



HACS

Hillingdon Autistic Care & Support
Registered Charity Number 1183576

Annual Report 2023/24

Hillingdon Autistic Care & Support Ltd (1183576)

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Achievements and Financial Summary

“Minimising disability, maximising ability”

Governance and Staffing

Board of Trustees (Directors) 2023/24

John Friel	Chair
Nicholas Smith	Treasurer
Jean Palmer	Secretary
Nancy Harvey	
Grahame Reynolds	
Sean O'Halloran	
Ricardo Mullins	
Janine Bozic	
Siobhan Savidge	

Sessional Staff 2023/24

In addition to our core staff team, we have a team of over 30 sessional staff members who support our Children and Young People's service and provide additional Job Coaching support.



Staff Team 2023/24

Antoinette Mullally	<i>Chief Executive</i>
Stephanie Mullally	<i>Operations Director</i>
Maeve O'Connor	<i>Business Support Officer</i>
Katherine Eaton	<i>Adult Services Manager</i>
Samantha Richards	<i>CYP Service Manager</i>
Niamh Campbell	<i>Autism Advisor</i>
Kevin Mullally	<i>Family Support Lead</i>
Niamh Steed	<i>Employment Specialist</i>
Tamika Isaie	<i>Job Coach</i>
Eddie Carlos	<i>Job Coach</i>
Amal Mumin	<i>Job Coach</i>
Emma Costick	<i>Job Coach</i>
Annie Stone	<i>Job Coach</i>
Luke McCabe	<i>Job Coach</i>
Natalie Oliver	<i>Health & Wellbeing Coordinator</i>
Victoria Stewart	<i>Adult Support Worker</i>

Our Services 2023-2024

Service and Activities	Outputs and Outcomes
<p><u>Autism Awareness</u></p> <p>Representation on Hillingdon Autism Partnership Board and sub-working parties.</p> <p>Joint facilitation of the Hillingdon Expert Reference Group (ERG) with another local Charity. The ERG is a forum of autistic adults who work together to inform LBH's development of Autism Strategy and support/services offered to residents.</p> <p>Autism Awareness sessions for schools, community groups, health and social care providers and employers.</p> <p>HACS Outreach Awareness meetings at school parent meetings across the borough, e.g. Coffee morning programmes to reach parents/carers within the borough.</p>	<p><u>Outcomes for beneficiaries included:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased awareness of autism and improved access to support for families through understanding of HACS support available• Improved participation of residents with Hillingdon, giving them a voice to shape and influence the services they receive through HACS representation on council boards• Positive societal impact, starting off with our local community outreach, changing attitudes and misconceptions around Autism by reframing how Autistic people have often inaccurately been portrayed
<p><u>Family Support</u></p> <p>Telephone helpline offering information, advice and guidance for autistic individuals and parents/carers/professionals providing support to autistic individuals (areas of support include support with new diagnosis, special educational needs in schooling, behavioural issues, welfare, and benefit rights)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We responded to 380 new enquiries (who have not previously accessed our service) for information, advice and guidance, of which 271 were parents/carers seeking Family Support.• An additional 573 parents/carers previously known to the service before this year also accessed advice, guidance or support from the Family Support Team. Support for those who contacted us may have ranged from short-term engagement, such as a telephone helpline call, to more intensive users who have received a high degree of 1-2-1 support for longer-term issues such as school placement breakdown.

Delivery of three-monthly autism surgeries (2 morning and 1 evening) provided by members of the team that have a wealth of knowledge to support families in need.

Delivery of one coffee morning per month

Family Support team offering individual casework support, outreach support and advocacy.

Behaviour and anxiety support meetings

Support to understand and access the local offer.

EHCP request and transfer support

Supporting parents with mediations

- We facilitated 20 virtual surgeries and 7 face-to-face sessions.
- We provided 5 Behaviour and Anxiety support meetings for parents/carers, which were reintroduced in November 2023 due to feedback from parents/carers.
- We hosted 9 Coffee Mornings, welcoming guest speakers from Hillingdon Talking Therapies, Hillingdon Adult Social Care, and the Families Information Service who presented an overview of Hillingdon's Local offer.

