

# Autism

INNOVATION & DEVELOPMENT FUND

Progress Report 2016/17



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
[gov.scot](http://gov.scot)

INSPIRING SCOTLAND



"MAKE  
YOUR  
GARDEN  
FEED  
YOU"

DIGGING  
POTATOES  
IS ALWAYS  
AN ADVENTURE

Unlocking  
My  
**Potential**  
AHA Futures

Active  
Healthy  
Achieving



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Thank you very much to all  
the charities who have kindly  
provided photography:

A.H.A Futures  
Check In Works/ Giraffe  
Indepen-dance (Scotland)  
Into Work  
Perth Autism Support  
Project Ability  
Scottish Autism  
Thistle Foundation

# Forewords



## Celia Tennant **Chief Executive, Inspiring Scotland**

At Inspiring Scotland, our vision is to create a Scotland without poverty or disadvantage. It is not going to be easy to achieve, but we know from experience when people, communities, charities and government all work together, remarkable things can be accomplished.

Since our involvement in the Autism Innovation and Development Fund began in April 2016, Scottish Government, charities and Inspiring Scotland have come together to work towards a common purpose of improving the lives of autistic people.

The Innovation and Development Fund has enabled charities to learn what is needed in their local area and develop projects to address those needs.

From young people in Fort William to parents and carers in East Renfrewshire, from autistic teens struggling with school exclusion in North Lanarkshire to siblings in Aberdeen, the work has been bold, diverse and inspiring.

We are delighted to share the progress of the Autism Innovation and Development Fund with you in this report and would like to thank everyone involved across Scotland who works tirelessly every day to help improve lives and build a Scotland without disadvantage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Celia".

Celia Tennant, Chief Executive, Inspiring Scotland



## **Maureen Watt MSP**

### **Minister for Mental Health**

As the first Minister for Mental Health in Scotland, I am delighted to support the work achieved through the Autism Innovation and Development Fund.

Our vision, as set out in the Scottish Strategy for Autism, is that individuals on the autism spectrum are respected, accepted and valued by their communities and have the confidence that services treat them fairly, so that they are able to have meaningful and satisfying lives.

To help us realise this vision, between 2015 and 2018, over 40 projects across Scotland will have been supported financially through the Autism Innovation and Development Fund. From April 2016 they have also received support from Inspiring Scotland on areas such as leadership and building a sustainable organisation.

This report shares the progress made from when the projects launched until 31st March 2017. The projects supported are from a diverse range of charities and social enterprises, each bringing their own unique strengths and areas of expertise to help improve the lives of autistic people and parents or carers across Scotland.

I am delighted that more than 6,000 people have been reached to date through this fund. I hope you enjoy reading about the work achieved so far, as we move one step closer towards our vision of transforming lives for autistic people. We look forward to a further year of working with the charities and Inspiring Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen Watt".

Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Mental Health

# Autism Fund: Our year in numbers



# 6,390

**People impacted.\***

\*This includes up to 7% duplicates where two charities have worked with the same individual.



# £1.5m+

**Fund investment between March 2015 and March 2017.**



# 42

**Projects across Scotland delivered by 38 charities.**



# 74%

**Of projects have connected with their local authority or Integrated Joint Board.**



# 67%

**Of projects have made connections with other projects in the Fund.**



# 30%+

**Of portfolio charities received pro bono support.**

# Fund progress

**Supporting people with autism and their families to lead more meaningful and satisfying lives.**

- **Strong progress made across all Innovation and Development projects.**

It has been reported that from the beginning of this fund, projects have impacted 1,491 autistic individuals, 2,813 parents/carers, 1,237 practitioners, 222 school teachers, 372 people who employ or work with autistic people and 255 others (this includes housing, police, NHS, social work or siblings). Please note this includes up to 7% duplicates where two charities have worked with the same individual.

- **Evidence of demand for services.**

Projects have evidenced a strong and growing demand for services, with many charities now operating a waiting list for support.

