



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From July 1st 2020 (Period start date) to June 30th 2021 (Period end date)

Charity name: Focus Surrey

Charity registration number: 1178378

Objectives and Activities

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document.

Focus Surrey is an independent, not-for-profit volunteer-led Saturday club for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. It aims to assist children with ASD to improve their communication, social and play skills within a nurturing, fun and child-centred environment.

Charitable Aims

1. To relieve the needs of children with autism spectrum disorder and other communication difficulties and their families in particular but not exclusively by:

- Providing a structured Saturday club within a safe, nurturing, fun and child-centred environment for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Providing a friendly and sociable environment for parents/carers and siblings to meet
- The provision of information for parents/carers through organised talks on ASD-related subjects

2. To advance the education of the public in autism spectrum disorder and other communication difficulties in particular but not exclusively by:

- The provision of training and volunteer opportunities in autism teaching methods based on Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) methodologies
- The provision of information sessions on ABA and other interventions, developments and related topics with regard to ASD

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.

Focus Surrey aims to assist children with ASD and communication difficulties to improve their communication, social and play skills within a nurturing, fun and child-centred environment. Focus Surrey provides a learning and social outlet for children and families in the wider Surrey area, including Sutton and neighbouring boroughs, via the evidence-based principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis.

The benefit of the club is threefold – not only are children with Autism receiving 1:1 support; the tutors who are all volunteers are gaining training and experience working with children with ASD and the parents are receiving peer support, networking opportunities and information via a series of guest speakers.

The charity works with Board Certified Behaviour Analysts and experienced ABA tutors to support children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families using the approach and science of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).

In the period 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021 the main activities of the charity were suspended due to the club being closed because of the Covid pandemic and restrictions on indoor group activities.

However, we were keen to support parents and families in whatever way we could and we maintained communication and shared resources with parents and ran a very popular online guest speaker series which was able to support more families in Lockdown than it had when run in-person in Surrey.

Prior to Covid, Focus Surrey's guest speaker series was open to the public, where professionals working with children with ASD gave parents and guests an introduction to ABA, advice on Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), speech and language therapy (SLT) and occupational therapy strategies, as well as talks from parents whose children have been taught using ABA.

Due to Covid restrictions and not being able to run the club in person, it was decided to take the guest speaker series online. This opened up the possibility of more people attending, as people did not have to come to the club venue to attend.

Parents and guests were overwhelmingly positive about the "high calibre" of the guest speakers who all give their time for free.

We had 224 people attend online between June 2020 and July 2021 compared to 77 external guests in the previous year. Many of the guest speaker attendees were from the greater London area, however we also reached families throughout the UK in Surrey, Yorkshire, the South of England and the Midlands, who previously couldn't attend our in-person talks. As well as some families from as far away as Australia, United States, Brazil, Dubai, Puerto Rico, Greece, Turkey and Morocco.

This benefited at least another 224 children whose parents or professionals received advice and information on therapies and strategies for children and families with ASD. Over 90% of these attendees were not already club members. 80% were parents and almost 20% were professionals (e.g., SLTs), so the impact of the advice given is infinite.

Guest speakers included:

- Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) James Adcock and Speech and Language Therapist Emma Pomroy spoke about developing positive professional relationships and how ABA and SLT can work together
- SOS!SEN advisor June Goh gave advice on how to seek local authority/school support for ABA
- ABA Access4All founder Jane McCready spoke about ABA and the Teenage Years and helping autistic children develop independence skills for a better quality of life in adulthood.
- Donna Benton and Claire King from Autism Partnership spoke about shared ways to help generalise ABA skills into the home
- Dually qualified SLT and BCBA Bethan Mair Williams spoke about developing language skills in "Beyond Manding"
- Occupational Therapist Heather Greenaway spoke about sensory behaviours and needs within the restrictions and stressors imposed on us by or left over from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Occupational Therapist Shelley Birkett Eyles shared her expertise on movement and activities to assist with co-ordination, sensory issues, writing and fine motor skills

This was some of the feedback received in response to the question 'Please tell us what you enjoyed about the talk?'

