
Our impact 2021 – 2022

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Welcome from our CEO and Chair of Trustees

In Year 2 of our 5-year strategy we have continued to strengthen our organisation in order to ensure excellence in what we do. Our growth is enabling us to reach and serve more autistic children and young adults through their access to an education that empowers a life of choice, opportunity, and independence.

We are leading the field of autism education at a time when the external environment has presented both challenge and opportunity. The uncertain arrival into a post-pandemic world, coupled with Brexit, has given us much to think about when attracting new staff and wanting to retain talent within the organisation. Expectations have shifted with the normalisation of hybrid-working, whilst service delivery needs to remain face-to-face and hands-on for our cohorts of autistic learners. It is aspirational pupil outcomes that continue to fuel our passion and drive for relentless improvement across our services, bringing innovation into the sector. We want to see further change in 5 key strategic areas:

- Reducing school placement breakdown
- Increasing employability
- Living the ideal week
- Increasing family resilience
- Community inclusion

This has been a year of significant change for BeyondAutism. The founder and former Chair of Trustees, Karen Sorab OBE, stepped down, leaving a legacy of passion for autism education underpinned by behaviour analysis. Karen's unwavering pursuit of outstanding provision for autistic children and young adults has created an organisation on a mission to reach as many children, young adults, their families and the professionals that work with them as possible, expanding beyond the geographical confines of Greater London. The world of autism education owes a great debt to Karen.

Professor David Croisdale-Appleby OBE, has been appointed as the new Chair of Trustees. David and I are working closely together on this next phase of the BeyondAutism journey. His experience, networks and personal interest in BeyondAutism's vision will help to ensure we are reaching many more autistic children, young adults and their families. As David said, when accepting the invitation to join us:

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I am delighted to take on the role of Chair of Trustees at BeyondAutism and proud to be part of an organisation with such an aspirational vision, at both an individual and societal level, for autistic people and their families. I am excited to be part of that change and look forward to using my position as Chair to help the continued growth and reach of the charity.

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"We are leading the field of autism education at a time when the external environment has presented both challenge and opportunity."

There are 160,000 autistic children in England.¹ Only 21% of autistic adults are in employment,² and 80% of teachers state they need more training to include autistic learners successfully.³

We're working to reverse these statistics by leading autism education from the early years through to early adulthood. We have widened and increased our impact this year through direct service delivery in our Early Years' service, two independent special schools, three Post-19 community learning hubs, outreach into mainstream schools, training, our award-winning employability toolkit, and piloting the Fast Responder service.

We are proud to live our values, and present this report as testimony to the achievements of autistic children, young adults and their families; and to extend our thanks to the great number of supporters of our vision.

There is still much, much more to be done to ensure autistic children and young adults are able to access an education that empowers a life of choice, opportunity, and independence, no matter where they live; and we look forward to Year 3 of our 2020–2025 strategy, and continuing to realise this vision.

Coulton-Pitman David Croisdale-Appleby



Tracie Coulton-Pitman
Chief Executive Officer



**Professor David
Croisdale-Appleby OBE**
Chair of Trustees

Proud to challenge, and be challenged: Reviewing the language we use

This year we undertook a review of how we define and articulate our service delivery approach. We've also been reflecting on the importance of the words and language we use, which led to us revisiting, reviewing, and ultimately shifting our position on the use of identity-first versus person-first language.

As an organisation we're proud to challenge and be challenged. This work is the result of us living that value in practice – listening, changing thinking, shifting attitudes, and educating – both internally and externally.

Identity-first language

Where a person can communicate their preference for either person-first or identity-first language to talk about their autism, this has, and always will be, respected and used.

In the past whilst the organisation has used a mixture of terms depending on the context, we have favoured the use of person-first language. Many of the learners we work with don't have the ability or comprehension to explain their choice, so our preference had been to advocate for them as individuals, rather than defining them by their autism. It is also language that is more commonly used in the education sector.

We have spent the last year listening to conversations on this topic and have subsequently made the change to prioritise identity-first language. This can be seen in a change to our vision, as well as across our materials. We feel this respects the wishes of the majority and is more positive and assertive language. We will continue to advocate for personal choice, using whatever language an individual prefers.

Behaviour Analysis

Within our services we use teaching strategies underpinned by Behaviour Analysis, guided by the science of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behaviour (VB), as part of an interdisciplinary approach.

Behaviour analysis is not a therapy or a treatment. It is the data-based practice of understanding behaviour. We use behaviour analysis to underpin our understanding of our learners. Alongside teaching, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy it is used to increase language, communication, academic and daily living skills, tailored to each learner's specific needs and preferences. We also use it to help reduce behaviours that challenge or that limit opportunities or present barriers to learning, by teaching functional alternatives.

We are aware of the controversy that is linked to Applied Behaviour Analysis and that some autistic people have had a negative experience of ABA. This is a result of historical malpractice by an individual or group of individuals, where the principles and understanding of behaviour were applied in unethical and inhumane ways that didn't demonstrate any respect or dignity for the individual. The modern practice of behaviour analysis that is used today across many different sectors, has completely evolved from its early roots; however, it continues to be viewed by some as controversial. In our experience this has at times created a barrier to people understanding what we do and engaging with us. There is a lot of misinformation shared online, and particularly on social media, about ABA – typically that it causes harm. These blanket accusations are completely at odds with our professional experiences and bear no resemblance or accuracy to the practice we use in our services. We're very proud of our services, the interdisciplinary approach we take and the impact we achieve.

It became clear that we needed to be better at describing our approach, to give a true representation of what it is we do. ABA is a reference to the science of the field, and therefore not an accurate standalone term to use when defining our approach, and we have updated our content accordingly to reflect this. We hope that by better defining our approach, and giving this clear distinction, we will be able to move forward with the neurodiversity community to work together in developing life-changing education services and resources.