- **Trusting relationships built.**

Working with autistic people often takes time to build trusting relationships therefore projects are now demonstrating impact from relationships that started six months to one year ago



- **National themes clarified.**

We are seeing a clear clustering of projects and themes emerging for additional support (see Emerging Themes section for more details).

- **Sustainability and resilience a priority.**

There continues to be a need for this important work and, as we come to the end of this three year fund, there now needs to be a strong focus on sustainability and resilience. We will ensure a legacy is built for what has been achieved to date.

# Strategic outcomes

**A Scotland where we are all  
respected, accepted and valued.**

As set out in the Scottish Government's Scottish Strategy for Autism, all projects are working towards one of four key strategic outcomes:

## 1. A Healthy Life:

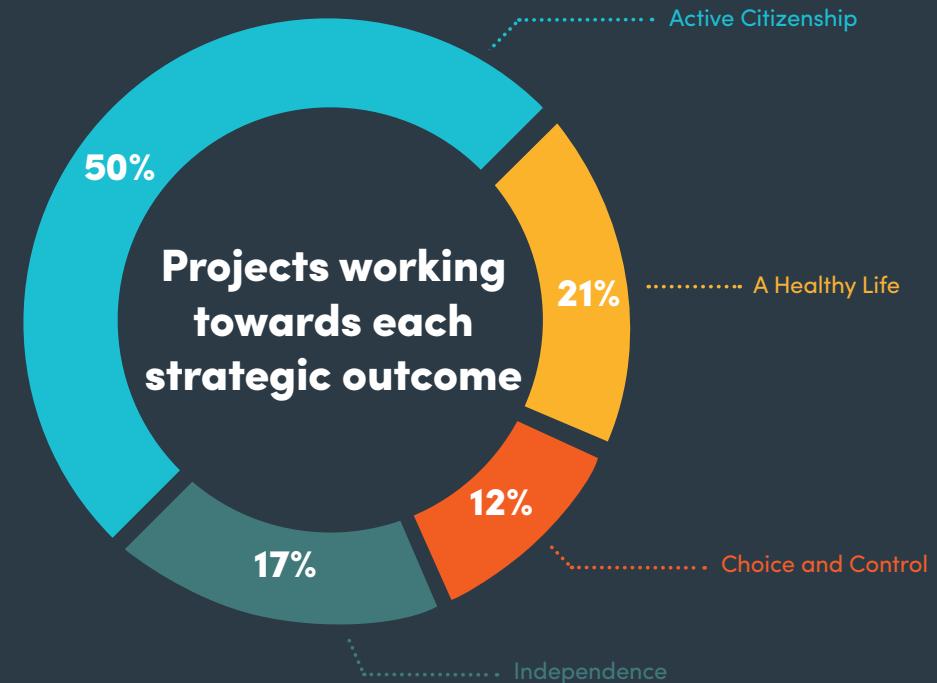
People with autism enjoy the highest attainable standard of living, health and family life and have timely access to diagnostic assessment and integrated support services.

## 2. Choice and Control:

People with autism are treated with dignity and respect and services are able to identify their needs and are responsive to meet those needs.

## 3. Independence:

People with autism are able to live independently in the community with equal access to all aspects of society. Services have the capacity and awareness to ensure that people are met with recognition and understanding.



## 4. Active Citizenship:

People with autism are able to participate in all aspects of community and society by successfully transitioning from school into meaningful educational or employment opportunities.

## Across all Innovation and Development Fund projects:

- **76%** of projects reported that people have experienced improved access to information and support.
- **76%** of projects reported that people have increased knowledge of choices and available support for well-being.
- **70%** of projects reported that people have increased social confidence.
- **68%** of projects reported that people have increased social inclusion and access to community activities.

Projects have also reported delivering increased resilience, development of healthier coping strategies, an increase in number of people supported and better engagement across education, volunteering and employment.

