

# Sen Talk CIC

*Championing Neurodiversity*



## Annual Review and Impact Summary 2018-2019



**"Gained confidence as a mother and helped me through providing support and honest, non-judgemental advice. It's been somewhere to turn to during crisis"- Parent respondent, Service Survey 2019**

A child with curly hair is wearing a lion mask with a yellow face, pink nose, and white muzzle. They are wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, and are holding a blue rope. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

## Impact Summary

This impact summary serves as a celebration for the hard work and dedication of all involved in Sen Talk, all our phenomenal children and young people and our wonderful parents and carers and supporters who believed in our service and have contributed to the success illustrated here, in this report.

## About Sen Talk CIC

Sen Talk is a community interest company that aims to improve social and emotional health for children and young people. The organisation provides opportunities that support autistic children (ASC/ ASD) and children with attention deficit disorders (ADHD/ADD) and with social communication difficulties develop key skills in emotional literacy through interest-led play and positive social experiences.

Sen Talk is steered by its stake holders and values a lived experience approach to employment and service design and delivery, favouring those with direct experience. The organisation prides itself on empowering parents to share skills and knowledge to improve the lives of children and young people, and runs successful projects for children, families, professionals and the wider community to increase awareness and acceptance of neurodiversity within society.



# Our mission and values

## Mission statement

Our mission is to challenge discrimination of autistic children (ASC/ASD) and children with attention deficit disorders (ADHD) by bridging the gap between provision, care and education within mainstream society to bring about long lasting social change towards disability.

## Vision

Our vision is to create a society that understands, accepts and includes autistic children and children with attention deficit disorders and social communication differences so children and young people reach their full potential.

## Our Shared values

- **Empowerment**

Empowering parents, professionals and the wider community to effectively advocate for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) but also, empowering children and young people (CYP) to develop self-belief and confidence in their own abilities

- **Equality**

Treating people fairly and providing fair access to opportunities and activities that can enhance positive social and emotional wellbeing

- **Collaboration**

Working in partnerships to challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity through inclusion

- **Sustainability**

Focussed on long lasting social change that provides a fairer society for disabled people and their families

## Sen Talk 5 Year Plan

**As a rapidly growing organisation we are more than aware of the increasing need for specialist provision and services for children and young people with SEND and are dedicated to improving social and emotional health for children and young people on the autistic spectrum, and or with social communication differences and attention deficit disorders who are of school age.**



January 2020 will mark the first year of implementing our new 5-Year plan to enhance Sen Talk's service offer to provide children and young people, families, professionals and the wider community with a service reflective of the current need within society. Part of our 5- Year plan will be increasing our staffing levels to meet the growing demand for services like ours.

The recruitment of new team members will include the addition of a dedicated children's service lead who will oversee all children's clubs and activities and lead a team of volunteers and casual workers/ SEND assistants to provide opportunities for children and young people to develop confidence and self-esteem and increase positive social and emotional mental health. The second appointment will be for a parent and carer support lead who will oversee our peer support programmes, workshops and personal development opportunities and will also be responsible for providing support and advocacy for families and strengthening our outreach within the community, working closely with local schools, local authorities and other applicable statutory and non-statutory services.



## Sen Talk 5 Year Plan

The increase in staffing will coincide with the expansion of our children's activities which will include 1 further Brick Club (Lego®-Based therapy) session per week term-time and the launch of our afterschool club in January 2020, to be part of our regular weekly term time offer. The expansion of these programmes is designed to meet current demand and reduce existing wait times for support, but also allow for further growth capacity.

The recruitment of casual playworkers and SEND assistants will be pivotal to ensuring the organisation provides a consistent offer that not only reaches goals to provide improved social and emotional mental health for children and young people, but also maintain our strong relationships with families and the wider community as a reputable service that puts the service users at the fore front.



Sen Talk will continue to build national recognition as a unique training provider and by July 2020, will seek to expand the current training offer to accommodate 2 further planned training sessions per month and additional opportunities for bespoke and in-house training packages in Lego®-based Therapy, Social Skills, Autism Inclusion and Attention Deficit Disorder training and will continue to plug areas in the market that contribute to our understanding of autism, attention deficit disorders and social communication needs.

