our story widely—we require immediate financial assistance to continue our essential work. I remain hopeful that together, we can overcome these challenging circumstances.

With sincere appreciation,

**Elaine Nicholson MBE Founder, Counsellor & CEO**

**Action for Neurodiversity**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**Year ended 30 September 2024**

	Unrestricted funds £ 2024	Restricted funds £ 2024	Total funds £ 2024	Total funds £ 2023
<b><u>Incoming resources</u></b>				
<b>Voluntary Income</b>				
Donations and Grants received	27,476	-	27,476	66,642
	27,476	-	27,476	66,642
<b>Charitable Activities Income</b>				
Consultations, diagnosis and assessments	124,955	-	124,955	147,225
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-
	124,955	-	124,955	147,225
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>				
Sale of Merchandise	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>152,431</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>152,431</b>	<b>213,867</b>
<b><u>Resources expended</u></b>				
<b>Activities for Generating Funds Costs</b>				
Opening stock	600	-	600	600
Gifts/Grants given	1,306	-	1,306	1,382
Closing stock	(600)	-	(600)	(600)
	1,306	-	1,306	1,382
<b>Charitable Activities Direct Costs</b>				
Professional services	14,149	-	14,149	17,829
Employment costs	-	-	-	21,105
Office costs	16,557	-	16,557	31,648
Costs for clubs	-	-	-	-
Conference and meeting expenses	1,742	-	1,742	1,757
	32,448	-	32,448	72,339
<b>Charitable Activities Support Costs</b>				
Computer and IT support expenses	11,634	-	11,634	17,216
Postage, printing, stationery and advertising	12,708	-	12,708	3,527
Subcontractors	92,637	-	92,637	102,818
Subscriptions	3,230	-	3,230	2,329
Telephone	2,408	-	2,408	2,448
Travel and subsistence	1,143	-	1,143	2,876
Bank charges	2,152	-	2,152	2,718
Insurances	1,702	-	1,702	2,573
Sundry and cleaning	1,525	-	1,525	233
Depreciation	2,419	-	2,419	7,029
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	-
	131,558	-	131,558	143,767
	165,312	-	165,312	217,487
Excess of payments over receipts	(12,881)	-	(12,881)	(3,620)
Funds brought forward	40,852	-	40,852	44,472
Funds carried forward	27,971	-	27,971	40,852

## Action for Neurodiversity

## Balance sheet as at 30 September 2024

	Note	2023		2023	
		£	£	£	£
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Computer equipment		4,790		7,569	
Office equipment		1,609		1,249	
Motor Vehicles		-		-	
	3		6,399		8,818
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stock		600		600	
Debtors		-		-	
Rent deposit and prepayments		-		2,235	
Bank Accounts		20,972		32,135	
			21,572		34,970
			27,971		43,788
<b>LESS: LIABILITIES</b>					
Creditors and accruals		-		2,936	
Other Creditors		-		-	
			-		2,936
			27,971		40,852
<b>REPRESENTED BY: -</b>					
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	4		-		-
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUND</b>	4		27,971		40,852
			27,971		40,852
			-		-

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



**Name:** Elaine Nicholson (CEO)

**Date:** 20/05/2025

## Action for Neurodiversity

## Notes to the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2024

**1 Accounting Policies**

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 (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102). The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

**a) Income and resources expended**

Income and expenditure incurred on the operating of the charity is provided for on an accruals basis.

**b) Depreciation**

Depreciation is provided on non-current assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follow:

Asset Class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer Equipment	5 years straight line basis
Office Equipment	5 years straight line basis
Vehicles	25% reducing balance basis

**2 Trustees Expenses**

The trustees received no emoluments (2023 : £nil). During the year, telephone, travel and subsistence expenses were reimbursed to trustees at cost totalling £331(2023 : £71).

**3 Non Current Assets**

	Office Equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Motor Vehicle £	Total £
Cost:				
Brought forward	9,617	25,516	-	35,133
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Carried forward	<u>9,617</u>	<u>25,516</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,133</u>
Depreciation:				
Brought forward	7,245	19,070	-	26,315
Charge for the year	763	1,656	-	2,419
Eliminated on disposals	-	-	-	-
	<u>8,008</u>	<u>20,726</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>28,734</u>
Net book value:				
At 30 September 2023	<u>2,372</u>	<u>6,446</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,818</u>
At 30 September 2024	<u>1,609</u>	<u>4,790</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,399</u>

**4 Funds movement**

	B/fwd £	Income £	Expenditure £	C/fwd £
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	40,852	152,431	(165,312)	27,971
	<u>40,852</u>	<u>152,431</u>	<u>(165,312)</u>	<u>27,971</u>

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Action for Neurodiversity, charity number 1148790, for the period ended 30 September 2024.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
  - proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Graham Darbourne FCA

TC Group

TC Group  
The Old Town Hall  
Market Place  
Oundle  
Peterborough  
PE8 4BA

Date: 20/05/2025



A bespoke counselling service for lives that have become adversely affected by the experience of Asperger's syndrome (Autism Spectrum Disorder)

 01536 266681

 [info@actionforneurodiversity.org](mailto:info@actionforneurodiversity.org)  [www.actionforneurodiversity.org](http://www.actionforneurodiversity.org)

Office/consulting rooms: Action for Neurodiversity, Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre, 9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG



Charity Registration 1148790 Founded 2008

**Action for Neurodiversity**

England & Wales - Charity number 1148790

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# Accounts

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# ACTION FOR NEURODIVERSITY

COUNSELLING LIVES AFFECTED BY AUTISM AND ASPERGER'S SYNDROME



## Annual Report 2022 - 2023



# Counselling lives that have become adversely affected by the experience of autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre  
9 Darwin House,  
Corbygate Business Park  
Priors Haw Road,  
Corby,  
Northamptonshire  
NN17 5JG

**Report of the Trustees for the Period ended:  
30 September 2023**

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8	Activities; Customer Relations Management (CRM) System; Human Resources; Safeguarding; Fundraising
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## Introduction

The Trustees present their annual report and unaudited financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2022, and confirm they comply with The Charities Act 1993, as amended by The Charities Act 2006, the Trust Deed, and the Charities SORP 2005. Principal office: Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre, 9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG

## Board of Trustees

- Dr Max Lowenstein – Chair
- Sonia Owen – Vice Chair
- Anthony Mathieson
- Anthony Hall
- Steve Watkins
- Michael Chard
- Louise Collinson

## Patrons

- Dame Vivienne Westwood (deceased 29.12.2022)
- Dr. Barbara Jacobs
- Mrs. Donna Taggart
- Mr. Scott James
- Mr. Gary Numan
- Dr. Luke Beardon
- Mr Carne Ross

## Independent Examiners

Bulley Davey Accountant, 6 North Street, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4AL

## Bankers

The Co-operative Bank.

## Governing Document

The constitution was adopted on 01 October 2008, amended on 31 August 2012, and subsequently amended on 22 September 2017.

## Organisational Structure

Action for Neurodiversity (AfN) is governed by a board of trustees. The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The trustees meet as a body quarterly and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running AfN and the activities provided by the charity.

The trustees have encouraged the recruitment of volunteers for AfA since charity registration was awarded on 31 August 2012. The volunteers have been deployed for purposes of fundraising, counselling, and assisting the founder, Elaine Nicholson, with various office administration and secretarial tasks.

The day-to-day management of AfN and its various projects is the responsibility of Elaine Nicholson, founder, counsellor, and chief executive officer (CEO) of AfN.

## Trustee roles

- The chair of the trustees is Dr Max Lowenstein.
- The vice-chair is Sonia Owen. Ms Owen is responsible for aiding Elaine Nicholson with managerial matters.
- Tony Mathieson, Trustee, is responsible for all things that are classed as maintenance/repair/service in the main office building.
- Anthony Hall, trustee, is responsible for strategic guidance.
- Michael Chard, Trustee, is responsible for aiding in HR matters.
- Steve Watkins, Trustee is responsible for legal matters.
- Louise Collinson, Trustee, is responsible for administration matters.

## The Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees, but in doing so the trustees seek the views and recommendations of volunteers and respected professionals presently working in the autism community. The trustees believe that this approach will ensure that any new trustees have a good knowledge of autism per se – based on personal, professional, and experiential backdrops.

Potential trustees will be invited to attend trustees' meetings as observers and will be apprised of the charity's aims and objectives, and, if all agreed, they will then be proposed as new trustees at the next trustees' meetings. The process will allow for due consideration of the person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist knowledge and skills.

## Induction and Training of trustees

Following an appointment of a new trustee, such persons will be introduced to their new role and given copies of the governing document and a guide to the policies and procedures adopted by AfN. Some publications from the Charities Commission are also provided, including the guidance on charities and public benefit and on the advancement of autism awareness knowledge for the public benefit. This should ensure that new trustees should be aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act.

Initially, new trustees will work and be guided by, existing trustees, and will, within six months, be given the task of heading a project or activity, reporting progress at a trustees meeting that follows within a time frame of 6 months.

## Risk Management

The trustees review risk regularly during their quarterly meetings. Appropriate Disclosure and Barring Safeguarding (DBS) checks that are enhanced (formerly CRB) are made for all those who have a connection to AfN, whatever their capacity. Child Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adult safeguarding training courses are made available to those who work with such groups.

## Objectives

The objects of AfN are set out in the charity's constitution document and are summarised as follows:

- To offer a bespoke counselling service for lives over the age of three years which have become adversely affected by the experience of Asperger's syndrome (autism spectrum disorder). This applies to those who have autism, and those who have a close relationship with someone who has autism.
- To provide advocacy for its clients when and as required.

Our dual aims serve to enable the furtherance of autistic mental health awareness in both the local and wider community. Additionally, AfN can also provide training.

## Strategies and community activities

AfN's service is a 24/7 assistance facility for those who need it, via electronic communications and/or face-to-face communications. Clients may contact us at any time via email, hence the "24/7"; this is allowable due to the complex processing that goes with an autistic neurological profile and gives the clients a chance to ask questions and/or share their concerns outside of the counselling sessions.

The charity offers low-cost counselling therapy; we request from clients a donation for their counselling session (currently £43-£65 per hour – lower to higher incomes – the client decides where they are on that pricing scale). If a client is unable to pay, we offer telephone and/or email support gratis. AfN also offers student counselling at £22.50 per hour with counsellors who are in their last year of their training, and emotional support sessions for £17.50 per hour. Emotional support is provided by workers who, though not counselling trained, have a strong experiential background of autism. Emotional Support Workers also partake in AfN training and monthly autism-specialist supervision.

## Activities

### Customer Relations Management (CRM) System

Our client notes and records management remain with the CRM system HubSpot, helped and managed by Mr. David Mallinder of Gemini Blue. The CRM system remains functional and effective though not quite “fitting” our requirements.

As ever, investigations continue but our bespoke needs combined with lack of revenue to purchase exactly what we need, makes finding a new CRM system tricky.

