

Year ended 31 March 2022

Objectives and activities

The first purpose of HHASG is to promote the health, welfare, care and education of children and young people that have Autistic Spectrum Disorder and their families and carers in the Belfast and North Down area. Children and Young people with ASD and their siblings will be healthier, happier and more confident. The direct benefits are: -Children and young people with ASD are better enabled, prepared, equipped and skilled for life educationally, emotionally and socially

-Children and Young people with ASD will develop skills to fulfil their potential

-Parents are less isolated and have enhanced emotional well being

-Parents learn new skills and knowledge to create a more positive family environment

The second purpose of HHASG is to promote understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder within the wider community and to represent the views of those affected by autism. The direct benefits are:

Develop and understand ASD in the wider community to promote a positive image of ASD which will give communities and ASD families an increase in confidence

Increase knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder in the community to build confidence and capacity with those who are neurotypical.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

Achievements and performance

This year has been a more settled year with lockdown being lifted and our centre being allowed to be opened for most of the year, the children and young people have loved getting back to their normal weekly youth activities. We have been continuing on with our fundraising efforts which included our annual golf charity event, Asda Sit out and the families taking part in sponsored walks etc to help raise funds for our centre.

We were also supported this year again by Three Guineas Trust that we are so grateful for, this allows us to bring in facilitators and offer parents respite times and trips during the summer break this is an invaluable service to those families with ASD and with complex needs.

Other support was achieved this year from the Clear Project supported by the PHA and from CFNI for training programme for parents and volunteers and carers too. This was great as therapies were offered, new techniques were supported and our carers received some time away to learn new skills.

Lisburn Castlereagh City Council have also continued to support our charity with help with equipment and running costs which is always needed to continue to support the children and young people each week. This year they also helped with the costs towards raising awareness during a Twinkle all the way - Sensory Christmas experience we held at the nearby park, we invited all the local schools and businesses to join us and learn something about sensory processing.

We also received funding from Movement for Good this year to purchase new equipment for the children which included sensory toys.

Our weekly sessions continue and are now offered 7 times per week, we aim in 2023 to increase our volunteer opportunities and possibly bring in more facilitators to help with weekly programmes, this will give the committee time to focus on other things. We desperately need new outdoor space for the children and young people as they love spending time out there, and its great to get outside too.

We are also providing facilitated sessions to those young people with high levels of anxiety, who are waiting on appointments with the Health Trust mental health services, we are finding a lot of younger people struggling with their feelings and how to manage them.

2022/2023 has been a busy year, which we have loved as our charity has been able to grow further and support more children and young people with Autism in the local area and right across Belfast, Lisburn/Castlereagh and North Down areas.

