

resources for
autism



SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2021/22

WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

This was my second year as CEO of Resources for Autism and reflecting about it now, it was a year of both recovery and growth.

After successfully navigating the pandemic turbulence of the first year, this year we continued to operate in a COVID secure ways, we re-opened some services that were paused during COVID and we really took time to reflect on supporting our community with recovery. The pandemic impacted on everyone but it had a disproportionate impact on members of our Autism community and those who love and care for them. Loneliness and isolation for autistic adults, growing mental health concerns for young people and adults as well as parental wellbeing and resilience became immediate priorities. As a result, in addition to existing services, we started a volunteer led phone buddy service, an adult counselling service, we extended the support to our parent community and we increased the capacity of our behaviour team who can offer more specialist support.

We increased the number of people who benefited directly from our services by 10% (2349 individuals) and we welcomed 307 new individuals to our services.

As a CEO I am fully aware that our staff are every day heroes without whom none of what we do would be possible. Anyone who works in front line services supporting vulnerable people have felt the impact of the last two years on their own wellbeing. As an organisation we were very

proactive in this area taking multiple steps to elevate the conversation around staff wellbeing to same level as other matters of importance. We are still on a journey but we are committed in ensuring that our organisation is a mentally healthy place to work, to develop and to be of service to others.



There is no doubt that times are challenging for charities at the moment. A combination of post pandemic fatigue, staff shortages, rising costs and social/political upheaval, all impact on our ability to reach those most in need of support. As an organisation we are facing our future with a robust strategy in place, a strong and renewed Board 60% of which are experts by experience, a staff and volunteer wellbeing strategy and an organisational culture that is values driven, agile and filled with genuine desire to create an inclusive world for autistic people and their families. I could not be more proud of what we collectively achieved as an organisation with our community and for our community.

This report is filled with stories of our reach and our impact. I hope you enjoy reading it and whether you are a member of our community, a commissioner, a funder or a staff member, you remain connected with our mission. ■

Dolyanna Mordochai



resources for
autism
TEAM RFA

resources for
autism
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ABOUT RESOURCES FOR AUTISM

Resources for Autism is a registered charity whose vision is a society where individuals on the spectrum can live as equal citizens in their community. We provide practical services for children and adults with a diagnosis of autism and for those who love and care for them.

We see autism as a neurodevelopmental difference that can affect how an individual perceives the world and relates with people around them. Our fundamental starting point is acceptance for an individual exactly as they are. We work collaboratively with them, their environment and those around them to ensure each individual is understood and supported to be the best version of themselves they can be.

Our aim goes beyond developing resilient individuals and families to creating resilient services that are aware and inclusive or neurodivergence.

We have a team of trained, enthusiastic and kind staff and volunteers offering a wide range of support. All our staff are autism specialists who understand alternative communication and sensory needs. We operate in London and the West Midlands.

In compiling our social impact report this year we went on a journey internally to look at the whole of resources for autism and how it impacts our community. We drew on fresh data qualitative and quantitative from autistic people who use our services, their parents, our volunteers and commissioners. We talked, we observed and we counted to have a good scrutiny of what was on offer and to fully understand how we impact our community. ■

“I feel I finally have somewhere that gets me and how I feel. They understand what I am trying to say and can listen without judgement. They understand parts of my world and can listen to me without an agenda”