Statistical data is gained through analysing emails and the CRM system. Following a number of changes within the organisation during this year, work on the CRM system is ongoing, and it is hoped that the charity will be in a position to provide precise statistical evidence by the time of the charity year 2024/2025.

### Human Resources

During this period the charity had 20 counsellors, 2 student counsellors and also went from 1 emotional support worker to 2. The charity is always looking to recruit new counsellors and emotional support workers – particularly those who are available to work from the main office in Corby - as the mental health of our autistic clients continues to be a priority.

### Safeguarding

Paul James remains our safeguarding consultant. Paul has had a career of over 35 years in school leadership and children’s services. He is our guiding light in this respect, and we consider ourselves most fortunate to have him on board.

### Fundraising

How do we raise funds? Our therapists are priced out at half of what they would earn privately; AfN “creams” off from their hourly rate, and though this isn’t much, we have sustained ourselves since 2008. Elaine Nicholson continues to work freely for AfN, donating approximately £20k pa. The charity also has a voluntary fundraising consultant to help with bid writing.

We would like to be able to provide free, in-person counselling to those who do not have the funds to pay for their counselling but until we can bring in more funds this is not currently possible.

### Financial

AfN remains a donation-led service, although it is hoped that funding from sources such as grants will follow as the charity continues to deploy expert fundraising consultancy. The majority of income is from donations for counselling services as mentioned above.

### Autistic Empathy



In June 2022 we launched Autistic Empathy - a friendship and dating community which has been devised by our CEO, Elaine Nicholson, specifically for people with autism and Asperger's syndrome. It's friendly community with a holistic and welcoming vibe.

The community is heavily monitored, with Sonia Owen overseeing things on a daily basis. Sonia regularly checks in on the content posted, and she does a number of things in relation to member admin such as checking the new users for obvious red flags, dealing with those at the end of their 3-week trial period, and checking for and dealing with any reports from users as soon as possible.

The community is so far proving to be a success. It's slow growing because of the heavy monitoring and our verification rule meaning anybody who fails to verify their identity within 3 weeks is removed. However, this also means we have a lovely community of genuine and verified people and it's probably the safest app out there.

During this period, we have maintained member numbers of between 275 – 375 active members, and it is growing slowly but surely. We are averaging 7 new users signing up each day.

The community can be accessed by downloading the App from the Apple store for iOS, or Google Play store for Android. It can also be accessed via the web. To access via the web, you can email [info@autisticempathy.com](mailto:info@autisticempathy.com) and ask for a weblink.

Currently, the majority of users (55%) are iOS users, but we also have 37% of users on Android and 8% of users accessing the community via the web.

## Figures for the reporting period 01/10/2022 - 31/09/2023

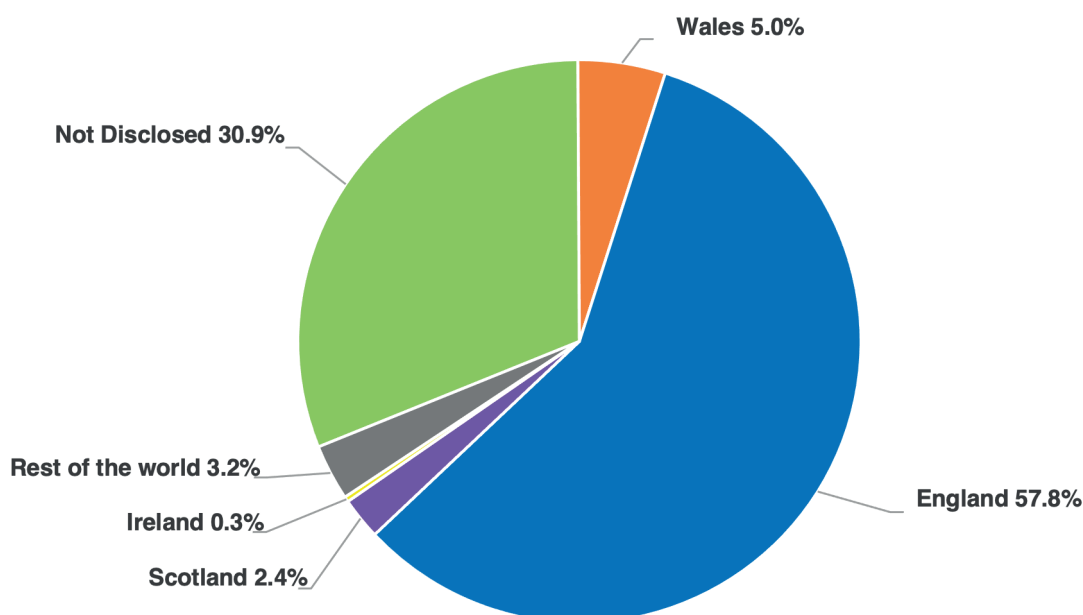
In last year's AGM report, we reported that for the 12-month reporting period we had received 778 email enquiries – which was significantly down on pandemic levels.

By comparison, for the 12-month period of this report, the charity received approximately 952 enquiries. This number is up by approximately 172 on last years but still a long way below the levels of enquiries we were experiencing during the pandemic.

The level of enquires represents an average of 79 per month or 3 per day. The busiest months were February 2023 (95 enquiries), March 2023 (94 enquires) and April 2023 (92 enquiries). The quietest month was December 2022 with 65 enquiries.

## Where do our clients come from?

### By country



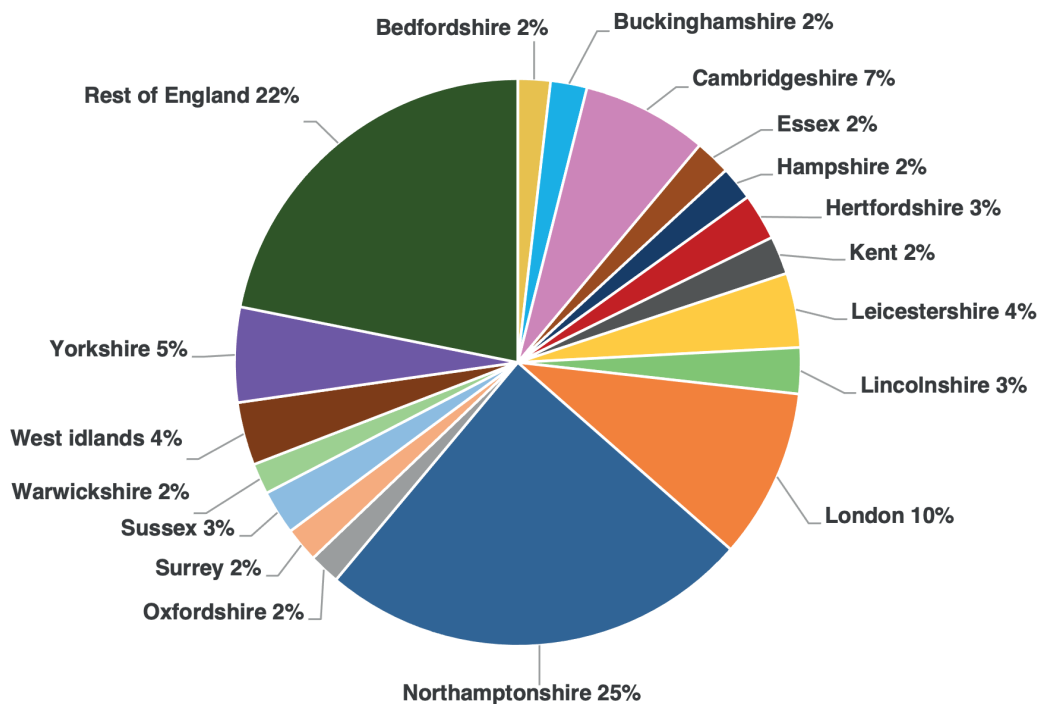
The majority of clients come from England, with the number standing at 57.8%. Wales represents 5%, Scotland 2.4% and Ireland 0.3%

The 30.9% 'Not Disclosed' indicates that, via client personal preference, they chose not to divulge their geographical whereabouts.

Thanks to Skype/Facetime/Zoom technology we have clients from all over the world. The 3.2% labelled 'Rest of the World' is detailed like so:

Australia; Bahrain; Belgium; Canada; Channel Islands; Chile; China; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ecuador; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hong Kong; Hungary; India; Isle of Man; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kenya; Kuwait; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Mexico; Monaco; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Palestine; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Rwanda; Samoa; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Slovakia; Spain; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; Tanzania; Thailand; Trinidad and Tobago; Tunisia; United Arab Emirates; USA; Vietnam.

## In terms of England and the breakdown from the different counties



The 22% 'Rest of England' is detailed like so, for the following geographical areas have a number of less than 75 clients accessing the service from these areas:

Berkshire; Bristol; Cheshire; Cornwall; County Durham; Cumbria; Derbyshire; Devon; Dorset; Durham; Gloucestershire; Greater Manchester; Herefordshire; Isle of Wight; Lancashire; Merseyside; Norfolk; Northumberland; Nottinghamshire; Rutland; Shropshire; Somerset; Staffordshire; Suffolk; Tyne and Wear; Wiltshire; Worcestershire.

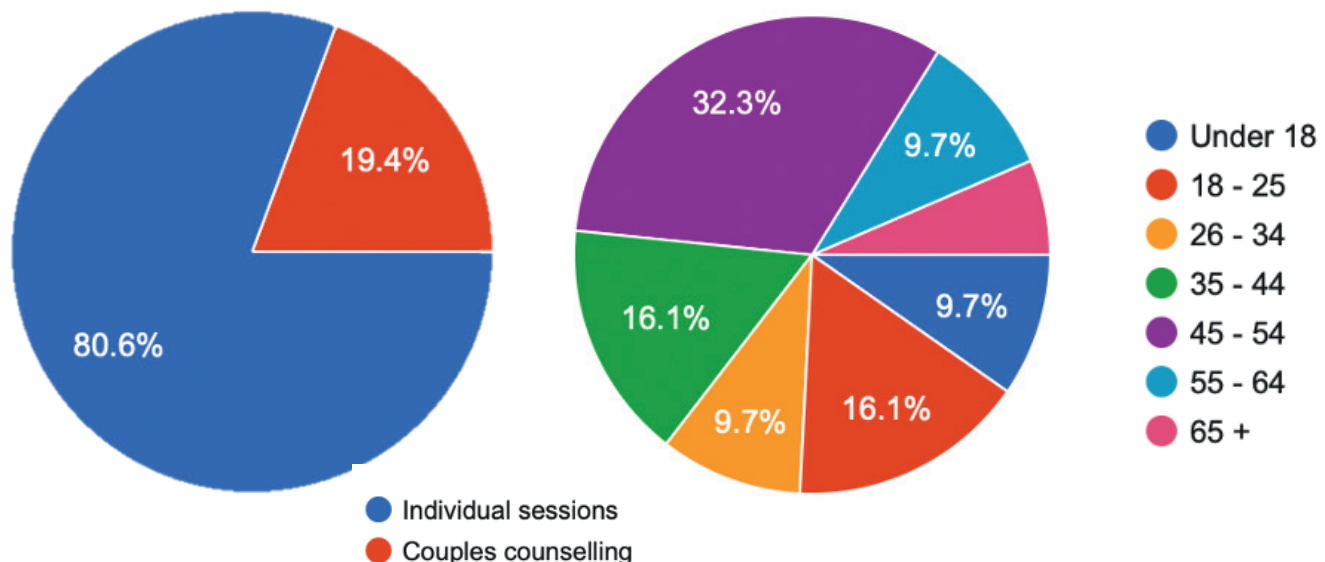
## Client Satisfaction

AfN did once again duly undertake client satisfaction audits. We continue to evaluate our performance this way because we continuously strive to provide a high-quality service for our clients. We want our clients to feel heard and always encourage feedback so that we can absolutely ensure that what we are doing is pitched correctly, but also check if there are any areas which we need to improve on or change altogether.