We have seen strong progress over the last year. The projects are delivering great results.

- Performance Advisor, Inspiring Scotland



# Spotlight on the Portfolio

**We work  
together and  
get results.**

Across Scotland, the Autism Innovation and Development Fund continues to have an impact on the ground for autistic people and their families, carers and communities.

All projects are making progress with more than 6,000 individuals positively impacted since the start of the projects. There has been strong evidence of achievement of outcomes provided by charities in the form of testimonials, case studies and quotes.

Over the following pages, we will highlight some of the Autism Innovation and Development Fund projects, clustered by key themes emerging.

# Employment

The National Autistic Society's Employment Gap report estimates that only 16% of autistic adults are in full-time paid employment and 32% of autistic adults are in some kind of paid work. Employment and/or the transition to further education or training is a core focus for many projects.

- **Values Into Action Scotland** (VIAS), based in the West of Scotland, has helped 29 autistic individuals into Modern Apprenticeship placements through delivering its model in conjunction with partner organisations (including colleges, Skills Development Scotland and local authorities). VIAS has reported "The genesis of the initial project was the Developing the Young Workforce report from 2014/15, showing that only 62 people with any disability had gained a Modern Apprenticeship. Our project on its own contributed a 35% improvement in those figures nationally." West College Scotland alone has tripled its number of autistic people in employment using the VIAS model and now has over 30 additional support students in mainstream courses.
- **REALISE Support and Learning**, based in Aberdeen, has supported 22 individuals to explore career options in health, social care and other sectors. A key learning has been the varying level of support required based on the individuals' needs and discovery of a gap in provision to help with 'basic life skills' which needs to be addressed before individuals can seek employment.
- **Into Work**, working in Edinburgh and the Lothians, has supported 19 autistic individuals who are furthest away from the labour market around issues such as transition, difficulties engaging with tasks like signing on at a Job Centre and help if at threat of redundancy. In addition it has worked with employers including Network Rail, Waldorf Astoria and National Library of Scotland.



This has been life changing for me and I am so grateful to everyone involved. I now have something to look forward to every day and a future that looks positive.

- Apprentice with Values into Action

# Transitions

People with autism can experience difficulties in coping with change. Many charities in the Autism Innovation and Development Fund are working to help people understand and manage key life transitions such as leaving school and going to college.

- **Autism Network Scotland**, in partnership with **ARC**, has now delivered transition support training to 341 parents/carers and practitioners across 11 local authority areas. The project has allowed practitioners to know their responsibilities in supporting an autistic person in transitions (including clarity on transitions legislation and policy) and parents attending the sessions are aware of their rights and what to expect. When asked how the session would impact their ability to support their child with transitions, 82% of parents rated a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5.
- **Clydesdale Community Initiatives** has been working with young people to explore environmental volunteering to aid a smooth transition from school. CCI notes a need for better and more successful transitions for individuals with autism and have found that many young people are “not enabled to explore ‘non-traditional’ opportunities when transitioning from school”. The model of support is centred around environmental-based volunteering programmes and activities which develop skills, improve self-confidence. 49 autistic people have had the opportunity to explore different routes within environmental volunteering.
- **Perth Autism Support** works closely with the local authority on a number of areas such as education, housing and community care. The impact their project has on those supported has been described as life-changing. They are the only transition support for autistic young people in Perth and Kinross. They have more than 600 families registered demonstrating the need for this service.



- **The Shirlie Project** notes that “for young people, transition from school is not always about a positive destination of their choice but just about a destination. This can often be a college course which is not the right choice or option for the person”. Through the Bigger Picture Programme, The Shirlie Project, which forms part of the transition team from school, can build meaningful networks around the young person based on their ambition for the future. Now covering all 32 secondary schools across the Highlands, the programme has worked with 53 young autistic people, involving approximately 500 people in local communities.