88% of beneficiaries reported being happy or very happy with service received



OUR REACH IN 2021/2022

Totals for this time period

852

CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE

337

ADULTS

284

PARENT AND
CARERS

2,394

INDIVIDUAL
FAMILIES AND
CARERS

36,000

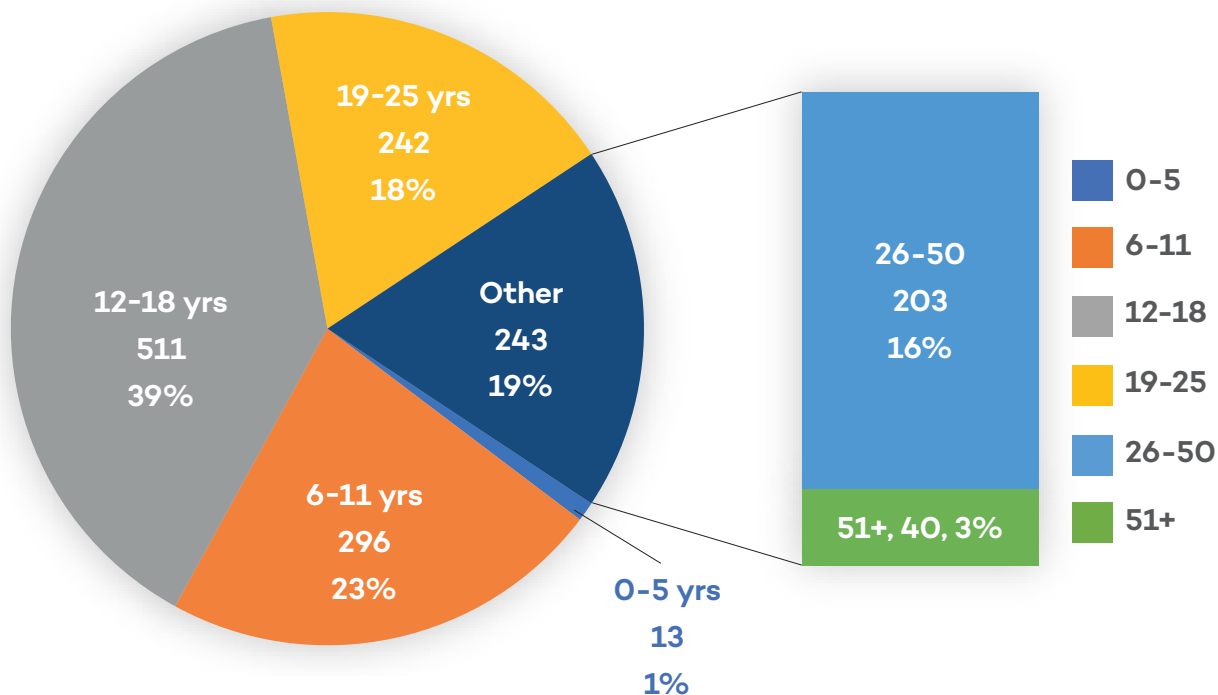
WEBSITE
HITS

307

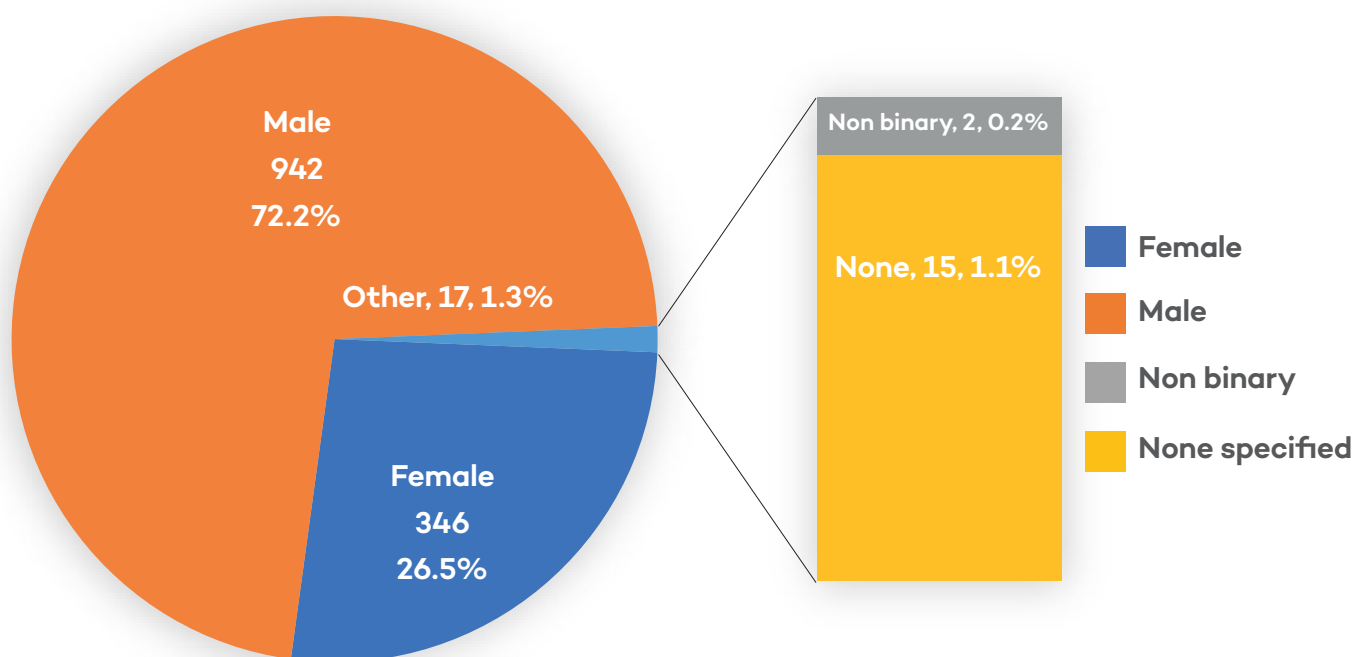
NEW AUTISTIC
PEOPLE WELCOMED
THROUGH OUR
DOORS

WHO DO WE SUPPORT?