The questionnaire that was used to elicit information was created via Google Forms, with a link to it distributed via email to random AfN clients. Participation was completely optional. Responses were also anonymised.

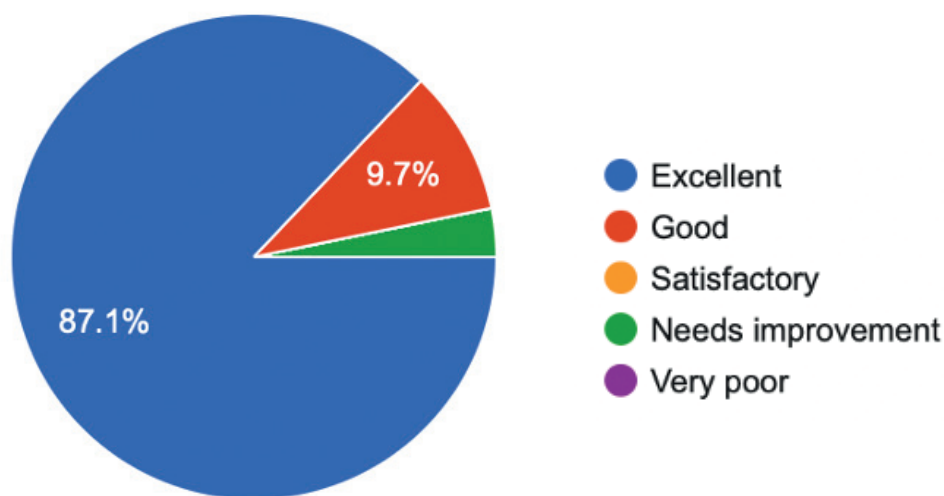
AfN continues to see clients via a combination of remote video consultations and some face-to-face consultations at our offices in Corby, Northamptonshire.

Of the respondents to the survey, 87% were clients and 13% were representatives responding on behalf of a client (including parents/guardians and carers). Of these, 80.6% had sought individual sessions and 19.4% had sought couples counselling. Feedback was provided by respondents of all ages giving us a broad range of feedback from across the age groups.



Of the respondents to the survey, 90.3% felt that their mental health had improved since becoming a client of AfN – with some having improved to the point of finishing their counselling journey and some feeling improvement as they still continue on their counselling journey. The comments for the 9.7% who had not felt an improvement reinforced that this was primarily due to still being at a point of their counselling journey where they are still unsure about where things will go and how things may change.

The quality of service provided by Action for Neurodiversity is seen as overwhelmingly positive: 87.1% of the clients who responded rated their overall experience with their counsellor or emotional support worker as 'excellent', and 9.7% as good.



The remaining 3.2% of respondents to this question rated the service as needing improvement. The main comment with this was about counsellors and emotional support workers perhaps needing updated training. Although there was no further context given to this suggestion, we absolutely take on board this comment and the trustees and CEO will add the subject of counsellor and emotional support worker training as an agenda point for discussion at the next board meeting.

### Teen Project

In June 2023, the charity was fortunate enough to receive funding to enable us to offer 'free' counselling sessions to neurodiverse teenagers in the local area. There has been a huge uptake from within the community with parents getting in touch to book a counselling slot for their young person, as well as local schools signposting students our way. It has been proven that free counselling is sought after as not everyone can afford to pay for counselling. Teenagers' mental health is so important and is important that support is offered as soon as possible.

Young people have a lot to cope with and can sometimes feel very isolated and alone in dealing with some difficult feelings and issues. To be able to offer a confidential, non-judgemental sensory space to teenagers to talk is so valuable. Being listened to and heard is something that young people need. The counselling sessions are tailored to the individual and we work together to develop a sense of self, a way of trying to understand their emotions and looking at ways that they experience the world. Building a young person's self-esteem by recognising their worth can feel empowering. Teenagers have lots of changes and transitions to process. Some of the issues that come up in counselling sessions are anxiety, low-mood, bullying, school issues, self-harm, gender and sexual identity, friendship issues and self-esteem. Increasing a young person's sense of self, confidence and happiness happens within therapy as they discover their own coping mechanisms and individual identity.

We have the following feedback from parents:

*"He appears so much happier in himself and looks forward to his sessions with you each week. He appears to be sleeping better and not coming downstairs panicking about death all the time and other concerns he has at bedtime."*

*"I'm very grateful for all your help and I don't know what I would have done without you. I'm used to supporting other children but when it's your own child it's hard because I don't know how to help him and of course I have an emotional attachment to him being his mum which is hard for me."*

*"He really enjoyed his sessions with yourself and we believe this has made a massive improvement in his anxiety at school. He is going into school more often and gradually staying a little longer each week. I personally would like to thank you for allowing him to feel safe and confident to speak with you."*

*"The counselling sessions helped a massive amount and we really appreciate the time you spent with him."*

*"I wanted to say a big thank you for supporting her, she has found the counselling very helpful and we have noticed a difference to her attitude towards school."*

*"His counselling sessions helped a massive amount and we really appreciate the time you spent with him."*

The teenagers that I have been working with love our unique sensory counselling room and can feel free to be themselves, unmasked. The colour changing light tubes and bubble machine, fidget items, games, weighted blankets and other sensory equipment in the counselling room are always appreciated.

It has been a privilege to meet so many remarkable young people since starting of this 'Teen Project'. I see some fantastic teenagers and I want them to see how great they are too!

**Jemima Gee**  
**Teen Counsellor**

## Letter from Elaine Nicholson, MBE, CEO

Dear Client/Friend/Supporter

### Introduction

We deeply appreciate your ongoing interest and support in our charity, especially during these challenging times. Your understanding and support have been invaluable to us.

As you will have noticed from reading this report, we remain less busy than we were during the height of the pandemic when dealing with eight new enquiries per hour. Thankfully, we have slowed to a pre-pandemic level of working, which is manageable.

### Charity restructure

This year to which the report relates: 1st October 2022 to 30 September 2023, has been one of the most difficult years. In January 2023, during a time I'd booked as a holiday, I had the time to look at things on a managerial level properly. Our bookkeeper - also from the firm that does our final accounts and audit (the well-known and respected firm TC Bulley Davey) - was consulted, as was the main accountant and our legal experts. I could see trouble ahead money-wise if we didn't do something fast.

My management degree, business and finance qualifications from yesteryear, and knowing 'my baby' on a visceral level aided decision-making. The accountant concurred with my deduction. An emergency meeting of the trustees was arranged. We were also ever-mindful of our commitment to The Charities Commission and of our requirement to hold, at all times, a £10,000 pot as a safety net as per our Constitution.

We had a bank balance of £16,000. Without changes, given rising office and utility costs and a combined wage bill of circa £4k per month, we'd have been dead in the water within four months. We were incredibly sad at being in a position to have to take action, but we had no option other than to reorganise the charity structure and remove the paid administrative roles - which ultimately led to staff changes.

What followed has been upsetting as well as distracting and costly in a number of different ways. We want to thank our legal experts, accountant and bookkeeper, trustees, and The Charities Commission for their assistance during this difficult time.

Since the changes, Sonia Owen and I have voluntarily run the charity, saving it lots of money. I continue, as I always have, to donate several thousands of hours and pounds, day in and day out, to the charity. I have never remunerated myself for the work I do as CEO and counsellor since the charity's inception in 2008.

### Rebranding

After holding on to the name 'Asperger's' for approximately fourteen years, we decided to rebrand and call the charity Action for Neurodiversity. This change has been met with approval by the majority, although, fair to say, there have been a few upset by the elimination of the word Asperger's. For many, getting a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome pre-2013 answered so many questions for them after years of anguish and torment. For your interest, I contributed to an article entitled: 'They tried to wipe it out' and which appeared in The Observer and The Guardian:

[www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/16/they-tried-to-wipe-it-out-the-problem-with-talking-about-aspergers](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/16/they-tried-to-wipe-it-out-the-problem-with-talking-about-aspergers)

We are happy with the change and mindful of the client who will approach us twenty years hence. Would they approach us saying, "I think I have Asperger's?" or would they approach us saying, "I think I might be neurodiverse?" Of course, the latter is more likely. Thanks go to Sonia Owen for helping to steer these changes.

### Fundraising

The marvellous Helen Evans has managed to procure funding for our free teen counselling project that Jemima Gee has run. This has been a huge success, but of course, we need more funding and more counselling. The adults could do with a little fundraising income coming their way also. Sadly, Helen Evans, our fundraiser, is moving on to pastures new, and we shall miss her presence and all that she stood for. We were blessed to have her. If anyone out there would like to help our fundraising campaign, please do get in touch with your CV. We'd love to hear from you.

### Journalism

My contribution to various magazines has increased this year, particularly for Autism Eye. I enjoy writing articles, and it gives the charity a little bit of publicity, which is good.

### Trustees

We would love to expand our team of trustees. If you feel that you can devote the time to attend four meetings a year, and are passionate about autism, ADHD and neurodiversity per se, we'd love to hear from you. Please write to me at: [elaine.nicholson@actionforneurodiversity.org](mailto:elaine.nicholson@actionforneurodiversity.org)

### Conclusion

So, as you can see, it has been a truly challenging time, but our survival instinct is strong, as is our protective instincts for the charity. We have a marvellous team of therapists working for us, all happy to earn less than they would earn privately to see clients approaching the charity. Their beneficence is warming. We remain forever grateful for all they do.

Personally, this has happened during a very difficult year, with elderly parents with high health needs requiring my time and attention also. Not for the faint-hearted, I can assure you!

Take care, look after each other.