Our highlights of the year



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Thank you all for your support, advice, guidance, encouragement, hard work, devotion to children, young people and families and for all the amazing things that you all tirelessly do.

Parent

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The work that BeyondAutism has provided us as a school has been invaluable. The child with whom they were working with has made excellent progress towards his learning and communication goals.

Outreach school

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The staff at BeyondAutism have been so amazing and helpful I will be forever grateful to them... The hard work they put in on a daily basis with each individual family is outstanding... and the advice is so honest and positive.

Parent

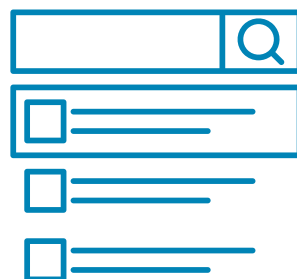
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Tram House School rated Good with Outstanding areas

“...staff never give up. They keep going and are determined to find a way to help every pupil.”

Ofsted visited Tram House School in May 2022 for a routine inspection. The overall rating for Tram House School was Good. Our Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Sixth Form provision were judged to be Outstanding. We are very proud of the report which captures the essence of the day-to-day practice of the school, and its many strengths and achievements. Our ambition for and with our pupils shone through.



Autism Services Directory launched

1400+ individuals accessing each month since launch

A one-stop tool to help people find local and national services
(page 29)

Tram House School achieve Wellbeing Award



(page 27)



Webinar series launched

900 live and on-demand views

45-minute webinars with experts from across our organisation covering topics of interest to families and professionals.
(page 18)



Fast Responder pilot launched (page 16)

96% of students stayed in their local setting

Stepping in at the point of crisis, working with schools and families of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, to remove barriers to learning and reduce the national picture of school placement breakdown.

Employability toolkit launched

(page 22)

500 toolkits accessed by individuals and organisations

A free resource helping autistic people have improved access to, and support in, employment.



Internship programme enters 3rd year

Three interns completed the programme and have now gone on to paid employment
(page 21)



2nd Annual Professional Conference

hosted online and on demand
(page 18)



Fast Track Leadership Development Programme

Set up to address the need for underrepresented groups in our senior leadership positions. These groups are determined by protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Fast Track Leadership Development Programme is designed to enable employees to accelerate their chances of promotion, across a two-year period. This year we had two employees enrol in the programme, one of whom has now moved into a senior leadership role at BeyondAutism.





£571,482

raised thanks to the generosity of our supporters



Providing a sensory learning space at Tram House School

With the number of students at Tram House School growing, making the best use of every corner of the building matters. The Therapy Team have been on a mission to transform a small office at the top of the school into a multi-purpose sensory room. This was finally made possible through the support of our amazing donors and fundraisers.

The space has been transformed with soft wall and floor padding, and seating areas to provide our secondary-aged learners with the opportunity to relax and feel safe and calm. Purpose-made lighting equipment, beanbags and sound boxes complete the room to give our learners a full sensory experience.

As well as a safe space for pupils to find respite, the room gives our Therapy Team new teaching opportunities. There are endless chances to develop fine and gross motor skills, encourage imaginative and creative play as well as build social skills such as turn-taking and teamwork.

“It has been a joy to see our pupils making use of this much needed space at Tram House School. The resource really supports our pupils to manage their sensory needs throughout the day. It provides them with a safe and age-appropriate space to regulate themselves. It’s yet another valuable space to support learning, run therapy groups and support our pupils’ independence.”

Tom Bailey, Head of Therapy Services 2021–2022

New sensory playground at Park House School gives our pupils opportunities for development

We received a generous grant from Morrisons Foundation to install a sensory playground at Park House School to help the children’s learning and development.

Exploration and play are hugely important in a young child’s development and emotional wellbeing. Play is the foundation for communication and language, essential skills that they can build upon throughout their education. The new playground encourages fine and gross motor skills and prompts for creative and imaginative play.

“The new playground has provided a multitude of opportunities for Park House School pupils. They have enjoyed watching the progression of the playground being built and since it’s unveiling has been a favourite activity for pupils across the school. It has encouraged positive interactions between pupils, helping to build relationships with peers as well as working on turn-taking, waiting and a large variety of occupational and speech and language therapy targets. We couldn’t imagine Park House School without it!”

Sarah Dominic, Assistant Head of Park House School



A close-up photograph of several students' hands working together on a project. They are using a green glue stick to attach small, colorful paper cards onto a larger sheet of paper. The cards feature simple line drawings and text, including the words 'HOUSE' and 'SCHOOL'. The students are wearing green shirts. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hands and the project.

Our Post-19 service became fully established in 2017 and now has 3 hubs and over 30 students.

The curriculum prepares students for adulthood with a skill set that enables them to have choice over where and how they live, what they do and with whom. Ensuring sustained success beyond the age of 25.

Our first Post-19 student graduates from the service: Priyan's story

Priyan joined BeyondAutism Sixth Form in 2014. A friendly young man, he liked people and their attention, but didn't have the skills he needed to effectively gain attention or manage his own sensory needs. The resulting behaviours that challenge meant that Priyan required a staffing ratio of 2:1 in the Sixth Form hub and had very low community access. The Sixth Form team supported Priyan to communicate and request more effectively, manage transitions appropriately, and to regulate himself within the busy environment of the school.

As Priyan came to the end of his time in the Sixth Form, his family and the team around him realised there was a lack of appropriate post-19 provision available for him to continue his education. Priyan had made good progress and learnt a lot of skills during his time at school but needed further support to ensure he was ready for adulthood.

BeyondAutism Post-19

Having identified a critical gap in provision for our cohort, and knowing we had the expertise to help, in 2016 BeyondAutism secured a building in partnership with Yarrow Housing and a small team of staff to support Priyan in the newly formed pilot of BeyondAutism Post-19.

