MyOTAS

England & Wales · Charity number 1184723

Details

Other names	TAKIWATANGA SUPPORT SERVICES
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2019-08-01
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	57a Highcliffe Road Wickford SS11 8JP
Phone	07840799718
Email	info@myotas.org
Website	www.myotas.org

Activities

Objects: TO RELIEVE THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY AUTISM OR SOCIAL ANXIETY AND THEIR FAMILIES WITHIN ESSEX BY:1) PROVIDING INFORMATION, SIGNPOSTING TO RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL AGENCIES AND RUNNING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS TO ENABLE PARENTS TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN ACHIEVE THEIR ACADEMIC POTENTIAL AND MINIMISE THEIR CHILD'S SOCIAL ANXIETY; 2) PROVIDING SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN, TAILORED TO THEIR PARTICULAR NEEDS, TO BOOST THEIR SELF-ESTEEM AND IMPROVE THEIR SOCIAL SKILLS, WHILST ENABLING THEM TO MIX SOCIALLY WITH NEUROTYPICAL PEERS AND SIBLINGS; 3) PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES, IN SMALL GROUPS, FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE HOME-SCHOOLED AND/OR SCHOOL REFUSERS, AS A RESULT OF THEIR AUTISM AND/OR SOCIAL ANXIETY ISSUES; 4) PROVIDING TRAINING TO EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, PARENTS AND THE WIDER PUBLIC REGARDING THE AUTISTIC SPECTRUM, THE BENEFITS, THE CHALLENGES AND THE BEST METHODS TO SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATE WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN; 5) RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AUTISM.FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS CLAUSE ‘SOCIAL ANXIETY’ MEANS DIFFICULTY WITH SOCIAL COMMUNICATION, EMOTIONAL WELLBEING, SENSORY/PHYSICAL SENSITIVITIES AND COGNITIVE/LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.

Activities: Parent Support Groups both in person and online. 1:1 support for families in person, on the phone, or by email. Referrals accepted from outside agencies and parents direct. Activities for neurodivergent children (autistic, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, etc) Seminars by professionals to give advice

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to parents

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training, Disability, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Essex

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-04-30	£178,606	£132,852	-	-
2024-04-30	£82,115	£59,375	-	-
2023-04-30	£56,742	£60,363	-	-
2022-04-30	£59,026	£36,438	-	-
2021-05-01	£26,345	£19,179	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Gemma Elaine Moyse		2025-11-21
Jens Manfred Seibolt		2019-05-01
Joanne Collinson		2025-11-02
Maria Denton		2020-06-01
Matthew Prior		2024-09-17
Trisha McClure		2024-11-15

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MyOTAS

England & Wales - Charity number 1184723

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report - 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025

Charity Name: MyOTAS (My Own Time And Space)
Charity CIO registration number: 1184723
Registered Office: 57a Highcliffe Road, Wickford, Essex, SS11 8JP

Our Trustees during the above year:-

Maria Denton – Chair
Jenne Seibolt
Alex Harding
Trisha McClure
Matt Prior

Our Aims, Objectives and Values

Our aim is to support neurodivergent (Autism, ADHD, OCD, Dyslexia etc.) children and young people and their families within Essex, through 3 pillars of activity:

Activities for Children & Young People

Family Support for Parents & Carers

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

Each year, we take time to reflect on our aims, objectives, and activities to celebrate our achievements and learn from our experiences. Our annual review looks at the difference we have made over the past 12 months - what we set out to do, what we achieved, and how our work has supported neurodivergent children, young people, and their families.

This process helps us understand the real impact of our key activities and ensures that everything we do continues to focus on improving the lives of those we are here to help. It also gives us the opportunity to make sure our aims and objectives remain relevant and true to our charitable purpose.

When reviewing our work and planning for the future, the trustees draw on the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. We carefully consider how each of our planned activities will help us achieve our goals and continue to make a positive difference for the neurodivergent community we serve.

Our Values

- **Non-judgemental – valuing people for who they are;**
- **Inclusive – everyone is welcome, no diagnosis needed;**
- **Be kind;**
- **Innovative thinking – exploring new ideas and finding different ways to do things;**
- **Collaboration – working openly with other voluntary organisations and service providers.**

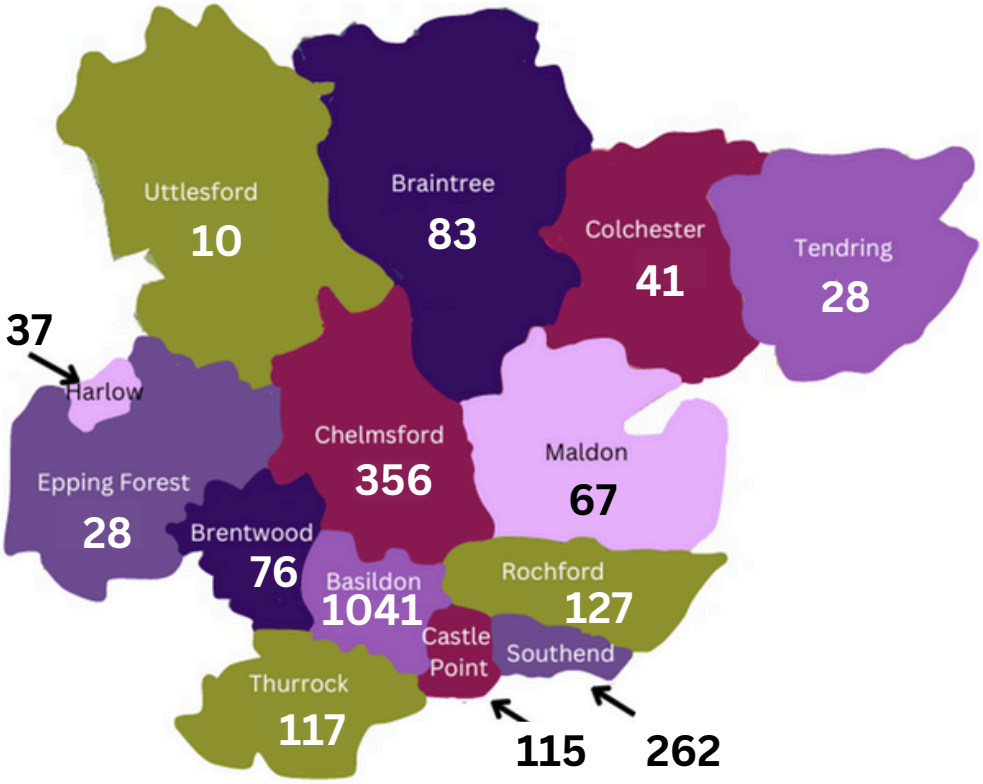
Trusted relationships are often difficult to form for neurodivergent young people, so we seek to build ongoing and sustainable relationships, for young people of all ages, through to independence. We have created partnerships with SAFE Essex (Charity for autistic people of all ages) and Exceptional Individuals (Recruitment and employment services for neurodivergent people) to support this pathway.

A diagnosis is not required to access our services. Some of the families requiring the most help have a child who is undiagnosed. For example, a child may be on a waiting list for assessment - waiting times for assessment have increased dramatically and in our area, timescales often exceeding 18 months, so this is often a critical time for support. Neurodivergent conditions are often genetic, so parents may also have their own challenges or may not see the presenting difficulties as anything unusual.

530 families in total attended activities or groups or received 1:1 support from our team.

Our Beneficiaries

We support neurodivergent children and young people and their families, within Essex and beyond.



Members of our online Parent Support Group by area

In addition there are 72 members from Greater London and 137 from the rest of the UK. The remaining members did not disclose their address.

Activities for Children & Young People

We deliver inclusive and accessible small group sessions designed to support neurodivergent children and young people alongside their parents or carers, who attend and remain responsible for their child throughout. This approach helps to reduce anxiety for participants and fosters positive shared experiences between children and their families. We also provide dedicated support for accompanying parents and carers to ensure their needs are recognised and met.

During this reporting period, we expanded both the range of groups offered and the number of places available, enabling more families to benefit from our sessions.

168 CYP attended Woodland Warriors with a total of 987 places being booked

3 sessions per week

58 CYP booked places on Mindful Crafts sessions

3 sessions per week with

18 CYP and 16 adults attended Mum & Teen Daughter Yoga sessions

1 session per week

15 families attended our Fun Day at Basildon Scouts Camp Ground

Principles

- **Low pressure – Accessible**
- **Support for the wider family**
- **Small groups for that children do not become overwhelmed**
- **A nominal charge is requested for some activities, but finance should never be a barrier to accessing our services, so we offer sessions for free in cases of financial hardship**

Family Support for Parents & Carers

Empowering Parents and Carers

We believe that when parents and carers feel informed, supported, and connected, their children thrive. Our work focuses on empowering families to better understand and support their neurodivergent children - helping them to celebrate strengths, navigate challenges, and feel confident in their journey.

We provide one-to-one guidance, training sessions, and both face-to-face and online support groups where parents can share experiences and find understanding. We also signpost families to other relevant services and offer a range of practical resources to help them access the right support at the right time.

Our approach is guided by core principles that shape everything we do:

- Providing information and support that families can trust and relate to.
- Ensuring every family feels seen, heard, and validated.
- Encouraging connection and community so no parent or carer feels alone.
- Reaching out proactively to families who may face barriers in accessing help.

Together, these values underpin our commitment to creating a supportive, inclusive environment where families can grow in confidence and connection.

341 families received support at our CYP's activities or in-person Parent Support Groups

An additional 189 families received 1:1 help from the Family Support Team, via email, phone or face to face appointments

Our On-line Support Group had 2.5K members as at May 2025 from all over Essex and beyond - with over 2K active members accessing the group each week

Family Support for Parents & Carers

Our team answered 222 questions from parents, with a further 189 questions being answered by other parents within the on-line support group.

100 parents booked on to full day Financial Wellbeing Courses run by Multiply and supported by the MyOTAS and STRM teams

40 parents attended a talk on Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) delivered in partnership with Thurrock & Brentwood Mind

We work collaboratively with other local community groups on a number of projects, including SEND the Right Message, Essex Family Forum, SAFE, ATF, Mother's Kitchen, Motivated Minds, Basildon Scouts, Thurrock/Brentwood Mind and Castledon School

We piloted a two-part EHCP workshop, to provide information about the process, talk about why it is important and provide on-going support through a peer support network.

With special thanks to Debut Training Academy, we held a free Pamper Day for 15 SEND Parents/Carers, where they could book a blow dry, pedicure, manicure or massage.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

We relentlessly represent the needs of neurodivergent children, young people and families – at a local and national level.

Provided training in neurodiversity and inclusion to Mind, Pedal Power and ECVYS

Continued close working relationships with Essex Family Forum, SEND the Right Message and SAFE charities

Nationally – we are active members of:

- The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition
- The Council for Disabled Children
- The Charlie Waller Trust
- The Place Network

Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition

We input to the Mental Health Act Bill working group with the DHSC, the Children's Commissioner's Office, the Council for Disabled Children and policy analysts and equality researchers from organisations such as Mind, Article 39 and JustEquality, to represent the lived experiences of our families.

We are active members of the Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition and have represented the needs of neurodivergent children and young people in the priorities for inclusion within the Mental Health Bill. Our CEO, Paula will form part of the panel providing feedback to the Department of Health and Social Care. Paula is also working with the coalition legal team to ensure that the needs of neurodivergent people without learning disabilities have access to the same mental health opportunities as those with autism and/or learning disabilities.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

The ‘Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child’ book, co-written by Paula Farrow and Sam Read from MyOTAS, in collaboration with Maggie Cleary from STRM Charity and Katrina Farrell from Essex Family Forum, has now been distributed to over **15,000 families** via support groups. The rights to adapt the contents have been bought by 10 other areas, including Manchester, Luton & Bedfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk

‘I have been a parent for 12 years, have hundreds of books on neurodiversity and have never seen anything of the depth and quality of this resource’

Key Highlights and Activities

Throughout the year, we have continued to grow, collaborate, and advocate for neurodivergent children, young people, and their families. From local community events to national policy influence, each milestone reflects our commitment to inclusion, empowerment, and positive change.

May 2024 – Multiply: Budgeting, Wellbeing and Neurodiversity

We were delighted to work again with our partner charities STRM, MyOTAS, and SAFE, delivering a session for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. Participants explored ways to reduce household outgoings while focusing on their own wellbeing and self-care — recognising that supporting themselves enables them to better support their children.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

June 2024 – Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing

Representatives from MyOTAS – My Own Time And Space attended the Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing event at the British Psychological Society in London. Alongside other charities, we continue to contribute to shaping local and national policy on neurodiversity, ensuring the lived experiences of parents and carers are represented.