Outcomes for beneficiaries included:

- Increased resilience of parents of autistic children to develop their capacity to overcome challenges of autism
- Improved family cohesion and well-being of families affected by autism - 82% of parents using our services have indicated that they are very satisfied using HACS services
- 78% of parents/ carers who completed our annual surgery agreed that HACS has improved wellbeing for themselves or their autistic family member

Training

Specialist workshops for parents/carers and professionals.

Well-being courses for parents/carers

Bespoke specialist training for schools, community groups, health and social care providers and employers

We delivered 19 workshops for a range of groups including parent/carers, professionals, and autistic adults. We covered a range of topics from:

- Autism: Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Understanding Autistic Children & Young People
- Understanding & Supporting autistic adults
- Autism & Sensory Differences
- Adult Learning Webinars

Outcomes for beneficiaries included:

- Increase parent/carer skills and knowledge of autism to become more self-sufficient
- Improved outcomes for autistic people by improving skills of professionals supporting and working with them
- Equipping work forces with knowledge to ensure autistic people are correctly supported

Children and Young People's Services

Twice monthly Saturday club for autistic children aged 8-13 years

Twice monthly Saturday club for autistic young people aged 14-25 years

Sportwise: Weekly multi-sport sessions introducing young people to a wide range of fitness activities whilst building their confidence, self-worth, fair play and teamwork.

Weekly youth session (South Ruislip) for young people aged 14-25 years.

x4 Holiday Playschemes per year for 8-25 years

Family well-being activities e.g. Christmas Pantomime trips

Personalised short-breaks services (commissioned by London Borough of Hillingdon Social Care)

Brand-new Wellbeing Hub for young adults aged 16-25 years, funded by Awards for All and CNWL/London Borough

During 2023/24 we relocated all Saturday clubs to Yiewsley Grange School, which has proven to be an excellent fit for the children and young people we support. The site features specialist rooms, including a sensory and LEGO room. As well as outdoor facilities equipped with zip lines, climbing structures, and swings.

Once again, we were appointed by The London Borough of Hillingdon as a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) provider for Summer 2023, enabling us to offer 124 fully funded places with a free hot meal during the Easter and Summer holidays.

- We ran the following holiday Playschemes:
 - *Easter 2023 (5 sessions, 35 clients)*
 - *Summer 2023 (16 sessions, 57 clients)*
 - *October playscheme 2023 (4 sessions, 38 clients)*
 - *February playscheme 2024 (4 sessions, 34 clients)*
- 62 young people accessed Saturday club sessions throughout the year
- 20 young people participated in our Wednesday and Thursday youth clubs

Through the Young Adult Wellbeing Hub, we delivered:

of Hillingdon offering social activities, one-to-one mentoring/advice and a peer-led group learning programme began in April 2023

- X 1 Cohort (8-week) peer support and psychoeducational programme. The peer-led group learning programme was an eight-week psychosocial educational group, co-produced and delivered by one of our volunteer expert by experience. The sessions aimed to empower young adults to understand their diagnosis
- 15 gaming group sessions- providing young adults with a social space to meet, chat and play card, board, and portable video games
- 7 transition mentoring sessions for young adults which covered topics such as Applying for university and university life, future careers options, friendships, applying for jobs, revision and time management

Outcomes for beneficiaries included:

- Increased access to social activities for autistic children and young people
- Improved social interaction skills of autistic children and young people, enabling them to live more fulfilling and independent lives
- Enhanced well-being of autistic children and young people in Hillingdon
- 85% of parents that completed our annual parent/carer evaluation indicated that they agreed their child and themselves have benefited from increased access to play opportunities through attending the Saturday club
- 80% of parents agreed that HACS has increased access to social activities for children and young people with autism

Skills and Employment

- 1-2-1 information, advice and guidance for autistic adults who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET)

This year 50 young people and adults accessed our Skills and Employment programme. This is through our Get the Job cohort, DFN Project SEARCH programme and post-employment support through the DWP Access to Work scheme.