***"By 2025 The organisation will be recognised as not only a leading training and development organisation specialising in autism, attention deficit disorders and social communication nationally, but a crucial support service for parents and carers, children and young people London wide" Annaliese Boucher CEO***



# The Chair's report

Eoin Heffernan



Twelve months ago, we looked at the year ahead and resolved to pursue an ambitious set of targets and audacious growth.

Today, I could not be prouder of the incredible successes that Sen Talk have achieved this year towards providing better outcomes for children with special educational needs and of improving the emotional and social development of children with autism and ADHD.

Central to our growth in the past year has been the Mini minds, Big ideas! Project generously funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Through this project we are able to significantly scale our service offering and provide our beneficiaries with a strengthened voice.

Recognition of our progress is best evidenced by our beneficiaries and the impact that Sen Talk has had of their lives. And as we continue to challenge the discrimination of children with disabilities, our impact is also measured by the success of our promotion of inclusion in society at large.

More locally, we were delighted to win the Wandsworth Business Awards this year in both Best Charity or Social Enterprise and Best Business with Under 50 Employees categories. Everyone involved with Sen Talk already understood the outstanding ability, commitment and leadership of our CEO Annaliese Boucher but these awards were wonderful external recognition of her work and the impact of the Sen Talk team.

# Words from our Chief Executive

Annaliese Boucher



Looking back over the past twelve months, I am incredibly proud of what Sen Talk has been able to achieve in such a short time and the impact that the service has made on some of the most vulnerable children and young people and their families.

In 2016, I had an ambitious idea to start a peer support group for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and could not have imagined how pivotal that idea would be in shaping the service that exists today, meeting both the needs of the family and the

child. Sen Talk is aimed specifically at children with less 'visible' or hidden disabilities such as autism spectrum conditions (ASC) and attention deficit disorders (ADD/ADHD) especially those attending mainstream education settings. Our cohort of children and young people are too often overlooked and misunderstood due to their potential academic capabilities, verbal capabilities, which often mask the true extent of their difficulties.

Both ASC and ADHD conditions will entail social communication differences, making it difficult for individuals to relate to peers and understanding the social world. This unfortunately, can sometimes lead to challenging behaviour, sometimes resulting in social exclusion and impacting the child or young person's social and emotional wellbeing.

Sen Talk is ultimately about providing positive social opportunities to enhance the lives of children and young people, by developing confidence, self-esteem and self-belief, but also providing a space for parents, to learn, grow and develop their understanding of neurodiversity alongside other like-minded individuals.

This year, we are especially pleased with all our accomplishments, with the biggest testament to our success being our rapid growth in registrations






which has tripled over this period, with 200 regular attending families now registered with the service. We have estimated our total engagement over the past year to be around **700** individuals accessing at least one of our service areas, activities or events over the last twelve months.

Other successes include the launch and delivery of our pilot parent counselling project, kindly funded by the Wandsworth Clinical Commission Group (CCG) through their Community Grant Scheme, which has helped parents access a non-judgemental reflective space to receive person centred counselling, greatly received and recognised by some parents as the 'missing link' in support for families pre and post diagnosis.

We have also been able to increase our specific targeted support this year, focussing on harder to reach families, including children at risk of exclusion and work within the black and ethnic minorities communities (BME) in partnership with local charities and organisations to tackle division in the community, and bring about long-lasting social change.

Further to the addition of new projects, we have been pleased to have been able to offer our families another round of respite breaks and trips this year, which were fully accessible opportunities for children and young people, parents and carers and siblings through our Awards for All grant funded by the Lottery Community Fund. We have also been delighted to have been able to continue our regular children's activities in weekly Brick Club (Lego®-based therapy) and our Communicate Youth Club, both aimed at building social and emotional skills and funded through Children in Need.

Other developments and successes have included the appointment of a dedicated Administrative assistant, Aisling Griffith, who has triumphed in her role since she began in February this year, quickly becoming the friendly face of Sen Talk, and looking after all day to day administrative tasks. Aisling has shown great resilience in her role and has adopted our 'all hands on deck' approach to the service delivery and notably excelled when she was immediately thrown into facilitating our Annual ADHD Conference in April, along with some of the industry's leading professional speakers. The event saw over 50 parents, carers and professionals come together to advance



their knowledge around the ADHD diagnosis with a key feature on mental health, to better support children and young people's overall wellbeing.