June 2024 – National Advocacy for Children and Young People's Mental Health

Together with the Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition (CYPMHC), MyOTAS, and 58 other organisations, we co-signed an open letter to political leaders urging them to prioritise children and young people in their election campaigns. The letter shared powerful insights and clear recommendations to help the next government improve mental health support.

July 2024 – Woodland Warriors Visit

We were thrilled to welcome Cllr Ferguson and Grant Taylor from Basildon Borough Council to one of our Woodland Warriors sessions at Memorial Park, Wickford. Their visit provided a valuable opportunity to showcase how outdoor, nature-based activities support the wellbeing and confidence of neurodivergent young people.

July 2024 – Talks and Training

In July, Paula was invited to speak to over 40 staff and volunteers at Mind, focusing on supporting children and young people with SEND. Later in the year, in November, Wendy delivered an engaging talk on Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), sharing insights with professionals and volunteers across the sector.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

August 2024 – Community Engagement with Pedal Power

Paula was delighted to speak to Pedal Power, a charity helping people to access cycling, sharing our charity's mission and the importance of inclusive opportunities for neurodivergent children, young people, and their families.

September 2024 – Recognising Achievement and Community Involvement

We were immensely proud when our outdoor activity session leader, Tiffany Belford-Fry, received a Leadership Award from the Jack Petchey Foundation. Our young people Lakota, Nathan, and Harley also received Jack Petchey Achievement Awards, recognising their personal growth and contributions to our Woodland Warriors programme.

During September, we also took part in the Castledon School Careers Event, supporting young people as they explore future pathways, and joined the Find Your Active Festival in Basildon, promoting inclusion, wellbeing, and active participation.

October 2024 – ECVYS Children's Mental Health Event

Paula spoke to an audience of 50 youth workers and leaders at the Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (ECVYS) event on children's mental health, sharing insights into the experiences of neurodivergent young people and the importance of community-led support.

November 2024 – Continuing to Raise Awareness

In November, our team presented to 20 attendees at the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and over 200 participants at a Basildon Council meeting, held both in-person and online. These sessions offered valuable opportunities to strengthen partnerships and advocate for improved understanding and support of neurodivergent families.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

December 2024 – Commitment to Excellence

We are delighted to announce that MyOTAS successfully completed the Cranfield Trust Journey to Excellence (J2E©) consultancy project, marking our ongoing commitment to organisational learning and continuous improvement. The Journey to Excellence assessment tool, developed from over 30 years of Cranfield Trust's experience supporting non-profit organisations, provided valuable insights into our strengths and opportunities for growth. We are deeply grateful to the Cranfield Trust and specifically our mentor Mike Nevin for their support and guidance throughout the process.

Cranfield Trust | JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

COMMITTED TO IMPROVEMENT 2024

March 2025 – Advocacy and Recognition

Paula attended the Law's Role in Shaping and Responding to Disability and Motherhood event at the University of Reading — and gave an inspiring talk highlighting the lived experiences of neurodivergent families and the challenges they face in health, family life, and legal rights.

Paula also facilitated a session with the Othona Bradwell Community to help "build a neurodiverse community," bringing together people with lived experience, health and education professionals, and charity leaders to share learning and strengthen collaboration.

We have worked to increase understanding and acceptance of neurodivergence with a wide range of people including:-

40 people at Thurrock/Brentwood Mind
20 at the ICB
200 at Bas Council meeting
2000 follow our public Facebook Page
8 at Pedal Power
50 at ECVYS Children's Mental Health
751 people received our newsletter

Financial Review

Our total income in money terms was £178,231. In addition, we have received donations of services, equipment, office/storage space and volunteer time in excess of £15,000.

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for the charity during this year were grants from a variety of sources.

Core Costs

National Lottery (Year 2 of 3 years funding) - £72,000
Essex Community Foundation - £1,000

Family Support

Mid/South Essex ICB - £1,600
Essex Carers Fund - Essex County Council (Year 1 of 3 years funding) - £9,200
Health Inequalities Fund - Basildon/Brentwood Alliance NHS - £19,500
Essex Community Foundation for the Four Acre Core Cost Fund and the Elspeth Hodgkinson Fund (Year 1 of 3 year funding) - £7,000
ECC - Multiply (shared with STRM and SAFE) - £20,000

Children's Activities

Jack Petchey Foundation - £1,900
Tesco Groundworks - £1,100
Basildon District Council - £1,600
Hedley Foundation - £900

Raising Awareness

Basildon District Council (Wickford fund) - £3,500
Research Engagement Network (REN) - £2,600

Financial Review

Diversifying Income

As MyOTAS continues to grow and respond to the evolving needs of neurodivergent children, young people and their families, we are intentionally diversifying our income streams to build a more resilient and sustainable organisation.
While short-term grant funding remains an important enabler of innovation and pilot projects, it is increasingly unpredictable and time-limited. By developing complementary income through consultancy work, locality-based delivery, community donations and corporate engagement, we are reducing reliance on any single funding source and strengthening our long-term stability. This blended approach allows us to reinvest unrestricted income into core costs, safeguarding, quality assurance and staff wellbeing, while also sharing our lived-experience expertise more widely to influence systems, build inclusive practice, and create lasting impact within our communities.

May - Ride London

Dave Camp, Grandad to one of the children MyOTAS supports, completed the Ford Ride London/Essex bike ride on 26th May 2024 and raised over £700.

March 25 Sponsored swim

SEND the Right Message and MyOTAS joined forces to take part in this year's Swimathon! On March 29th, 2025 - Paula, Maggie and Katrina swam 5KM to raise essential funds to support local neurodivergent children and young people, while showing their commitment to partnership working. Over £1,800 was raised and split between the 2 charities.

Financial Review

Investment Policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are few funds for long term investment. A review of investment policies will be taken if our income stream significantly increases.

Reserves Policy

The Management Committee has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be approximately 3 months of the annual expenditure. Budgeted expenditure for 2025/26 is £177,000 and therefore the target is £44,250 in general unrestricted funds. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the Management Committee are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding.

The level of reserves available to the charity as at May 2024 was £41,967 which therefore falls short of this target level. Although the strategy is to continue to build reserves through planned operating surpluses, the Management Committee is well aware that it is unlikely that the target range can be reached for at least three years. In the short term the Management Committee has also considered the extent to which existing activities and expenditure could be curtailed, should such circumstances arise.

Governing Document

The organisation is a Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), established in May 2019 and formally registered as a charity in August 2019. The charity operates under a constitution that defines its charitable objects and powers. In accordance with this governing document, should the charity be wound up, the trustees are not required to make any financial contribution.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

In line with the charity's constitution, the trustees — referred to as members of the Management Committee — are appointed to serve for a term of three years. Following this period, they are eligible for re-election at the next Annual General Meeting.

All trustees contribute their time and expertise on a voluntary basis and receive no financial remuneration or other benefits for their work. Given the nature of our charitable purpose, which focuses on supporting neurodivergent children, young people, and their families, many of our trustees bring valuable lived experience as parents or carers, helping to ensure our governance remains informed, compassionate, and reflective of the community we serve.

Governance, Structure and Management

The Management Committee seeks to ensure that the needs of this community are appropriately reflected through the diversity of its trustee body. Traditional business, educational, and medical expertise are also well represented on the Committee. To maintain this broad and balanced skill mix, trustees are asked to provide an annual record of their skills and experience. When specific expertise is lost through retirements or resignations, suitable individuals are approached and encouraged to stand for election to the Management Committee.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity, having been encouraged to attend our activities and events prior to their appointment. New trustees are also invited to read our book Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child, which provides valuable insight into the ethos of the charity, the context in which we operate, and an overview of neurodiversity and its co-occurring conditions.

Trustees are provided with a comprehensive induction pack, which includes the charity's Constitution, the latest published accounts, the Code of Conduct for Trustees, Volunteers and Staff, and the Charity Commission's guidance The Essential Trustee. They are also directed to review all of the charity's key policies, including Safeguarding, GDPR, Health & Safety, and Financial Management.

All trustees, employees, and volunteers complete mandatory training in Safeguarding, GDPR, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), along with other regular development opportunities to ensure continued compliance and best practice.

Risk Management

The Management Committee conducts regular reviews of the major risks facing the charity. A detailed risk register is maintained and reviewed at least annually. Where necessary, systems and procedures have been implemented to mitigate identified risks and ensure the charity's ongoing stability and resilience.

Data Protection and Cyber Security

We maintain robust IT security and recovery plans for all our systems, which are managed by trusted external IT providers. The Board periodically reviews these measures to ensure that data protection and cyber security remain effective and compliant with current regulations.

Fundraising

The charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and adheres fully to its Code of Fundraising Practice. We are proud to report that we received zero complaints during this reporting period.

Governance, Structure and Management

Financial Risks

Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which will allow for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Health & Safety

Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of employees, volunteers and service users.

Safeguarding

MyOTAS have a robust safeguarding policy, a Designated Safeguarding Lead, two deputies and a trustee with specific safeguarding responsibilities.

We understand that safeguarding is a significant risk in supporting our young people and we have visited a number of independent schools and other voluntary groups to learn from their experiences.

We have taken a cautious approach to launching and expanding our activities, piloting in small groups first, and maintaining open and honest communication with families. Our approach and principles have developed with safeguarding as a key consideration. For example, we ask parents to attend all of our children's activities and to remain responsible for their child. We also have a family support worker in attendance to be available in case of need and to role model appropriate ways to support children and to help facilitate support and build relationships between parents.

Organisational Structure

Last year we identified the organisation's dependency on a small number of key staff as a significant operational risk. To address this, we have taken proactive steps to strengthen our team and build greater resilience across our operations. We have recruited new staff and sessional workers to share responsibilities, broaden skills within the organisation, and ensure continuity of service delivery. This has reduced the risk associated with staff absence or transition and enhanced our capacity to respond flexibly to the needs of children, young people, and families.

MyOTAS has a Management Committee of up to 12 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. During the year 2024-2025 the Committee had 8 members (5 trustees and 2 part-time management staff) from a variety of professional backgrounds, relevant to the work of the charity. A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the Chair along with the rest of the committee. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. The CEO has responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of the charity, individual supervision of the team and also ensuring that the team continue to develop their skills and working practices in line with good practice.

Governance, Structure and Management

Related Parties

Where it is complementary to the charity's objects, the charity is guided by both local and national policy. Three of the management committee are also Family Champions for Essex Family Forum. This is a multiagency group with Essex SEND as its focus. The representation of local organisations within this group has proved invaluable to the charity in establishing improved links within the community and identifying relevant gaps in support, policy developments and prospective funding.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

We recognise that neurodivergent individuals face significant inequalities across their lives. In the UK, it is estimated that around 15%–20 % of the population are neurodivergent in some way (for example having autism, ADHD, dyslexia or another neuro-difference).

Ethnicity and Neurodivergence

Disparities in diagnosis and access to services exist between ethnic groups. For example:
In a large study of over 7 million schoolchildren in England, the standardised prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) was highest among Black pupils at 2.11 % (95 % CI 2.06–2.16) compared to an overall national average of ~1.76%. Rates of use of NHS-funded mental health, learning disability and autism services in England to March 2023 varied widely by ethnic group: for example, among people of "Mixed" ethnicity there were around 7,499 per 100,000 using those services, compared with 3,133 per 100,000 among people of Asian ethnicity. ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk

Cultural and access barriers for children from Black and minoritised communities have been highlighted: for example, more than 20,000 children from Black communities were reported to be waiting beyond statutory time-limits for Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) and face punitive rather than supportive responses to neurodivergence. (The Guardian)
These figures suggest that the intersection of neurodivergence and ethnicity involves added layers of disadvantage — including delayed diagnosis, mis-interpretation of behaviours, and reduced access to culturally responsive support.

LGBTQ+ Identity and Neurodivergence

Research shows a strong correlation between neurodivergence and LGBTQ+ identity:
A UK study by University of Cambridge found that autistic adults and adolescents are approximately eight times more likely to identify as asexual or other non-heterosexual categories compared to non-autistic peers. (University of Cambridge)

Many sources estimate that among autistic individuals who do not have an intellectual disability, 15 %-35 % identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. (sparkforautism.org)

In the broader UK population, the percentage identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual is estimated at around 3% (though likely under-reported). thebraincharity.org.uk+1
This suggests that neurodivergent individuals are significantly more likely than the general population to identify as LGBTQ+, highlighting the importance of considering multiple dimensions of identity in our work.