Warmly,

**Elaine Nicholson MBE**

**CEO and Counsellor**

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Action for Neurodiversity, charity number 1148790, for the period ended 30 September 2023.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
  - proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Graham Darbourne FCA  
TC Group  
6 North Street  
Oundle  
Peterborough  
PE8 4AL

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## Action for Neurodiversity Statement of Financial Activities Year ended 30 September 2023

	Unrestricted funds £ 2023	Restricted funds £ 2023	Total funds £ 2023	Total funds £ 2022
<b><u>Incoming resources</u></b>				
<b>Voluntary Income</b>				
Donations and Grants received	66,642	-	66,642	39,159
	66,642	-	66,642	39,159
<b>Charitable Activities Income</b>				
Consultations, diagnosis and assessments	147,225	-	147,225	154,730
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-
	147,225	-	147,225	154,730
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>				
Sale of Merchandise	-	-	-	10
	-	-	-	10
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>213,867</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>213,867</b>	<b>193,899</b>
<b><u>Resources expended</u></b>				
<b>Activities for Generating Funds Costs</b>				
Opening stock	600	-	600	600
Gifts/Grants given	1,381	-	1,381	2,062
Closing stock	(600)	-	(600)	(600)
	1,381	-	1,381	2,062
<b>Charitable Activities Direct Costs</b>				
Professional services	17,829	-	17,829	10,887
Employment costs	21,105	-	21,105	38,241
Office costs	31,648	-	31,648	22,240
Costs for clubs	-	-	-	181
Conference and meeting expenses	1,757	-	1,757	100
	72,339	-	72,339	71,649
<b>Charitable Activities Support Costs</b>				
Computer and IT support expenses	17,216	-	17,216	11,417
Postage, printing, stationery and advertising	3,527	-	3,527	3,534
Subcontractors	102,818	-	102,818	104,875
Subscriptions	2,329	-	2,329	5,173
Telephone	2,448	-	2,448	3,109
Travel and subsistence	2,876	-	2,876	256
Bank charges	2,718	-	2,718	2,977
Insurances	2,573	-	2,573	852
Sundry and cleaning	233	-	233	140
Depreciation	7,029	-	7,029	6,748
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	-
	143,767	-	143,767	139,081
	217,487	-	217,487	212,792
Excess of payments over receipts	(3,620)	-	(3,620)	(18,893)
Funds brought forward	44,472	-	44,472	63,365
Funds carried forward	40,852	-	40,852	44,472

## Action for Neurodiversity Balance sheet as at 30 September 2023

		2023		2022	
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Computer equipment		7,569		11,550	
Office equipment		1,249		2,893	
Motor Vehicles		-		-	
	3		8,818		14,443
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stock		600		600	
Debtors		-		-	
Rent deposit and prepayments		2,235		6,856	
Bank Account		31,975		19,142	
PayPal Account		160		9,315	
			34,970		35,913
			43,788		50,356
<b>LESS: LIABILITIES</b>					
Creditors and accruals		2,936		5,884	
Other Creditors		-		-	
			2,936		5,884
			<b>40,852</b>		<b>44,472</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY: -</b>					
RESTRICTED FUNDS	4				
UNRESTRICTED FUND	4		40,852		44,472
			<b>40,852</b>		<b>44,472</b>

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and signed on behalf by:

E Nicholson

Date: 14th May 2024

The notes on the following page form part of these accounts

## Action for Neurodiversity Notes to the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023

### 1 Accounting policies

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 (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102). The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

#### a) Income and resources expended

Income and expenditure incurred on the operating of the charity is provided for on an accruals basis.

#### b) Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on non current assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follow:

<b>Asset Class</b>	<b>Depreciation method and rate</b>
Computer equipment	5 years straight line basis
Office equipment	5 years straight line basis
Motor Vehicles	25% reducing balance basis

### 2 Trustees expenses

The trustees received no emoluments (2022 : £nil). During the year, telephone, travel and subsistence expenses were re-imbursed to trustees at cost totalling £nil (2022 : £nil).

## 3 Non Current Assets

	Office Equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Motor Vehicle £	Total £
<b>Cost:</b>				
Brought forward	8,213	25,516	-	33,729
Additions	-	1,404	-	1,404
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Carried forward	<u>8,213</u>	<u>26,920</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>35,133</u>
<b>Depreciation:</b>				
Brought forward	5,320	13,996	-	19,286
Charge for the year	1,644	5,385	-	7,029
Eliminated on disposals	-	-	-	-
	<u>6,964</u>	<u>19,351</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,315</u>
<b>Net book value:</b>				
At 30 September 2022	<u>2,893</u>	<u>11,550</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,443</u>
At 30 September 2023	<u>1,249</u>	<u>7,569</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,818</u>
<b>4 Funds movement</b>	<b>B/fwd</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>C/fwd</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	44,472	213,867	(217,487)	40,852
	<u>44,472</u>	<u>213,867</u>	<u>(217,487)</u>	<u>40,852</u>

The policy of the trustees is to hold enough funds to meet four months operating costs of AfA. Operating costs per month are in the region of £4,500 net on average. It is the CEO's opinion that a bank balance of no less than £10,000 at any one time should sit in the charity bank to act as a financial 'cushion' should such a cushion be needed.

### Principal funding sources

The charity's main source of income is client donations for counselling (welfare) services.

### Investment policy and objectives

AfA has no long-term investments. The Trustees consider interest earned by the AfA bank account through the Co-operative banking system as a gift of the UK banking system.

### Trustees' Responsibilities

The charity Trustees are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and UK Accounting Standards. The law applicable to charity in England and Wales requires the Charity Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year that give a true and fair view of the economic state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently – and observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make adjustments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. State whether applicable 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 appropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial

statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees for the purposes of Charity law who served during the period and up to the date of this report are set out on page 4 of this report.

**Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:**



Sonia Owen

Vice-chair

14th May 2024





**A bespoke counselling service for lives that have become adversely affected by the experience of Asperger's syndrome (Autism Spectrum Disorder)**

 **01536 266681**

 [info@actionforneurodiversity.org](mailto:info@actionforneurodiversity.org)  [www.actionforneurodiversity.org](http://www.actionforneurodiversity.org)

Office/consulting rooms: Action for Neurodiversity, Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre,  
9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG



Charity Registration 1148790 Founded 2008

**Action for Neurodiversity**

England & Wales - Charity number 1148790

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# Accounts

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# Action for Asperger's

## Annual Report 2021-2022



Charity Registration 1148790  
[www.actionforaspergers.org](http://www.actionforaspergers.org)

# Action for Asperger's®

Est. 2008



Counselling lives that have become adversely affected by the experience of autism and Asperger syndrome

**Autism- Specialist Counselling Centre  
9 Darwin House,  
Corbygate Business Park  
Priors Haw Road,  
Corby,  
Northamptonshire  
NN17 5JG**

**Report of the Trustees for the Period ended 30 September  
2022**

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7	Objectives; Strategies and community activities
8	Activities; Customer Relations Management (CRM) System; Human Resources; Safeguarding; Fundraising
9	Fundraising (continued); Financial; eBay.
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## **Introduction**

The Trustees present their annual report and unaudited financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2021, and confirm they comply with The Charities Act 1993, as amended by The Charities Act 2006, the Trust Deed and the Charities SORP 2005. Principal office: Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre, 9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 5JG

## **Board of Trustees**

- Dr Max Lowenstein – Chair
- Sonia Owen – Vice Chair
- Anthony Mathleson
- Anthony Hall
- Jane Letts
- Steve Watkins (elected to the board April 2022)
- Michael Chard (elected to the board April 2022)
- Louise Collinson (elected to the board July 2022)
- Fran McKenzie (resigned April 2022)
- Rachel Duffy (resigned May 2022)

## **Patrons**

- Dame Vivienne Westwood (deceased 29.12.2022)
- Dr. Barbara Jacobs
- Mrs. Donna Taggart
- Mr. Scott James
- Mr. Gary Numan
- Dr. Luke Beardon

## **Independent Examiners**

Bulley Davey Accountant, 6 North Street, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4AL

## **Bankers**

The Co-operative Bank.

## **Governing Document**

The constitution was adopted on 01 October 2008, amended on 31 August 2012, and subsequently amended on 22 September 2017.

## **Organisational Structure**

Action for Asperger's (AfA) is governed by a board of trustees. The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The trustees meet as a body quarterly and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running AfA and the activities provided by the charity.

The trustees have encouraged the recruitment of volunteers for AfA since charity registration was awarded on 31 August 2012. The volunteers have been deployed for purposes of fundraising, counselling, and assisting the founder, Elaine Nicholson, with various office administration and secretarial tasks.

The day-to-day management of AfA and its various projects is the responsibility of Elaine Nicholson, founder, counsellor, and chief executive officer of AfA.

In terms of the trustee roles:

- The chair of the trustees is Dr Max Lowenstein.
- The Vice-Chair/trustee is Sonia Owen. Ms Owen is responsible for aiding Elaine Nicholson with managerial matters.
- Tony Mathleson, trustee, is responsible for all things that are classed as maintenance/repair/service in the main office building.
- Rachel Duffy, trustee, is responsible for community fundraising.
- Frances Mackenzie, trustee, is responsible for human resources and learning development.
- Jane Letts, trustee, is responsible for legal matters.
- Anthony Hall, trustee, is responsible for strategic guidance.

- Michael Chard, trustee, is responsible for aiding in HR matters.
- Steve Watkins, trustee, is responsible for legal matters.
- Louise Collinson, trustee, is responsible for administration matters.

### **The Recruitment and appointment of trustees**

The trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees, but in doing so the trustees seek the views and recommendations of volunteers and respected professionals presently working in the autism community. The trustees believe that this approach will ensure that any new trustees have a good knowledge of autism per se – based on personal, professional, and experiential backdrops.

Potential trustees will be invited to attend trustees' meetings as observers and will be apprised of the charity's aims and objectives, and, if all agreed, they will then be proposed as new trustees at the next trustees' meetings. The process will allow for due consideration of the person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist knowledge and skills.

### **Induction and Training of trustees**

Following an appointment of a new trustee, such persons will be introduced to their new role and given copies of the governing document and a guide to the policies and procedures adopted by AfA. Some publications from the Charities Commission are also provided, including the guidance on charities and public benefit and on the advancement of autism awareness knowledge for the public benefit. This should ensure that new trustees should be aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act. Initially, new trustees will work and be guided by, existing trustees, and will, within six months, be given the task of heading a project or activity, reporting progress at a trustees meeting that follows within a time frame of 6 months.

### **Risk Management**

The trustees review risk regularly during their quarterly meetings. Appropriate Disclosure and Barring Safeguarding (DBS) checks that are enhanced (formerly CRB) are made for all those who have a connection to AfA, whatever their capacity. Child Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adult safeguarding training courses are made available to those who work with such groups.

## **Objectives**

The objects of AfA are set out in the charity' constitution document and are summarised as follows:

- To offer a bespoke counselling service for lives over the age of three years which have become adversely affected by the experience of Asperger's syndrome (autism spectrum disorder). This applies to those who have autism, and those who have a close relationship with someone who has autism.
- To provide advocacy for its clients when and as required.

Our dual aims serve to enable the furtherance of autistic mental health awareness in both the local and wider community. Additionally, AfA can also provide training; during this year we have been enjoying doing "swop" trainings with other organisations; we teach them about autism, and they teach AfA about their speciality. This "swop" training has proved most enjoyable.

