



Autonomie
Independence through education and support

Annual Report 2020/21





Acting Chair Foreword

What a year it has been!

It has been my pleasure and privilege to have taken on the role as acting chair in what has been a most challenging and difficult year for everyone, but for a small charity like ours the challenges brought by Covid-19 have been huge.

The staff team however, have risen to every challenge with enthusiasm and a dedication that has been incredible.

The support of Jerome and the team at the National Lottery Community Fund has helped to enable the work to continue virtually, by providing additional funding for tablets and a Zoom license that has been invaluable to help connect with the young people and their families.

The versatility of the staff team to adapt to online delivery that has included everything from cookery and craft to makaton signing and quizzes, has been exemplary.

Despite the restrictions, business has continued, the appointment of our Family Voice Coordinator - Sharon Quinn and successful bid for ongoing funding by Lynne Morrison (Chief Officer) and David Coates (Parent/Committee Member) has secured funding for a Youth project for the next three years.

I am also so impressed by the physical changes to the Lilac House, these will hopefully help to enable more face-to-face delivery of services in lovely modern surroundings.

I would really like to thank Lynne and her team, who without them, there would be no Autonomie. Trevor left us such a legacy, but Lynne has been able to carry his vision forward and create her own vision with enormous dedication and hard work, always striving for the best for the young people and their families.

Thank you
Cathy Brannigan, Acting Chair

Just some of the highlights of the past year

"Autonomie has been an absolute life saver this year. We cannot thank you enough." - Family

Successfully modified services to online delivery
Expanded our team
Introduced vital support for families with Family Voice Hub
What Next? Programme ShoeBox Appeal for the Homeless
Family Voice Hub facilities upgrade at Lilac House
Regular family quiz nights with raffles and prizes
Wellbeing / activity packs for young people
Check-in, catch-up, varied and fun Zoom activity sessions
Autonomie 2020 virtual summer scheme
Families presented staff & volunteers with pamper hampers
Wee Critters Interactive Animal Education Show
Easter egg special delivery
4th of July Independence Day celebrations
Young people participated in task of the week
Convenient cookery, baking and cookalongs with Tessie
Makaton with Bethany
Halloween fancy dress family fun
Special Santa Saturday
February wellbeing month
Random acts of kindness challenge
Mum and dads nights in courtesy of Zoom
Donated baked goods to Hope Harbour Belfast
Yoga classes for Autonomie Very Important Parents
Weekly Tea-tastic Tuesday for parents via Zoom



"Hope you realise what a lifeline Autonomie has been to our children over lockdown. Keeping them in a routine with such creative and well thought out activities has been amazing!! We really appreciate you all."
- Family

Digital inclusion

We secured additional Community Fund NI funding with young people able to loan 10" Lenovo Smart Tab M10 tablets with pre-installed software and apps so no young person was left behind.





"Autonomie are my 2nd family."
- young person

Our impact



98%

of young people participated in online activity sessions during Covid-19 restrictions.



100%

of young people and families were satisfied with our services.



48%

increase in the number of young people and families we supported.



Case study

Aisling Skillen, 26

Service user & volunteer at Freedom2Choose programme

"I like helping others." This is what inspired Aisling to become a volunteer at Autonomie. In February 2020, Aisling along with her fellow volunteers organised the What Next? Programme ShoeBox Appeal for the Homeless, an inspirational initiative led by the young people to give something back and help others.

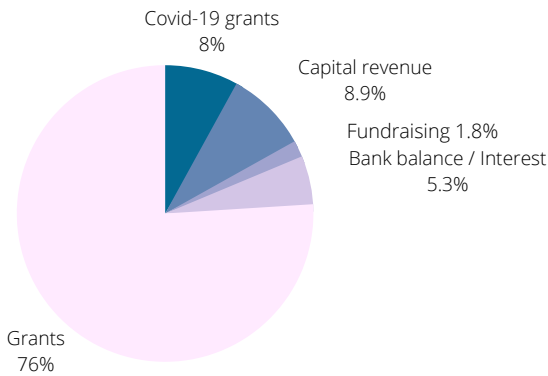


"We are so grateful for all you have done for us over this difficult time. I truly don't know how we would have managed with Autonomie. My son has so enjoyed the sense of community and connection. We really appreciate your hard work on our behalf." - Family

Plans for the future

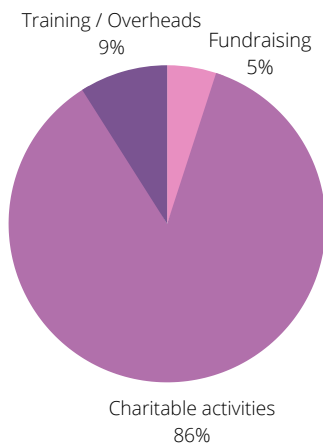
Next year provides us with opportunities to support even more young people with complex additional needs and across 8 local council areas. We will support more parents, siblings and extended families raising a child or young person with additional needs by delivering high-quality practical and emotional support.

Financial overview



Income 2020/21

Our total income for 2020/21 was £161,339.56. This was possible thanks to the generosity of all our supporters over the past 12 months. Our goal is to use their support as effectively as possible to ensure that every young person with additional needs can reach their potential and that every family raising a child or young person with additional needs is supported.



Spend 2020/21

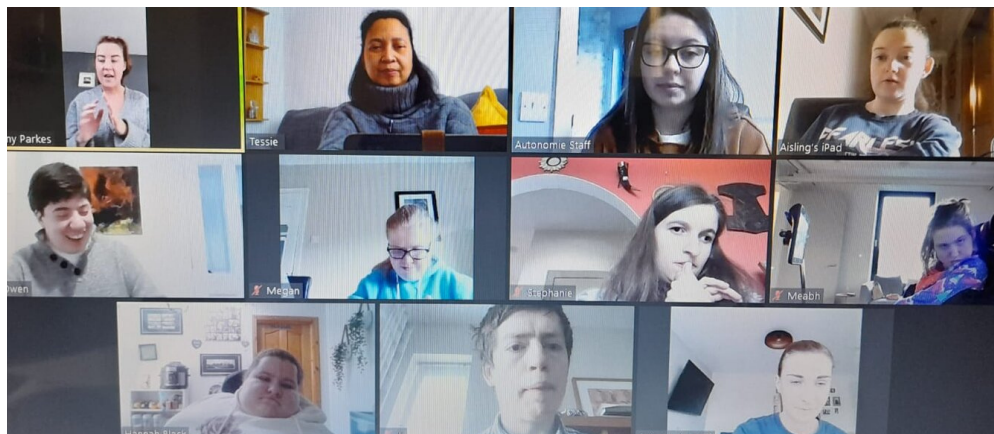
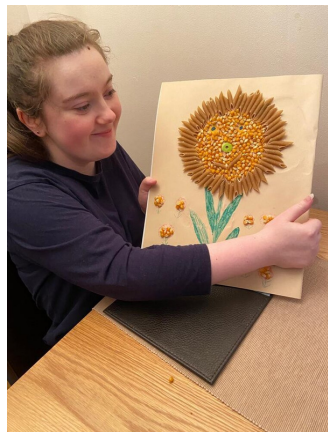
In the last year our total expenditure was £158,275.40. 86% of this was spent on delivering our life-changing charitable activities.



Our supporters

We would like to thank the National Lottery Community Fund NI, Community Foundation for NI, TBF Thompson Foundation, South Belfast Partnership and Halifax Foundation NI for their fantastic support during 2020-21.





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