Governance, Structure and Management

Our Approach

Given these intersectional realities:
We support families requiring light touch intervention (information and sign-posting) and those who are effectively off-grid from mainstream services — for example where children face exclusion, emotionally-based school avoidance or complex mental health challenges with limited support.

We adapt our delivery to meet diverse needs: if a child finds full group sessions difficult, we offer alternative pathways (for example 1:1 sessions followed by gradual group re-integration; or specialised format such as 1:1 yoga rather than group mindful-crafts).
We proactively work within some of the most deprived post-codes in the Basildon Borough, and engage communities traditionally hard to reach. We have supported families by liaising with statutory assessment services when children have "dropped off the system", by collaborating with local outreach agencies, and by helping families access school-based help for their child.

Through this inclusive, flexible and intersectional focus, we seek to ensure that neurodivergent children, young people and their families — across all ethnicities and including LGBTQ+ identities — are seen, supported and empowered.

Environment

As a charity seeking to improve outcomes and wellbeing for the people that we support, we recognise our responsibility to role model good practice in the way that we impact the environment. We do not currently have our own premises, but the environment is a consideration in all that we do.

All of our children's activities are environmentally aware and we seek opportunities to reinforce best practice. For example, we ran a reduce/re-use/recycle project at Woodland Warriors, in line with the Basildon District Council programme. Our mindful crafts re-use old CDs and often use natural materials.

Conclusion

This year has been a period of strong and controlled growth for the charity. The award of national lottery funding will enable us to address the key risks in the next reporting year, namely bringing in additional resource to reduce the dependency on key members of staff and to outsource our IT security. As we strengthen our operating platform, we are well placed to meet the increasing demand for our services. We are also increasingly using our lived experience and subject matter expertise to help influence services for neurodivergent people at a local and national level.

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

MyOTAS - My Own Time And Space	No (if any) 1184723

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01/05/2024	To	Period end date 30/04/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations and legacies	4,846	-	-	4,846	2,878
Grants and Trusts	-	-	-	-	9,589
Community Fundraising	2,552	-	-	2,552	-
Donations - Yoga	605	-	-	605	7
Donations - Crafts	2,390	-	-	2,390	1,132
Donations - Woodland Warriors	5,716	-	-	5,716	5,509
Family Support and Training events	24	-	-	24	-
Grants and Trusts - Core Costs		73,680		73,680	30,781
Grants and Trusts - Child Activities		6,040		6,040	18,967
Grants and Trusts - Family Supp/Train		66,193		66,193	9,994
Grants and Trusts - Raising Awareness	10,400	6,160		16,560	508
Corporate fundraising				-	2,750
			-	-	-
Sub total *(Gross income for AR)*	26,533	152,073	-	178,606	82,115
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	26,533	152,073	-	178,606	82,115
A3 Payments					
Cost of fundraising	1,843	-	-	1,843	250
Cost of Woodland Warriors	-	12,908	-	12,908	11,820
Cost of Mindful Crafts	-	7,406	-	7,406	2,531
Cost of Yoga	-	3,259	-	3,259	198
Cost of other children's activities	222	2,036	-	2,257	692
Parent Support and Training events	-	40,212	-	40,212	15,330
Raising Awareness	-	13,064	-	13,064	2,394
Admin/Management Salaries		38,861		38,861	20,141
Travel/Petrol/Parking		71		71	214
Insurance		799		799	526
Tel/Web/Email/Zoom/IT		1,631		1,631	2,695
Print/Post/Advertising/Stationery		2,926		2,926	430
Venue Hire and refreshments		839		839	123
Staff/Volunteer costs inc DBS/training	-	2,835	-	2,835	170
Memberships/Subs	-	1,224	-	1,224	676
Sub total	2,065	128,071	-	130,136	58,190
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Laptops		2,716	-	2,716	
	-	-	-	-	1,185
Sub total	-	2,716	-	2,716	1,185
Total payments	2,065	130,787	-	132,852	59,375
Net of receipts/(payments)	24,468	21,286	-	45,755	22,740
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	17,499	32,649	-	50,148	-
Cash funds this year end	41,967	53,935	-	95,903	22,740

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

B1 Cash funds

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Metro	2,380	-	-
	NatWest	39,537	53,935	-
	Petty cash	50	-	-
	Total cash funds	41,967	53,935	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Maria Denton	16/01/2026

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees	Charity Name MyOTAS My Own Time and Space		
On accounts for the year ended	30th April 2025	**Charity no (if any)**	1184723
Set out on pages	1-2 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30/04/2025**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

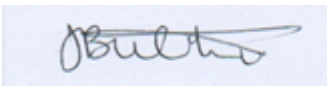
Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* *Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	26/01/26
Name:	JOANNE BUTCHER		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA)		
Address:	40 Arundell Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 2QQ		

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	N/A

MyOTAS

England & Wales - Charity number 1184723

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report - 1st May 2023 to 30th April 2024

Charity Name: MyOTAS (My Own Time And Space)
Charity CIO registration number: 1184723
Registered Office: 57a Highcliffe Road, Wickford, Essex, SS11 8JP

Our Trustees (during the above period):-

Daniel Ireland – Chair
Alex Harding
Jenne Seibolt
Maria Denton – Treasurer
Sharon Adonri
Chantelle Poulter
Trisha McClure

Our Aims, Objectives and Values

Our aim is to support neurodivergent (Autism, ADHD, OCD, Dyslexia etc.) children and young people and their families within Essex, through 3 pillars of activity:

Activities for Children & Young People

Family Support for Parents & Carers

Raising Awareness and Acceptance within the community

Our Values

- **Non-judgemental – valuing people for who they are;**
- **Inclusive – everyone is welcome, no diagnosis needed;**
- **Be kind;**
- **Innovative thinking – exploring new ideas and finding different ways to do things;**
- **Collaboration – working openly with other voluntary organisations and service providers.**

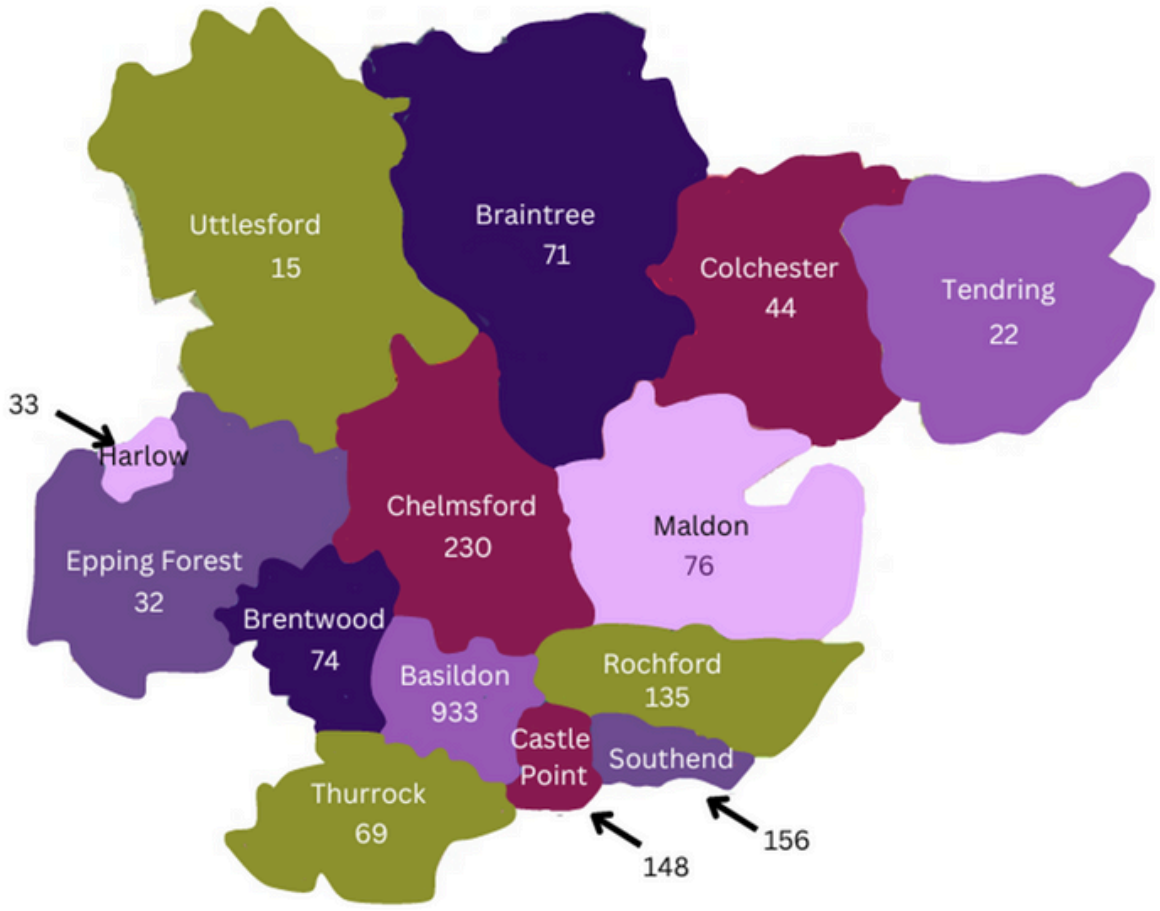
We review our aims, objectives and activities each year.

This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we are set up to help. The review also helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aim and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

Our beneficiaries

We support neurodivergent children and young people and their families, within Essex and beyond.



In addition to the above there are approx. 70 parents registered from Havering and Greater London, as well as a few from other parts of the country. We do not have location data for every member, as some people choose not to share it.

Trusted relationships are often difficult to form for neurodivergent young people, so we seek to build ongoing and sustainable relationships, for young people of all ages, through to independence. We have created partnerships with SAFE Essex (Charity for autistic people of all ages) and Exceptional Individuals (Recruitment and employment services for neurodivergent people) to support this pathway.

A diagnosis is not required to access our services. Some of the families requiring the most help have a child who is undiagnosed. For example, a child may be on a waiting list for assessment - waiting times for assessment have increased dramatically and in our area, timescales are currently c.18-24 months rather than the NICE guideline of 18 weeks, so this is often a critical time for support. Neurodivergent conditions are often genetic, so parents may also have their own challenges or may not see the presenting difficulties as anything unusual.

Activities for Children & Young People

Provision of Inclusive and accessible small group sessions. Parents or carers attend with their child, and remain responsible for them. This helps to minimise anxiety for young people at the groups and can become a positive bonding experience. We provide support for accompanying parents.

In this reporting period, we have increased the variety of groups that we run and also the number of places available.

177 CYP attended Woodland Warriors with a total of 886 places being booked

3 sessions per week with 148 sessions over the year

46 CYP booked places on Mindful Crafts sessions

2 sessions per week with 60 sessions over the year

20 CYP attended pilot sessions of Yoga, Therapeutic Nature Group and Teen Girls Social Group

15 sessions over the year

Principles

- Low pressure – Accessible
- Support for the wider family
- Small groups for that children do not become overwhelmed
- A nominal charge is requested for some activities, but finance should never be a barrier to accessing our services, so we offer sessions for free in cases of financial hardship

Family Support for Parents & Carers

Empowering parents to better understand and support their children through 1:1 support, training, face to face and online support groups, signposting to other relevant services and provision of useful resources.

Principles

- Providing information and support
- Every family feels informed and validated
- Encourage connection to peers
- Outreach where needed

Just wanted to say, Wow! I am so glad I joined this group.

In total 251 families received support at our CYP's activities and an additional 145 families requested 1:1 help from the Family Support Team

Worked collaboratively with other local community groups including ATF, SEND4All, Basildon Parents 4 Parents, Motivated Minds and Castledon School

Our On-line Support Group had 2.1K members as at May 2024 from all over Essex and beyond - with over 1.3K active members a week

Family Feedback

'Friendly, knowledgeable and caring people who make you feel less alone'

'It's nice to meet other parents who totally understand what you're dealing with'.

'I'm so glad I came. I always feel so much better after talking to you guys. I can feel myself relax a bit.'

Composed and distributed 4 page newsletter to over 300 subscribers with up to date cost of living crisis info for parents

The Family Support team answered 256 questions from parents, with a further 127 questions being answered by other parents within the group.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

We relentlessly represent the needs of neurodivergent children, young people and families – at a local and national level.

We provided training on ND and inclusivity to the Scout Group leaders, Essex Football Association and Family Solutions. Initiating an increased range of therapeutic activities for children, through building relationships with the groups above and Mind, Friends of Wickford Memorial Park, etc.