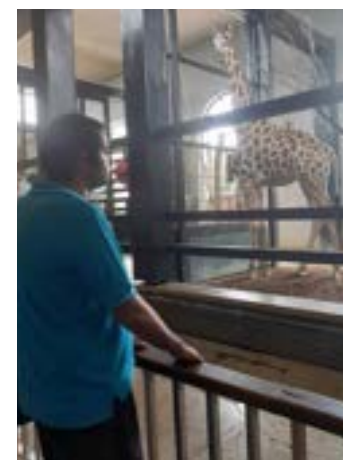
In the first year, the team did fantastic work supporting Priyan in his new setting, reducing behaviours that challenge and teaching independent living skills that would be critical in his adult life.

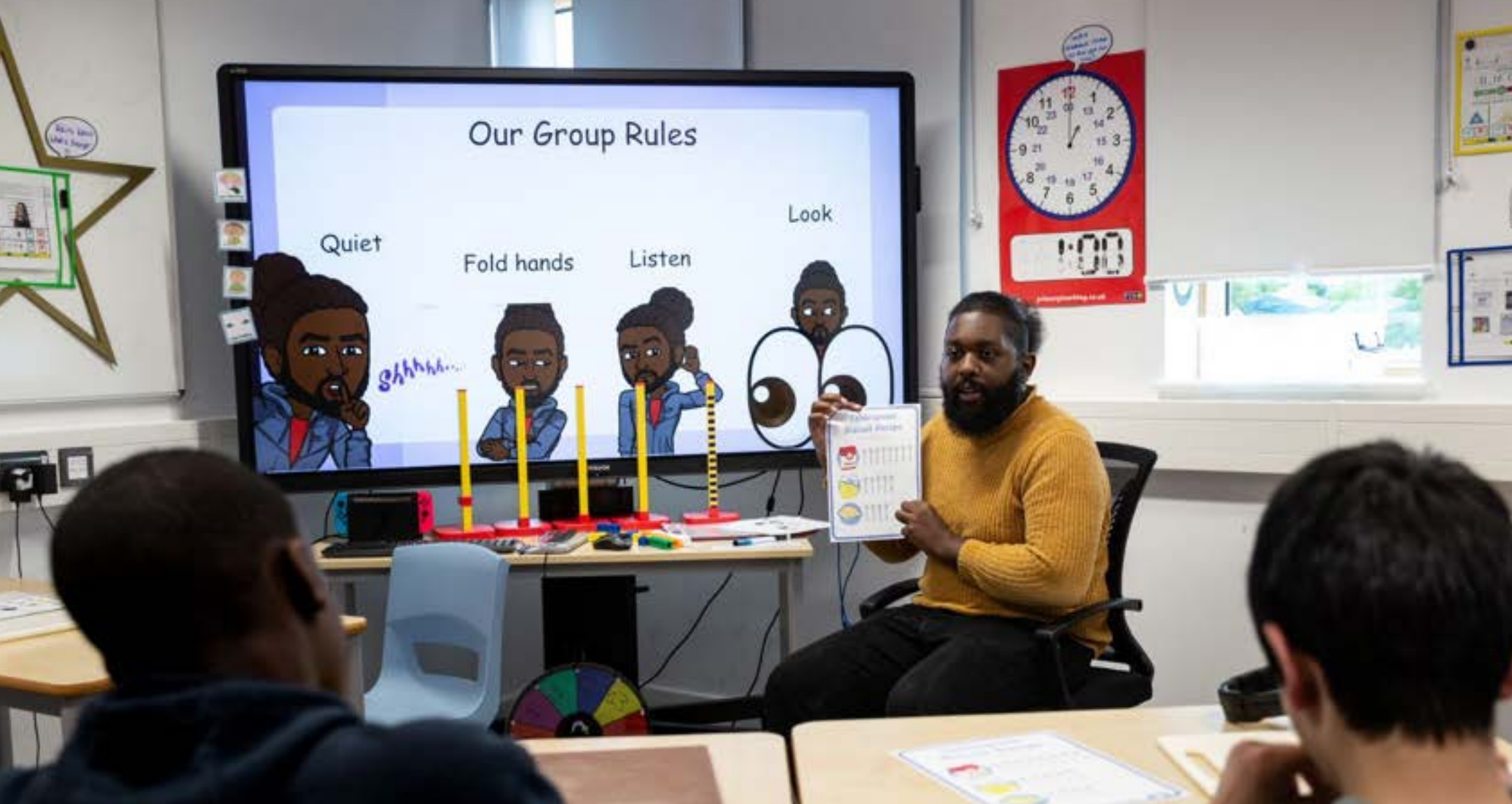
Staff then focused on developing his communication to give him the ability to request for the items, activities, locations and actions (e.g., asking to take a break) that he wanted. He learned to engage in short durations of peer activity (playing darts, Connect 4, and reading with a peer), and to exercise to support his physical health.

He also learned to transition independently in the Post-19 Hub and in the community. As a result, he began to thrive in the community, making huge progress whilst accessing a wider variety of locations on a daily basis; including shops, cafés, parks, the gym, and the local garden centre. Priyan also completed vocational tasks – participating in a social enterprise making cards, and gardening at the hub and a local care home as part of a work experience placement.

Priyan graduated from Post-19 in summer 2022. By this point his staffing ratio had reduced to 1:1 support in the Hub with 2:1 support in the community. During his final academic year, we supported Priyan's family with their options for future placements. He is currently on a waiting list to access his next adult setting and is continuing to develop his independence skills with his father at home.

Priyan will always hold a very special place in our history for playing a crucial part in shaping our adult education offer for 19-25 year olds. Provision that enables students to make meaningful choices and progress in ways that are important to them. We wish him all the very best for his future.





Reducing school placement breakdown

Noah

Noah started his educational journey in mainstream nursery school and, like many other autistic children, had a hard time adjusting. Sadly, his experience is not uncommon, with many educational settings and professionals struggling to understand and meet autistic children's needs due to a lack of knowledge, teacher training and resources.

