Autistic Children and Carers Together Registered Charity Number 1169099

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Page
Trustees' report	1-8
Independent examiner's report	9
Statement of financial activities	10
Balance sheet	11
Notes to the accounts	12-16

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Legal and Administrative Information

Trustees: Helen Gilder – Chair

Deborah Young Claire Dyson Margaret Kilner Nadine Cain

Sara Bartlett Brown

Honorary Trustees: Dr. Nevyne Chalhoub, Consultant Child and Adolescent

Psychiatrist at Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust

Dr. Val Harpin, Retired Consultant Neurodevelopmental

Paediatrician

Staff: Manager, 17.5 hours per week;

Fundraising & Finance Coordinator, 16 hours per week; Deputy Coordinators (job share), 13 hours per week;

Project Manager, 6 hours per week;

Sessional Playworkers x 22

Principal Address: St Mary's Community Centre

Bramall Lane Sheffield S2 4QZ

Independent Examiner: Terry Scully

Bankers: Lloyds

Church Street

Sheffield

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

Report from the Chair

Welcome to ACCT's annual report for 2022-23. This year, ACCT changed our legal charity name from Asperger's Children and Carers Together to Autistic Children and Carers Together. We still generally refer to ourselves by the acronym ACCT.

This change has been under discussion for some time, recognising that the outdated reference to Asperger's Syndrome in our name does not accurately reflect the wide range of neurodivergent young people that ACCT supports, including those without a formal diagnosis. The decision to change our legal name was made by members at the ACCT AGM on 31 January 2023 and agreed by the Charity Commission in February 2023.

Need and demand for ACCT support has continued to grow through the year. We continued to deliver as wide a range of activities as funding would allow, continuing our activity groups for young people and increasing support for parent-carers and whole family activities.

Acctivate and Teenage Club have continued to be over-subscribed. We continue to manage session bookings carefully to ensure that all places are taken up and places are allocated fairly, with safe staff to participant ratios in place. We have continued to offer 30 places per session; we work with Sheffield City Council as part of the SNIPS contract framework on referrals to these groups as well as supporting self-referrals from families with young people in need who are outside the SNIPS eligibility.

Our ACCT Academy Football Coaching sessions are fully booked most weeks. We have separate pitches for younger children and teenagers, and a move to different pitches at Goals Sheffield with seating at the side of the pitch has been a big help, meaning that parent-carers can more easily use the clubhouse and have a sit down.

We have also continued to deliver gaming groups. Our Saturday morning Minecraft session has time on Creative and Survival modes for different types of challenge, and young people have worked together in this online space and developed their online literacy. We run two Dungeons & Dragons online sessions per week, and have added a monthly session alongside Teenage Club and a monthly in-person game at Patriot Games in Sheffield city centre. D&D has continued to be very popular and we will look at ways of expanding this delivery next year so more young people are able to access the sessions.

The Teenage Drama sessions we piloted with theatre company Forced Entertainment in 2021-22 have continued to be popular with Autumn, Spring and Summer term blocks of sessions delivered. We are working towards ways of delivering this project sustainably in the future.

ACCTing Out is a vibrant group for young autistic adults which runs fortnightly social events, supporting young adults to develop independent living skills. This project has also worked with venues to support them to make their spaces and activities more accessible to neurodivergent people.

Parent-carer meetings ran every fortnight, offering a space for discussion, information sharing, advice and most importantly, moral support. We also commissioned webinars and workshops for parents on issues that arise frequently in meetings, such as Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

We increased the amount of family activities we ran this year. Our fortnightly Autism-friendly family swimming sessions are hugely popular. As a private hire session, we can have lower light levels, less noise and lower numbers to make these sessions more accessible to neurodivergent people. We take a similar approach to the private hire family sessions we have held at Air Haus (a giant bouncy castle park) during the year.

We have also continued to offer Summer day trips and a Christmas pantomime trip. For many families with autistic children, going out together to busy public places is very difficult due to the likelihood of sensory overload and meltdowns; it often means that families stop trying to go out to places together and can become quite isolated. Our trips give parents the confidence to join in, knowing that you'll be around other families who understand neurodiversity and where we may be able to work with venues to make activities more Autism-friendly.

As always, I'd like to thank everybody who gives their time to help ACCT achieve its positive outcomes.