Our year truly ended on a high when we also recently received the wonderful accolade of being awarded the Best Social Enterprise and Best Business with Under 50 employees at the Wandsworth Business Awards for our training and professional services. We are extremely proud of how the courses and programmes that we have worked on over the last few years have come to fruition, and of the warm reception that these have received.

“Sen Talk ran an excellent workshop for our staff and volunteers raising awareness about autism and ADHD. Annaliese conveyed everything brilliantly, including practical ways that we can support individuals and families with additional needs. It was fascinating and I have no doubt it will improve our service to families. Plus, the volunteers loved it” –Laura Ferreira – Homestart Wandsworth Scheme Manager

We are rightly so, incredibly proud of all our achievements, which really would not have been possible without the continued support of our families, children and young people, the dedicated Sen Talk staff team, and the phenomenal dedication of our volunteers who facilitate all our children's activities.

We thank you all and look forward to another year of thrashing milestones in 2020!



# An overview of our activity

## Children's sessions

We have been able to provide **56** planned children's sessions in Brick Club and Communicate Youth Club with over **374** children and young people attending over this period. We were also able to work collaboratively with A2ndVoice CIC, autism organisation to co-host a Family Fun Day over the summer, with over **500** attendees throughout the day.

## Respite family breaks

We have been able to provide **5** respite family breaks with **102** attendees in total. Trips included a visit to Bocketts Farm, London Zoo's Special Children's Day, Godstone Farm, Special Equine Therapy Session at Morden Stables and a special out of hours visit to Kew Gardens Temperate House.

## Parent Talks and Seminars

We have run **15** Specialist Talks with **135** attendees as well as our annual ADHD Conference with **52** attendees. Talks included guest speakers from Kings College London, Skylarks charity, SENSAS (Education Advocacy), Max Green (Autistic Speaker), Vanessa Bobb (A2ndVoice and member of All-Party Parliament Group for Autism), Paediatric Consultant Dr Serena Haywood (St Georges Hospital)

## Training sessions for professionals

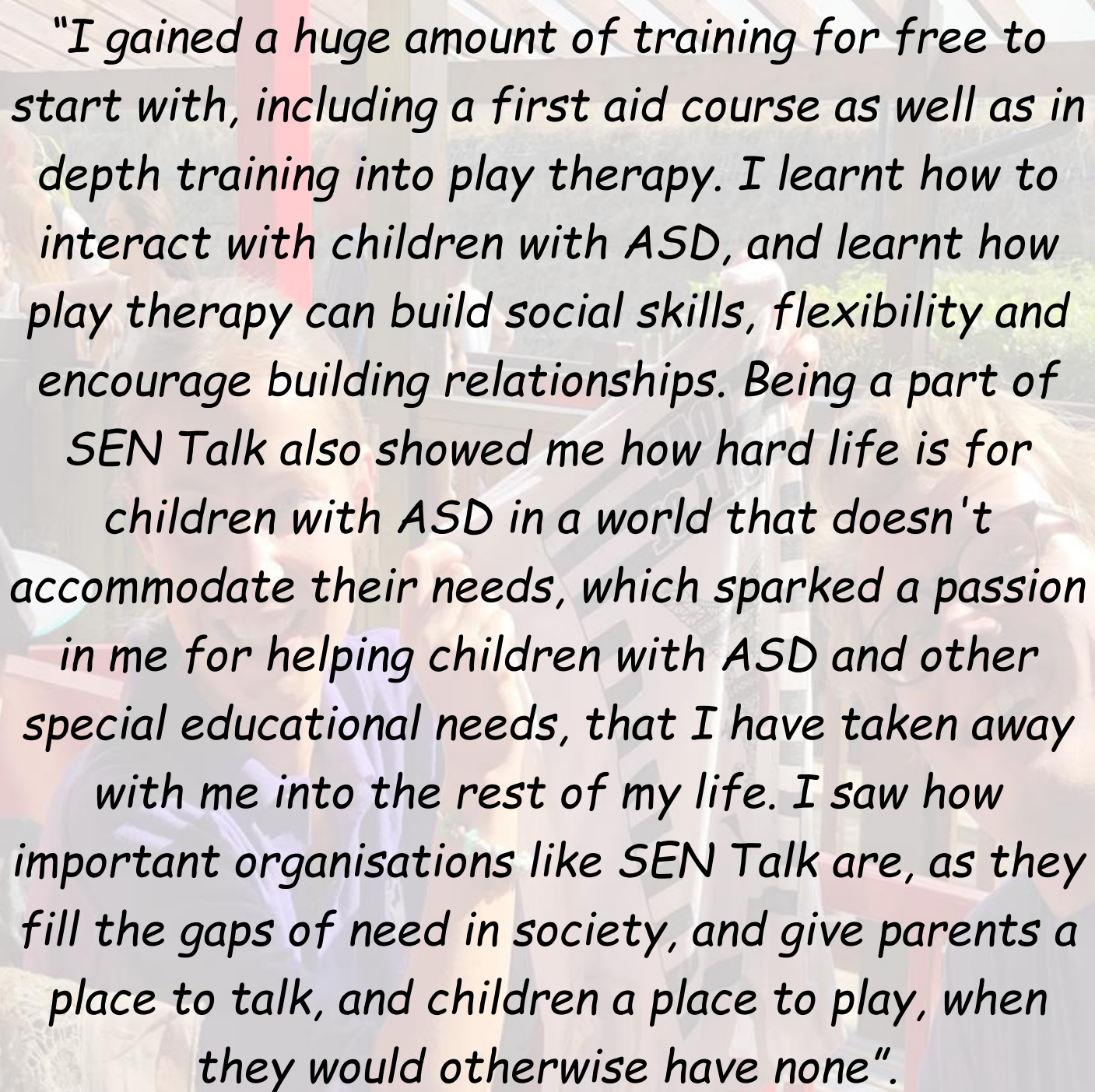
We have delivered **18** training sessions and development workshops for professionals with a total of **201** people who are better equipped to support children and young people with SEND and their families