Noah's mother reflects: "On one occasion I remember picking up Noah and he was cold and frozen and shivering, and I asked the teacher what happened. She told me they had to keep him for one hour outside so he didn't disturb the other children. That was the last time we took him to that school.

"The second school we tried was a base attached to a nursery. Here the ratio of staff to children was better, however Noah could never settle properly. The maximum they were able to keep him in there was for 10 minutes. They would call me, and I would go and pick him up, or I'd just wait outside.

"Following the experiences of the two schools Noah in many ways regressed. He refused to walk. Going to school he became more rigid; he would escape and he would hide under parked cars. He would try anything and everything not to reach the school... at home he started wetting the bed, smearing, to name just a few of the issues we saw".

After enrolling Noah at Park House School, the change was rapid and significant. "For the first couple of weeks, I remember I would sit outside the school in the park waiting for a phone call, for someone to call and say come and pick Noah up, but that phone call never came. The atmosphere was different. Noah goes in smiling; he comes out smiling... they speak his language and that's all Noah needed".

After six weeks, Noah's team compiled a detailed profile which was then used to form an individualised plan as to how best to support him both in school and at home. Noah is now thriving at Park House School, and his mother could not be more pleased:

"The biggest impact is on Noah's mental health, he is generally more happy and content... this has a knock-on effect on his home time, the happiness continues until bedtime. This means aggressive behaviour towards his younger brother, self-harming and self-injurious behaviour has decreased drastically. In the past, as a family we used to work to separate them in order to ensure their safety, whereas now, we encourage that they play together, read and write together, eat together and watch a movie together. This change in behaviour has impacted [our] family immensely for the positive."



Our services are leading the way in autism education. Creating positive educational experiences which are uninterrupted by school placement breakdown.



Empowered and resilient parents, confident in meeting the needs of their child



Specialist skills-based curriculums that ensure rapid and sustained success beyond the age of 25



Training for the professional team around a child



Building local capacity, activating networks, solutions focused

Fast Responder pilot

We know from Government figures that pupils receiving SEN support are four and a half times more likely to be excluded than those receiving no SEN support.⁴ Adding to the official figures, NAS also found that over 20% of parents reported that their child had been informally excluded at least once over the past 2 years.⁵ The most common reason given for all exclusions (permanent and fixed term) was persistent disruptive behaviours.

The processes that are currently in place are clearly not working. We felt a different approach was needed, and thanks to funding from City Bridge Trust, the City of London Corporation's charitable funder, this year we ran our Fast Responder pilot.



Fast Responder is a service that works with schools and families of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, stepping in at the point of crisis to remove barriers to learning and reduce the national picture of school placement breakdown. The pilot set out to make three significant differences for the services we worked with:

- 1** Increase knowledge, confidence and self-efficacy amongst all Teachers and Teaching Assistants at the school, thus building on the schools' expertise and confidence in inclusion
- 2** Significantly reduce school placement breakdown as a direct result of immediate Fast Responder interventions, and when not resolvable immediately on site, through activating the right network
- 3** Trial logistical and operational efficacy, to establish a bank of evidence to support how the service can help Local Authorities reduce expenditure on high-cost placements in the future

We worked with two London boroughs and a Multi-Academy Trust, taking referrals over a 6-month period. Only 54% of those referred had a diagnosis, and only 27% had an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) – it was about meeting the needs of the learner.

96% of those referred remained in setting; 4% went to a setting that better suited their needs (e.g. a Speech and Language school).

The feedback received reflected the increase in confidence and skills seen within the staff, and the wellbeing and long-term outcomes of the individual pupils. We are now in conversations about rolling this out nationally.

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The child feels safer and calmer and the consistent approach used has meant incidents of dangerous behaviours have reduced.

SENCo participant in pilot

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[The service] exceeded expectations... Support was praised by the staff as insightful and welcome with so many ideas to try. The way in which [they were] able to look at information and pull [their] knowledge along with [their] observations of the child and team to pull together the support package was amazing.

It was so insightful and even though I have been working with children with needs for many years, [their] approach was super.

There have been blips at times, but the progress that the child has made since the support has been in place, could not have been imagined without it. The child was at risk of exclusion and with support from the team (and school putting in place full-time 1:1 support) the child has remained in school.

SENCo participant in pilot

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Delivering rapid and sustained outcomes for autistic learners

This year our Outreach team have continued to work with boroughs across London and the surrounding counties. Our focus is providing tailored interventions that deliver rapid and sustained outcomes for autistic learners by activating networks and building local capacity.

We respond to the needs of learners through a collaborative approach, working with schools, colleges and Local Authorities, helping to overcome the barriers that often result in exclusion.

100% of the outreach pupils we worked with have remained in the setting of their choice



Resolving network breakdown to remain in education, Oxford

'From leaving hospital following a mental health crisis, the learner went from accessing a couple of hours remote education a week to returning to school four days a week'

We first met Jess* when she was in Year 9. She was keen to be in school but was overwhelmed by the school environment. School staff weren't picking up on her signs of distress; it got so bad that she threatened to take her own life. Hospitalised for several months due to self-harming and excluded from school; she had missed Year 8 and most of Year 9. She received an autism diagnosis while in hospital, resulting in an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

The network between the school, CAMHS, social care, and the family had broken down. The family found themselves in a cycle of using formal complaints to resolve their needs. With no local special provision available, Jess and her family both wanted her to remain at the school. Their social worker reached out to BeyondAutism and asked for an assessment. We quickly met with the school and the family, to give us all the information needed to make an informed response. From there a proposal was formed, based on the resources available and immediate barriers. At the heart of this was creating a person-centred plan, in which Jess was the main voice. This provided a clear road map of support – a mixture of direct outreach with Jess, to develop her resilience and strategies for returning to education, alongside skilling the professionals around her with the right knowledge and tools to support her needs.