Staff and volunteer recruitment have been a challenge for ACCT over the year. We have fixed session times, so finding Playworkers who can work at those specific times is sometimes difficult. Similarly, we have seen a reduction in new volunteers, with the cost of living crisis perhaps meaning that more students and other prospective volunteers are having to focus on paid work more than volunteering. Despite these challenges, we have managed to keep all sessions running and fully staffed and our thanks go to the staff and volunteer team who provide such great support to children and young people.

Many thanks to my colleagues on the ACCT board who volunteer their time and skills to ensure that our charity is well-governed and provide excellent governance support and strategic advice and support to the responds to strategic and operational needs. The Manager and Trustees have reviewed ACCT's policies and procedures, ensuring we are following best practice for a charity of our size working with vulnerable children.

Thank you to all ACCT members and supporters for everything you do to help improve the lives of autistic children and their families in Sheffield.

Helen Gilder, Chair

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution dated 8th September 2016 and as amended on 17 March 2023. Amendments were made to reflect or new legal charity name Autistic Children and Carers Together and updates to the language regarding Autism rather than Asperger's and to include gender neutral pronouns. This language update meant we also updated our charitable object with permission from the Charity Commission. Our charitable object now reads:

The object of the CIO is to support the needs of autistic children and young people living in the Sheffield area, in particular by provision of services and assistance to them and their family and carers, irrespective of political or religious affiliation, race, gender or sexual orientation.

ACCT previously operated as an unincorporated charity - Asperger's Children and Carers Together (ACCT) Sheffield, registered charity 1123714 - which was re-formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (registered charity 1169099) from 1st April 2017.

Overall governance of the charity is the responsibility of the Trustees who are elected from the membership and co-opted at the Annual General Meeting under the terms of the constitution. The Board of Trustees meets at least four times per year and is responsible for managing the business of the organisation, safeguarding the assets and managing the funds. Day to day activity is managed by and carried out by paid staff and volunteers.

Trustees serve for a term of three years at the end of which they are eligible to stand for reelection. Trustees are primarily drawn from ACCT's 500+ members, who are parents and carers of autistic children. We may also co-opt Trustees from outside the membership to bring additional skills or experience onto the board.

Risk Assessment

The Board of Trustees regularly discusses and reviews all the major risks to which ACCT is exposed, and establishes suitable systems to mitigate those risks.

Financial Review

We budgeted for 2022-23 expenditure at a slightly higher level to 2021-22 based on delivering a similar level of activities but allowing for anticipated cost increases. The cost of living crisis meant that some costs increased more than anticipated.

Fundraising has also become significantly more challenging as a result of the difficulties in the wider economy. Grants, contracts and donations received during the year helped raise the majority of the income needed to run all of our activities, but in light of the cost increases we knew that there would be a shortfall.

Trustees took the decision to continue to run our planned activities and bear the higher costs, knowing that we held a comfortable level of reserves from 2021-22.

We had a deficit of £25,301 in unrestricted funds for the year, which was paid for using charity reserves. This reduced our level of unrestricted reserves from £118,522 at 31 March 2022 to £93,251 at 31 March 2023.

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

We would like to thank the many funding bodies and individuals who continue to support our work financially, helping provide a total income this year of £155,298.

Sheffield City Council remained ACCT's major funder, continuing to fund 28 Acctivate places and 24 Teenage Club places at our weekly multi-activity clubs through the Short Breaks for Disabled Children (SNIPS) programme. Other funders enable us to provide additional non-SNIPS places at Acctivate and Teenage Club for children and young people who fall outside the SNIPS eligibility, e.g. those in urgent need without a diagnosis.

We apply to a wide range of trusts, foundations and other grant-makers to support our work. Our BBC Children in Need Next Steps grant ran until March 2023. We received the second £20,000 installment of our two year grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation, as well as a large number of other grants from charitable trusts and other funding bodies, which are listed in the accounts.

ACCT members and other individual supporters continue to be generous donors, with regular giving and one-off donations providing around 10% of ACCT's income.

ACCT begins 2022-23 in a healthy financial position to continue delivering our expanded programme, especially thanks to our successful National Lottery People's Projects campaign in Spring 2023 which raised £70,000 towards our single activity sessions and progression activities. We know that costs are continuing to increase and the fundraising climate remains challenging. Trustees are monitoring the charity finances and will make decisions through the year on our levels of activity accordingly.