Basildon District – Council events, Wickford Voices, BasildON Creative, parish and town council meetings and with our local MP.

Essex wide – inputting to Start-Well and Live Well NHS strategies, members of the Essex All Age Autism Partnership Board. Close links to Essex Family Forum.

Provided training in neurodiversity and inclusion to Essex FA and Basildon Scouts' leaders

Continued close working relationships with Essex Family Forum, SEND the Right Message and SAFE charities

In February 2024 our Operations Manager Sam Read, was highly commended in the fundraising champion category at the Basildon Voluntary Awards.

MyOTAS was also nominated as the best voluntary group and our Treasurer Maria Denton was nominated as a community star for her tireless work behind the scenes.

We were very proud to be recognised alongside other organisations and individuals delivering amazing support and services across the Basildon Borough.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

Nationally – we are active members of:
The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition
The Council for Disabled Children
The Charlie Waller Trust
The Place Network

We sit on the Mental Health Act Bill working group with the DHSC, the Children's Commissioner's Office, the Council for Disabled Children and policy analysts and equality researchers from organisations such as Mind, Article 39 and JustEquality, to represent the lived experiences of our families.

We are active members of the Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition and have represented the needs of neurodivergent children and young people in the priorities for inclusion within the Mental Health Bill. Our CEO, Paula will form part of the panel providing feedback to the Department of Health and Social Care. Paula is also working with the coalition legal team to ensure that the needs of neurodivergent people without learning disabilities have access to the same mental health opportunities as those with autism and/or learning disabilities.

In July 2023 Paula (CEO **Myotas - My Own Time And Space**) and Maggie (CEO **STRM - SEND the Right Message Registered Charity**) attended a conference at the **National Children's Bureau**, to represent the mental health needs of neurodivergent children and young people, led by the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, with representatives from the **Children's Commissioner for England**, Department of Education, Department of Health & Social Care and the Director of the **Council for Disabled Children**.

It was exciting to hear about the work that is taking place to support the mental health needs of all children in schools and to discuss the specific challenges faced by neurodivergent children and young people in mainstream education, with policy makers. We were also able to highlight the higher level and more complex needs of those struggling to access education and health services.

Raising Awareness & Acceptance

In April 24 our Chair of Trustees, Danny Ireland, met with Matt Hancock and other charity and business leaders, to discuss the Parliamentary Bill to introduce neurodivergent screening in all primary schools, to ensure no child starts secondary education not knowing if they are neurodivergent. The Bill passed the first stage, but there is still a long way to go before agreement is reached to put this process in place.

The ‘Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child’ book, co-written by Paula Farrow and Sam Read from MyOTAS, in collaboration with Maggie Cleary from STRM Charity and Katrina Farrell from Essex Family Forum, has now been distributed to over 12K families via support groups, with a further 5,000 families requesting a copy in the post. The writing team undertook an extensive update during Winter 2023, adding new sections on

The rights to adapt the contents have been bought by 8 other areas, including Manchester, Luton & Bedfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk

‘I have been a parent for 12 years, have hundreds of books on neurodiversity and have never seen anything of the depth and quality of this resource’

Governance, Operations and Finances

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for the charity during this year were grants from a variety of sources.
·National Lottery
·Essex Community Foundation
·Community 360
·Active Essex

In addition, we received funding towards the co-production of the Supporting Your Neurodiverse Child family support pack from the Essex Joint Commissioning Board.

Our total income in money terms was £82,000. However, although not included in our Receipts & Payments Accounts, we have calculated that the donations of services, equipment, office/storage space and volunteer time was in excess of £6,500.

Investment Policy
Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are few funds for long term investment. A review of investment policies will be taken if our income stream significantly increases.

Reserves Policy
The Management Committee has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be approximately 3 months of the annual expenditure. Budgeted expenditure for 2024/25 is £120,000 and therefore the target is £30,000 in general funds. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the Management Committee are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding.

The level of reserves available to the charity as at May 2023 was £15,000 therefore falls short of this target level. Although the strategy is to continue to

Governance, Operations and Finances

build reserves through planned operating surpluses, the Management Committee is well aware that it is unlikely that the target range can be reached for at least five years. In the short term the Management Committee has also considered the extent to which existing activities and expenditure could be curtailed, should such circumstances arise.

Our main funders are the National Lottery (3 years for core operational costs), Essex County Council, the Postcode Lottery and the Essex Alliance (NHS)

We have received smaller grants from Tesco, Active Essex, Wickford Town Council, Basildon Town Council and Foster, Smith & Jones

Corporate donations have been received from Forsters and Sage Publishing

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The organisation is a foundation CIO and was set up in May 2019 and was formally registered as a charity in August 2019. The charity was established under a constitution which established its objects and powers.
In the event of the charity being wound up trustees are not required to financially contribute.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The trustees of the charity for the purposes of charity law and under the charity's Constitution are known as members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Constitution the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of three years, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity for work undertaken as trustees. Due to the nature of neurodiversity support much of the charity's work inevitably focuses upon parents and children.

Governance, Operations and Finances

The Management Committee seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. The more traditional business, educational and medical skills are well represented on the Management Committee. To maintain this broad skill mix, members of the Management Committee are requested to provide a list of their skills (and update it each year) and in the event of particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the Management Committee.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity having been encouraged to attend some of our activities. Additionally, new trustees are invited and encouraged to read our book Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child to familiarise themselves with the ethos of the charity, the context within which it operates and most importantly provide them with an overview of neurodiversity and its comorbid conditions.

Trustees are also provided with the following documents:- MyOTAS' governing document (Constitution), the latest published accounts, Code of Conduct for Trustees/Volunteers/Staff and the Charity Commission's guide "the Essential Trustee". Trustees are also signposted to review all of the charity's current policies, including Safeguarding, GDPR, Health & Safety, Financial Management, etc.

Risk Management

The Management Committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces.

Securing 3 years of National Lottery core cost funding from February 2024 will have a significant positive impact upon our ability to expand servies, bring in new processes and mitigate against key risks, such as the dependency on key individuals. During the next financial year we will also be implementing new data management and protection procedures and moving all personal information to a secure server.

Governance, Operations and Finances

Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which will allow for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of volunteers and service users.

The charity follows the Institute of Fundraising Practise guidelines.

All procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. We ensure that all trustees/volunteers have the relevant DBS checks and safe-guarding training.

Organisational Structure

MyOTAS has a Management Committee of up to 12 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. During the year 2023-2024 the Committee had 8 members (5 trustees and 2 part-time management staff) from a variety of professional backgrounds, relevant to the work of the charity. A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the Chair along with the rest of the committee. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. The CEO has responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of the charity, individual supervision of the team and also ensuring that the team continue to develop their skills and working practices in line with good practice.

As at May 2024 we employed 4 part-time staff (60 hours per week total)

Related Parties

In so far as it is complementary to the charity's objects, the charity is guided by both local and national policy. Three of the management committee are also Family Champions for Essex Family Forum. This is a multiagency group with Essex SEND as its focus. The representation of local organisations within this group has proved invaluable to the charity in establishing improved links within the community and identifying relevant gaps in support, policy developments and prospective funding.

Governance, Operations and Finances

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Neurodivergent people, particularly those without learning difficulties, face multiple inequalities throughout their lives.

We support a number of families who only require a light touch of support; information and signposting to help. However, there are a significant number of families who are 'off-grid' with service providers, for example if their young person is unable to attend school for reasons of exclusion or emotionally based school avoidance; or they are experiencing complex mental health challenges for which there is little, or no support available. We are committed to working patiently and supportively with these young people and their families to find an access point to help.

We support families from some of the most deprived postcodes in the Basildon Borough and offer outreach sessions to communities in traditionally hard to reach areas. We have had notable successes helping many families with complex needs. (e.g. liaising with assessment services to triage an urgent appointment for a child whose details had dropped off the system, liaising with family solutions to find appropriate help, helping families to access support for their child at school).

Recent research suggests that autistic people are three times more likely to identify as trans, and eight times more likely to be asexual. (www.therainbowcharity.org.uk).

We recognise this in the young people that we support and are keen to expand our offering of training and support groups to provide dedicated help for LGBTQA young people and their families.

Governance, Operations and Finances

Environment

As a charity seeking to improve outcomes and wellbeing for the people that we support, we recognise our responsibility to role model good practice in the way that we impact the environment. We do not currently have our own premises, but the environment is a consideration in all that we do.

All of our children's activities are environmentally aware and we seek opportunities to reinforce best practice. For example, we ran a reduce/re-use/recycle project at Woodland Warriors, in line with the Basildon District Council programme. Our mindful crafts re-use old CDs and often use natural materials.

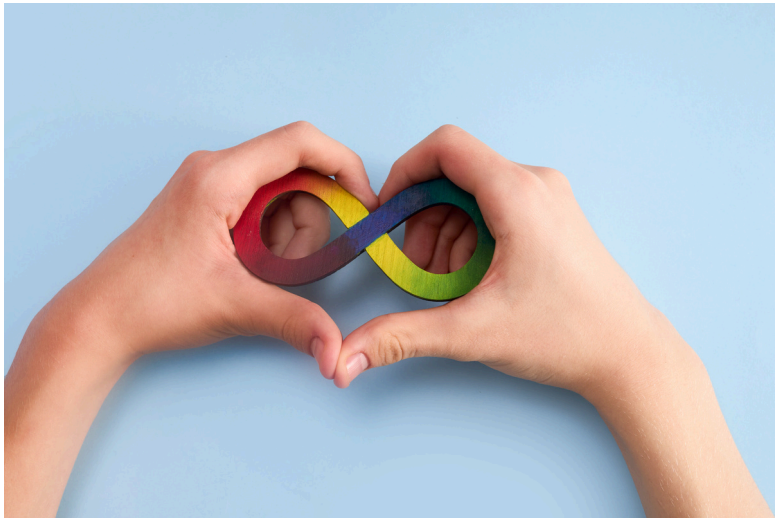
Safeguarding

MyOTAS have a safeguarding policy and two trustees (NHS and education experience) with safeguarding responsibilities.

We understand that safeguarding is a significant risk in supporting our young people and we have visited a number of independent schools and other voluntary groups to learn from their experiences.

We have taken a cautious approach to launching and expanding our activities, piloting in small groups first, and maintaining open and honest communication with families. Our approach and principles have developed with safeguarding as a key consideration. For example, we ask parents to attend all of our children's activities and to remain responsible for their child. We also have a family support worker in attendance to be available in case of need and to role model appropriate ways to support children and to help facilitate support and build relationships between parents.

Where children have found sessions difficult, we have found ways to support them without impacting on the wider group. For example, when a child was struggling to play with other children at woodland warriors, we arranged 1:1 sessions, and then re-integrated her back to the group by joining for short but increasing sections of the group session Another child was unable to access group sessions of mindful crafts because of anxiety about the other children present, and we offered 1:1 yoga sessions, which she was able to access.



Conclusion

This year has been a period of strong and controlled growth for the charity. The award of national lottery funding will enable us to address the key risks in the next reporting year, namely bringing in additional resource to reduce the dependency on key members of staff and to outsource our IT security. As we strengthen our operating platform, we are well placed to meet the increasing demand for our services. We are also increasingly using our lived experience and subject matter expertise to help influence services for neurodivergent people at a local and national level.