We activated the network of professionals required, who brought the correct scope of practices and competence to the team around Jess and her family. We reviewed the curriculum and provided training and communication tools so that staff could alter their approach when she needed help. We also supported with risk management – demonstrating how a behaviour plan and risk assessment could ensure safety, rather than resorting to altering the physical school building.

From leaving hospital following a mental health crisis, Jess went from accessing a couple of hours remote education a week to returning to school four days a week and one day at CAMHS support. The 1:1 support and other strategies enabled her to complete her GCSEs, achieving 6s, 7s, and 8s in her core subjects, and in her favourite subject, Art. She is happier, with zero self-harming and CAMHS support reducing. Her profile and support plans are regularly reviewed – and she is the main voice in what those look like. We are now supporting her transition to Art College to follow her passion.

*learner's name has been changed

Leading autism education: sharing expertise and best practice to ensure aspirational outcomes are achieved for autistic individuals

BeyondAutism Professional Conference

We held our 2nd Annual Professional Conference, attended by over 60 professionals, hearing experiences on the theme of 'Whose decision is it anyway?' Together, we explored how, as professionals, we should be working with the neurodiversity community to ensure the voice of the individual is at the heart of everything we do.



1500+
people accessed training

Training

Our online training courses and podcast series continued to be successful, offering professionals access to new CPD opportunities; and helping to equip them to teach autistic pupils and manage behaviour to maintain placements.

100%
said they would be able to apply what they had learnt to their daily lives

We also added to our bank of resources, providing families and professionals access to information that empowers them to positively influence a child's future.

Lunch & Learn

In January 2022 we launched our successful new Lunch and Learn series – a monthly, 45-minute webinar with experts from across our organisation covering topics of interest to families and professionals. Sessions included person-centred planning, managing transitions, and developing employability. With over 900 people engaging live and on-demand, and people tuning in from as far as Australia, this is going to become a staple in our offering moving forward.



900 live and on-demand views

14 countries





Increased employability

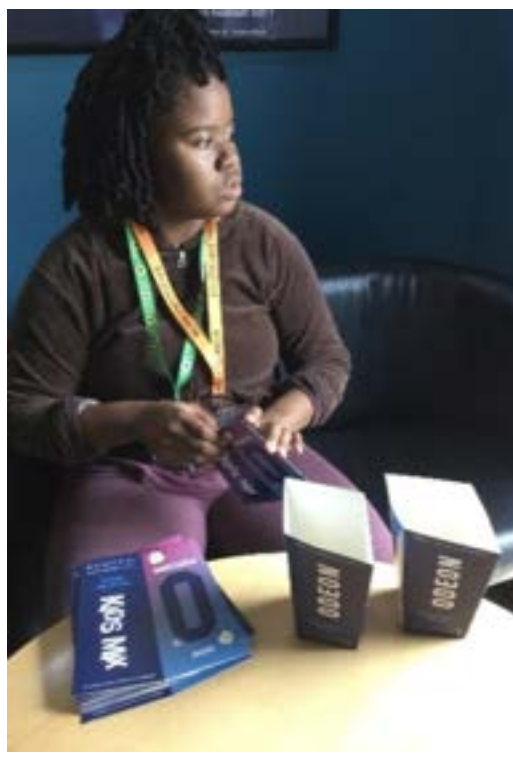
Employability begins at school

We believe that the skills you need for seeking meaningful employment in adulthood can and should start as early as primary school, with a curriculum that focuses on skills-based learning. This year our Specialist Vocational Advisor supported 28 learners and 4 interns to create their vocational profile. Like a CV and personal profile in one, a vocational profile belongs to the learner and should be created with them and regularly updated. It's the best way to ensure they are receiving the right level of support in the workplace and that their skills are being built up.

We also worked to ensure that all our older students had access to work experience placements that develop their employment skills and enable them to experience first-hand the types of roles available. The outcome from the placements should be that students are able to identify what area they would like to work in and what support they will need to achieve this. This year, every one of our Sixth Form and Post-19 students have taken part in work experience – driven by their chosen area of interest. With thanks to the companies and organisations partnering with us, we've been able to offer vocational opportunities in retail, cafés, at a cinema and a library.



BeyondAutism Year 2 Impact Report, 2021-22



Internship programme enters third year

Three people completed an internship programme with us this year – taking up roles in Marketing, HR and in one of our schools in addition to completing project work for the charity. The interns used the employability toolkit to help identify the skills they needed to develop to allow them to progress in their chosen career. They have each gone on to paid employment.

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For me, as a young adult on the autistic spectrum, it has always been difficult to find paid work. I had been invited to many interviews for other jobs, all of which had been unsuccessful; I didn't feel most of the interviews went particularly badly, so I thought it was just a matter of other applicants being better suited for the job. However, when I attended a career open day, one of the professionals checked my CV and told me that mentioning that I have autism may have been a factor in this. This is when I realised how difficult it actually was for people with autism in general to find employment due to the possible stereotypes of the condition.

The internship has been an incredible opportunity for me. I made new friends, learned some new skills that I think would benefit me greatly in my future career. It has also helped me develop a better understanding of the workplace. I am extremely grateful to [have been] a part of the internship.

Following on from the internship, I managed to secure a job as HR Assistant at The Academy of Medical Sciences. I feel that the skills I developed as an HR intern were instrumental in helping me qualify for this role, and while I am encountering different challenges in my new position, I find my experience learning about how HR systems are employed will give me the confidence and knowledge needed to succeed in the role.

Joe, HR Intern 2021-2022

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Only 21.7% of autistic adults are in paid employment⁶ and 60% of employers are worried about getting their support for autistic employees wrong.⁷ We want autistic people to have the skills and confidence to enter the workplace in a career of their choosing, and we want employers to have the tools and training needed to feel more confident in actively supporting autistic people at work.