Reserves policy

ACCT needs to hold financial reserves in a realisable form in order to manage cashflow, meet unforeseen expenditure needs and ensure an orderly wind down in the unlikely event that the charity needs to close.

The trustees consider it prudent that the charity should hold unrestricted reserves sufficient to cover at least three months' running costs plus close-down costs. For 2022-23, this meant a level of at least £56,000. At the end of the year 2022-2023, ACCT held unrestricted reserves of £93,251, or approximately 5 months' running costs plus close-down costs.

Public Benefit

Autistic Children and Carers Together provides public benefit by delivering group activity sessions which support autistic children and young people to develop confidence and emotional resilience, practice vital life skills and engage with the world, make lasting friendships, and become empowered to better understand and celebrate the role their neurodivergence plays in their identity.

We work with the whole family, with support for parent-carer and nurturing member families as part of a citywide Autism community. Parent-carers gain knowledge, skills and confidence around parenting autistic children. Families are able to develop the emotional resilience to address internal and external challenges related to Autism, such as managing stressful times of transition and change.

Our activities are designed to enable stronger mutually supportive peer relationships between young people, between parents and between families that can continue outside of ACCT. By supporting a growing and empowered Autism community in Sheffield, we can

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

increase Autism awareness in wider society, improving outcomes by helping families identify neurodiversity and seek support at an earlier stage.

Achievements and Performance

ACCT has been supporting autistic children and their families in Sheffield since 2006. We have learned a lot about the use of fun activities to motivate autistic children to communicate and interact, providing non-judgmental environments in which children are able to explore how their Autism impacts them and practice dealing with the resulting behaviours and challenges in a safe way.

During 2022-23, we delivered the following sessions each week:

Acctivate multi-activity club for 30 children aged 5-12 on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evening **Teenage Club** for 30 teenagers. Sessions held in a self-contained annex of St Mary's Community Centre, Bramall Lane, just outside Sheffield city centre with a hard court area for sports and a grassed outside space. Sessions include games and construction, arts and crafts, a sensory room and football and outside activities.

ACCT Academy football coaching for 30 children and young people aged 5-18. Sessions are held every Friday evening, 6-7pm at Goals Sheffield, which provides all-weather pitch facilities. We have two groups for younger and older children, with two coaches per pitch.

ACCT Gaming Clubs. 3 staffed Minecraft and Dungeons & Dragons online sessions per week plus monthly in-person D&D sessions at Patriot Games and alongside Teenage Club. Sessions support cooperative gameplay, imagination, flexibility and promote safe and positive online behaviour.

We also delivered fortnightly ACCTing Out social group activities for young autistic adults, three terms of Drama Club sessions for teenagers, fortnightly peer support meetings for parent-carers, fortnightly Autism-friendly family swimming sessions and a programme of family day trips and activities throughout the year.

We supported more than 500 autistic children and young people during the year, around 300 through in-person and online sessions and 200 via participation in family activities. More than 100 parent-carers accessed Parents' Meetings and workshops. And more than 140 siblings and other family members via family activities or attending groups.

Plans for 2023-24

We aim to continue to offer a wide range of activities to meet the needs of as many autistic children and young people as possible. We recognise the continuing delays and discouragement for families in seeking diagnosis and applying for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and want to make sure that children and parent-carers can be supported in these circumstances.

During the year, we are revising our delivery models to make sure we manage demand fairly and that we are able to get the most value for money. Costs are increasing and fundraising is becoming more challenging, so we know we need to manage our spending carefully so we are able to deliver as much activity as possible. For example, we are working with theatre company Forced Entertainment on developing a way of delivering our teenage drama sessions in a cost-effective way.

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2023

We are focusing on strategic developments for ACCT in the coming year, beginning with a trustee and core staff away day held in Spring 2023 from which we identified a range of possible development areas for the charity to address current needs, as well as beginning the process of developing improved processes for trustees to quantify and manage key risks impacting the organisation.

Trustees' Responsibilities for the Financial Statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit for the period. In preparing these financial statements, Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to prepare the financial statements. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent Examiner

The trustees have appointed Mr. Terry Scully to provide an Independent Examination Report on the accounts for the year.