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

MyOTAS My Own Time And Space	No (if any) 1184723

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01-May-23	To	Period end date 30-Apr-24

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations and legacies	2,878		-	2,878	4,782
Grants and Trusts	9,589		-	9,589	4,658
Community Fundraising		-	-	-	1,096
Donations - Yoga	7	-	-	7	122
Donations - Crafts	1,132	-	-	1,132	1,198
Donations - Woodland Warriors	5,509	-	-	5,509	6,174
Family Support and Training events		-	-	-	304
Grants and Trusts - Core Costs		30,781		30,781	7,080
Grants and Trusts - Child Activities		18,967		18,967	9,614
Grants and Trusts - Family Supp/Train		9,994		9,994	20,996
Grants and Trusts - Raising Awareness	508			508	500
Corporate fundraising	2,750			2,750	
Refunds			-	-	218
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	22,373	59,742	-	82,115	56,742
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
N/A	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	22,373	59,742	-	82,115	56,742
A3 Payments					
Cost of fundraising	250		-	250	501
Cost of Woodland Warriors	2,252	9,568	-	11,820	12,268
Cost of Mindful Crafts	2,223	308	-	2,530	2,946
Cost of Yoga		198	-	198	1,761
Cost of other children's activities	195	497	-	692	
Parent Support and Training events	223	15,108	-	15,330	17,221
Raising Awareness	1,938	456	-	2,394	4,140
Admin/Management Salaries	9,740	10,401		20,141	18,643
Travel/Petrol/Parking	173	42		214	302
Insurance	526			526	628
Tel/Web/Email/Zoom/IT	310	2,386	-	2,695	777
Print/Post/Advertising/Stationery	267	163	-	430	547
Venue Hire and refreshments	123			123	132
Staff/Volunteer costs inc DBS/training		170		170	19
Memberships/Subs	452	224	-	676	283
Sub total	18,671	39,519	-	58,190	60,168
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Printer and Shredder		-	-	-	195
Computer Equipment	-	1,184	-	1,184	
Sub total	-	1,184	-	1,184	195
Total payments	18,671	40,704	-	59,375	60,363
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,702	19,038	-	22,740	- 3,621
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	13,797	13,611	-	27,408	-
Cash funds this year end	17,499	32,649	-	50,148	3,621

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

B1 Cash funds

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Metro Account	2,504		-
	NatWest Account	14,995	32,649	-
				-
	Total cash funds	17,499	32,649	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	M Denton	12/01/2025

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	MyOTAS My Own Time and Space		
On accounts for the year ended	30th April 2024	**Charity no (if any)**	1184723
Set out on pages	1-2 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30/04/2024**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

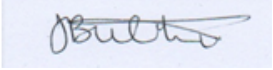
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:		**Date:**	03/02/2025
Name:	Joanne Butcher		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA)		
Address:	40 Arundell Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 2QQ		

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	N/A

MyOTAS

England & Wales - Charity number 1184723

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report - 1st May 2022 to 30th April 2023

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: MyOTAS

Charity registration number: 1184723

Registered Office: 57a Highcliffe Road, Wickford, Essex SS11 8JP

Trustees (during the above period):-

Daniel Ireland - Chair	Karen Cogger - Vice Chair	Chantelle Poulter
Jenne Seibolt	Maria Denton – Treasurer	Vacant – Secretary

About Us

The MyOTAS journey began in 2016 when a group of parents of autistic children came together to provide useful, kind and non-judgemental support to others facing similar challenges.

Since that time, we have learnt so much about the needs of young people and families and how we can best support them, and about the gaps in services and how we can work with service providers to represent the families that we support.

We were registered as a charity in 2019 and our trustees include a children's Occupational Therapist, a primary school teacher and special needs co-ordinator, an FA registered Football Coach and inclusion officer and a variety of other professionals and parents of SEN children.

We are based in Wickford Essex, and support many families from across the Basildon borough, including a number of the most disadvantaged areas. Our aim is to support families and share our knowledge wherever we can help, so we have a strong online offer, including zoom support groups, through which are able to support families across Mid and South Essex, and indeed the whole of Essex and beyond.

Aims and Objectives

Our aim is to support neurodivergent (Autism, ADHD, OCD, Dyslexia etc.) children and young people and their families within Essex, through 3 pillars of activity:

Children's activities

Family Support

Increasing awareness and acceptance within the community

Our Values

- Non-judgemental – valuing people for who they are;
- Inclusive – everyone is welcome, no diagnosis needed;
- Be kind;
- Innovative thinking – exploring new ideas and finding different ways to do things;
- Collaboration – working openly with other voluntary organisations and service providers.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year.

This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we are set up to help.

The review also helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aim and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

Our beneficiaries

We support neurodivergent children and young people and their families.

Trusted relationships are often difficult to form for neurodivergent young people, so we seek to build ongoing and sustainable relationships, for young people of all ages, through to independence. We have created partnerships with SAFE Essex (Charity for autistic people of all ages) and Exceptional Individuals (Recruitment and employment services for neurodivergent people) to support this pathway.

A diagnosis is not required to access our services. Some of the families requiring the most help have a child who is undiagnosed. For example, a child may be on a waiting list for assessment - waiting times for assessment have increased dramatically and in our area, timescales are currently c.18-24 months rather than the NICE guideline of 18 weeks, so this is often a critical time for support. Neurodivergent conditions are often genetic, so parents may also have their own challenges or may not see the presenting difficulties as anything unusual.

Neurodivergent people face significant health inequalities:

Life expectancy - Autistic people have significantly lower life expectancies than the rest of the population. A statement from the UK government in 2021 quotes the data reported by the British Journal of Psychiatry that autistic people will live 16 years fewer than their non-autistic peers. Another report compares the range of average life expectancy for autistic people from 39.5 years to 58 years, to the global average of 72 years.

ADHD and prison - Approx 25% of offenders have ADHD: Takeda_ADHD-in-the-CJS-Roundtable-Report_Final.pdf (adhdfoundation.org.uk)

Autism and mental health - 80% of autistic adults experience mental health issues at some point in their lives Mental-health-autism-E-LEAFLET.pdf (autistica.org.uk)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published new data that shows just 22% of autistic adults are in any kind of employment. New shocking data highlights the autism employment gap

We have:

95 regular service users

351 signed up to receive our newsletter

>1.8K members of our private parent carer support group on Facebook, with >1.3K active members per month

Our Projects

Children's activities

Inclusive and accessible small group sessions.

Woodland Warriors – c. 20 attendees per week - plus support for accompanying parent carers. 175 children attending from May 22 to April 23.

Mindful Crafts c. 8 attendees every 2-weeks – plus support for parents and carers

Yoga – 1:1 therapy sessions offered as needed

Principles

- Low pressure – Accessible
- Support for the wider family
- Small groups for that children do not become overwhelmed
- A nominal charge is requested for some activities, but finance should never be a barrier to accessing our services, so we offer sessions for free in cases of financial hardship

Achievements

- 1104 + places offered in 2022
- Fantastic community engagement and response
- Family feedback:-
    - ‘Inclusive and really fun’
    - ‘Love that educational elements are offered but not forced’

- ‘Loved being able to participate with my child’
- ‘Calm and gentle’

Family support

Empowering parents to better understand and support their children through 1:1 support, training, face to face and online support groups, signposting to other relevant services and provision of useful resources.

- Face to face support groups – 3-25 attendees, 3 sessions per month
- Online support groups – 2-8 attendees, one session per month,
- Guest speakers – currently ad-hoc, seeking to make this a monthly programme
- Wellbeing walks –2-10 attendees, every 2 events per month
- 1:1 support – 103 families supported during May 22 to Apr 23.
- Training events – the events we have run have been fantastically well attended; 35 people signed up to most recent face to face event (charge to attend) and 100 people signed up to our last zoom event (free). We are seeking to make this a regular monthly programme.

Principles

- Providing information and support
- Every family feels informed and validated
- Encourage connection to peers
- Outreach where needed

Achievements

- 25 support meetings
- 1:1 support provided to 103 parents/carers
- Referrals from Family solutions, ECFWS, schools, GPs, Paediatricians etc.
- 5 training events – 195 places booked

Family feedback

- ‘A nice respite from daily life out in nature’ (wellbeing walk)

- ‘Love being able to type questions rather than having to speak’ (zoom support)
- ‘Friendly, knowledgeable and caring people who make you feel less alone’
- ‘It’s nice to meet other parents/carers who totally understand what you’re dealing with’.
- ‘I’m so glad I came. I always feel so much better after talking to you guys. I can feel myself relax a bit.’ (parent support group)

Increasing awareness and acceptance within the community.

Supporting your Neurodiverse Child Book - we are co-authors of the ‘Supporting your Neurodiverse Child’ Support pack.

Commissioned by the Essex Joint Commissioning Board

C.6k copies delivered to families and professionals in Essex

National interest - 2 health and local authorities also using pack with interest from more.

Family feedback

‘I have been a parent for 12 years, have hundreds of books on neurodiversity and have never seen anything of the depth and quality of this resource’

'This is answering questions that I didn't even know I needed to ask’

'I want everyone i know to read this so they can understand my son better'

Representing our charity and the needs of neurodivergent young people at a range of forums

Local in the Basildon District – carnivals, council events, Wickford voices, BasildON creative, parish and town council meetings, with our local MP etc.

Essex wide – inputting to start-well and live well strategies, members of the Essex all age autism partnership board. Close links to Essex Family Forum.

National – we are active members of:

The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition and by drawing on the lived experiences of our families, are helping to advise on national policy e.g. Mental Health Bill.

The Council for Disabled Children

The Charlie Waller Trust

Joint projects with local services and voluntary groups:

Increasing inclusivity in mainstream sporting groups

Joint training and family support events organised with SAFE charity, Send The Right Message charity, SEND in the Dengie support group, Men's Sheds (in progress)

Initiating an increased range of therapeutic activities for children though building relationships with the groups above and Peaceful Pony, Basildon Mind, Friends of Wickford Memorial Park etc.

Principles

Not apportioning blame for the current gaps and creating positive relationships

Relentlessly representing the needs of our young people and families – at a local and national level

Achievements

Joint project with Essex FA – CPD 'Exploring Neurodiversity' – Objective to improve inclusion within mainstream grassroots sporting groups. To be expanded to other Essex based sports groups in collaboration with Public Health and Active Essex and offered to national FA.

CEO invited to address local medical centre including GPs to improve their understanding.

Cost of living project with local estate agent to distribute £7k of funding to local low income SEND families. Undertaking training with office staff and developing resources including information sheets and social stories.

Feedback from Dr Sue Truman (NHS Manager and Primary Care Adviser) 'We recognise the importance of MyOTAS representing the needs of neurodivergent young people and their families at our strategic planning meetings and to help address health inequalities within our community by striving continuously to create and maintain powerful working relationships with all partners across the Health and Social Care system.'

Feedback from Kim Collins Children with Disabilities Lead at Family Solutions: 'I wanted to feedback from a meeting with my colleagues, we discussed the services MyOTAS is able to provide for neurodivergent young people as well as their families. Family solutions recognise the importance of the work MyOTAS do to support neurodivergent young people and their families and wanted you and your colleagues to be aware of this.'

Paula Farrow our CEO updating services, voluntary partners and families

Our offering has evolved in response to what we hear from children and their families. Formally we undertake an annual survey, and informally, everyone involved with the charity regularly attends events to hear feedback directly and plan future activities in line with these needs.

We are the only charity locally which focuses on the unique needs of neurodivergent people with no associated learning difficulties, and the particular challenges that this group face, especially with regard to mental health challenges. Rather than a disability pathway, they require support and adjustments to be able to access and be included in mainstream activities.

Financial Review

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for the charity during this year were grants from a variety of sources.

- National Lottery
- Essex Community Foundation

- Co-Op
- Arnold Clark
- BasildON Creative
- Tesco
- Essex Association Micro Tech Grant
- Tudwick Foundation
- Local Giving
- Arrun Estates via Douglas Allen Estate Agents and ECF
- Community 360
- Active Essex

In addition, we received funding towards the co-production of the Supporting Your Neurodiverse Child family support pack from the Essex Joint Commissioning Board.

Our total income in money terms was £57,742. However, although not included in our Receipts & Payments Accounts, we have calculated that the donations of services, equipment, office/storage space and volunteer time was in excess of £6,500.

Investment Policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are few funds for long term investment. A review of investment policies will be taken if our income stream significantly increases.

Reserves Policy

The Management Committee has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be approximately 3 months of the annual expenditure. Budgeted expenditure for 2022/23 is £55,000 and therefore the target is £14,000 in general funds. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the Management Committee are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding.

The level of reserves available to the charity as at May 2023 was £10,000 therefore falls short of this target level. Although the strategy is to continue to build reserves through planned operating surpluses, the Management Committee is well aware that it is unlikely that the target range can be reached for at least five years. In the short term the Management Committee has also considered the extent to which existing activities and expenditure could be curtailed, should such circumstances arise.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The organisation is a foundation CIO and was set up in May 2019 and was formally registered as a charity in August 2019. The charity was established under a constitution which established its objects and powers.

In the event of the charity being wound up trustees are not required to financially contribute.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The trustees of the charity for the purposes of charity law and under the charity's Constitution are known as members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Constitution the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of three years, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity for work undertaken as trustees. Due to the nature of neurodiversity support much of the charity's work inevitably focuses upon parents and children. The Management Committee seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. The more traditional business, educational and medical skills are well represented on the Management Committee. In an effort to maintain this broad skill mix, members of the Management Committee are requested to provide a list of their skills (and update it each year) and in the event of particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the Management Committee.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity having been encouraged to attend some of our activities. Additionally, new trustees are invited and encouraged to read our book Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child to familiarise themselves with the ethos of the charity, the context within which it operates and most importantly provide them with an overview of neurodiversity and its comorbid conditions.