**For young people, transition from school is not always about a positive destination of their choice but just about a destination. This can often be a college course which is not the right choice or option for the person.**

- The Shirlie Project

# The Arts

The value of our projects working in the arts continues to grow and deliver strong well-being results, as autistic people have the opportunity to learn, explore and express themselves through creative outlets.

- **Indepen-dance** is an inclusive dance company, which has been helping autistic people explore, enjoy and express themselves through dance. From the beginning of the Autism Innovation and Development Fund, over 140 autistic individuals have taken part in Indepen-dance classes. For autistic children, the experience of dance on a regular basis has opened up the possibility of more connections with others, improved speech and expanded movement range and growing self confidence. Speaking of one of the participants, an Indepen-dance teacher has reported “M has developed from not engaging to struggling to engage in the weekly classes, to now developing his own movement quality. He has now become a confident dancer.”
- **Project Ability** provides 12-15 autistic people with access to a professional visual art studio, materials and expert tuition every week. Sessions are self-directed and local artists, who volunteer with Project Ability, also come along to work on their own projects and alongside people with different lived experiences. Project Ability have noted that participants are extremely creative and talented and benefit greatly from accessing the arts in a safe, creative and autism-friendly environment. The social aspect of the project is extremely important with people reporting how much they enjoy working alongside others but within their own space. People report being happier, improved well-being, more confident and less socially isolated. Parents and carers report on their relief in finding a meaningful activity that their child engages with and an environment where they



are welcome.

- **Limitless**, a pilot project between the **National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the National Autistic Society**, explored the potential for a creative autistic life through creative theatre and drama. 21 autistic people took part in the pilot during the summer of 2016 and building on the success of the programme has led to commitments to develop this work further. Artist Graham Eatough is keen to work with the core members of the professional creative team on development and delivery of his production, *The Reason I Jump*. In addition, the work has led artist Zoe Halliday to design an Autistic Youth Theatre Company model that would run out of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



# Outdoor Activities

Outdoor learning and play can make people feel happier, healthier and more active in their communities. Our outdoor activity projects are demonstrating the benefits of this first hand.

- **Aberdeen Play Forum** gives children the opportunity to be involved in an innovative and unique woodland play project, focused on keeping the children healthy and active. The children who participated in the week-long project, demonstrated confidence and resilience during participation, increasing skills and confidence through play and nature-based experiential learning. Another unique aspect of this project was the involvement with siblings. Aberdeen Play Forum observed greater independence and less reliance from the autistic child and found the siblings would come together with the freedom to play in their own groups, released of their caring responsibilities. The experience enabled children to develop their existing coping skills and boosted their confidence for active participation in their community.
- **The Highland Cycle Ability Centre** (Watermill Enterprises), based outside Nairn, has over the course of the project attracted 107 autistic individuals, 250 parents/carers and 15 school teachers to use this inclusive cycle track. Close links have been established through schools and ASD users have reported increased confidence, feeling fitter, less anxious, more sociable, more empowered, feeling healthier, having better sleep patterns and better communication skills. “W is 19, autistic, and has made the transition from Drummond School to Watermill Enterprises. As part of his weekly programme of activities he attends the Highland Cycle Ability Centre at least twice a week and, on occasions, cycles 14km continuously. Normally requiring 2:1 supervision, W can be trusted to cycle



**It's like having a new son. He is sleeping so much better and seems really happy.**

- Mother of autistic boy working with Highland Cycle Ability Centre

on his own at all times around the track thus giving him much greater levels of independence.” W’s mother commented “It’s like having a new son. He is sleeping so much better and seems really happy.”

- **The Conservation Volunteers** (TCV Scotland) run a range of stimulating sensory-based activities for autistic adults through outdoor sessions at Jupiter Wildlife Centre in Grangemouth. This project is a great example of partnership working across the fund as this is done in conjunction with Scottish Autism.

