

Charity trustees' annual report - London Autism Group Charity

1st April 2021- 31st March 2022

Your charity's name: London Autism Group Charity

Registration number: 1176341

Address: 66 Chase Way, London, N14 5DG.

Trustee names: Dr Chris Papadopoulos (Chair), Morgan Papadopoulos, James Gordon, Emma Lazenby, Marianna Dean

Its structure and details of how it is managed, including how it recruits trustees:

The trustees follow and abide to the Charity's Governing Document which is based on the Constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose only voting members are its charity trustees ('Foundation' model constitution).

The appointment of new charity trustees follows the following rules:

(1) Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of two years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

(2) In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Its activities and objectives in the year:

Our activities this year have been aligned with our overall charity objective which is 'to relieve the needs of individuals in London (and surrounding counties) with a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, and their family carers, by the provision of information and support'.

We believe we can achieve this objective by conducting activities related to the following goals:

- To provide support for autistic people and/or their family carers living in London or surrounding counties
- To promote social inclusion of autistic people and family carers.
- To promote social awareness and acceptance of autism and to reduce autism stigma and discrimination
- To advance the mental and physical health and wellbeing of autistic people and family carers

Its achievements and performance, including reporting on its public benefit:

In the past year, we have conducted the following successful and impactful activities:

1. Continued management of the London Autism Group. The London Autism Group is a private Facebook group aimed at supporting anyone whose lives have been influenced by autism and reside in or near to London. As of the end of March 2022, we had approximately 2969 members. The group is extremely popular and active, with 2287 of the 2969 members

being 'active' on the group in the past month (i.e. they have read or interacted with posts). Also, each month, we receive over 52,000 views on posts made. The group consists of a wide and balanced socio-demographic and includes members who identify as autistic, family carers, health and social care professionals, scientists/researchers and more.

2. The Autism Podcast: The Autism Podcast continues to be extremely successful and impactful. The aim of the podcast is 'to improve our understanding of autism, boost acceptance, reduce autism stigma, and generate impactful, transformative ideas ranging from practical everyday advice to thoughts on policy, practice, and wider socio-cultural challenges.' We have released 3 new episodes during this period with a wide range of guests and impactful topics. Our statistics continue to rise; we now have almost 54,000 downloads and a growing membership. We appear among the first results listings when the word 'autism' is searched for in most podcast apps (including Apple Podcasts). We also appear among the top Google listings when 'Autism podcast' is searched for. We have also been listed in many 'top autism podcasts' lists (e.g. https://blog.feedspot.com/autism_podcasts/). Overall, we are confident that our podcast is among the most listened to autism-related podcasts in the world and continues to create considerable impact.
3. Community Café: We launched a new monthly in-person Community Cafe/drop-in scheme in Feb 2022 which has been highly impactful. It takes place on the second Sunday of every month, between 1pm and 3pm. It is held at the fantastic St Andrew's Church Hall in Southgate, N14 5PP. The entire Autistic community are welcome: Autistic people and Carers, no official diagnosis or pre-registration is necessary. People can just come on in, relax, have a hot drink and some biscuits, meet others and, ultimately, build crucial social capital.
4. Autistic led expert mental health, wellbeing and identity support: A significant activity starting this year has been the funding and commissioning of autistic professionals in mental health and autistic identity to support Autistic people and Carers that come to us in crisis. Through our network of expert contacts we can book specialised sessions that support specific areas of Mental Health in unique and effective ways. Because of our knowledge of Autistic lived experience, we can recognise the problems and direct people to the correct professionals. Many of the professionals we work with are Autistic themselves, and therefore offer specialist support that is in very short supply. Some examples are:
 - i. Supporting Child Mental Health.
 - ii. Exploring Late Autistic Diagnosis and Identity.
 - iii. Living with trauma, bullying and the effects of crime.
 - iv. Addiction.
 - v. Autism Stigma and Self-stigma.
5. Website: We have continued to improve our website in the past year (londonautismgroupcharity.org) which details our charity's mission and values, the work that we do, and how to get in touch. As can be seen on the 'What We Do' page (<https://www.londonautismgroupcharity.org/what-we-do>), we have also produced several accessible maps that users can gain information about legal services, services, schools and more. These maps have been accessed more than 50,300 times.