## **Strategies and community activities**

AfA's service is a 24/7 assistance facility for those who need it, via electronic communications and/ or face-to-face communications. Clients may contact us at any time via email, hence the "24/7"; this is allowable due to the complex processing that goes with an autistic neurological profile and gives the clients a chance to ask questions and/or share their concerns outside of the counselling sessions.

The charity offers low-cost counselling therapy; we request from clients a donation for their counselling session (currently £43-£65 per hour – lower to higher incomes – the client decides where they are on that pricing scale). If a client is unable to pay, we offer telephone and/or email support gratis. AfA also offers student counselling at £22.50 per hour with counsellors who are in their last year of their training. AfA also provides emotional support for £17.50 per hour; emotional support is provided by workers who, though not counselling trained, have a strong experiential background of autism. Emotional Support Workers also partake in AfA training and monthly autism-specialist supervision, provided by Elaine Nicholson in the main with Chrissy Nickel and Debbie King as back-up.

## **Activities**

### **Customer Relations Management (CRM) System**

For the third year, our client notes and records management remain with the CRM system helped and managed by Mr. David Mallinder of Gemini Blue. The CRM system remains functional and effective though not quite “fitting” our requirements. Investigations continue as we pursue getting a CRM system that befits our needs perfectly. This is a most difficult task, for our needs are somewhat bespoke in requiring something for a charity, but which has elevated security; security similar to that deployed in the NHS. We do not have the revenue to purchase exactly what we need, so our CRM system investigations continue slowly, but surely. Work with the CRM is ongoing, and it is hoped that the charity will be in a position to provide precise statistical evidence by the time of the charity year 2023/2024.

### **Human Resources**

The charity now has 22 counsellors, 3 student counsellors and an emotional support worker, and is always looking to recruit new counsellors – particularly counsellors who are available to work from the main office in Corby - as the mental health of our autistic clients continues to be a priority.

### **Safeguarding**

Paul James remains our safeguarding consultant. Paul has had a career of over 35 years in school leadership and children’s services. He is our guiding light in this respect, and we consider ourselves most fortunate to have him on board.

### **Fundraising**

How do we raise funds? Our therapists are priced out at half of what they would earn privately and AfA “creams” off from their hourly rate, and though this isn’t much, we have sustained ourselves since 2008. Elaine Nicholson continues to work freely for AfA, donating approximately £20k per annum.

The charity has engaged a voluntary fundraising consultant to help with bid writing during this year. We have had limited success as financial records show an income of £6,000 for the 12-month period from trust/grant fundraising.

We would like to be able to provide free, in-person counselling to those who do not have the funds to pay for their counselling, but until we can raise more funds this is not currently possible.

### **Financial**

AfA remains a donation-led service, although it is hoped that funding from sources such as grants will follow, as the charity continues to deploy expert fundraising consultancy. The majority of income is from donations for counselling services as mentioned above.

### **eBay**

Our eBay account was first set up in August 2022 and is managed by our student counsellor, Kirsty Oxley.



**Kirsty says:**

**'So far, we have raised £408.73 from items donated to the charity. We would be very grateful for any donations that we can put on our eBay site and raise much needed funds for the charity.**

**If you have any questions about our eBay site or wish to make any donations, please contact us [volunteer@actionforaspergers.org](mailto:volunteer@actionforaspergers.org).**

**You can also view our items for sale at: <https://www.ebay.co.uk/usr/actionforaspergers22>**

## **Autistic Empathy**



**In June 2022 we did a soft launch of Autistic Empathy - a friendship and dating community which has been devised by our CEO, Elaine Nicholson, specifically for people with autism and Asperger's syndrome. It's friendly community with a holistic and welcoming vibe.**

**The community is heavily monitored, with Sonia Owen overseeing things on a daily basis. Sonia regularly checks in on the content posted, and she does a number of things in relation to member admin such as checking the new users for obvious red flags, dealing with those at the end of their 3-week trial period, and checking for and dealing with any reports from users as soon as possible.**

**The community is so far proving to be a success. We've had some lovely comments from people saying they are liking what we are doing. It is still very much in its infancy. We currently have 272 active members, and it is growing slowly, but surely. We are averaging 3 new users signing up each day – though it has been as high as 19 new users on some days!**

**The community can be accessed by downloading the App from the Apple store for iOS, or Google Play store for Android. It can also be accessed via the web. To access via the web, you can email [info@autisticempathy.com](mailto:info@autisticempathy.com) and ask for a weblink.**

**Currently, the majority of users (64%) are iOS users, but we also have 23% of users on Android and 13% of users accessing the community via the web.**

**Figures for the reporting period 01/09/2021 - 31/08/2022**

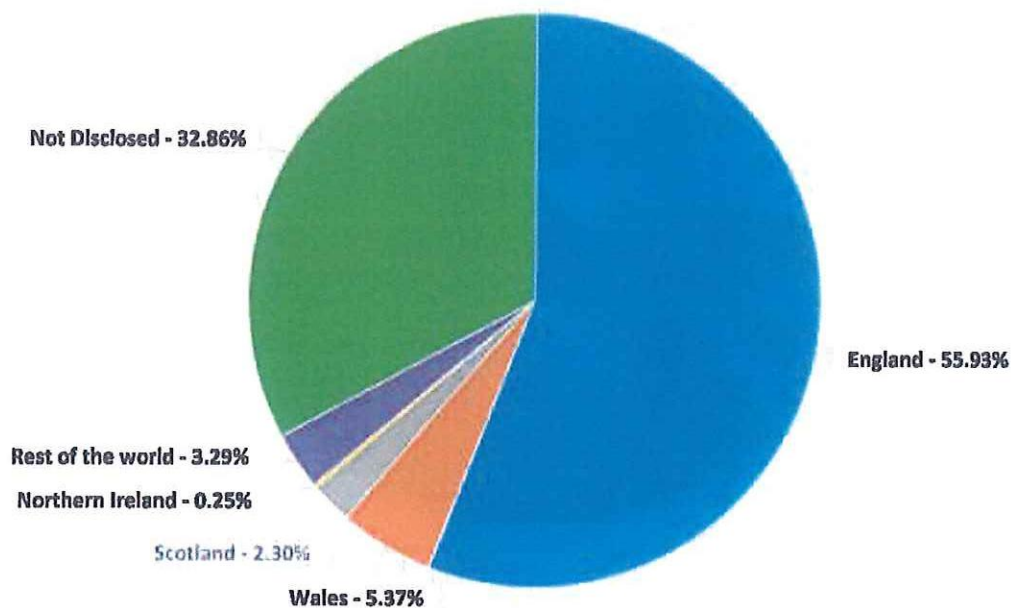
In last year's AGM report, we reported that for the period between the 01/09/2020 and the 31/08/2021 the charity received approximately 1,998 new email enquiries.

By comparison, for the 12 months period of this report, which was during a time in which things began to stabilise following the pandemic and the country also started to feel the effects of the economic downturn, the charity received approximately 778 email enquiries. This equates to just under 15 enquiries a week, or approximately 2 – 3 enquiries a day.

This significant decrease from 1,998 enquiries to 778 represents a drop of 1,220 enquires across a 12-month period or as a percentage, a 61% drop, in the number of enquiries coming in.

**Where do our clients come from?**

**By country**



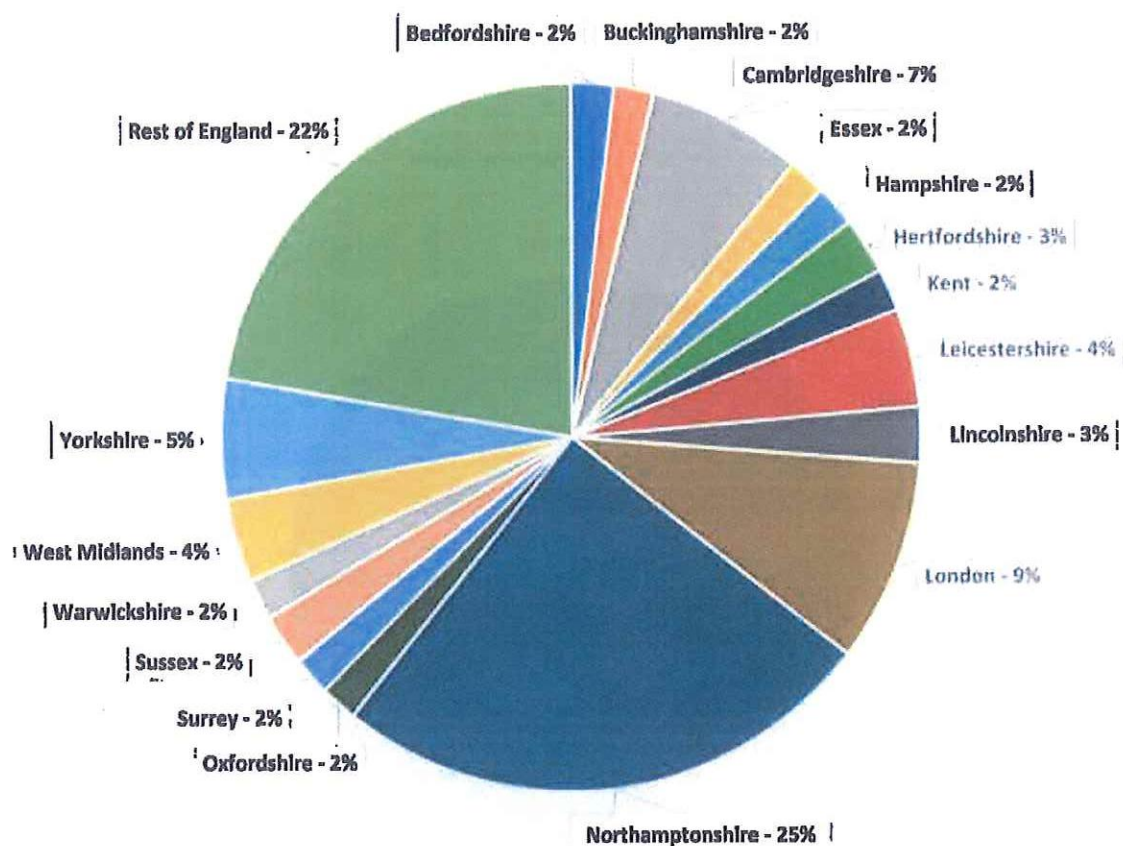
The majority of clients come from England, with the number standing at 55.93%. Wales represents 5.37%, Scotland 2.30% and Northern Ireland 0.25%

The 33% 'Not Disclosed' indicates that, via client personal preference, they chose not to divulge their geographical whereabouts.

Thanks to Skype/Facetime/Zoom technology we have clients from all over the world. The 3% labelled 'Rest of the World' is detailed like so:

Australia; Bahrain; Belgium; Canada; Chile; China; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hong Kong; Hungary; India; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kenya; Kuwait; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Monaco; New Zealand; Norway; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Ireland; Romania; Rwanda; Samoa; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Tanzania; Thailand; Trinidad and Tobago; United Arab Emirates; USA; Vietnam.