- 1-2-1 job application/interview preparation sessions for autistic adults as part of the Get the Job programme and Project SEARCH Supported Internship programmes
- In-work Support provided to Autistic adults in paid employment through job coaching funded by Access to Work
- Supported work placements for young people and adults aged 16 years over (autism and learning disabilities)
- Worked in collaboration with local companies to host insight days to give learners a more concrete understanding of career options
- "Autism in the Workplace" training for employers
- Support with welfare benefits and entitlements to remove barriers to employment (Universal Credit, Freedom Pass, Access to Work applications)
- Entered third year of Project Search Supported Internship In partnership with Hillingdon Council in the Civic Centre
- Launched new DFN Project SEARCH Programme with The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Ran a Summer Skills Podcast Project planned and led by young people to dispel myths about autism

Project Search

- 9 interns graduated in July 2023 from the Project Search programme of 2022/23
- 12 young adults were enrolled in September 2023 for this year's cohort of Project Search interns across two site

Summer Podcast Project

- 15 autistic young people took part in the creation of a podcast
- 6 podcast episodes were created with local employers and community advocates and famous guests including Anne Hgearty, Ruby Woods 'Rubyofmyeye' an autistic blogger, an autistic author Sarah O'Brian and Learning Disability Nurse, Sarah Burton

Get The Job Programme

- 20 adults accessed the Get the Job programme
- 30 Get the Job workshops delivered
- 8 guest speakers hosted workshops including organisations such as The Prince's Trust, Nationwide, Shaw Trust and The Money Charity
- 2 learners successfully secured paid employment and 3 learners entered into a voluntary position

In-work support

- Between April 2023 and March 2024, we supported 18 Autistic adults in paid employment through Access to Work. Employers included London Borough of Hillingdon, Skanska, Oakwood School, HACs and Selco

and interview local employers and community advocates about their experiences

- Commenced new employment preparation programme 'Get the Job' hosting workshops on CV writing, the job application process, money management, communication, and motivation to work with guest speakers

- 5 'Autism in the Workplace' training sessions delivered to employers to equip them with the knowledge to best support their Autistic employees

Outcomes for beneficiaries included:

- Reduced barriers to employment for adults with learning disabilities or autism
- Improved economic well-being of adults with learning disabilities or autism
- Increased independence for adults with learning disabilities or autism
- Supporting employers to make reasonable adjustments for autistic employees whilst increasing their levels of independent support through training

Upon completion of the weekly job clubs, participants completed a survey to give feedback on the benefit that the sessions have had:

- 70% of respondents said they either agree or strongly agree that they feel confident in job interviews
- 80% of respondents said they either agree or strongly agree that they feel confident about getting a job

Feedback from our 'Autism in the Workplace' training:

- 100% of employers who attended training reported that they were "very satisfied" with the training and 100% rated the training as "excellent" with feedback such as:

"It is vital that team leaders are fully aware of autistic traits so then can best support their team"

“I enjoyed learning more about autism and how it can affect individuals. I feel a lot more confident supporting someone in my workplace, or in general, who has autism or is neurodivergent”

Adult Support

- 1-2-1 information, advice and guidance at pre- and post-diagnostic stages
- Adult social activities including a monthly dinner or lunch club to a local restaurant and monthly trips to activities of choice e.g. bowling, mini-golf, cinema
- We launched a new social activity ‘creative arts group’ due to popular demand of the autistic adults
- Autism learning programme – 9 learning webinars designed for autistic adults to help them to understand autism
- Facilitated Hillingdon Expert Reference Group, an advisory group for the Hillingdon Autism Partnership Board
- Partnered with Geri Daly, wellness coach, who delivered a 4-week course called the ‘Wellness Hour’ for autistic adults
- Launched a new project in Ealing providing support to autistic adults with employment and social skills

We delivered...