Trustees are also provided with the following documents:- MyOTAS' governing document (Constitution), the latest published accounts, Code of Conduct for Trustees/Volunteers/Staff and the Charity Commission's guide "the Essential Trustee". Trustees are also signposted to review all of the charity's current policies, including Safeguarding, GDPR, Health & Safety, Financial Management, etc.

Risk Management

The Management Committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which will allow for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of

volunteers and service users. The charity follows the Institute of Fundraising Practise guidelines. All procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. We ensure that all trustees/volunteers have the relevant DBS checks and safe-guarding training.

Organisational Structure

MyOTAS has a Management Committee of up to 12 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. During the year 2022-2023 the Committee had 8 members (5 trustees and 2 part-time management staff) from a variety of professional backgrounds, relevant to the work of the charity. A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the Chair along with the rest of the committee. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. The Secretary has responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of the charity, individual supervision of the team and also ensuring that the team continue to develop their skills and working practices in line with good practice.

Related Parties

In so far as it is complementary to the charity's objects, the charity is guided by both local and national policy. Three of the management committee are also Family Champions for Essex Family Forum. This is a multiagency group with Essex SEND as its focus. The representation of local organisations within this group has proved invaluable to the charity in establishing improved links within the community and identifying relevant gaps in support, policy developments and prospective funding.

Equity Diversity and Inclusion

As per the stats above, neurodivergent people, particularly those without learning difficulties, face multiple inequalities throughout their lives.

We support a number of families who only require a light touch of support; information and signposting to help. However, there are a significant number of families who are 'off-grid' with service providers, for example if their young person is unable to attend school for reasons of exclusion or emotionally based school avoidance; or they are experiencing complex mental health challenges for which there is little, or no support available. We are committed to working patiently and supportively with these young people and their families to find an access point to help.

We support families from some of the most deprived postcodes in the Basildon Borough and offer outreach sessions to communities in traditionally hard to reach areas. We have had notable successes helping many families with complex needs. (e.g. liaising with assessment services to triage an urgent appointment for

a child whose details had dropped off the system, liaising with family solutions to find appropriate help, helping families to access support for their child at school).

Recent research suggests that autistic people are three times more likely to identify as trans, and eight times more likely to be asexual. (www.therainchcharity.org.uk). We recognise these trends in young people that we support and are keen to expand our offering of training and support groups to provide dedicated help for LGBTQ young people and their families.

Safeguarding

MyOTAS have a safeguarding policy and two trustees (NHS and education experience) with safeguarding responsibilities.

We understand that safeguarding is a significant risk in supporting our young people and we have visited a number of independent schools and other voluntary groups to learn from their experiences.

We have taken a cautious approach to launching and expanding our activities, piloting in small groups first, and maintaining open and honest communication with families. Our approach and principles have developed with safeguarding as a key consideration. For example, we ask parents to attend all of our children's activities and to remain responsible for their child. We also have a family support worker in attendance to be available in case of need and to role model appropriate ways to support children and to help facilitate support and build relationships between parents.

Where children have found sessions difficult, we have found ways to support them without impacting on the wider group. For example, when a child was struggling to play with other children at woodland warriors, we arranged 1;1 sessions, and then re-integrated her back to the group by joining for short but increasing sections of the group session Another child was unable to access group sessions of mindful crafts because of anxiety about the other children present, and we offered 1:1 yoga sessions which she was able to access.

Environment

As a charity seeking to improve outcomes and wellbeing for the people that we support, we recognise our responsibility to role model good practice in the way that we impact the environment.

We do not currently have our own premises, but the environment is a consideration in all that we do.

All of our children's activities are environmentally aware and we seek opportunities to reinforce best practice. For example, we ran a reduce/re-use/recycle project at Woodland Warriors, in line with the Basildon District Council programme. Our mindful crafts re-use old CDs and often use natural materials.

Dated this 17th day of December 2023

Daniel Ireland – Chairperson

Signed .....

Maria Denton - Treasurer

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

MyOTAS My Own Time And Space	No (if any) 1184723

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01-May-22	To	Period end date 30-Apr-23

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations and legacies	4,782		-	4,782	3,578
Grants and Trusts	4,658		-	4,658	41,795
Fundraising Events	1,097	-	-	1,097	1,889
Donations - Yoga	122	-	-	122	141
Donations - Crafts	1,198	-	-	1,198	101
Donations - Woodland Warriors	6,174	-	-	6,174	7,094
Family Support and Training events	304	-	-	304	3,640
Grants and Trusts - Core Costs		7,080		7,080	
Grants and Trusts - Child Activities		9,614		9,614	
Grants and Trusts - Family Supp/Train		20,996		20,996	
Grants and Trusts - Raising Awareness		500		500	
Gift Aid	-			-	212
Refunds	218	-	-	218	576
Sub total *(Gross income for AR)*	18,552	38,190	-	56,742	59,026
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
N/A	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	18,552	38,190	-	56,742	59,026
A3 Payments					
Cost of fundraising	501		-	501	742
Cost of Woodland Warriors	3,280	8,988	-	12,268	14,019
Cost of Mindful Crafts	278	2,668	-	2,946	488
Cost of Yoga	-	1,761	-	1,761	803
Cost of Board Game Club	-	-	-	-	493
Parent Support and Training events	2,763	14,498	-	17,261	9,270
Raising Awareness	3,640	500	-	4,140	57
Admin/Management Salaries	8,659	9,984		18,643	7,222
Travel/Petrol/Parking	227			227	17
Insurance	628			628	1,776
Tel/Web/Email/Zoom/IT	787		-	787	521
Print/Post/Stationery	531		-	531	261
Venue Hire	132			132	
Office/General Admin expenses	60			60	281
Memberships/Subs	283		-	283	166
Sub total	21,769	38,398	-	60,168	36,116
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Printer and Shredder	195	-	-	195	
	-	-	-	-	322
Sub total	195	-	-	195	322
Total payments	21,964	38,398	-	60,363	36,438
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 3,412	- 208	-	- 3,621	22,588
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	17,209	13,819	-	31,028	-
Cash funds this year end	13,797	13,611	-	27,407	22,588

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

B1 Cash funds

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Metro Account	2,516	1,900	-
	NatWest Account	11,170	11,711	-
	Petty Cash	111		-
	Total cash funds	13,797	13,611	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-
		-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Maria Denton	17/12/2023
	Joanne Butcher	**29/01/2024**

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	MyOTAS My Own Time and Space		
On accounts for the year ended	30th April 2023	**Charity no (if any)**	1184723
Set out on pages	1-2 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30/04/2023**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

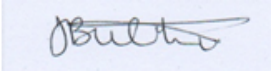
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:		**Date:**	29/1/2024
Name:	Joanne Butcher		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA)		
Address:	40 Arundell Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 2QQ		

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	N/A

MyOTAS

England & Wales - Charity number 1184723

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report - 1st May 2021 to 30th April 2022

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: MyOTAS (formerly Takiwatanga Support Services)

Charity registration number: 1184723

Registered Office: 57a Highcliffe Road, Wickford, Essex SS11 8JP

Trustees (during the above period):-

Daniel Ireland - Chair	Karen Cogger - Vice Chair	Nicola Sheldon - Secretary
Jenne Seibolt	Maria Denton – Treasurer	Marie Findlay

Objectives

Our charity's aims, as set out in our governing document (constitution), are to relieve the needs of autistic children and those affected by social anxiety and their families within Essex by:

1) providing information, signposting to relevant professional agencies and running emotional support groups to enable parents to help their children achieve their academic potential and minimise their child's social anxiety;

2) providing social activities and opportunities for autistic children, tailored to their particular needs, to boost their self-esteem and improve their social skills, whilst enabling them to mix socially with neurotypical peers and siblings;

3) providing educational activities, in small groups, for children who are home-schooled and/or school refusers, as a result of their autism and/or social anxiety issues;

4) providing training to education and health professionals, parents and the wider public regarding the autistic spectrum, the benefits, the challenges and the best methods to support and communicate with autistic children;

5) raising public awareness of autism. Ensuring our work delivers our aims

A formal diagnosis of Autism/ADHD and other neurodivergent conditions is not required to access our services.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we are set up to help.

The review also helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aim and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

The focus of our work

Our main objectives for the year continued to be supporting neurodivergent children and young people and providing support for their families, within the county of Essex. As the country emerged from the pandemic we began to see a sharp rise in the number of families approaching us with concerns about the mental health and emotional well-being of their young person.

As restrictions were lifted we had to adopt a flexible approach to support and activities to reflect healthcare guidelines, throughout the period. We provided:-

- a range of outdoor and on-line activities to promote social interaction, self-regulation and build confidence.
- support groups and informative talks for parents and other professionals Focusing upon providing a calm environment, with small groups and promoting a positive view of autism and its many unique gifts, whilst providing a non-judgemental attitude towards the distressed behaviours that can be displayed when a child is overwhelmed.

In addition, we are working in partnership with other services and voluntary groups to secure the widest range of services is available that best matches the needs of neurodivergent children and their families.

MyOTAS
My Own Time And Space

Activities for Children and Teens

A total of 1263 places were provided at activities for children/teens including:-

12 Sensory Yoga sessions (started in Feb 22)

"It makes me feel smiley, calm and relaxed. I like Mummy Yoga cuddles."

"I like Yoga because it's really relaxing and I have a fun time with Paula."

"The Yoga classes have been a brilliant way for us to come together as a family, to keep both mind and body healthy. Paula gives us a new and interesting programme each week to try. She has provided us with a kind, nurturing, safe and flexible space, with the opportunity to meet other families also living with Autism. As a Mum with 2 Autistic children, I have hugely appreciated having a time to stop, retreat, relax and be in the moment. Each week the girls build their body confidence which is great to see. They are always calmer after each session."

13 Mindful Crafts sessions (started in March 22)

"It's the one thing I look forward to all week." (B aged 13)

"the girls have had so much fun. Thank you for making them feel so welcome. You have such a calm way about you all and the girls were so proud of their fairy gardens. I haven't seen them so enthused about their efforts for a long time.....what an amazing outcome."

"Mindful crafts has been thoroughly enjoyable and beneficial to both myself and my Daughter (13 ASD). It is a peaceful, calm, and safe environment for her to enjoy and partake in arts and crafts which are tailored perfectly to her needs and abilities. Emma who runs the class is very conscious of the children's needs and is understanding and flexible. I cannot tell you how nice it is to attend a session like this as a parent knowing everyone understands, is non judgemental and every session has been meltdown free, which is rare."

MyOTAS
My Own Time And Space

200 Woodland Warriors outdoor activity sessions

"The fact that the kids are not forced to take part. They can dip in and out as they please. The interaction between the fabulous Tiff and the kids and between the kids themselves is the best thing."

"Loved casual structure of group, variety of outdoors activities, no pressure to do any activity. As a parent, having that connection with other families is essential."

"We love that we are able to enjoy being with other friends and families that all understand each other and feel safe."

"Woodland warriors was life changing for us as we had tried loads of other clubs but they never suited our needs and always turned into a negative experience for us and our son. The Woodland Warrior sessions provided, flexibility, understanding/support, life skills, being outdoors and above all fun with Tiff. We have been attending the sessions regularly for years now and our son has grown in so many ways, due to the skills and freedom in these sessions and is now beginning to help new younger children attending the sessions for the first time. I also now have a group of understanding friends who I look forward to seeing as a result of Woodland Warriors."

"My son absolutely loves these sessions. Tiffers really understands the children and can communicate with them individually and as a group successfully. He never gets bored and is constantly reminding me to book. My son has complex needs that many people don't understand but he has found his tribe in Tiffers and the other families who attend."

3 monthly sessions of Board Game Club

"G loved trying out new games and meeting new people. The atmosphere was very low key and we both had great fun, we can't wait to come back!"

Family Support

A total of 2040 interactions to provide family support

10 Relaxation Walks for Parents/Carers at Memorial Park, Wickford - run in conjunction with Action for Family Carers

"I attended today and was really glad I did. I liked how relaxed it was, no pressure to talk but lots of understanding when I did, and such a beautiful location. Looking forward to coming again."

"Really helped to calm me down, relaxation techniques shown for use at home. Nice non-judgemental supportive group, able to chat with parents who understand."

12 monthly On-Line Parent Support Groups inc. guest speakers from SENDIASS and an Occupational Therapist

"It was a small group and I felt it was very personal. I liked being able to speak with and listen to parents/carers who had similar experiences. I also enjoyed listening to a professional (SENDIASS) who was able to offer valuable advice from their side of the fence."