Age – 80% of our beneficiaries are under 25 yrs

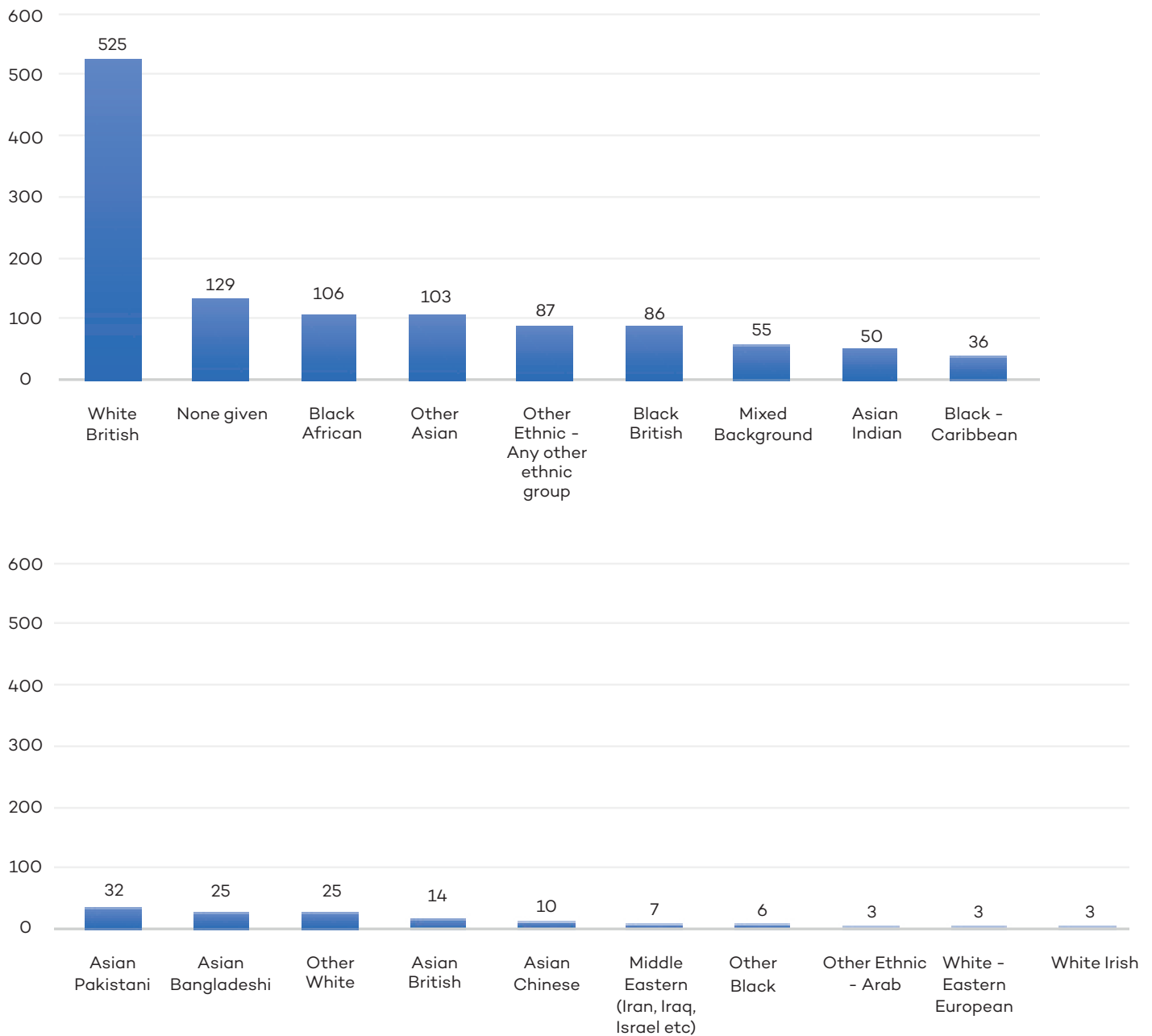


Gender – 72% identify as male

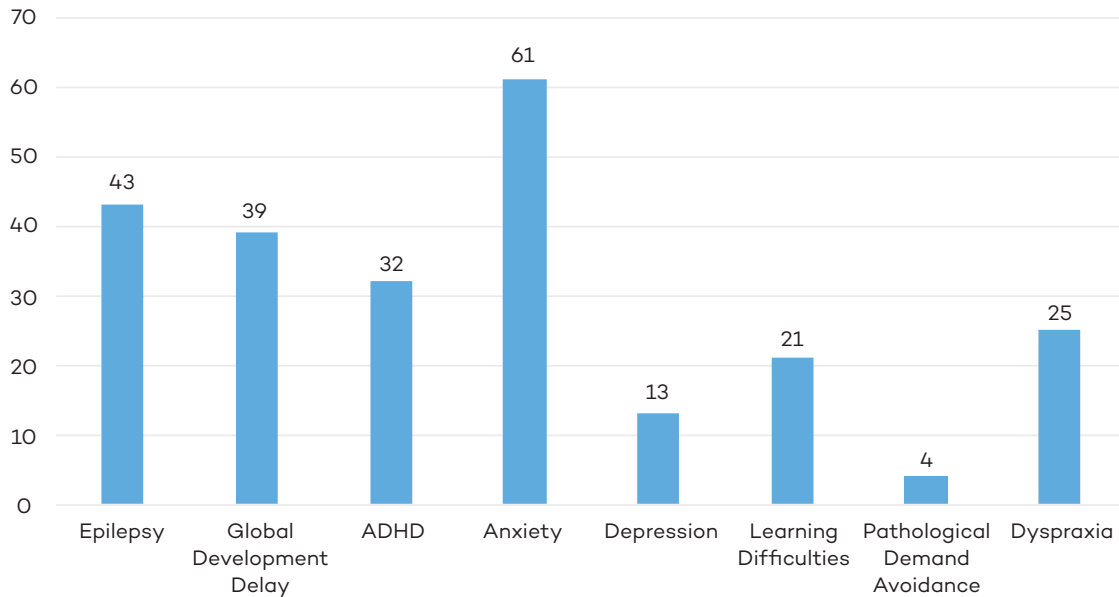


WHO DO WE SUPPORT?