On behalf of the board of trustees,

Helen Gilder, Chair

17th October 2023

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Autistic Children and Carers Together

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 10-16.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

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

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

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

T G Scully 63 Argyle Road, Sheffield, S8 9HG Date 17th October 2023

Autistic Children and Carers Together Statement of Financial Activities For the year ended 31st March 2023

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	Notes	£	£		£
Contracts	6	-	52,800	52,800	52,800
Grants	7	40,531	39,265	79,796	133,244
Donations		22,702	-	22,702	20,096
		63,233	92,065	155,298	206,140
0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1		50.040	77.054	400.004	400,000
Salaries NI and Pensions		53,010	77,854	130,864	109,263
Rent rates and Room Hir	е	8,473	17,039	25,512	21,993
Activity Delivery Costs		12,106	21,348	33,454	12,993
Equipment		-	-	-	1,683
Training		5,838	-	5,838	4,301
Travel		-	360	360	252
Volunteer costs		28	796	824	237
Office costs		2,205	-	2,205	3,209
Fundraising costs		753	-	753	752
Finance and accountancy costs		2,358	-	2,358	2,203
DBS checks		962	-	962	1,321
Professional fees		354	1,099	1,453	-
Insurance		1,334	-	1,334	1,249
Depreciation		763	2,995	3,758	2,151
Examiners Fees		350	-	350	350
		88,534	121,491	210,025	161,957
					_
Surplus/(Deficit)		(25,301)	(29,426)	(54,727)	44,183
Total funds brought forwa	ard	118,552	44,697	163,249	119,066
Total funds carried forwa	rd	93,251	15,271	108,522	163,249

Autistic Children and Carers Together Balance Sheet At 31 March 2023

		2023	2022
	note	£	£
Fixed Assets	8	8,984	12,742
Current Assets			
Cash at bank and in hand		100,295	152,528
Debtors and accrued income			832
		100,295	153,360
Current Liabilities			
Accruals and deferred income	9	757	2,853
		757	2,853
Net current assets		99,538	150,507
		400.500	
Net Assets		108,522	163,249
Funds	4.4	45.074	44.007
Restricted	11	15,271	44,697
Unrestricted		93,251	118,552
Total Funds		108,522	163,249

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on the 17th October 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Helen Gilder, Chair

Accounting Policies

1 The financial statements are prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of investments and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

a) Incoming resources

Incoming resources have been included on a receivable basis. Grants and voluntary income are accounted for in the year in which they are received unless receipt has become certain at the balance sheet date, and allocated to the period in which it applies if appropriate. Resources restricted to a specific purpose are carried forward until spent. Other income is accrued as it becomes due.

b) Resources expended

Resources expended are recognised in the period in which they are incurred, and include attributable VAT which cannot be recovered. The analysis follows a natural classification.

c) Allocation of costs

Costs directly related to an activity are allocated to that activity. Support costs, which are necessary to deliver an activity but do not themselves deliver the activity, are allocated in proportion to the benefit attributable. Governance costs are those costs incurred in meeting statutory and constitutional requirements.

d) Restricted funds

Funds are identified as restricted where they are received for a specific purpose or project and where the donor may require repayment if the conditions are not met.

e) Donations in kind

Donations in kind or goods or services are accounted for using the trustees' estimate of their value. No value is attributed to the activities of trustees or voluntary helpers.

Accounting Policies - continued

1 f) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are included at original cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided to write off each asset over its estimated useful life on a straight line basis.

The applicable rates are:

Musical equipment 20% IT and visual equipment 25%

Notes to the Accounts

2 Taxation

As a registered charity, ACCT is exempt from income and capital taxes on its charitable activities.

3 Trustees' remuneration and related party transactions

Trustees received no remuneration. Expenses were paid in reimbursement of costs incurred on behalf of the charity. No more than £100 was involved in total. No trustees reported any interests in contracts involving ACCT.