In terms of England and the breakdown from the different counties



The 21% 'Rest of England' is detailed like so, for the following geographical areas have a number of less than 75 clients accessing the service from these areas:

Berkshire; Bristol; Cheshire; Cornwall; Cumbria; Derbyshire; Devon; Dorset; Durham; Gloucestershire; Greater Manchester; Herefordshire; Isle of Wight; Lancashire; Merseyside; Norfolk; Northumberland; Nottinghamshire; Rutland; Shropshire; Somerset; Staffordshire; Suffolk; Tyne and Wear; Wiltshire; Worcestershire.

**Letter from Elaine Nicholson, MBE, CEO**

June 2023

Dear Client/Friend/Supporter



Thank you for taking the time to be interested in our charity. We welcome you.

It has been an interesting year to September 2022, with everyone still working hard, but nothing like how hard we worked during the peak of the pandemic, when the poor mental health of our autistic population reached an all-time high. During this time, ALL counsellors, everywhere in the world, experienced a heightened demand for their services, with many counsellors reporting that their private practices were saturated with requests for help.

Prior to the pandemic, many private counsellors did charity working because they wanted to give something back to society. Some counsellors chose to work for a charity to supplement their private income - due to perhaps a lack of demand in their private practices. Whatever the reason behind a counsellor's involvement with our charity, at the peak of the pandemic the enticement of well-paid work was a huge pull, and they basically had a choice - £25/£28 per hour to be earned from the charity, or £50+ per hour to be gleaned from private practice working. During this time, I feared that I might lose many of our counsellors, the temptation of earning privately being too appealing, especially when many had partners who were furloughed or had lost their jobs altogether. I wouldn't have blamed them had they have chosen to leave.

I feel immense pride that during this time many of our counsellors continued to provide their minimum quota of three AfA clients per week for the charity, despite the lure of earning extra money from their private working. This showed dedication and loyalty to the cause that is AfA. Our counselling staff I take my hat off to – they are wonderful, and always endeavour to do their very best by the charity. Selfless, altruistic, kind, decent and honest are descriptors that apply to them all without exception.

Currently, and as the figures show, the number of new enquiries has slowed down significantly, making the work we do more manageable...*phew!* As of the date of writing this letter, we are back to a pre-pandemic level of working, with a nice and steady flow of new enquiries coming through as opposed to a torrent of enquiries.

What has changed for AfA post-pandemic is demand for the *type* of counselling, with many people opting for video counselling as opposed to in-person counselling. Pre-pandemic, we did so much in-person work that a booking system for the counselling spaces (rooms) was contrived. Nowadays, the return to in-person work is gradual, but it is coming, slowly, but

surely, particularly during weekends. I consider this a good thing, for as a therapist with many years' experience, and despite being a pioneer of video counselling, with hand on heart I can tell you that in-person work is preferable, for things can get missed on a video screen, like body language for example. Additionally, we have counselling rooms that are designed to consider the sensory experience of the individual, which aids the therapeutic process enormously. Clients can "design" the counselling space themselves. They may choose to sit in a darkened space, looking at a projector on the wall, save giving painful eye contact, whilst covered with a weighted blanket. They may choose to have bubble tubes running, capitalising on the therapeutic effect of water sounds. Our model of counselling is more than just top-down (mind) counselling, it's a sensory therapeutic experience, integrating bottom-up (body) approaches, for example, grounding techniques, that aid the holistic affect.

On the business front, the trustee group has expanded and contracted, as people have moved on and some new faces have been brought in. This year we welcomed the return of Mr Michael Chard to the board. We missed Michael enormously, so were delighted by his coming back to the fold. Dr Max Lowenstein and Sonia Owen as chair and vice chair of the board do a marvellous job, especially Sonia who devotes every day of her life to the charity. During this year we dispensed with the use of HR and GDPR consultants, individuals originally brought in as a response to sudden and exponential staffing and data issues that arose, again, as a consequence of the pandemic.

We have seen some marvellous examples of solidarity among the trustees. There have been some difficult days. As a charity we have learnt that we are prone to mistreatment and manipulation that can come in many different guises. It might be a salesman at the door trying to sell the charity something that it doesn't need, or something profoundly darker. It must be said that we have been tested in many ways through some unwholesome strikes upon the charity during this time. Indeed, we have had to raise our game from being soft targets that try to understand why maleficence occurs to being more matter of fact and business like, whilst at the same time trying to hold on to the warm and therapeutic healing process that is the lifeblood of AfA.

It has been a balancing act, for certain, this year, but whatever our challenges, we remain always there for YOU the client, undaunted by any adverse macro or micro event that reaches our door!

Sending healing, love and light to all.

Yours sincerely,  
*Blaine Nicholson*

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Action for Asperger's, charity number 1148790, for the period ended 30 September 2022.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
  - proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act;
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Graham Darbourne FCA  
TC Group  
6 North Street  
Oundle  
Peterborough  
PE8 4AL

Date: 24.06.2023

## **Financial Review**

The policy of the trustees is to hold enough funds to meet four months operating costs of AfA. Operating costs per month are in the region of £4,500 net on average. It is the CEO's opinion that a bank balance of no less than £10,000 at any one time should sit in the charity bank to act as a financial 'cushion' should such a cushion be needed.

## **Principal funding sources**

The charity's main source of income is client donations for counselling (welfare) services.

## **Investment policy and objectives**

AfA has no long-term investments. The Trustees consider interest earned by the AfA bank account through the Co-operative banking system as a gift of the UK banking system.

## **Trustees' Responsibilities**

The charity Trustees are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and UK Accounting Standards. The law applicable to charity in England and Wales requires the Charity Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year that give a true and fair view of the economic state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently – and observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make adjustments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. State whether applicable 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 appropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also

**responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.**

**The Trustees for the purposes of Charity law who served during the period and up to the date of this report are set out on page 4 of this report.**

**Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Owen', written in a cursive style.

**Sonia Owen, Vice-Chair of the Trustees. Dated: 24.06.2023**

**Action for Aspergers**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**Year ended 30 September 2022**


	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£ 2022	£ 2022	£ 2022	£ 2021
<b>Income resources</b>				
Voluntary Income				
Donations received	8,859	-	8,859	12,174
Grants received	30,300	-	30,300	59,780
	<u>39,159</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>39,159</u>	<u>62,954</u>
Charitable Activities Income				
Consultations, diagnosis and assessments	154,730	-	154,730	164,944
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	676
	<u>154,730</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>154,730</u>	<u>165,620</u>
Activities for Generating Funds				
Sale of Merchandise	10	-	10	73
	<u>10</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>73</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b><u>193,899</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>193,899</u></b>	<b><u>228,649</u></b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Activities for Generating Funds Costs				
Opening stock	600	-	600	600
Gifts/Grants given	2,062	-	2,062	1,461
Closing stock	(600)	-	(600)	(600)
	<u>2,062</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,062</u>	<u>1,461</u>
Charitable Activities Direct Costs				
Sensory therapy, furniture and toys	-	-	-	28
Professional services	10,887	-	10,887	9,222
Employment costs	38,241	-	38,241	33,716
Office costs	22,240	-	22,240	22,960
Costs for clubs	181	-	181	-
Conference and meeting expenses	100	-	100	137
	<u>71,649</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>71,649</u>	<u>68,063</u>
Charitable Activities Support Costs				
Computer expenses	11,417	-	11,417	6,914
Postage, printing, stationery and advertising	3,534	-	3,534	2,190
Subscriptions	104,875	-	104,875	101,610
Subscriptions	5,173	-	5,173	12,883
Telephones	3,169	-	3,169	3,312
Travel and subsistence	256	-	256	1,143
Bank charges	2,977	-	2,977	3,166
Insurance	852	-	852	1,156
Stamps and clearing	140	-	140	800
Depreciation	6,748	-	6,748	5,422
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	(482)
	<u>139,081</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>139,081</u>	<u>138,446</u>
	<u>212,792</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>212,792</u>	<u>207,970</u>
Excess of payments over receipts	(18,893)	-	(18,893)	20,679
Funds brought forward	63,363	-	63,363	42,686
Funds carried forward	<u>44,472</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>44,472</u>	<u>63,363</u>

**Action for Aspergers**  
**Balance sheet as at 30 September 2022**

	Note	2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Computer equipment		11,550		11,326	
Office equipment		2,893		4,337	
Motor Vehicles				-	
	3		14,443		15,863
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stock		600		600	
Debtors		-		850	
Rest deposit and prepayments		6,856		3,956	
Bank Account		19,142		47,337	
PayPal Account		9,315		1,704	
			35,913		54,447
			50,356		70,310
<b>LESS: LIABILITIES</b>					
Accruals		5,884		6,543	
Other Creditors		-		402	
			5,884		6,945
			44,472		63,365
<b>REPRESENTED BY: -</b>					
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	4		-		-
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUND</b>	4		44,472		63,365
			44,472		63,365

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and signed on behalf by:

B Nicholson



Date: .....

The notes on the following page form part of these accounts

## Action for Aspergers

### Notes to the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2022

#### 1 Accounting policies

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 (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102). The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

#### a) Income and resources expended

Income and expenditure incurred on the operating of the charity is provided for on an accruals basis.

#### b) Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on non current assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset Class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer equipment	5 years straight line basis
Office equipment	5 years straight line basis
Motor Vehicles	25% reducing balance basis

#### 2 Trustees expenses

The trustees received no emoluments (2021 : £nil). During the year, telephone, travel and subsistence expenses were reimbursed to trustees at cost totalling £nil (2021 : £nil).