29/10/2020 ABA & SALT - Emma Pomroy and James Adcock

Open honesty about the relationship between ABA consultants and SLT, and how they can work together as a team to reach the best outcome for the child. I also gained some ideas on how I can help my children more.

10/11/2020 ABA & SEN Provision – June Goh

The empathy of the speaker - she was answering the questions considering a 360 point of view. It helps a lot to have realistic expectations.

These talks enabled the charity to continue raising ambitions and outcomes for children, young people and families. They enabled parents to help themselves, develop resilience and assist their children to live inclusive and independent lives.

In addition, many of the parent/carer volunteers go on to use these principles and ideas while playing and caring for their own family members. Focus Surrey is building a community who are committed to helping children with ASD.

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

The trustees have taken into account the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit and are confident its activities fit that criteria outlined by The Charities Act 2011 definition of a charitable purpose, explicitly, as one that falls within numbers 4 and 12 of its descriptions of purposes.

4. The advancement of education

12. The relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

Contribution made by volunteers

Focus Surrey is volunteer-based with no staff costs for management. All trustees provide expert advice from their fields to support the running of the club. All guest speakers are professionals or parents who voluntarily give their time and advice for free.

Focus Surrey pays contractors to support the running of the club including the key role of the Autism professionals (BCBAs) and experienced ABA tutors who supervise the club. In this period when the club was not running the only staff costs was for an administrator who supported with organising the guest speaker series, consolidating the administration processes, and improving the reporting and marketing processes.

Achievements and Performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.

Focus Surrey is an in-demand service. It currently has 118 children on its waiting list (as of 26 April 2022).

There are no other opportunities locally for children with ASD to socialise and develop targeted social, communication and play skills using the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).

The charity has given some children the only specific ASD support their parents can afford, helping to motivate the children to engage in their learning; for others it is the only ABA and focused one-on-one support received.

The charity aims to support parents to gain practical information and training, and these families are empowered to help their family member with autism progress their social development and understanding. We are also equipping parents with legal advice from independent SEN advocates and also referring parents to legal charities who assist them to update and improve EHCPs and thus improve the long-term education of their children.

Between July 2020 and June 2021 when the club was forced to close because of the global pandemic and national Lockdowns, Focus Surrey continued to give regular updates and share resources and learning materials with its members as well as share resources with other supporters via social media. Focus Surrey still worked hard to support families wherever possible.

Families of disabled children were even more isolated than normal during the pandemic, schools shut down or provided reduced hours and families lost the support of familiar routines for their children who relied on them to reduce their anxieties. For some families they lost their respite or short breaks as organisations closed down and carers couldn't come into the home as often. Others were afraid to take their vulnerable children out in the brief periods they were allowed to socialise outdoors.

Focus Surrey provided networking opportunities by facilitating an informal group where parents could keep in touch and support each other informally through social media.

One parent wrote: *"Thank you so for the hard work you put into Focus Surrey. You have inspired me. I hope that one day I'll be able to open a children's centre for children with learning disabilities."*

The guest speaker series which we ran throughout the pandemic provided a vital element of support and continued to educate parents on different strategies and therapies for children with autism. It also gave practical advice and provided professional advice for some professionals who attended.

One speech and language therapist said: *"I learnt a lot and would highly recommend as a very well spent hour.... So many of our members would really enjoy that and learn a lot from it."*

Most importantly we were still able to support our charitable aims by providing information sessions on ABA and other interventions, developments and related topics with regard to ASD and providing information for parents/carers through organised talks on ASD-related subjects. This indirectly helped children with autism to develop their language, play and social skills to reduce isolation, and empower children and families.

Feedback from the talks was positive with attendees appreciating the *"Honesty, openness & practical advice from speakers"* and ABA and strategies being explained in *"straightforward language for parents"*. Attendees also appreciated: *"The practical examples and the useful resources. Also, the positive attitude of the speaker, very inspiring."*

"I gained some ideas on how I can help my children more."