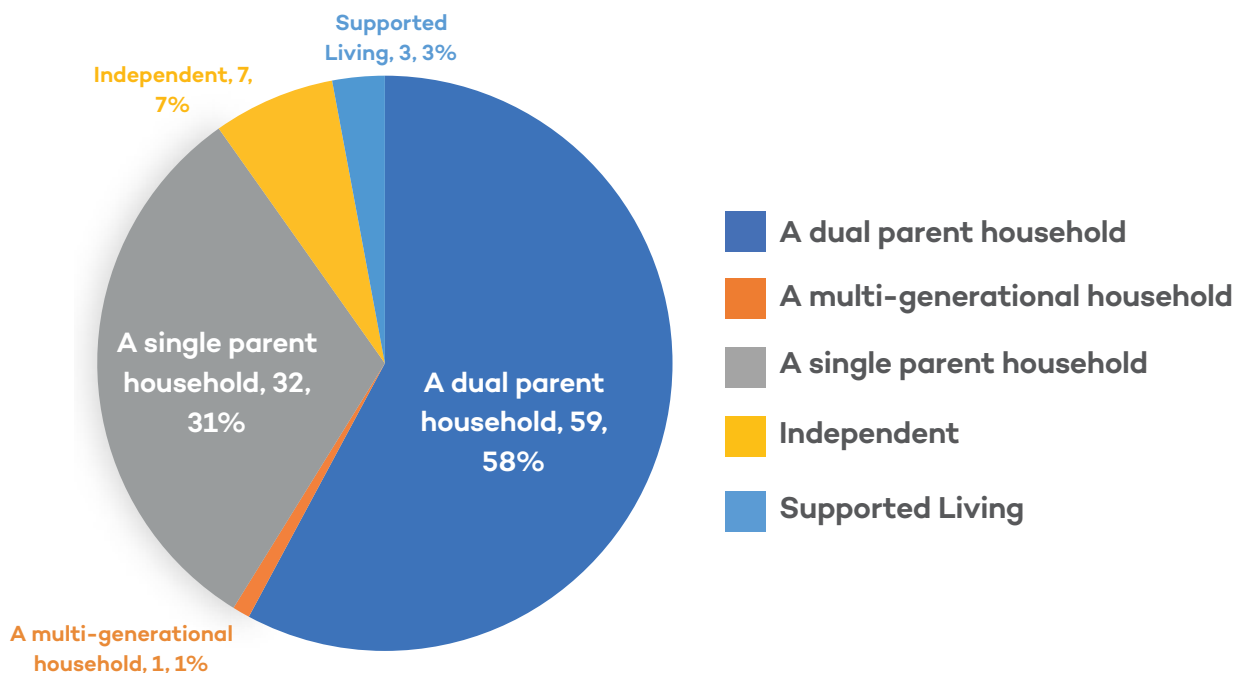
**Ethnicity – 48% are from ethnically diverse backgrounds
40% are white British**



Co-conditions – Anxiety and learning disabilities (epilepsy, GDD etc) are the most common co-conditions



Household type – 31% of our families live in a single parent household



OUR IMPACT FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

What we offer



Play and Youth Service – after school clubs, weekend clubs and holiday schemes



Behaviour Support – including Orange House, Intensive Support Programme including Barnet Early Help



Individual and Group Art and Music Therapy



Newly introduced Play Therapy using play and creativity to unlock emotion, deal with anxiety and help with communication and interaction - WM



Volunteer Mentoring and Befriending



Community Support Service offering bespoke 1:1 support on a weekly basis, working towards independence within the community

852

We supported 852 children and young people

153

We welcomed 153 new young people to our services



OUR IMPACT FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Increased confidence and a sense of wellbeing

At RFA everyone is welcome. When you feel welcome your sense of wellbeing will improve automatically. RFA's values are an intrinsic part of what we do on an everyday basis. They are embodied with each service user so that anyone who accesses our services is treated with kindness and acceptance.

Our clubs are welcoming and happy spaces to play, unmask, and be yourself.

RFA understands that children need safety and boundaries to feel secure. For Autistic People these unwritten rules can seem baffling and part of our impact is to untangle and demystify these social rules. Learning through experience and social practice while having a good time.

We will always make sure we look at what they can do, what do they want to do and how do they communicate this to us rather than focusing on deficits. Everyone is capable and this is our impact and legacy. Feedback from service user and parents tell us this has such a long lasting impact

Through our therapeutic services children and young people have the opportunity to further explore this sense of self. This could be on a one to one basis or within a group setting. All of our work is about making sure the young person feels comfortable in that space. ■

“My son comes out of club more confident, chattier, he’s more willing to talk and expand his vocabulary and he has a big smile on his face for the rest of the day”



Survey
Feedback
showed RFA
has helped
99% of
individuals to
increase their
confidence

Improved communication

Communication is key for our young people – finding their own voice, interacting with others and being able to express what they want to happen for them.

Consent is also a vital part of communication. Through work with our specialist therapists, group leaders and support workers, these skills are built for long lasting life changes. It is vital to be able to express your preference and the element of choice is important and is part of the road to autonomy and independence.

We provide staff and services who are competent in alternative communication as less than 35% of all communication is verbal and we understand and promote this. The element of choice is important and it is vital to be able to express your preferences and consent to be on the road to autonomy and independence. ■



“My son can actually go out with 1 to 1 support, he is less violent at home, he has built trust in the worker which he finds really hard. My son will actually leave the house more, he still struggles but with encouragement he will go out”



84%
of survey
responders
have seen an
improvement
in their
communication

OUR IMPACT FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Improved relationships

To build social connection we need to be emotionally honest. Our play service models and presents this to our young people.