4 Staff costs and numbers:

-	Stan costs and numbers.		
		2023	2022
		£	£
	Wages and salaries	124,233	104,116
	Pension contributions	5,843	4,359
	Health care scheme	788	788
		130,864	109,263
	Staff (part time)	26	22
	No employees were paid more than £60,000.		
5	Fees for examination of accounts	2023	2022
	Independent examiner	£	£
		350	350

6	Contracts	2023	2022
	SCC Short break contract	52.800	52,800

The SCC contract is part of the Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS) framework and funds Short Break activity places for autistic children and young people at Acctivate and Teenage Club

7 Grants

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	iulius	iuiius	2023	2022
BBC Children in Need	750	29,040	29,790	36,281
Garfield Weston Foundation	20,000	-	20,000	20,000
Morrisons Foundation	-	4,600	4,600	-
Sheffield Town Trust	4,500	-	4,500	4,500
NHS Sheffield CCG	2,500	-	2,500	1,572
The James Neill Trust Fund	-	2,500	2,500	-
Happy Days	2,000	-	2,000	2,000
Sheffield Church Burgesses Trust	2,000	-	2,000	-
Forced Entertainment	1,781	-	1,781	1,465
Westfield Health Charitable Trust	-	1,125	1,125	-
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
Charities Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
Cutlers Company Charitable Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
J G Graves Charitable Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
Olive Lawrence Memorial Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
Sir John Eastwood Foundation	1,000	-	1,000	-
Voluntary Action Sheffield	-	1,000	1,000	4,058
Other grants and trusts	2,000		2,000	63,368
	40,531	39,265	79,796	133,244

In addition to the above the trustees wish to acknowledge the following trusts and grant making bodies who have contributed towards the funding of the charity during the year.

The Dixon Pitchfork Charitable Trust Fund The Fitton Trust Trustees of Elsie Lawrence Deceased The Vulcan Rotary Club

Accounting Policies - continued

8 Fixed Assets

	Cost	IT Equipment £	Visual Equipment £	Total £
	At 1/4/22	35,972	2,637	38,609
	Additions	-	_,	-
	At 31/3/23	35,972	2,637	38,609
	Depreciation			
	At 1/4/22	23,608	2,259	25,867
	Charge for the year	3,621	137	3,758
	At 31/3/23	27,229	2,396	29,625
	Net Book Value			
	At 31/3/23	8,743	241	8,984
	At 31/3/22	12,364	378	12,742
9	Creditors - amounts falling due within one ye	ear		
			2023	2022
	Taxes and social security		-	631
	Accruals		757	2,222
	Deferred income		-	
			<u>757</u>	2,853
10	Analysis of Net Assets between Funds			
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
		funds	funds	2023
		£	£	£
	Tangible fixed assets	1,400	7,584	8,984
	Current assets	92,608	7,687	100,295
	Creditors falling due within one year	(757)	-	(757)
		93,251	15,271	108,522

11 Restricted Funds

	Balance at	Incoming	Resources	Transfers	Balance at
	01/04/2022	resources	expended	Transfers	31/03/2023
SCC Contract	_	52,800	(52,800)	-	_
BBC CIN, Next Steps	-	29,040	(29,040)	-	-
National Lottery	9,351	-	(9,351)	-	-
Postcode Neighbourhood Trust	8,537	-	(8,537)	-	-
SCC Covid Recovery Fund	13,701	-	(13,701)	-	-
Voluntary Action Sheffield	2,529	-	(2,529)	-	-
Sheffield Autism Partnership	-	1,000	-	-	1,000
Westfield Health Trust	-	1,125	-	-	1,125
JG Graves Charitable Trust		1,000	(1,000)	-	-
Morrisons Foundation		4,600	(288)	-	4,312
James Neill Trust Fund		2,500	(1,250)	-	1,250
Restricted Asset fund	10,579		(2,995)		7,584
	44,697	92,065	(121,491)	-	15,271

Restricted funds were received for the following purposes:

SCC Contract	Support for Acctivate and Teenage Club
BBC CIN, Next Steps	Support for activities and parents
National Lottery	Support for ACCTing Out young adults' activities and joint
	working with SAPAG
Postcode Neighbourhood Trust	Football activity costs
SCC Covid Recovery Fund	Support for online clubs and gaming groups
Voluntary Action Sheffield	Support for ACCTing Out young adults' activities and joint
	working with SAPAG
Sheffield Autism Partnership	Support for ACCTing Out young adults' activities
Westfield Health Trust	Support for ACCTing Out young adults' activities
JG Graves Charitable Trust	Swimming activity costs
Morrisons Foundation	Swimming activity costs
James Neill Trust Fund	Support for Drama activities