6. Community livestreams: During the past 12 months, we produced more Facebook-based livestreams to provide expert advice and support regarding the support of the community's mental health and psychological wellbeing. These videos have been watched over thousands of times. We interviewed a range of autistic experts and professionals who answered questions from the community
7. London Autism Befriending scheme: Our befriending scheme for autistic adults and the wider autism community continued to develop and is running very successfully. The scheme provides provide friendship for people (16yrs+) living in London and surrounding counties including autistic people, parents and family carers. The scheme to support people's mental health and reduce feelings of loneliness which is particularly important given the times we live in. It involves people being paired with one of our charity volunteers who make contact via whatsapp and, if you wish, 1-1 conversations over Zoom.
8. Workshops and training: We have facilitated a range of different free workshops for the community to support their wellbeing including training events for healthcare students and workplace staff, school students and SEND teachers
9. YouTube training videos: We commissioned autistic adult and digital creator Savan Gandecha (from SavanFilms - <https://www.youtube.com/c/SavanFilms/> and <https://www.instagram.com/savvyaboutautism/>) to provide a free introductory workshop into producing YouTube videos.
10. Charity volunteer Tracy Clements did this interview with the Express Newspaper where she talks about her Autistic discovery and late diagnosis. Tracy discusses her ability to mask and the exhausting toll that this takes, as well as the struggle of personal and professional relationships for Autistic people (<https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/1530947/Autism-symptoms-what-is-women-late-diagnosis>)
11. Funding support: We have funded a range of therapies for multiple vulnerable individuals in the autism community who have required support for their mental health or vital equipment for the wellbeing of their autistic children.
12. Supporting research - we have supported multiple research studies by (a) advising researchers on how to work with the community and (b) enabling researchers to access the autism community.
13. London Autism Sibling Support Group: We have continued to provide our monthly support group specifically for siblings of autistic people. The support group aims to give a safe space for members to share experiences, connect and get advice and support
14. Neurodiversity articles: We have published several articles pertaining to neurodiversity and other themes related to our charitable objectives
15. Stack recruitment: We have supported Stack Recruitment by advertising their excellent service and linking the community with them. This has enabled autistic people to find employment
16. Supporting new autistic advocates: We have continue to sponsor young autistic people to achieve their aspirations (My Autistic Sparkle)
17. Annual newsletter: We published our annual 2021 and 2022 newsletters for continued transparency to the community on what we have been doing to support the autism community: 2022:

https://www.londonautismgroupcharity.org/_files/ugd/96ec05_6dce4482f8b74adf89ed69678cfe6b09.pdf; 2021:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NuT_hmVUYvY3_N_ZdiakqSrZxSPxKlyA/view?usp=share_link

A financial review including any debts and details of your reserves policy (if applicable):

The Charity has raised **£2916.75** in funds and has spent **£2549.37**.

Current balance as of April 2022 is **£5199.66**

Details of any funds held as a custodian trustee: n/a

			Account Balance April 2020	4907.47
Date	Info	Deposit	Withdrawal	
12/4/2021	S Boreham Donation	181		
15/4/2021	Stripe Payments	67.37		
16/4/2021	Audible		7.99	
26/4/2021	JustGiving membership		18	
4/5/2021	Stripe Payments	194		
4/5/2021	Zurich Insurance		96	
17/5/2021	Audible		7.99	
24/5/2021	Amazon		71.65	
24/5/2021	PayPal Petittresoi	30		
24/5/2021	PayPal Emergent-Diver	30		
25/5/2021	JustGiving membership		18	
26/5/2021	Stripe Payments	9.51		
27/5/2021	PayPal Petittresoi		30	
28/5/2021	PayPal JaneMcAuley		200	
28/5/2021	PayPal Emergent-Diver		30	
10/6/2021	Amazon		75.21	
10/6/2021	PayPal Emergent-Diver		30	
21/6/2021	Facebook Payment	155		
25/6/2021	JustGiving membership		18	
17/8/2021	Amazon	89.19		
31/8/2021	Zoom		143.88	

27/9/202			
1	Amazon		46.98
12/10/20			
21	PayPal Petittresoi		30
18/10/20			
21	PayPal Sav		40
19/10/20			
21	PayPal Petittresoi		60
19/10/20			
21	PayPal Petittresoi		60
19/10/20			
21	PayPal Petittresoi		60
1/11/202			
1	Stripe Payments	130.89	
1/11/202			
1	PodBean		81.20
1/11/202			
1	PayPal JDreamer		54.70
1/11/202	PayPal Emergent-		
1	Diver		10
10/11/20			
21	Stripe Payments	24.07	
23/11/20			
21	Stripe Payments	48.35	
8/12/202			
1	Stripe Payments	14.37	
13/12/20			
21	Amazon	94.94	
13/12/20			
21	PayPal Petittresoi		120
22/12/20			
21	PayPal DLowenthal		100
13/1/202			
2	SJP CH FOUND	250	
26/1/202			
2	PayPal Petittresoi		60
2/2/2022	PayPal CJVohl		435
10/2/202			
2	Solopress		46.73
14/2/202			
2	PayPal Netty		60
14/2/202			
2	Asda		21.84
14/2/202			
2	PayPal Petittresoi		120
23/2/202			
2	Amazon	126.68	
10/3/202			
2	PayPal Netty		60
10/3/202			
2	PayPal Netty		60
10/3/202			
2	PayPal Netty		60
10/3/202			
2	PrintPond		9.46
11/3/202			
2	PayPal AJ3Morrison		20
14/3/202			
2	Stripe Payments	145.45	

14/3/202			
2	Asda		5.45
16/3/202			
2	Amazon		68.99
17/3/202			
2	PayPal AutisticInclus		10
21/3/202			
2	Stripe Payments	28.93	
21/3/202			
2	Facebook Payment	797	
21/3/202			
2	Amazon		32.22
22/3/202			
2	Hertfordshire CC	500	
28/3/202			
2	PayPal YvetteGenn		70.08
		TOTAL	TOTAL
		2916.75	2549.37
		Account Balance April 2021:	
		£5199.66	