- 13 adult social activities
- 8 dinner/lunch clubs
- 5 creative arts sessions
- Up to 20 clients attended each of the social activities
- X 2 cohort (8 week) Autism Learning Programme for newly diagnosed adults
- X 1 Cohort (10 week) wellbeing workshops delivered by drama and movement therapists, Givespace - focussing on exploring and developing tools to approach mental health and emotional wellbeing through creativity
- X 1 cohort (4-week) Wellbeing course ‘The Wellness Hour’ in partnership with Geri Daly, Wellness Coach - teaching mindfulness skills and strategies for managing stress and anxiety
- 4 winter wellness sessions running throughout the winter months of December 23- March 24
- 4 women’s groups for Ealing residents
- 3 Skill Smart Employment sessions for Ealing residents

Outcomes for beneficiaries included:

- Improved well-being of adults with learning disabilities or autism

- Partnered with drama and movement therapists, Givespace, who ran a 10 week course of wellbeing workshops for autistic adults
- Introduced monthly “Winter Wellness” drop-in sessions offering a warm, safe space at our Resource Centre to autistic adults with social opportunities, advice, and hot drinks/refreshments

- Increased independence for adults with learning disabilities or autism
Maintaining and improving wellbeing since the pandemic
- 100% of adults either ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ agreed that they felt more confident in themselves due to attending the HACS socials and activities
- 90% of adults reported that they either ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ agreed that they felt happier after attending the HACS socials

"HACS works very hard to provide a range of services from activities to work opportunities and advice and advocacy for both members and their families, they listen to what members want"

"You employ wonderful staff"

"I think HACS staff and programs are excellent and can honestly say I can't think of any other way they can develop the service"

"HACS have been a sounding board for me they have supported me 1:1 at times. They know what people are going through and understand autism and how to support me, I also feel I can be me with the HACS staff and I don't have to mask with them"

"Organises holiday and Saturday clubs well and has nice coffee mornings with useful information and advice"

"HACS do a fantastic job they are always there if we need support or advice"

"Provide an invaluable service with the playschemes. Enables us to spend time with our other son."

"My son loves the playschemes"

"The people that work there are understanding and care. They do not take outburst personally"

"Staff who are caring and understanding of challenges of autistic children and young and older adults. HACS supports and provides activities for young people. These can be the only activities autistic young people may have access to."

"Friendly hardworking supportive staff"

"They listen and understand"

"Thank you for your support I really appreciate that you understand me and do not take offence to anything I say when I am having RANT"

"Their flexibility to accommodate young person's needs. Also, they get to know the families they work with"

"Specialist knowledge around autism by people who are invested in supporting autistic individuals. They really get to know the families they support."

"Long history of consistent good work"

Helps families not to feel isolated, very welcoming to people, very good at accommodating unique special needs in addition to autism.

"HACS provided a safe space for me to engage in conversation without being mercilessly judged. I could breathe easy, knowing that I now had a network of people that cared who would support my efforts to get into work... I'm satisfied with where I am now, grateful to HACS for allowing me to get here, hopeful for more autistic adults to realise their hidden potential"

"It feels nice to be part of the 'HACS family'"

"Always ready to help and support. My son has gained so much confidence because of HACS and it has helped him with the structure of his week with valuable work."

"Good communication, friendly and understanding staff"

"Run by people who understand the challenges"

2023/24 at a glance



Funders and Supporters 2023-24

Grant Funders 2023-24

London Borough of Hillingdon
BBC Children in Need
A P Taylor Trust
Orchyd Charity
Alstom
Three Guineas Trust
London Youth
Global Make Some Noise
London Marathon Trust
London Borough of Ealing
Sisters of the Holy Cross
London Borough of Hillingdon – CNWL Mental health grants
Imperial Health Compassionate Communities
Rethink Mental Illness – Northwest London Suicide Prevention Programme
National Lottery Community Fund
Benevity Corporation

We would also like to thank the following local businesses and **supporters**:

Nationwide
Velocity Worldwide
Ground Construction
Ward Williams
Centrica
Barrett Foundation
VGC Group
MP Moran
ASEND
Premier Mechanic Installations
Sexton Financial Services
Podtrack
BCC
Kelly Communications
PF Cusack
Coyle Equipment Services
Grundon Waste
Timothy Palmer-Brown
Intercept Fire & Security
Lovell Chohan
Geldards LLP
Kerry Association



Three Guineas