“(The speaker) was informative and had a very good balance of formative knowledge with an informal approach which is very appealing to a parent.”

Parents also appreciated hearing other “parent’s perspectives and what they have learned so far from supporting their teenagers with ASD, e.g., challenges, what has surprised them, what they have found useful.”

“It helps a lot to have realistic expectations.”

The talks helped parents to increase resilience and reduce social isolation for them and their children and enabled social networks to be created and a community maintained. Advice was shared both formally through the guest speaker series as well as informally through the Q&A sessions after the talk. Attendees also appreciated being connected and being able to see one another at times online when the country was in Lockdown.

The charity also held an online pamper evening for parents and carers and friends of the club in March 2021 for parents to reconnect and have some much-needed time to focus on their own well-being as well as raise money for the club.

Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set

Fundraising activities and opportunities were limited because of the Covid pandemic, but where possible we aimed to raise funds to pay for the next term, when we could once again meet in person. All funds derived from fundraising activities were used to subsidise membership fees and to pay for the costs of running the club.

Financial Review

Review of the charity’s financial position at the end of the period

Income: £9,449

Expenditure: (£5,710)

Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held

Focus Surrey aims to have 50% of the cost of running a term in reserves to cover the costs of the next term with further fundraising to continue. At a bare minimum Focus Surrey should have reserves to cover support and governance costs.

The charity’s principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)

The principal source of funds is from membership fees, grants, donations and fundraising activities.

We experienced a significant loss of income due to Covid 19 and missed two potential terms. We were unable to open in September 2020 or March 2021 because of government restrictions on numbers meeting indoors as well as lack of funds. As a result, we diversified our fundraising and started to approach charitable trusts for fundraising as well as continuing to organise fundraising events and get donations.

Most of the financial activity from Year End 2021 was made from March to June 2021 as the club started to fundraise in order to start up again in September 2021. The club held a free guest speaker series asking for donations and then introduced a small fee for some talks in order to raise further funds. A pamper evening and raffle in March 2021 account for the majority of the fundraising income. We also received a £3000 grant from a charitable trust in 2021, along with a corporate donation of £2000.

A description of the principal risks facing the charity

As the country went into national Lockdown due to the Covid pandemic in March 2020; October 2020 and January 2021, fundraising events and activities were cancelled which explains the variance in income and expenditure between Year End 2020 and Year End 2021.

This restricted the fundraising activities the charity could do. All activities had to be moved online, a small amount of income was generated by online shopping and donations but the majority of fundraising and grant submissions did not take place until after March 2021.

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document		Foundation Model Constitution
How is the charity constituted?		Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g., election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees		Elected by majority decision

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees

The Management Committee is required to have a minimum of three and a maximum of 12 members at any one time and one third of them are to be re-elected annually by rotation at the Annual General Meeting.

Safeguarding, child protection and risk management.

Focus Surrey recognises its responsibilities in the management of risk, particularly in respect of the children attending and the volunteers trained by the paid staff as well as in its fundraising policy. Focus Surrey's policies are reviewed and updated every term. They include:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Privacy and Data Protection policy
- Safeguarding and Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form
- Codes of Conduct (for staff and parents)
- Financial Control policy

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Focus Surrey
Other name the charity uses	

Registered charity number	1178378
Charity's principal address	37 Stanhope Rd, Carshalton, SM5 4LH

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Susan Archdall	Chairperson	Entire year	
2	Amanda West		Entire year	
3	June Goh		Entire year	
4	Lisa Masarati		Entire year	
5	Kunhui Rimington		14/05/2021 to current	
6	Kathy Kelly		14/05/2021 to current	

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Trustee 1

1. Full Name and Position: Susan Archdall, chair of trustees

2. Signature



3. Date: 29/04/2022

Trustee 2

1. Full Name and Position: Lisa Masarati, Trustee

2. Signature



3. Date 29/04/2022

You can read more about Focus Surrey at focussurrey.co.uk or by following us on Instagram @focusabacclubsurrey; Facebook @ABASurreyFocus and Twitter @Focus_Surrey