Attended **5 outreach events** at Parents4Parents in Laindon, 2 x Essex Family Forum in Pitsea, SEND Roadshows in Canvey and Rayleigh

6 in-person Parent Support groups, collaborating with Motivated Minds and 3 local schools

"Knowledgeable group. Lots of info They help break down complex issues into simple next step actions"

"Everyone is always so lovely knowledgeable and helpful."

"Friendly and welcoming. Lots of good information."

260 hours spent on 1:1 parent support sessions (either via phone, Zoom or in person). Providing in excess of **520 instances of support** to parents via phone, email, messenger services.

Managing our **on-line Parent Support group** on Facebook, which grew from 584 members in June 2021 to **1.3K members** in June 2022.

"they made me feel confident about what I was doing and gave me the energy to keep fighting for my son'."

""Everyone is always so lovely, knowledgeable and helpful."

"It was nice to know that I am not as alone in this as I thought I was"

Raising Awareness

In addition, MyOTAS is raising awareness of autism and neurodiversity within the community and we are proud to have co-authored the 'Supporting Your Neurodiverse Child' book, co-written by MyOTAS, SEND The Right Message and Essex Family Forum. Over 4,200 copies have been distributed to parents across Essex, plus many more downloaded from the web. We have received excellent feedback from families and service providers.

"I have been a parent for 12 years, have read hundreds of books on neurodiversity and have never seen anything of the depth and quality of this resource."

"This is answering questions that I didn't even know I needed to ask."

"I want everyone I know to read this so they can understand my son better."

"Got my book today – actually could have cried flicking through it. This is going to help so many parents out there. Thank you so much."

"The feeling I had flicking through the book was one of relief. I think so many parents will benefit from it and it will help steer them in the right direction."

Plans for the Future

The charity plans to continue the activities outlined above in the forthcoming years subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

Activity is focussed into three key areas:

1. Children's Activities
2. Family Support
3. Raising Awareness and Promoting Inclusion

Plans are also being developed to provide the following additional services, subject to available funding:-

In response to feedback, we also plan to introduce a programme of family training.

Financial Review

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for the charity during this year were emergency Covid grants, from a variety of sources, including the National Lottery, Essex Community Foundation, Essex Short Breaks, the Co-Op Community Fund, Arnold Clarke and Local Giving. Once again fundraising events were difficult to run, due to Covid restrictions, but we did organise a Christmas Raffle and one supporter took part in the Fun Walk Trust event.

We would also like to thank:-

All the local companies who donated raffle prizes and all our supporters who purchased tickets.

Mrs Thomson from monies raised by Essex Advanced Motorcycle Club following the sad passing of her husband Richard.

The students of Beauchamps High School for nominating us and creating a winning presentation to First Give for their £1000 grant award.

Wickford Singing Group who donated funds to us to run craft groups, when they were winding up their charity.

In addition, we received NHS funding towards the co-production of the Supporting Your Neurodiverse Child family support pack.

Our total annual income in monetary terms was £59,026. However, although not included in our Receipts & Payments Accounts, we have calculated that the additional donations of services, equipment, office/storage space and volunteer time was in excess of £6,000. Full details of our income and expenditure can be found in the attached Charity Commission form CC16 at the end of this report.

Investment Policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are few funds for long term investment. A review of investment policies will be taken if our income stream significantly increases.

Reserves Policy

The Management Committee has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be approximately 3 months of the annual expenditure. Budgeted expenditure for 2021/22 is £55,000 and therefore the target is £14,000 in general funds. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the Management Committee are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding.

The level of reserves available to the charity as at May 2022 was £10,000 and therefore falls short of this target level. Although the strategy is to continue to build reserves through planned operating surpluses, the Management Committee is well aware that it is unlikely that the target range can be reached for at least five years. In the short term the Management Committee has also considered the extent to which existing activities and expenditure could be curtailed, should such circumstances arise.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The organisation is a foundation CIO and was set up in May 2019 and was formally registered as a charity in August 2019. The charity was established under a constitution which established its objects and powers.

In the event of the charity being wound up trustees are not required to financially contribute.

During the year we received a few queries about our Māori name Takiwatanga and we were concerned about the potential for cultural misappropriation. Whilst we loved our Māori name and the translation/message behind it "In their own time and space", we felt that as a charity that represents a disadvantaged minority, it wasn't right to appropriate a name from another disadvantaged group.

We sought input from our families and young people and took the decision to change our name to MyOTAS (My Own Time And Space), keeping the sentiment of the original name.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The trustees of the charity for the purposes of charity law and under the charity's Constitution are known as members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Constitution the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of three years, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity for work undertaken as trustees. Due to the nature of neurodiversity support much of the charity's work inevitably focuses upon parents and children. The Management Committee seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. The more traditional business, educational and medical skills are well represented on the Management Committee. In an effort to maintain this

broad skill mix, members of the Management Committee are requested to provide a list of their skills (and update it each year) and in the event of particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the Management Committee.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity having been encouraged to attend some of our activities. Additionally, new trustees are invited and encouraged to watch a series of short training videos to familiarise themselves with the charity, the context within which it operates and most importantly provide them with an overview of autism and its comorbid conditions.

Trustees are also provided with the following documents:- MyOTAS' governing document (Constitution), the latest published accounts, Future plans and objectives, Code of Conduct for Trustees/Volunteers/Staff and the Charity Commission's guide "the Essential Trustee". Trustees are also signposted to review all of the charity's current policies, including GDPR, Health & Safety, Financial Management, etc.

Risk Management

The Management Committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which will allow for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of volunteers and service users. The charity follows the Institute of Fundraising Practise guidelines. All procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. We ensure that all trustees/volunteers have the relevant DBS checks and safe-guarding training.

Organisational Structure

MyOTAS has a Management Committee of up to 12 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. During the year 2021-2022 the Committee had 8 members (6 trustees and 2 part-time management staff) from a variety of professional backgrounds, relevant to the work of the charity. A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the Chair along with the rest of the committee. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. The Secretary has responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of the charity, individual supervision of the team and also ensuring that the team continue to develop their skills and working practices in line with good practice.

Related Parties

In so far as it is complementary to the charity's objects, the charity is guided by both local and national policy. Three of the management committee are also Family Champions for Essex Family Forum. This is a multiagency group with Essex SEND as its focus. The representation of local organisations within this group has proved invaluable to the charity in establishing improved links within the community and identifying relevant gaps in support, policy developments and prospective funding.

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

MyOTAS (formerly Takiwatanga Support Services)	1184723

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date 01-May-21	To	Period end date 30-Apr-22

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Govt. Grants - National Lottery	-	9,800	-	9,800	8,429
Grants from other sources	1,000	30,994	-	31,994	9,904
Fundraising	1,889	-	-	1,889	5,097
Donations towards cost of charitable services - Woodland Warriors	7,094	-	-	7,094	2,463
Craft Group	101	-	-	101	452
Yoga	141	-	-	141	-
Parent Support - ND Book	3,640	-	-	3,640	-
Training				-	
Transfer from petty cash to bank	50			50	
Donations	3,578			3,578	
Refunds	526			526	
Gift Aid	212	-	-	212	-
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	18,232	40,794	-	59,026	26,345
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
n/a	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	18,232	40,794	-	59,026	26,345
A3 Payments					
Cost of fundraising	742	-	-	742	538
Cost of charitable activities - WW	1,349	12,670	-	14,019	12,479
Craft Group	188	300		488	
Yoga	-	803		803	
Board Game Club	198	294		493	
Parent Support		9,238		9,238	
Parent/Carer Training	32	-		32	
Raising Awareness	57	-		57	
Cost of charity admin/wages	1,242	5,980	-	7,222	-
Trustee meeting costs inc room/refreshm	17	-	-	17	52
Insurance/HR	1,776	-	-	1,776	323
Tel/Web/Email/Zoom/Comms	521	-	-	521	317
Printing/Postage/Stationery	261	-	-	261	115
Training Courses/DBS	281	-	-	281	838
Membership/Subscription fees	166	-	-	166	145
Sub total	6,831	29,286	-	36,116	14,807
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	1,880
Laptop	322	-	-	322	2,492
Sub total	322	-	-	322	4,372
Total payments	7,153	29,286	-	36,438	19,179
Net of receipts/(payments)	11,079	11,508	-	22,587	7,166
A5 Transfers between funds	870	- 1,011	-		-
A6 Cash funds last year end	5,260	3,322	-	8,582	1,416
Cash funds this year end	17,209	13,819	-	31,028	8,582

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Account	17,209	13,819	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Total cash funds	17,209	13,819	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Petty Cash	91	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Daniel Ireland	16/01/2023
		Maria Denton	16/01/2023

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	MyOTAS (formerly Takiwatanga Support Services)		
On accounts for the year ended	30th April 2022	**Charity no (if any)**	1184723
Set out on pages	1-2 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30/04/2022**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

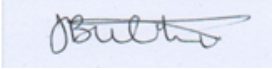
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:		**Date:**	21/01/2023
Name:	Joanne Butcher		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA)		
Address:	40 Arundell Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 2QQ		

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	

MyOTAS

England & Wales - Charity number 1184723

Accounts

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 1st May 2020 to 30th April 2021

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Takiwatanga Support Services

Charity registration number: 1184723

Registered Office: 57a Highcliffe Road, Wickford, Essex SS11 8JP

Trustees (during the above period):-
Paula Farrow - Chair
Nicola Sheldon - Secretary (appointed August 2020)
Maria Denton – Treasurer (appointed June 2020)
Karen Cogger
Marie Findlay
Jenne Seibolt
Daniel Ireland (appointed July 2020)
Samantha Read – (resigned August 2020)

Objectives

Our charity's aims, as set out in our governing document (constitution), are to relieve the needs of children affected by autism or social anxiety and their families within Essex by:

1) providing information, signposting to relevant professional agencies and running emotional support groups to enable parents to help their children achieve their academic potential and minimise their child's social anxiety;

2) providing social activities and opportunities for autistic children, tailored to their particular needs, to boost their self-esteem and improve their social skills, whilst enabling them to mix socially with neurotypical peers and siblings;

3) providing educational activities, in small groups, for children who are home-schooled and/or school refusers, as a result of their autism and/or social anxiety issues;

4) providing training to education and health professionals, parents and the wider public regarding the autistic spectrum, the benefits, the challenges and the best methods to support and communicate with autistic children;

5) raising public awareness of autism.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we are set up to help. The review also helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aim and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

The focus of our work

Our main objectives for the year continued to be supporting the mental health and wellbeing of autistic children and providing support for their parents, within the county of Essex. The pandemic meant that the strategies we had previously used to meet these objectives were now restricted, however we adapted to these restrictions to continue to provide support by :

Providing a range of outdoor and on-line activities to promote social interaction, self-regulation and build confidence.

Organising support groups and informative talks for parents and other professionals

Focusing upon providing a calm environment, with small groups and promoting a positive view of autism and its many unique gifts, whilst providing a non-judgemental attitude towards the distressed behaviours that can be displayed when a child is overwhelmed.

Working in partnership with other agencies to secure the widest range of services is available that best matches the needs of autistic children and their families.

Activities

Woodland Warriors Activity Sessions

Woodland Warriors is an outdoor activity programme run by Tiffany Belford-Fry, or as we like to call her 'Tiffers'. The outdoor setting helps to relax the body and mind, enhancing endorphins within the brain to relax and relieve anxiety and stress. This provides a foundation from which to learn and enhance life skills such as: mindfulness, self-confidence, appreciation for the natural world and making and maintaining friendships. We ran 68 sessions during the year, which were attended by 70 children.

Amazing feedback has been received from children and parents:-

I would like to share my son's experiences of Woodland Warriors, I'll give you a little bit of background information first. T experienced so many difficulties and issues at his previous school due to very little/poor support. This left his confidence and self-esteem in tatters and myself absolutely heartbroken seeing my son being treated in such a way. I pulled him out of school in October and started home-schooling until a change of placement could be secured. My son is a sociable little boy in his own unique way and I know that not having any social interactions for a period of time and then the 3rd lockdown seriously impacted him.

I discovered Woodland Warriors in February of this year and what can I say, Tiffers has been absolutely brilliant in welcoming T into the sessions and knows exactly how to treat each child as an individual. The past 2 months have been a lifeline to both T and myself, my son has really enjoyed the interaction with others and not being judged. All activities have an element of learning and are always fun, real thought and time has been invested in planning each session. What's more because it's fun and interactive I have found that after each session my son wants to know more! My son comes away from each session happy and full or questions, I have seen a real improvement in his confidence and self-esteem.