#### 3 Non Current Assets

	Office Equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Motor Vehicle £	Total £
<b>Cost:</b>				
Brought forward	8,213	20,188	-	28,401
Additions	-	5,328	-	5,328
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Carried forward	<u>8,213</u>	<u>25,516</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>33,729</u>
<b>Depreciation:</b>				
Brought forward	3,676	8,862	-	12,538
Charge for the year	1,644	5,104	-	6,748
Eliminated on disposals	-	-	-	-
	<u>5,320</u>	<u>13,966</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>19,286</u>
<b>Net book value:</b>				
At 30 September 2021	<u>4,537</u>	<u>11,326</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>15,863</u>
At 30 September 2022	<u>2,893</u>	<u>11,550</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,443</u>

#### 4 Funds movement

	B/fwd £	Income £	Expenditure £	C/fwd £
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	63,365	193,899	(212,792)	44,472
	<u>63,365</u>	<u>193,899</u>	<u>(212,792)</u>	<u>44,472</u>

**Action for Neurodiversity**

England & Wales - Charity number 1148790

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# Accounts

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# Action for Asperger's Annual report 2020-2021

[WWW.ACTIONFORASPERGERS.ORG](http://WWW.ACTIONFORASPERGERS.ORG)

Charity Registration 1148790

T: 01536 266681

E: [info@actionforaspergers.org](mailto:info@actionforaspergers.org)

*Coming out of the dark...*



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# Action for Asperger's

Est. 2008



Counselling lives that have become adversely affected by the  
experience of autism and Asperger syndrome

**Autism- Specialist Counselling Centre**  
**9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park**  
**Priors Haw Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 5JG**

**Report of the Trustees for the Period ended 30 September 2021**

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## **Introduction**

The Trustees present their annual report and unaudited financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2021, and confirm they comply with The Charities Act 1993, as amended by The Charities Act 2006, the Trust Deed and the Charities SORP 2005. Principal office: Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre, 9 Darwin House, Corbygate Business Park, Priors Haw Road, Corby, Northamptonshire; NN17 5JG

## **Board of Trustees**

Dr Max Lowenstein – Chair  
Anthony Mathieson – Vice Chair  
Sonia Owen  
Jane Letts  
Anthony Hall  
Rahcel Duffy  
Frances Mackenzie

## **Patrons**

Dame Vivienne Westwood  
Dr. Barbara Jacobs  
Mrs. Donna Taggart  
Mr. Scott James  
Mr. Gary Numan  
Dr. Luke Beardon

## **Independent Examiners**

Bulley Davey Accountant, 6 North Street, Oundle, Peterborough, PE8 4AL

## **Bankers**

The Co-operative Bank.

## **Governing Document**

The constitution was adopted on 01 October 2008, amended on 31 August 2012, and subsequently amended on 22 September 2017.

## **Organisational Structure**

Action for Asperger's (AfA) is governed by a board of trustees. The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits.

The trustees meet as a body quarterly and are responsible for all decisions taken in relation to running AfA and the activities provided by the charity.

The trustees have encouraged the recruitment of volunteers for AfA since charity registration was awarded on 31 August 2012. The volunteers have been deployed for purposes of fundraising, counselling, and assisting the founder, Elaine Nicholson, with various office administration and secretarial tasks.

The day-to-day management of AfA and its various projects is the responsibility of Elaine Nicholson, founder, counsellor, and chief executive officer of AfA.

The chair of the trustees, Dr Max Lowenstein,

The Vice-Chair/Trustee is Anthony Mathieson. Mr. Mathieson is also responsible for all things that are classed as maintenance/repair/service in the main office building.

Sonia Owen, trustee, is responsible for aiding Elaine Nicholson with managerial matters. Jane Letts, trustee, is responsible for legal matters.

Anthony Hall, trustee, is responsible for strategic guidance

Rachel Duffy, trustee, is responsible for community fundraising.

Frances Mackenzie, trustee, is responsible for human resources and learning development.

## **The Recruitment and appointment of trustees**

The trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees, but in doing so the trustees seek the views and recommendations of volunteers and respected professionals presently working in the autism community. The trustees believe that this approach will ensure that any new trustees have a good knowledge of autism per se – based on personal, professional, and experiential backdrops.

Potential trustees will be invited to attend trustees' meetings as observers and will be apprised of the charity's aims and objectives, and, if all agreed, they will then be proposed as new trustees at the next trustees' meetings. The process will allow for due consideration of the person's eligibility, personal competence, specialist knowledge and skills.

## **Induction and Training of trustees**

Following an appointment of a new trustee, such persons will be introduced to their new role and given copies of the governing document and a guide to the policies and procedures adopted by AfA. Some publications from the Charities Commission are also provided, including the guidance on charities and public benefit and on the advancement of autism awareness knowledge for the public benefit. This should ensure that new trustees should be aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act. Initially, new trustees will work and be guided by, existing trustees, and will, within six months, be given the task of heading a project or activity, reporting progress at a trustees meeting that follows within a time frame of 6 months.

## **Risk Management**

The trustees review risk regularly during their quarterly meetings. Appropriate Disclosure and Barring Safeguarding (DBS) checks that are enhanced (formerly CRB) are made for all those who have a connection to AfA, whatever their capacity. Child Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adult safeguarding training courses are made available to those who work with such groups.

## **Objectives and activities**

The objects of AfA are set out in the charity' constitution document and are summarised as follows:

- To offer a bespoke counselling service for lives over the age of three years which have become adversely affected by the experience of Asperger's syndrome (autism spectrum disorder). This applies to those who have autism, and those who have a close relationship with someone who has autism.
- To provide advocacy for its clients when and as required.

Our dual aims serve to enable the furtherance of autistic mental health awareness in both the local and wider community. Additionally, AfA can also provide training; during this year we have been enjoying doing a “swop” training with other organisations; we teach them about autism, and they teach AfA about their speciality. This “swop” training has proved most enjoyable.

### Strategies and community activities

AfA's service is a 24/7 assistance facility for those who need it, via electronic communications and/ or face-to-face communications. Clients may contact us at any time via email, hence the “24/7”; this is allowable due to the complex processing that goes with an autistic neurological profile and gives the clients a chance to ask questions and/or share their concerns outside of the counselling sessions. The charity offers low-cost counselling therapy; we request from clients a donation for their counselling session (currently £40–£65 per hour – lower to higher incomes – the client decides where they are on that pricing scale). If a client is unable to pay, we offer telephone and/or email support gratis. AfA also offers student counselling at £20 ph. with counsellors who are in their last year of their training. AfA also provides emotional support for £15 ph; emotional support is provided by workers who, though not counselling trained, have a strong experiential background of autism. Emotional Support Workers also partake in AfA training and monthly autism-specialist supervision, provided by Elaine Nicholson and Chrissy Nickel.

### Activities

#### Customer Relations Management (CRM) System

For the second year, our client notes and records management remains with the tailored CRM system helped and managed by Mr. David Mallinder of Gemini Blue. The CRM system is something which functional and effective though not quite “fitting” our requirements. Between the trustees, David Mallinder, Elaine Nicholson and Sonia Owen, investigations continue as we pursue getting a CRM system that befits our needs. This is a most difficult task, for we do not have the revenue to purchase exactly what we need, so our CRM system investigations continue slowly, but surely. It is hoped that the charity will be in a position to provide precise statistical evidence by the time of the charity year 2023/2024.

#### Human Resources

As we adapt to post-pandemic life, the demand for counselling continues to be very high. The charity has recruited even more new counsellors and one new emotional support worker. The charity now has 20 counsellors, 5 student counsellors and an emotional support worker and is always looking to recruit new counsellors, as the mental health of our autistic peoples continues to be a priority as we all try and recover from the pandemic and the challenges it brought with it. AfA continues to recruit new counsellors; we are fortunate in that the majority of our counsellors come to us looking to assist the AfA cause:

## General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The charity has engaged the services of Simon Hinks, Data Protection/GDPR specialist, in the official role of data protection officer (DPO).

## Safeguarding

AfA is honoured to have Paul James as our safeguarding consultant. Paul has had a career of over 35 years in school leadership and children's services. He is our guiding light in this respect and we consider ourselves most fortunate to have him on board..

## Fundraising

How do we raise funds? Our therapists are priced out at half of what they would earn privately; AfA "creams" off from their hourly rate, and though this isn't much, we have sustained ourselves since 2008. Elaine Nicholson continues to work freely for AfA, donating approximately £20k pa.

The charity has engaged a part-time fundraising consultant to help with bid writing during this year. This has been relatively successful as financial records show an increase in income for this period. We hope to continue this upwards trajectory.

We would like to be able to provide free, in-person counselling to those who do not have the funds to pay for their counselling. Our fundraising consultant is working on this bursary-type funding, hoping that funding can be acquired for this. Currently the NHS support (provide funding for) only two clients out of over 7k clients.

## Financial

AfA remains a donation-led service, although it is hoped that funding from sources such as grants will follow as the charity continues to deploy expert fundraising consultancy. The majority of income is from donations for counselling services as mentioned above.

## The Effect of the Pandemic on the Charity

AfA continued to work tirelessly post-pandemic. As a pioneer of video counselling - having considered it a vital resource to the counselling of autistic individuals - when the pandemic hit, the charity adapted by doing all counselling consultations via video. This mode of counselling therefore did not impact the counsellors greatly for they were used to this way of working; what has impacted, has been the demand for counselling.

In terms of numbers:

According to the charity's 'Initial Enquiries' mailbox, in the period from 01/03/2020 (roughly when Covid was starting to be talked about and the pandemic was just beginning to hit) to the 31/03/2022 (when this report was being compiled), we have seen approximately **3588 new enquiry emails**. This equates to 75 new enquiries per week. At its peak during the pandemic, AfA received 8 new enquiries per hour; compare that to pre-pandemic when AfA received approximately 8 new enquiries per week.

According to Action for Asperger's CRM system, the change in client numbers across the pandemic has been as follows:

•As of the **01/03/2020**, just as the pandemic was beginning, the number of clients on our client database system was **4351**.

•As of the **31/03/2022**, which is where things are at as this report is being written, the client total stands at **7,500**

Therefore, since the pandemic began, **our client list has grown exponentially.**

### **Figures for the reporting period: 01/09/2020 – 31/08/2021**

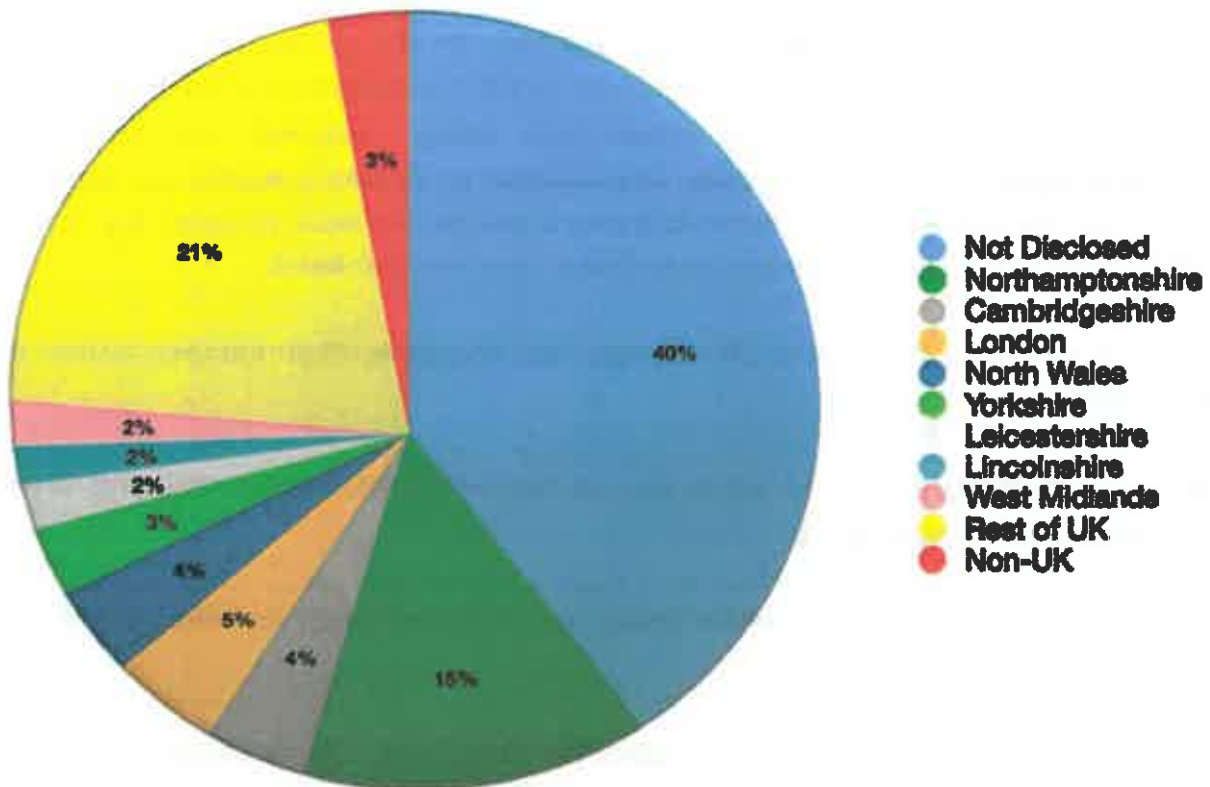
•As of the **01/09/2020**, which was the start of our financial year and thus the start of the 12-month period for reporting, the number of clients on the charity's CRM system was **4743**.

