



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.

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."

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!"





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

CC16a

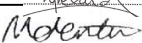
Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01-May-21		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)					
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	-	-	-	-
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
B2 Other monetary assets	Petty Cash	91	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		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
			Daniel Ireland	16/01/2023
			Maria Denton	16/01/2023



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.