## Support for Parents & Carers

Supporting parents and carers, particularly after receiving an autism diagnosis, is crucial. These projects are devoted to helping parents and carers with the information they need and building communities of support:

- **The East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre** offers parents of children aged six plus, a high quality training course that covers a wide range of topics. As a result, the parents feel more informed, skilled and supported. From working closely with parents, it was recognised that there is a gap in service provision for autistic girls. As a result, two of the trainers have taken an opportunity to receive additional training from 'The Curly Hair' project to support autistic girls and a peer support group has been established. Other gaps in provision identified include support with autism and mental health, early years provision and ongoing support to put strategies into practice. One parent of an autistic child recently commented "this course is a Godsend."
- **The Glasgow Carers Partnership** has been running training for parents and carers of young people with autism – to date, over 504 training places have been filled on 53 courses, estimated to have impacted over 350 individual families since January 2016. The project has been delivered using a strong partnership approach which includes Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership and the Autism Resource Centre. The information has ranged from provision of initial Introduction to Autism training through to Challenging Behaviour, Autism and Sleep, Promoting Positive Social Interaction, Toileting Issue workshops and more. In 2016/17 approximately 800 new Parent Carers of Children with Disabilities, 87% of whom have autism, were identified to Glasgow Carers Partnership services and the centre has been working hard to build a strong



referral network with the diagnostic centres. The project has identified that the number one lesson has been that a small resource at the right time can help avoid crisis at a later stage; "a little knowledge can go a long way to support parents cope."

- **The Richmond Fellowship.** This project has in total supported more than 300 family carers with face to face training and around 50 family carers with intensive input through one to one support. Once this has been completed, those family carers who have received face to face training will then be provided with access to an online e-learning resource whereby they can increase their knowledge, read up to date research and share ideas and support. There have been oversubscriptions in many areas which demonstrates a clear local demand for further training sessions. A parent in Glenrothes recently commented "I feel more informed, have a better understanding and now feel confident in going forward working together with my son through our difficult times."

# Independent Living

Several projects are dedicated to helping autistic people learn to live independently. This includes practical skills around the home, building connections and friendships with others and having a voice in the community.

- **Momentum** has run a variety of practical and project based learning sessions for 12 individuals with autism within a purpose built simulated living flat. Topics included managing your own home, safety in the home (including internet safety), use of electrical equipment, food hygiene (including REHIS Food Hygiene Qualification), exercise, sleep, managing your money and more. Employability skills were also developed including exploring first steps to securing employment.
- **Grampian Opportunities** has become an important and trusted place for people with autism in the community. The project team is made up of people with autism and their carers, working with them to collectively give autism a voice. There have been 22 autistic individuals, 24 parents or carers and 32 practitioners involved in the project to date, which has helped raise key issues faced by autistic people in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The project has received requests for help across housing, social care, health care, education, employment, transitioning from school and more. A key highlight has been the autistic people involved being asked to feed into the Mental Health Act 2010 review in relation to people with autism.
- **A.H.A. Futures** is a partnership between three organisations in Fort William (Ardgour Activities, Lochaber Rural Education Trust and Nimble Fingers). Young autistic people take part in activities throughout the year one day per week – from craft activities to running a pop up café – as a vehicle for social inclusion;



building skills, confidence and friendships. A Mum's recent feedback highlighted the service as being a lifeline to the family, "My child is a happy child after AHA Futures. I wish we could have this service five days per week."

- **National Autistic Society's** Coffee Club project has formed a supportive peer network of autistic people who meet on a regular basis. In total 47 people have engaged with the coffee clubs across seven local authority areas, supported by a network of 10 volunteers. Based on feedback from participants, 78% of attendees told NAS that their confidence has increased since attending Coffee Clubs and 100% agreed that they were able to form relationships and made friends at the Coffee Club. There was also an employability element to this project with 'Job Search' groups. While the employment groups came to an end in October, several people are still confident enough to attend interviews and look for work (one man recently travelled to Birmingham for an interview). This project shows the power of simply bringing people together for peer support, a highlight has been that seven Coffee Club attendees took part in comedy workshops ahead of the NAS 20th Birthday Celebrations at the Scottish Parliament.