•As of the **31/08/2021**, which was the end of our financial year and thus the end of the 12-month period for reporting, the number of clients on charity's CRM system was **6,001**.

Based on the above figures, during this 12-month period the charity's client list grew by over 1,500 clients.

In terms of the email enquiries the charity dealt with in this same period, there was approximately **1,998 enquiry emails**.

## Where do our clients come from?



The 40% 'Not Disclosed' indicates that, via client personal preference, they chose not to divulge their geographical whereabouts.

The 21% 'Rest of UK' is detailed like so, for the following geographical areas have a number of less than 30 clients accessing the service from these areas:

### UK Countries

Mid-Wales, South Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the following English counties:

### English Counties

Bedfordshire; Berkshire; Bristol; Buckinghamshire; Cheshire; Cornwall; Cumbria; Derbyshire; Devon; Dorset; Durham; Essex; Gloucestershire; Greater Manchester; Hampshire; Herefordshire; Hertfordshire; Isle of Wight; Kent; Lancashire; Merseyside; Northumberland; Nottinghamshire; Oxfordshire; Rutland; Shropshire; Somerset; Staffordshire; Suffolk; Surrey; Sussex; Tyne and Wear; Warwickshire; Wiltshire; Worcestershire

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**Thanks to Skype/Facetime/Zoom technology we have clients from all over the world. The 3% labelled 'Non-UK' is detailed like so:**

**Australia; Bahrain; Belgium; Canada; China; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Guernsey; Hong Kong; Hungary; India; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kenya; Korea; Kuwait; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Mexico; Monaco; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Palestine; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Ireland; Rwanda; Samoa; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Thailand; Trinidad and Tobago; United Arab Emirates; USA; Vietnam**

## Letter from Elaine Nicholson, MBE, CEO

Dear Client/Supporter

Thank you for your love, care and support during these most difficult times. You are greatly appreciated.

I must share with you that it has been a difficult year, one of the most difficult in our history since our inception in 2008. During this year, I attempted to hand over the reins of management of AfA, but regrettably this did not work for AfA. Managing a counselling charity requires more than management knowledge, it requires an understanding of counselling also, and a selfless, empathic approach that must be inherent in the individual whom shall manage – we have learned that it cannot be cultivated – and so our positionality is that we will wait patiently for the someone to come along at some point in the future to take over my role of steering/managing the charity, although please let me reassure followers, I will “helicopter” over AfA until my last breath. However, that said, despite a difficult year, managerially speaking, all staff, contractors and trustees, especially Jo Pearson (nee Ferraro), Lynn Lewis, and Sonia Owen, have aided my efforts and have naturally adopted a collective leadership approach. Their efforts have been both stupendous and awe-inspiring as I have watched them build a metaphorical protective fence around AfA.

As we move into 2022, our most important and pressing plan is to continue to serve all new clients who come knocking at our door and to do so without their having to suffer a long waiting list. Recruitment of new counsellors is a priority and so an advertising campaign has begun and shall continue without abating. Another priority is to (a) add to the trustee board and list of patrons and (b) increase funds through fundraising. We are confident all aims can be achieved.

Love and light to all.

Sincerely,

Elaine

## Financial Review

The policy of the trustees is to hold enough funds to meet four months operating costs of AfA. Operating costs per month are in the region of £4,500 net on average. It is the CEO's opinion that a bank balance of no less than £10,000 at any one time should sit in the charity bank to act as a financial 'cushion' should such a cushion be needed.

## Principal funding sources

The charity's main source of income is client donations for counselling (welfare) services.

## Investment policy and objectives

AfA has no long-term investments. The Trustees consider interest earned by the AfA bank account through the Co-operative banking system as a gift of the UK banking system.

## Trustees' Responsibilities

The charity Trustees are responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and UK Accounting Standards. The law applicable to charity in England and Wales requires the Charity Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year that give a true and fair view of the economic state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently – and observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make adjustments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. State whether applicable 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 appropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

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**The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.**

**The Trustees for the purposes of Charity law who served during the period and up to the date of this report are set out on page 4 of this report.**

**Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:**



**Anthony Mathieson (Vice Chair) Dated: 08.05.2022**

## Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:

- proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or

2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Graham Darbourn FCA  
TC Group  
6 North Street  
Oundle  
Peterborough  
PE8 4AL

Date: 14/5/22

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of Action for Asperger's, charity number 1148790, for the period ended 30 September 2021.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Action for Aspergers**  
**Statement of Financial Activities**  
**year ended 30 September 2021**

	Unrestricted funds £ 2021	Restricted funds £ 2021	Total funds £ 2021	Total funds £ 2020
<b>Incoming resources</b>				
<b>Voluntary Income</b>				
Donations received	12,174	-	12,174	18,543
Grants received	50,780	-	50,780	1,900
	<u>62,954</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>62,954</u>	<u>20,443</u>
<b>Charitable Activities Income</b>				
Consultations, diagnosis and assessments	164,944	-	164,944	127,987
Speech, Language & Occupational Therapy	-	-	-	8,000
Miscellaneous	676	-	676	12,272
	<u>165,620</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>165,620</u>	<u>148,259</u>
<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>				
Sale of Merchandise	75	-	75	388
	<u>75</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>388</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<u>228,649</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>228,649</u>	<u>169,090</u>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
<b>Activities for Generating Funds Costs</b>				
Opening stock	600	-	600	600
Gifts/Grants given	1,461	-	1,461	899
Closing stock	(600)	-	(600)	(600)
	<u>1,461</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,461</u>	<u>899</u>
<b>Charitable Activities Direct Costs</b>				
Sensory therapy, furniture and toys	28	-	28	628
Professional services	9,222	-	9,222	7,613
Employment costs	35,716	-	35,716	15,041
Office costs	22,960	-	22,960	23,318
Social outings	-	-	-	273
Conference and meeting expenses	137	-	137	3,398
	<u>68,063</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>68,063</u>	<u>50,475</u>
<b>Charitable Activities Support Costs</b>				
Computer expenses	6,914	-	6,914	10,759
Postage, printing, stationery and advertising	2,330	-	2,330	7,818
Subcontractors	101,610	-	101,610	56,124
Subscriptions	12,883	-	12,883	11,961
Telephone	3,512	-	3,512	3,018
Travel and subsistence	1,143	-	1,143	3,998
Bank charges	3,166	-	3,166	2,156
Insurances	1,156	-	1,156	1,800
Subsistence for staff	-	-	-	124
Sundry and cleaning	800	-	800	1,868
Depreciation	5,422	-	5,422	6,040
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	(492)	-	(492)	-
	<u>138,446</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>138,446</u>	<u>105,666</u>
	<u>207,970</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>207,970</u>	<u>157,040</u>
<b>Excess of receipts over payments</b>	20,679	-	20,679	11,650
Funds brought forward	42,686	-	42,686	31,036
<b>Funds carried forward</b>	<u>63,365</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>63,365</u>	<u>42,686</u>

## Action for Aspergers

### Balance sheet as at 30 September 2021

		2021		2020	
Note	£	£	£	£	£
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Computer equipment		11,326		14,146	
Office equipment		4,537		4,236	
Motor Vehicles		-		6,920	
	3		15,863		25,302
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stock		600		600	
Debtors		850		-	
Rent deposit and prepayments		3,956		4,322	
Bank Account		47,337		14,893	
PayPal Account		1,704		147	
			54,447		19,962
			70,310		45,264
<b>LESS: LIABILITIES</b>					
Accruals		6,543		2,377	
Other Creditors		402		201	
			6,945		2,578
			63,365		42,686
<b>REPRESENTED BY: -</b>					
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	4		-		-
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUND</b>	4		63,365		42,686
			63,365		42,686

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and signed on behalf by:



E Nicholson

14.5.22.

## Action for Aspergers

### Notes to the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2021

#### 1 Accounting policies

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 (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102). The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

#### a) Income and resources expended

Income and expenditure incurred on the operating of the charity is provided for on an accruals basis.

#### b) Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on non current assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset Class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer equipment	5 years straight line basis
Office equipment	5 years straight line basis
Motor Vehicles	25% reducing balance basis

#### 2 Trustees expenses

The trustees received no emoluments (2020 : £nil). During the year, telephone, travel and subsistence expenses were reimbursed to trustees at cost totalling £nil (2020 : £151).

#### 3 Non Current Assets

	Office Equipment £	Computer Equipment £	Motor Vehicle £	Total £
<b>Cost:</b>				
Brought forward	6,509	16,989	18,748	44,245
Additions	1,704	1,199	-	2,903
Disposals	-	-	(18,748)	(18,748)
Carried forward	<u>8,213</u>	<u>20,188</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>28,400</u>
<b>Depreciations:</b>				
Brought forward	2,273	4,843	11,828	18,944
Charge for the year	1,403	4,019	-	5,422
Eliminated on disposals	-	-	(11,828)	(11,828)
	<u>3,676</u>	<u>8,862</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,538</u>
<b>Net book value:</b>				
At 30 September 2020	<u>4,236</u>	<u>14,146</u>	<u>6,920</u>	<u>25,302</u>
At 30 September 2021	<u>4,537</u>	<u>11,326</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>15,863</u>
<b>4 Fundy movement</b>	B/bwd £	Income £	Expenditure £	C/fwd £
Restricted funds	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds	42,686	228,649	(207,970)	63,365
	<u>42,686</u>	<u>228,649</u>	<u>(207,970)</u>	<u>63,365</u>



**Autism-Specialist Counselling Centre**  
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**Counselling & Psychotherapy**



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Charity Commission Registration no: 1148790

All our workers are members of the Health and Care Professions Council  
and/or British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.