8yr old: I love the sensory swings and making and doing things like cooking on the fire.
I get to see my friends and we can play.
I don't feel like the only one that has autism anymore.
I love Tiffers she makes me laugh and knows lots of stuff, she's fun!
They don't think I'm weird if I tic, move around (stim), or get upset or anxious.
I learn stuff that's fun and get badges.

Both my children look forward to Woodland Warriors weekly, they enjoy the venue, the environment that is set up and the activities, resources and crafts Tiffers provides are well thought out and executed.
They love Tiffers and talk of her fondly at home and often want to take something they've made to show or share something they've learnt. They often carry on a topic they've learnt at Woodland Warriors at home (Victorians, Vikings) and tell friends what they've done.
They've been able to develop their social skills, speak in front of the group, develop friendships, learn and share new skills, develop greater awareness of nature, history, science, health and safety, craft skills and laugh and have fun!!!

Woodland Warriors On-Line

During lockdown periods we decided to run some on-line activities for our regular Woodland Warrior attendees. A private Facebook group was set up and Tiffers (the WW leader) regularly posted videos and activities for the children to participate in and share their own photos. One activity was building a snow igloo lantern. It was a great way to keep the children entertained and allow them and their parents to stay in touch with the other families from the group.

Stay Connected Activity Packs

We applied for a grant from the National Lottery Covid fund to help with people feeling isolated during the pandemic. We used the funds to run the on-line Woodland Warrior group and to provide 100 activity packs for autistic children. Our volunteers ordered the materials, put together the packs and delivered them all over Essex. The packs included a list of activities and things to make, to help them stay connected with friends, relatives and their communities.

Thank you!! The boxes are amazing, the contents were put together with such care and attention to detail, the print outs are so lovely. The girls love them and were so excited to show daddy.

Thank you for our boxes. My two absolutely loved them! Such brilliant ideas inside.

Huge thank you for making J's day (his words not mine). He is made up with his gifts.

Parent Support Group

Our Parent Support Groups were held every month. The number of parents attending each session varied from 4 to 15. Throughout the year the group was held via Zoom, due to the Covid19 crisis and we secured emergency funding to enable us to continue offering support via Zoom. We also promoted our Facebook Support Group and membership of that group increased by over 185 parents/carers.

Parent Feedback:-

"It was lovely meeting some you on the zoom call last night and share our experiences, both good and bad. Was nice knowing that I'm not as alone in this as I thought I was and there are some truly wonderful people here willing to offer support and a friendly ear so thank you"

"Takiwatanga is a fantastic service that offers meaningful help, advice and support within our community. I received very well-informed advice from them whilst trying to secure the right school placement for my son. They made me feel confident about what I was doing and they gave me the energy to keep fighting for my son. They make such difference in our community by making parents like myself feel like we are not alone. That is so important when you are struggling with the impact of additional needs on your family. They share valuable resources and advice on their social media that is very useful and has often helped me. Karen is lovely and really made me feel supported. Thank you so much Takiwatanga! We love knowing that you guys are just a message or call away"

On-line Parent Support

We responded to over 500 emails, social media messages, texts and phone calls from parents answering their queries.

Facebook Parent Support Group has grown from 378 to 565 members (April 2021)

1:1 Support for Parents

Our volunteers met privately with parents to discuss their concerns. Topics ranged from seeking diagnosis, advice after getting diagnosis, help with EHCP process and securing more support from schools. 42 parents were given in depth help via face to face meetings, telephone, email or messenger services.

Volunteers

Special thanks must be given to our amazing volunteers, employees and trustees, all of whom worked tremendously hard during an incredibly challenging year.

Social Media Presence

Facebook Page has grown from 369 to 610 followers with the biggest post reach being 2,501 people

Instagram following has increased from 103 to 224

Our Twitter account has 134 followers inc. Perry Norton (ECF), Essex is United, Citizens Advice Essex, Yenn Purkis, Jack Ferguson (Labour Cllr for Pitsea NW), Cllr Craig Rimmer, Cllr Jeff Henry (Laindon/Fryerns), Dean Beadle, Essex Family Forum, The Autistic Advocate, Essex YMCA, Louise McKinlay (Brentwood Council leader), Danny Lawrence (Dir. Gateway Radio)

Plans for the Future

The charity plans continuing the activities outlined above in the forthcoming years subject to satisfactory funding arrangements. Plans are also being developed to provide the following additional services, subject to Covid-19 restrictions and available funding:-

- Exploring group tutoring to promote a love of learning and assist anxious children to get back into the classroom
- Woodland Warriors sessions to be held during the day for children unable to attend school due to mental health issues and home-schooled children and further overnight camping trips
- Lego workshops – to promote teamwork, communication and executive function skills
- SEN Yoga classes for children
- Educational Talks and Q&A Sessions from Carmel Lawless (Clinical Psychologist), Mike Kelly (Educational Psychologist), Jenne Seibolt (Occupational Therapist), Nicola Durrant (Autism Specialist Teacher) and Tanya Williams (SEND Law Expert)
- Board Game Club
- Craft Club for Tween/Teen Girls

Financial Review

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funding sources for the charity during this year were emergency Covid grants, from a variety of sources, including the National Lottery, Essex Community Foundation and the Tudwick Foundation. All fundraising events were cancelled and we had to think out of the box to come up with some virtual events to take their place, which included a virtual balloon race across the Sahara and on-line raffle. By September we were able to take part in The Fun Walk Trust's sponsored walk and raised over £1,000.

Our total income in money terms was £25,892.94. However, although not included in our Receipts & Payments Accounts, we have calculated that the donations of services, equipment, office/storage space and volunteer time amounted to an additional £6,000.

Particular thanks should be given to:-

Mr M Jessup for his amazing donation of £800 towards the cost of the storage container.

Jane Jones who cycled 10K a day during the month of April - raising over £300 for Takiwatanga.

Wickford Town Football Club who very generously donated us the free use of the kitchen facilities and storage rooms at the club and allowed us to place our storage container on their land free of charge.

Investment Policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are few funds for long term investment. A review of investment policies will be taken if our income stream significantly increases.

Reserves Policy

The Management Committee has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be between 3 and 6 months of the expenditure.

Budgeted expenditure for 2021/22 is £55,000 and therefore the target is £18,000 in general funds. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the Management Committee are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. The present level of reserves available to the charity of £8,000 therefore falls significantly short of this target level. Although the strategy is to continue to build reserves through planned operating surpluses, the Management Committee is well aware that it is unlikely that the target range can be reached for at least five years. In the short term the Management Committee has also considered the extent to which existing activities and expenditure could be curtailed, should such circumstances arise.

Structure, Governance and Management Governing Document

The organisation is a foundation CIO and was set up in May 2019 and was formally registered as a charity in August 2019. The charity was established under a Constitution which established its objects and powers. In the event of the charity being wound up trustees are not required to financially contribute.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The trustees of the charity for the purposes of charity law and under the charity's Constitution are known as members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Constitution the members of the Management Committee are elected to serve for a period of three years, after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity for work undertaken as trustees. Due to the nature of autism support much of the charity's work inevitably focuses upon parents and children. The Management Committee seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. The more traditional business, educational and medical skills are well represented on the Management Committee. In an effort to maintain this broad skill mix, members of the Management Committee are requested to provide a list of their skills (and update it each year) and in the event of particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the Management Committee.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity having been encouraged to attend some of our activities. Additionally, new trustees are invited and encouraged to watch a series of short training videos to familiarise themselves with the charity, the context within which it operates and most importantly provide them with an overview of autism and its comorbid conditions. Trustees are also provided with the following documents:-

Takiwatanga's governing document (Constitution), the latest published accounts, Future plans and objectives, Code of Conduct for Trustees/Volunteers/Staff and the Charity Commission's guide "the Essential Trustee". Trustees are also signposted to review all of the charity's current policies, including GDPR, Health & Safety, Financial Management, etc.

Some of the training courses attended by trustees and volunteers this year include:-

Helplines Partnership – Helpline Management
IPSEA – Education and SEN Law Course Levels 1-3
Dean Beadle – Autism Positivity
NSPCC – Child Protection and Safeguarding

Risk Management

The Management Committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a strategic plan which will allow for the diversification of funding and activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of volunteers and service users. The charity follows the Institute of Fundraising Practise guidelines. All procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. We ensure that all trustees/volunteers have the relevant DBS checks and safe-guarding training.

Organisational Structure

Takiwatanga Support Services has a Management Committee of up to 12 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. At present the Committee has six members from a variety of professional backgrounds, relevant to the work of the charity. A scheme of delegation is in place and day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rest with the Chair along with the rest of the committee. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met. The Secretary has responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of the charity, individual supervision of the team and also ensuring that the team continue to develop their skills and working practices in line with good practice.

Related Parties

In so far as it is complimentary to the charity's objects, the charity is guided by both local and national policy. Two of the current trustees are also Family Champions for Essex Family Forum. This is a multi-agency group with Essex SEND as its focus. The representation of local organisations within this group has

proved invaluable to the charity in establishing improved links within the community and identifying relevant gaps in support, policy developments and prospective funding.

Our latest recruit to the trustee board is Danny Ireland who brings with him over 40 years of experience in Finance, Governance, Change management and Leadership. His last role was as Operations Director at the Chartered Trading Standards Institute so has business leading board experience in the 'Not for Profit' sector. Another of his volunteer roles is as a member of the Executive Committee at another local charity; Wickford Town FC where he is also their Football Development Officer. This has enabled Danny to help establish a mutually beneficial partnership between the football club and Takiwatanga.

He has developed three key pillars for this partnership:

1) Tactical fundraising activity

This is achieved by the club allowing us to have access to their facilities along with a secure storage unit to hold fund raising activities such as 'Clothes Collection' and sponsored walks for a minimal donation; hence benefiting both charities

2) Developing an Inclusion Pathway for participating at the Football Club

Danny has shown through his personal experience and building a knowledge of the issues faced by children on the autistic spectrum that it is possible for children to successfully play football if there is an appropriate 'safe Environment' for them to express themselves. This opportunity to support inclusion will be formalised into a framework that will be piloted across the club. The approach has also been discussed with the County FA CEO who would be willing to support the further development of the framework as part of their drive for inclusion.

3) Delivery of the Takiwatanga Vision

Wickford Town FC are pursuing a development plan for the 38 acres of land held in trust for them. Through his position within the club Danny is influencing the design of the plans to include facilities that could be utilised by Takiwatanga to support delivery of the charity's key objectives.

Dated this 10th day of December 2021

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01/05/2020	To	30/04/2021

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
National Lottery Grants	-	8,429	-	8,429	1,000
Grants from Trusts etc		9,904	-	9,904	-
Fundraising	5,097		-	5,097	2,845
Fees for charitable services	-	2,463	-	2,463	1,278
Refunds	452	-	-	452	-
Refreshment sales	-	-	-	-	46
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
***Sub total** (Gross income for AR)*	5,549	20,796	-	26,345	5,169
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
N/A	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	5,549	20,796	-	26,345	5,169
A3 Payments					
Cost of fundraising	538		-	538	575
Cost of charitable activities	50	12,429	-	12,479	1,631
Refreshment stock	27	-	-	27	53
Hire of rooms	25		-	25	74
Insurance	-	323	-	323	290
Telephone/website/email	-	317	-	317	191
Printing/Postage/Stationery	115	-	-	115	104
Training courses/DBS	-	837	-	837	143
Survey and Membership Fees	145			145	107
				-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	900	13,907	-	14,807	3,168
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
IT Equipment	-	1,880	-	1,880	15
Equipment inc storage container	-	2,492	-	2,492	570
Sub total	-	4,372	-	4,372	585
Total payments	900	18,279	-	19,179	3,753
Net of receipts/(payments)	4,649	2,517	-	7,166	1,416
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	611	805	-	1,416	-
Cash funds this year end	5,260	3,322	-	8,582	1,416

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Petty Cash	24	117	-
	Bank Balance	5,236	3,205	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	5,260	3,322	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	N/A	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	N/A		-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	None		-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	MARIA	MARIA DENTON	25/2/22
	DANIEL	DANIEL IRELAND	26/02/22

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Takiwatanga Support Services		
On accounts for the year ended	30 April 2021	**Charity no (if any)**	1184723
Set out on pages	1-2 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **30/04/2021**.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

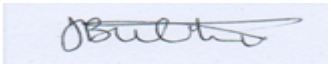
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:		**Date:**	13/02/2022
Name:	Joanne Butcher		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body):	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy		
Address:	40 Arundell Road, Weston-Super-Mare, BS23 2QQ		

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	N/A