RFA doesn't teach them not to have feelings and emotions but what to do with them and how to explore them through play. Not everything we do is right and there are consequences for ourselves and others and by turn taking and playing with a group we can explore this in a non threatening way.

We feel better about ourselves when we behave in ways that make others respond positively to us. Self esteem does not come about by people only telling us the good about ourselves. Self esteem isn't passive. It comes from mastering your part of the world and feeling competent and in control. Once we are accepted but also shown how to have autonomy of ourselves we will build stronger relationships. ■

“My child is more confident and more able to deal with different children and adults. He leads a relatively sheltered and protected life at home as he has no siblings. Club is an opportunity for his boundaries to be pushed in a safe space. He also just has fun there which is very important”



83% feel
better able to
deal with other
people

Case study: spotlight on peer support group

Our peer support group started life in 2018 in response to the rise in mental health referrals we were receiving regarding our teenagers. It has gone from strength to strength, the teenagers have claimed ownership of the group and made significant changes including changing the name. They explained to us they did not want formal sessions on mental health but found strength from sharing experiences and asking questions in this environment to learn together and support each other – so in 2021 it became the peer support group. It was really powerful to see them taking control in this way and understanding that it is the spaces to talk and express and validate that have such a powerful impact.



We have had a great consistent staff who are open to talking about any subject and we have covered so many : sport, school, racism, bullying, stabbings, LGBT you name it we have talked about it and made plans and shared ideas how to navigate these things which are really prominent in our teens life. Neuro Diversity can make it really hard to understand and decode what is going on and sadly other teens can use our autism against us to trigger a reaction. Peer support group is a safe space for us all. ■

Young person attending peer support group

“I had no peer group or people I could talk to about shared interests before - I didn't mix with anyone from school”

OUR IMPACT FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Alex's Story – Music Therapy

A was an 8-year old boy who was referred to music therapy in order to channel his love for music and offer emotional support and containment during a period of crisis in his schooling. He was struggling with his transition into year 3 and displaying a lot of anger, frustration and resentment, particularly towards his mother. This could lead to very challenging, resistant behaviour affecting his school attendance. In front of professionals, L sometimes masked his difficulties in order to avoid embarrassment and shame, but it meant that the complexity of his needs and anxiety was not always taken seriously.

A was a little tentative when he first started playing instruments in sessions, but within a few minutes he was playing in a much more open and fluent manner. On the guitar, he quickly showed real character and flair in his playing, with a natural sense of musicianship and the charisma of a seasoned performer. It was very powerful to witness and made me think of a boy much older than A's tender eight years. A's musicality clearly allowed him to feel empowered and free. That said, it was noticeable that L would often feign understanding of concepts or ideas where it was clear he was actually a bit confused. And I noticed that he appeared much more vulnerable and shy when he was not able to start a piece of music on his own terms.

We began work setting out a range of aims around his attention and listening skills, his communication and self-expression and his confidence and self-esteem. The pandemic meant

that our work took on a hybrid format, with a mixture of online and face to face sessions. This often did not suit A but we continued to find moments of connection through talking, music and play. A demonstrated glimmers of his lively sense of humour when using functions of the video technology to create a kind of virtual 'hide & seek'. We improvised together within our means and also shared songs with one another that we could both listen to at the same time and talk about afterwards.

When returning to our face to face work, A quickly re-discovered his love of live music-making and set to work experimenting with the electric guitar, bass and drums. He also became more open and assertive with his thoughts. Sometimes he would be extremely satisfied with what we had created, whilst at other times he would challenge me or himself, feeling that we were not playing as we should or that we should try a different idea. The music therapy environment was a crucial safe space for him to explore different aspects of his personality, whilst getting used to communicating and connecting in different ways.

Music therapy offered a way to capture A's potential and allowed him to express himself confidently in a space where he was listened to, accepted and appreciated. Through celebrating his musical ability and getting to know his difficulties in a safe space, I was able to be part of holistic discussions around his education and help to find positive, sustainable solutions. ■

Hugh, Music Therapist



OUR IMPACT FOR FAMILIES

What we offer

We aim to meet parents and carers where they are treating them as experts by experience, valuing them and supporting them to gain confidence, knowledge and resilience.



Parent and
Carer Support
Groups



First
response



Individual
Behaviour
consultations



Respite for parents
and carers of any age
through our groups



Early help
support



We worked
directly with
284 parents
at our support
groups

“Yes at all the sessions you come away thinking,
Ohh I didn't know that”

Building community

One of our key outcomes with our work with parents is to build a community which is non judgemental and safe for parents to share experiences, support each other and gain strength from the places where they meet.

Over and over again parents tell us that of all the support they have ever received in their journey, the most valuable has been the support of other parents. We create safe spaces where that can be possible. ■

“I don’t feel so isolated and know there are many parents like me out there struggling. I feel better connected. I can help my children better”

“As a family It was extremely challenging and as mum I felt very isolated. I was always stuck at home with a newborn. RFA have been a breath of fresh air not only for my son but us as a family. The service enables be to spend time 1-1 with my daughter I over the summer Holidays whilst I know my son is happy and engaged with fun activities.”