## Counselling for parents and carers

We have delivered **24** counselling sessions to **7** parents and carers

## Coffee Mornings

We have hosted **15** regular coffee mornings for **88** parents and carers and **3** specialist coffee morning's hosted at local schools for parents of pre-diagnosed and newly diagnosed children.

A group of children are sitting in a circle on the floor, smiling and engaged in an activity. They are in a room with large windows and wooden beams. The text is overlaid on the image.

*"I gained a huge amount of training for free to start with, including a first aid course as well as in depth training into play therapy. I learnt how to interact with children with ASD, and learnt how play therapy can build social skills, flexibility and encourage building relationships. Being a part of SEN Talk also showed me how hard life is for children with ASD in a world that doesn't accommodate their needs, which sparked a passion in me for helping children with ASD and other special educational needs, that I have taken away with me into the rest of my life. I saw how important organisations like SEN Talk are, as they fill the gaps of need in society, and give parents a place to talk, and children a place to play, when they would otherwise have none".*

**Tom Stewart, Volunteer**



" I find the positivity, expertise, realism and commitment of the service a great resource. The collective approach enabling peer support which empathises the importance of families sharing and knowing they are not on their own means it is particularly valid and underpins everything you do"- parent respondent, service survey 2019

## Financial Summary 2018/19

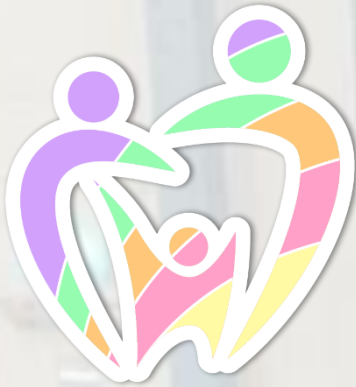
<b>Income</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Donations	£5,859	£13,598.15
Events	£1,129	£1155.40
Grants	£30,037	£110,091.30
Services	£3,329	£5,935
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£40,354</b>	<b>£130,879.85</b>

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Activities	£1,003.11	£4,528.56
Overheads	£4,781.58	£24,756.68
Project costs	£20,037	£5,357.32
Staff costs	£1865.59	£47,134.34
Staff CPD	£914.72	£1,072.21
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£28,602</b>	<b>£82,849.00</b>



*With thanks to our funders*





**SENTALK**

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