Launching our employability toolkit – for job seekers and employers

In September 2021 we launched our employability toolkit. Funded by City Bridge Trust, the City of London Corporation's charitable funder, this free-to-access resource is part of a wider employability programme to develop strategies, partnerships, and an employment pathway through our services and beyond into adulthood. The programme is designed to positively influence the perceptions of autistic individuals in the workplace; and change attitudes with employers, families and learners about what outcomes and aspirations can look like.

The employability toolkit helps autistic people have improved access to, and support in employment; and includes content aimed specifically at employers and the steps they can take from the very first stages of recruitment. It was developed by a team of professionals at BeyondAutism and reviewed by autistic individuals on our internship programme.

The toolkit is easy to navigate and is available online and in print. In its first year, it has been accessed by over 500 individuals and organisations.

Alongside the toolkit, we have delivered a series of presentations for professionals, families and autistic individuals. This included webinars on employability and the toolkit; and most recently a free online training course on how to get the most from the toolkit from an employer's perspective. One organisation shared:

“

As part of my role, I am included in Diversity and Inclusion groups and supplied the toolkit in those forums. [We] are committed to providing a safe space for everyone to work and this toolkit will be invaluable to use in being able to do so. The toolkit was extremely well received. Thanks for creating this wonderful toolkit.

”

“A vocational assessment is a very good idea as it will help employers to see what I am good at and what I need help with. I really like the traffic light system idea. I think all of these assessments will really help me and my employer.”

BeyondAutism Intern reviewing the toolkit



Our toolkit is truly innovative because of the diversity of audience that it supports.

Many of the autistic learners that attend our services also have other diagnoses, such as severe learning difficulties, which can present barriers to learning and to accessing opportunities and employment.

Most supported internships, or other such programmes available to help autistic people into work, are not suitable for our learners because there is an expectation of needing to have a certain level of independence to be able to achieve in the workplace.

Our toolkit is truly innovative because of the diversity of audience that it supports. It fills a gap in the market – offering all young adults, including our cohort, access to the same rights and opportunity to paid work. The shape that work may take might look different – the concept of job carving is a theme throughout our presentations around employability, but the focus is always on what the individual can bring to an organisation. Our goal is to demonstrate that by adopting simple tools and techniques you can create a more inclusive workplace.

We are delighted that our employability toolkit was crowned the 2022 winner of the Project Award by the Vocational Rehabilitation Association. This recognition sends a strong message about the impact our toolkit can have in creating opportunities for autistic adults in the workplace.



“

I wish this could be promoted far and wide; people on the spectrum (and with other disabilities) already know their strengths and weaknesses but society (in my opinion) focuses on the weaknesses rather than on the amazing abilities and positive elements that these employees could bring to a job.

Comment left on social media channel

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Charlie, Post-19 student

Charlie has been using the toolkit during his work experience placement at our charity office. Together with our Specialist Vocational Advisor and the team, he created a Vocational Profile and completed vocational assessments to ensure his placement developed the skills he wanted.

He was interested in gaining administration experience, alongside skills such as filing, scanning, franking, and developing his abilities on the computer.

Charlie hopes that working in an office environment will give him valuable insight into how businesses run, that he will be able to use to further his ambition to set up his own restaurant.





People with autism have the life skills to live their ideal week

Our students are deciding their futures





At BeyondAutism, the learner is at the heart of every decision we make. When it comes to key decisions about their future, it's important that they have the necessary skills and tools to be able to make informed decisions, and ultimately lead a more independent life of their choosing.

This starts by involving them in creating their own Personal Curriculum Plans (PCPs) – these documents outline the targets each individual is working on for the year, mapping out key development areas that will help them progress towards their ambitions. Every student has communication targets that ensure they are able to clearly communicate what they want for their future. ASDAN qualifications for our older students are linked to their plans, so that they know how to meaningfully apply the skills they learn in the world beyond education.

Learners across our services access a curriculum that builds on their PCPs and provides opportunities to embed learning and develop skills within the community in vocational and social activities.

It's also rooted in participation – in the services, in society, in making their own decisions. Equipping our learners with the tools they need to play an active role in decision making can look very different for each learner.



-  Zones of Regulation teaches emotional understanding from an early age. They help learners identify what emotional zone they're in, so that they can build the skills to manage the emotion
-  Visual timetables are an accessible tool that learners can use to choose what their day looks like, building key independence skills
-  Talking mats support a learner's ability to voice their own opinions and make their preferences known to others
-  Learner profiles provide information to others about what is important to them (what they like, what they don't like)



This is what it looks like for one of our learners, Dijj.

Our Speech and Language Therapist ran a session with Dijj to gather his views. He was asked what makes him happy or sad, what he likes doing at Post-19, and what he wants to do in the future. Dijj answered the questions by drawing circles around pictures, or writing his answer.

Dijj shared that friends and travelling make him happy; he likes using the gym and going swimming; he enjoys the whiteboard and computers. He identified McDonald's as a place he'd like to work. All of this helps Dijj shape what a good day looks like for him.

He arrives in the morning and writes his timetable for the day. He likes to include multisensory activities such as painting and using a keyboard; he also documents his day on the iPad. Dijj is great at a variety of jobs, including household chores, and uses movement breaks to release energy after each task. He has recently started work experience at a local gallery – organising and taking pictures of books for cataloguing. His trips into the community include visiting the park and shops, and swimming at the leisure centre.

Wellbeing Award for Schools

In January 2021, the team at Tram House School began working towards achieving the Wellbeing Award for Schools. We signed up to this award to further develop our work to promote positive wellbeing and mental health for the whole school community and gain accreditation for the ongoing work around pupil, staff and parent mental health. We are dedicated to improving the outcomes for all our pupils and positive mental health is the corner stone of this. We are also proud to challenge, and we knew that this award would require us to reflect on our practice and improve it, to better equip ourselves to support our learners, staff and parents.