“It was really really helpful and reassuring, especially because there were such a wide range of experiences and people with different aged children. Thank you so much, it made such a difference to us ”



We made First Response Service Calls to **458** new parents at point of referral

OUR IMPACT FOR FAMILIES

Increasing confidence

We believe at RFA that parents, carers, siblings and all sorts of family matter. Families can be made of those blood related or otherwise but they are all supporting the individual and we take seriously our duty to support them.

Community is talked about a lot but once school is finished for the day or services are closed who is really there for our families. Understanding this helps us to maximise our impact by supporting, teaching, modelling for and listening to our community.

Think of a scenario where a single parent is home at night with a disregulated individual who displays violent behaviour and the advice is to call the emergency services but they cant get to the phone. We will de brief them after and our behaviour team will show ways to avoid this happening in the first place and we will make safety plans that involve friends and neighbours to be alert or to make that call. It is often reported that the isolation of these families is the trigger to poor mental health and we manage to be that helping hand in the dark times and not to avoid the issue.

This is an area we and other services need to grow into and we hope from a humble position and awareness of this to make leaps in this area. ■

“The parent carer meetings in person or online is very helpful and if I need help or advice I can comfortably ask”

“Being able to show I am struggling to people who understand. It’s so isolating at times”



81% of families accessing Early Help Service reported feeling more confident in managing their child’s behaviour

Spotlight on parent group

RFA has run a variety of parent support groups across London and West Midlands. This is a vital service as the parent will always be the ones really on the front-line supporting their child.



As parents are the experts and have the best understanding of their child's needs. All parenting is hard but parenting in difficult circumstances is even harder. The parents we have connected with may have their own health issues, multiple children, poor housing, violence or abuse in the home or top off all the day to day strains post covid entering a cost of living crisis. The range of needs has changed with the increase in rising numbers of children refusing to go back to school due to an increase in anxiety and unmet mental health needs. Lack of timely access to diagnostic support services and mental health services are putting an added strain on family relationships and a parental sense of helplessness, being stuck and being alone.

To this end we believe all parents have something to share with other parents be it information, advice, connection or kindness. There is a real feeling of relief when you realise you are not the only one and that best is indeed good enough. Parents often say that sharing their experiences with other parents and listening to what they are going through helps them feel supported and less alone.

The groups cover a range of topics such as behaviour support, puberty, play and communication, active support and interaction,

managing transitions, managing screen time, mental health and much more. This helps parents understand their child's needs better and learn support strategies that can help their autistic child as well as improving the experiences of the whole family. Having an opportunity to speak to other parents enables them to articulate their thoughts and feelings in a way that is only possible when sharing with those who understand. Parents can be themselves and don't feel the need to hide or mask in this setting. There is a lot of real talk in the room. Receiving information, peer support, advice alongside the sharing of experiences helps parents to turn the corner and empowers them to keep going and doing the best for their children.

We have meetings in different formats to allow for equity or access: zoom, face to face, walking groups. Autism surgeries and pampering sessions. We endeavour to adapt and flex to meeting the needs of those with particular cultural or religious backgrounds. This means trying to understand how their needs may differ and what additional barriers they face and develop a format that works best for them. We do not want to be yet another barrier or closed door.

Parent groups at their best nourish the needs of the parents and helps them to re-energise and feel empowered. It helps to tackle the loneliness and isolation and give context and a space where they belong and can be themselves without judgement. ■

OUR IMPACT FOR FAMILIES

A Parent Says...

I am a mother of four children, two of whom are autistic. I first encountered RFA when I was seeking buddy support for my eldest daughter some five years ago. The team were amazing and the referral was handled with such care and consideration at a time when we were at our most vulnerable. For us it was not the right time to access the service. However, I never lost sight of the service and always had it at the back of my mind to re-engage when the time was right.

The opportunity to do so came, when my third child was unable to attend school and my world became an awful lot smaller. It was at this point that I started to attend the Parent Support Groups. They became my lifeline and I would look forward to every session I could attend to connect with other parents, to share, cry and support each other. It can be such a lonely life when your children do not quite fit into the social norms expected of them.

I participated in these sessions with such gusto that I became quite vocal and realised I had a lot of experience/knowledge to share and embarked on the training so I could become a volunteer.

As a parent you have to become a warrior and to learn to advocate for your children's needs in an environment whereby the systems and processes conflict with each other; where professionals and services do not



“I think its nice to have a support group that is on going and you can discuss problems and experiences that stays in the meeting. I feel being able to discuss issues with a group is much better for my well being then dealing with issues on my own”

communicate and where the statutory services fail your children again and again.

Resources for Autism were consistently there for me and gave me a platform to ask for support, seek advice and learn how to navigate the world of autism.

All too often we as parents are made to feel that it is our fault that our children are not 'functioning' as expected. All too often parents are unable to access services for so many reasons, have referrals rejected, and to be ignored/dismissed. And it is because this happens so many times that Resources for Autism is the lifeline for those families lucky enough to get onto the programmes on offer.

There are still so many families out there desperately needing to access a wide variety of support and this can only happen with more funding. As a volunteer I have been able to view the charity and its effectiveness and positive impact on individuals and families. There is safety in everything they do and they bring hope to many who have been failed in the past. Everyone is welcomed and indeed everybody is recognised as being a valuable element of the autistic & wider community.

They support individuals to thrive and to reach their potential and beyond. There is so much ambition within the team and so many creative possibilities to continue and expand on their vision and ethos.

West Midlands parent



0% of families referred to Early Help Service, some with repeated history of social care involvement, have been re-referred to social care

OUR IMPACT - ADULTS

What we offer



Social
Groups



Specialist
Groups



Virtual
Groups



Advocacy



First
Response



Phone
Buddies



Counselling



Art and Music
Therapy



Community
Support



Reach Out



We worked
directly with
309 adults
this year

“Our adult daughter struggles to socialise in other places as they are too uncontrolled and full of children. This is her social time and always puts a smile on her face. No weather conditions will put her off attending”

Supporting those with higher needs

Autistic Adults with complex needs, can require a high level of support throughout their lives. Our role is to ensure that they can still achieve and enjoy life.

At RFA our ethos is never to exclude based on behaviour, age or complexity of need. Instead we work with our service users by looking them as a whole person who, although may have communication differences, are still worthy of positive and adult experiences. We strive to understand each adult as an individual and instead of trying to change them to fit in with our world and expectations; we change ourselves and the environment by keeping the autistic person at the centre of everything that we do.

We offer a specialist group with emphasis on equality and peer interaction that is appropriate for their age. We aim to reduce dependence on parents and carers and by encouraging new experiences away from home and support the families with behaviour strategies when necessary.

The core of the group focuses on communication in all its forms and encourages each person to be an active participant within the group setting. This will hopefully lead to building relationships with one another, which is paramount to our service users sense of self in an often confusing world. We often see new interactions between the group. Progress is celebrated in all its forms and fun is always at the heart of each session we run.

“Wow this is the first time in his 25 years he has been invited to a social event (when we did a special day out) “



60-70%
of people who
have an autistic
spectrum
condition
will also have
a learning
disability

OUR IMPACT – ADULTS

Improved life skills

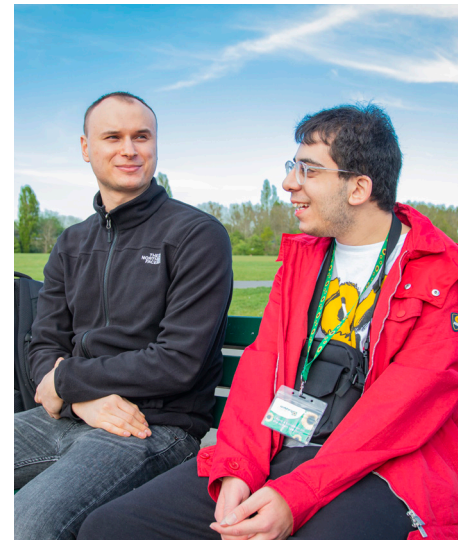
RFA recognises that our cohort have adult wants and needs the same as any other adult in the world. These could be career ambitions, wanting to learn, to date, to make friends, someone to go to the pub and more. We listen to our service users and provide co production in each of our settings so that our adults are directly influencing how they want their groups to run.

We organise our services so that wherever the autistic person's point of access is they are enabled to have choice and consent over their own lives. Autonomy is key and we strive to strengthen confidence and provide information to accommodate their voices to, not only be heard, but to truly be listened to.

Many of our adults come to us with challenging early life experiences some of which have been struggling without diagnosis with a lack of appropriate support. They may be living independently but without the life skills required to maintain a safe life whether that be financial related or vulnerabilities in terms of safety.

Adult services work together to find flexible solutions in conjunction with the autistic person and work with external agencies to support them to overcome individual barriers.

“Felt so alone and at sea with everything. You get this hopelessness and sense of overwhelm sometimes because everything about the autism ‘takes over’ life and can be difficult to navigate”



79%
reported that
the service
improved how
they do things

Unity and belonging

To find a sense of safety and self-worth humans need to feel secure and unafraid in their lives. Although this applies to all of us, feelings of isolation and fear can be heightened for an autistic person especially if they have been excluded from society.

For many of the adults who are accessing our services for the first time this might be their first experience of belonging. Being around strangers can be hugely daunting for an autistic person and anxiety around unpredictability feeds into isolation which can lead to further mental health issues and exclusion from society.

Our adult service users have shared that the stability of their weekly group provides them the routine and purpose to get through another week and the regular interactions supports their wellbeing and feelings of belonging.

“I am better at communicating how I feel. I’m better at stepping back and seeing the situations/s from a distance. With support I am trying to learn regulate my emotions and reduce my panic attacks and self harming incidents. I’m not there yet”

“I have community that I have known over the years and people, socialising place when I have no other organisation that I can continue beyond the age of 18 and after 25 very limited places to go to so I am very grateful for R4A”



84% they
have better
skills and feel
better about
themselves
after coming to
RFA

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

Capacity building other organisations

As a specialist autism charity working across the life span and spectrum of need, we realise that a major part of our impact lies with playing our part in raising awareness of autism within society so the narrative shifts from looking at what isn't possible to what is possible for autistic people.