Achieving this award requires the involvement of all members of the school community: staff, parents, pupils, governors as well as external stakeholders. During the process to accreditation, we sought the views of the whole school community. We wanted to hear about their challenges and what we could do to best support them. We also wanted to embed an open culture where mental health is discussed without stigma or prejudice.

At the start of January 2022, the school was assessed, and we were delighted to achieve the award – a fantastic outcome for the school, learners, parents and staff and recognition of the hard work that went into the process.

We are still seeking input on how we can better serve our community's mental health needs, and promoting emotional wellbeing and positive mental health will continue to be a priority of the school. To achieve this, we have developed a whole school strategy and vision statement which builds on the successes to date and which we feel will continue to have a significant positive impact on pupils, staff and parents. Our wellbeing strategy encourages pupils to say how they are feeling and have the strategies in place to support themselves to self-regulate.

“

The whole school community is to be congratulated for the huge strides forward taken in a short period of time, under very challenging circumstances. As a school that is 'proud to challenge', there is an ethos of reflection, growth and an embracing of progress that has stood you in good stead for the challenges of the award.

Our wellbeing verifier

”

“Leaders are right to be proud of their recent award for wellbeing, reflecting their strong emphasis on mental health. Pupils' personal development blossoms during their time at the school.”

Ofsted, 2022



Some of the ways learners share their views



Behaviours that Challenge

Lego Therapy

Self Help Skills

Parent Mental Health

Sensory

Zones of Regulation

Tolerating Skills

Growth Mindset

Safety in the Community

Increasing Cooperation

Communication

EHCP's

Sleep Issues

Routines + Repetitive Behaviours

Feeding Selectivity

Choosing a School

Intensive Interaction

Bucket Time

Toilet Training

Setting Targets

Principles of Behaviour



Increased resilience and confidence in families

Attention Autism
Bucket Time

Social Stories

In June 2022, 122,000 people in England were waiting for an autism assessment following a GP referral.⁸

Over 80% had been waiting more than 3 months to be seen, with reports of some families having to wait up to 5 years. Families face long waits to get a diagnosis that isn't even a guarantee they will start receiving the support they need. We believe more services are needed that bridge this gap for families.

Early intervention is the best way of supporting children and families; children who have the opportunity to attend pre-school will have greater acquisition of language, pre-reading and early number concepts by the age of 5 compared with those who don't. The benefits continue well into their education, and beyond.⁹

For children with developmental delay or difficulties '[early intervention] is better for the individuals concerned, their families and society more broadly; it avoids a lot of personal suffering, reduces social problems and generally, it costs less than remedial action'.¹⁰

Our Early Years' service is continuing to offer this early intervention support free to families, fully funded by voluntary-raised income thanks to grants from Trusts and Foundations, including The National Lottery Community Fund, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

71 families have attended sessions

222 parent sessions have been delivered in the last year alone – with topics chosen by the families

These parent sessions have a dual purpose – providing an opportunity for parents to talk through challenges they may be facing, and a supportive network of others to talk to, who better understand their world.

Introducing our online Autism Services Directory

We understand the importance of empowering people with information and resources, so that they can make informed choices. Our new directory offers a one-stop tool to help people find local and national services. From schools to social groups and diagnostic services to respite care, our directory will signpost people to the support they need.

The directory contains over 2000 services in London and across the UK: from early years all the way through to post-25. It stands apart from other directories in the sector for the truly impartial range of interdisciplinary services it covers – including behaviour analysis. Ensuring, as a result, that users can be matched to support that meets their needs. We're now continuing work to ensure the directory covers the whole of the UK.



We're extremely grateful to National Lottery Awards for All England for providing the funding to make this project a reality.

The research for this project was completed by our fantastic BeyondAutism Interns, offering them experience in planning and project management.

“

I think the directory will be a fruitful source of information to help people find local and national services without depending on SEND local offer. Types of services include therapy, family, schools, social, residential, respite and more. Compiling the list has been challenging, but at the same time interesting, rewarding and reassuring.

Rob, Marketing & Communications Intern 2021-2022

”

Creating resources that support the needs of families

Our interdisciplinary team is committed to sharing best practice information, driven by parents' needs, to help improve experiences for families; equipping them, and the professionals around them, with the knowledge and understanding to have a positive impact for autistic children and young adults, and their educational outcomes.

Autism and eating

In 2022, for World Autism Acceptance Week, we launched a new campaign around autism and eating that provided families with resources and tips to help get their child more interested in food.

For many autistic children and their families, mealtimes can be hard: sensory challenges, motor delay and a need for routine can all make it difficult to include a healthy range of foods into diets. Over two thirds of parents of autistic children report that their child is reluctant to try new foods!¹ Moreover, other behaviours such as eating or mouthing non-edible items, and extreme food selectivity can make providing sufficient nutrition hard. This can have a range of impacts on their health. Restrictive diets and disordered eating may also affect a child's learning – reducing their memory and concentration, reducing the energy they have and increasing levels of anxiety and depression. Providing early support is therefore crucial, and particularly for young people, could help reduce the impact on their education.

Our resources included:

- How to spot signs that might indicate a child is having difficulties with eating
- Tips for healthy eating
- Advice on food modifications to support positive experiences with food
- Strategies for introducing new foods, tastes and textures
- Visual recipes and ideas for food play



A new kitchen at Park House School

2022 also saw the completion of our new teaching kitchen at Park House School. Funded by Trusts, Foundations and the generosity of individual donors, this refurbishment has helped us create a wonderful learning space in which staff can work with pupils that have barriers to eating. By getting them involved in creating their own meals, we're also providing them with the skills to manage their own health in the future.

Richard LeRoy, Head of Park House School, highlighted the valuable learning that will be taking place:

“

We are so excited to have a kitchen space that replicates the home experience for pupils. They will be able to learn and practice truly valuable life skills that can be applied beyond the school environment. This will have an impact on a pupil's independence throughout their life.