Over the last 2 years we have taken very proactive steps in order to extend our mission beyond direct provision to creating a society that is inclusive of neurodivergence. We now have a robust, traded offer of capacity building other organisations which currently involves a combination of the following options:

- Offer 1-1 and group coaching/mentorship for neurodivergent individuals and their families/carers who work in the organisation
- Provide bespoke training on neurodiversity in the community and the workplace
- Provide 1-1 and group coaching/mentorship for service providers that support neurodivergent individuals and their families/carers
- Provide 1-1 and group behavioural consultancy and surgeries for service providers on bespoke cases
- Editorial and terminology consultancy on communications and content on neurodiversity

Our impact in changing the narrative

In 2021 we trained directly 3 corporate employers, 6 schools, 2 social care teams and 4 voluntary sector organisations.

We were key note speakers in an International Conference around Autism and Suicide and have been successful in gaining a Leader's Grant from Mayor of London which will enable us to offer neurodiversity training to a number of youth organisations over the next two years.

Last year we had the unique opportunity to work with Virgin Media on a jointly agreed capacity building model accessible to **13,000 employees.**

The programme of support included: a) Autism Awareness for all their employees, b) Fireside chat for their neurodiversity network, c) Editorial content and support with language around neurodiversity d) 1:1 consultations with neurodivergent employees or carers and finally e) a comedy event delivered by three neurodivergent comedians aiming to raise awareness of neurodiversity in the workplace.

Our website has had **32,000 unique visits** with our resources pages being our most popular.

Spotlight on Co-production

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

At the heart of our model and growth as a specialist charity has been an equal, ongoing dialogue with the Autism Community through formal and informal ways. We run termly co production panels, a parent/carer forum, we actively recruit neurodivergent staff and **60% of our Board has lived experience**. We lead on co production work nationally and we challenge

ourselves to find ways of involving in the design of our services those who don't communicate verbally. Every service developed in the last 25 years has been in direct response of what our community have asked of us. This year, we recruited our first Co- Production lead who will lead on embedding a culture of co-production in everything we do.

Quotes from Our Partners evidencing our impact and expertise:

“Thank you for your help! It was really useful to attend last week's meeting, as well as the autism & homelessness training. I will be compiling a list of resources and tips from these (including the slides) to share with the rest of the team. Following from your advice, I have put up some visual aids around the hostel showing how to prepare a cup of tea, wash your hands, brush your teeth, and take a shower. I will have a look online for resources and materials to create a timetable and some social stories, as I think these could be really useful”

Recovery Worker

“Just wanted to say I thought the Fireside chat was incredible –some really practical stuff, but also N sharing her experience really hit me in the feels (almost had to turn my camera off) -so similar to my own growing up experiences, and so much seem to make sense now”

Feedback from Virgin Media Employee who attended Resources for Autism lead Fireside chat on Neurodiversity in the workplace

“Thank you all so much for your hugely insightful and informative session today – it was really well received and we have already received so much positive feedback from people across the firm so huge, huge thanks! ”

Harbottle and Lewis partner

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Impact

We offered 6 rounds of volunteer induction training over the year and 10 development and support sessions for our volunteers. In addition to volunteers working in our services, we had 7 volunteers offering support in the office and 3 hosted internships. Three of our volunteers progressed into paid work within RfA.

What we do would not be possible without the contribution of our volunteers who now only offer tangible support to deliver our services but act as champions of autism within their own communities.

“My volunteer befriender was non-judgemental and was the first person to see good in me”

“Exploring new events and new places helped me to build confidence and now I can go there on my own”

“My volunteer was kind to me when my friends at school were not”
service user feedback

“My volunteer listened to me play piano, I think she wanted to learn as well”
service user feedback

“I would like to be a volunteer one day”
volunteer feedback



54 new
volunteers
were recruited
this year
offering a total
of **3898 hours**
of volunteering
a **16% increase**
from last year

LOOKING FORWARD

Our plans for 2023

We are proud of what we have achieved in the last year and we look into the future with ambition and hope. We have recruited a new Chair in July 2022 who is autistic himself and who brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience. We have also developed a new organisational strategy which focuses on the following priorities:



Over the coming year, in addition to our core work, our aim is to focus on the following service priorities:

1 Strengthen our play service by offering more spaces to more children/young people in more Boroughs.

Our play service (meaning our term time youth groups and our holiday schemes for children and young people) and our intention is to grow this service so we can serve more children/ young people in more Boroughs. There is currently a waiting list of

2,402 children and young people across London and West Midlands that have been referred in the last 2 years.

2 Develop a targeted offer of support for young people, adults and parents that is needs driven and unavailable elsewhere.

Examples of such services can include 10-week girls group, 6 months sex and relationship group, mind and movement group, parenting support groups, parenting trainings and webinars.

3 We will develop highly specialised service packages for those with moderate/complex needs i.e. School Integration, Adult complex need service, Mental Health challenges.

Over the next three years, our aim is to develop greater expertise in mental health support for autistic individuals and their carers, as well as a re-purpose a fully funded adult service, supporting those with complex need.

4 Develop a clear offer of training and consultancy for service providers, public sector bodies and corporates.

Our training and consultancy offer will be developed to enable us to raise awareness about autism and change the narrative of autism from one of stigma to one of inclusion. Our offer will target corporate employers, public sector bodies, schools, other voluntary sector organisations.

Thank you to all of our community for your trust, your feedback and support of our cause

Rfa team!

resources for
autism