”

Family resilience in the community – working to access medical appointments

A recent study found that 80% of autistic people reported difficulty visiting a GP.¹² Over half cited the waiting room environment as a major barrier. Many autistic children find medical appointments difficult as they can be confusing, unpredictable and painful. They may not understand why they are there, what is happening and what is expected of them. Appointments with unfamiliar people in unfamiliar, busy or noisy places can create a stressful environment which may be upsetting. This stress is then often felt by parents.

Over the last year at Park House School we have been working on a range of programmes, based on gradual exposure, to give our pupils the support they need to feel more comfortable at GP, optician and dentist appointments.



Anil's story*

Anil has made huge progress this year. At the start of the year, he was scared of attending medical appointments, having his hair cut or his nails clipped. His parents had to cut his nails whilst he slept. They needed to be able to go to the GP to get his hearing checked but were concerned about how he would respond to the appointment. Waiting rooms and otoscopes made Anil feel incredibly anxious, so getting his hearing checked was always challenging. He would need 2 or 3 people with him at appointments and he would have meltdowns because of his anxiety.

Slowly, across the year, Anil's class team helped him to overcome his challenges. They brought an otoscope into play sessions in the classroom to help him get used to the equipment. They also went on weekly visits to the GP surgery so he could get used to the journey and acclimatise himself in the waiting room. Similar strategies were used to help Anil with hair scissors and nail clippers.

In the course of the year, Anil has made amazing progress and is now happy having his nails clipped and his ears checked with an otoscope. He even went to the hairdresser for the first time and had his hair cut – huge steps that will give him more choice and control in his life.

“

[The] staff have worked so hard with Anil. In the holidays, he was able to go to a hairdresser and get a proper styled haircut with scissors, previously, we would have to make him sit in our lap and just use a machine to quickly cut his hair. He can also now wait [and] takes a seat in the reception area when we go and see the GP.

Anil's mother

”

*learner's name has been changed



Communities are supported to include people with autism

The services and projects we deliver all provide fantastic opportunities to engage with the wider community. This year we've worked with Allied Health Professionals, employers and engaged with an expanding number of parent groups; taking the right steps to break the cycle of prejudice that exists for many autistic children and young adults.

Building a new community in Bromley

October 2021 saw the official launch of our new home for Early Years in Bromley, with the premises opened by the Mayor and Mayoress of Bromley. This was an opportunity to welcome people from the surrounding community to see the service, and find out more about the charity. Being in a permanent location is allowing us to create stronger links with the surrounding businesses and education settings, so that families who attend the sessions can thrive in a more supportive local community.

Our Community Fundraiser visited over 50 local businesses, to share information about the service and to look at new affiliations for our organisation. We have partnerships with 13 local organisations, and hope to see this develop in the coming year, to increase the network of support available for families.



Leading autism education: sharing expertise and best practice to promote inclusive community environments and services

This year, London Southbank University invited us to present to around 130 first-year paediatric nursing students. They'd noticed a drop off in students following their placement within SEN settings and believed that more focused training would better prepare them to succeed across different settings.

A Behaviour Analyst and Speech and Language Therapist from BeyondAutism delivered training that introduced the principles of behaviour analysis, and how they can be used to support children during clinic. They also shared information about different communication systems, with examples that the students could experience and use, and provided resources to be able to make their own system.

By investing in training, early in the career of their nursing students, London South Bank University are equipping them with the essential skills they need to be more inclusive in their future careers.



"I will be able to recognise children with autism and their individual needs and how I can support them to meet them. It has helped me understand autism more and how it affects each individual differently and I have learned methods that I can use to provide them with the best possible care I can provide."

Student

We're meeting the needs of more people online

We've been working hard, and gathering insight, to ensure that the content we share is meeting the needs and interests of our audiences. The increase in engagement that we're seeing online demonstrates the impact this is having.

100%

increase in people finding us when they search for content on Google.

This means twice as many people are seeing our website, and the content we offer.

144k

people visiting our website to access information and resources.

That's **2x** as many as we had last year.

Resulting in

3500

downloads of our online resources.

A sponsored silence with a difference: Sophia's story

Sophia is 7 years old, and has a younger brother Toby, who has been attending BeyondAutism Early Years since September 2021. Toby cannot communicate verbally, so the Early Years' team have been supporting him to learn Makaton sign language to express himself. Sophia decided to take on a challenge that would seem impossible for many 7-year-olds, a 6-hour sponsored silence to raise money for BeyondAutism and complete her Brownies Charity Badge.

“

I decided to do a sponsored silence to show empathy to my brother and other kids who cannot yet speak. I wanted to put myself in Toby's shoes as he has trouble speaking and help him and all the other children like him.

”

During her sponsored silence Sophia only used Makaton signing to communicate. To earn her badge, Sophia also had various tasks to complete to promote and support BeyondAutism. She made a video which she shared on WhatsApp groups and social media, and distributed leaflets to a local playgroup and pre-school.

The family have noticed Toby has made real progress since he started attending Early Years. He has begun learning how to express himself through Makaton. Sophia says that “thanks to their help he is now participating in group activities like circle time, story time and messy play.”

Sophia's hard work was rewarded as she received her well-earned Brownies Charity Badge. She took the time to better understand her brother and his communication needs whilst raising awareness amongst her friends, family and community.

She also raised an incredible £784 for BeyondAutism.





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You can get involved

Our work leading autism education, and to drive change, doesn't stop here. Over the next 3 years of our strategy there is a lot more we want to achieve and we need your help to do this. Here are some of the ways you can support us and get involved.



- Fundraise for us
- Make an online donation
- Participate in our research
- Join our amazing team of staff
- Volunteer for us – in our services, as a Trustee, or by sharing your skills and experience
- Partner with us – by providing work experience placements, pro-bono support, Charity of the Year partnerships, donations or sponsorship to name just a few



Our website beyondautism.org.uk has more information on all these opportunities alongside a bank of useful resources and training.

Or why not get in touch directly?


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