# Emerging themes

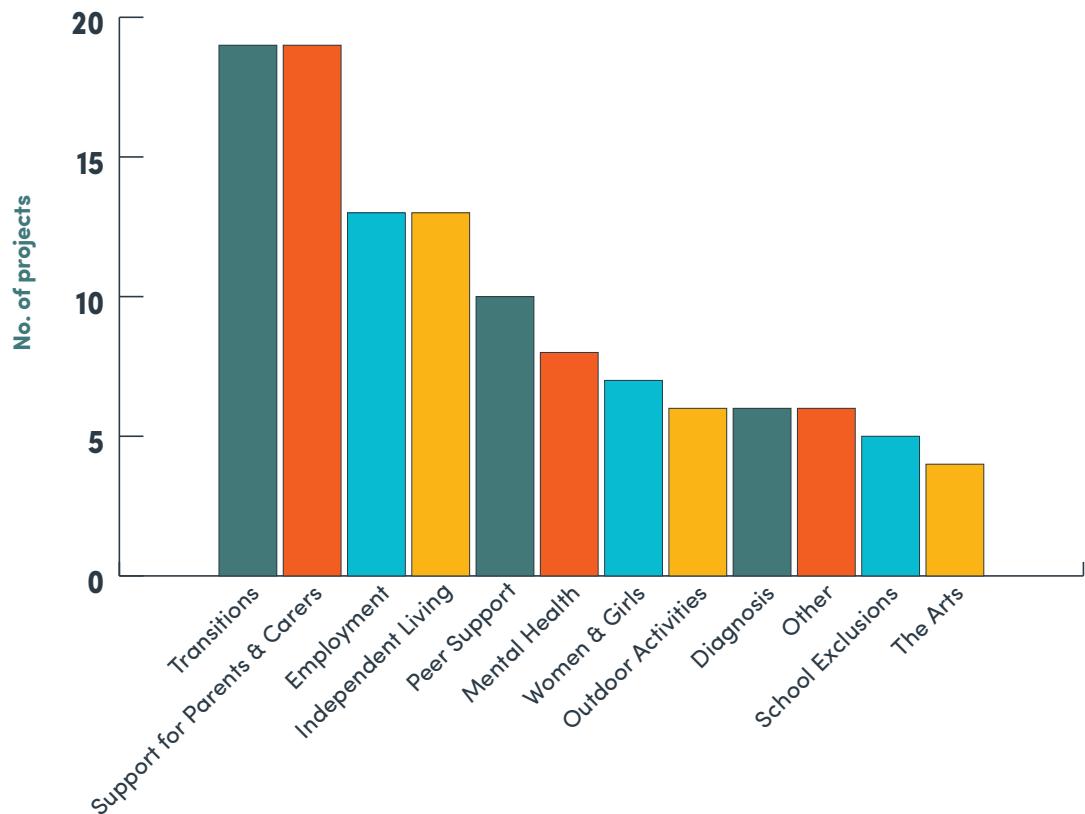
## Opportunities for development

With the Autism Innovation and Development Fund representing a diverse range of charities across Scotland, it is well positioned to report on what themes are emerging nationally.

Projects have reported that the top themes which represent gaps in service provision include Transitions, Support for Parents and Carers, Employment and Independent Living.

Over the next few pages, we will explore these emerging themes in more detail, using examples and insight from charities on the ground.

We asked all project to identify up to 3 gaps in service provision for autistic people, families, carers or practitioners.



# Emerging themes

## Employment

**With only 16% of autistic adults in full time paid work and only 32% of autistic adults in some kind of paid work (statistics from the National Autistic Society), employment remains a key theme.**

Projects have noted that employer engagement can be challenging. However, the Shirlie Project emphasises that employers are happy to be involved with supporting young people, providing they feel they have the support they need from a specialist organisation if and when required.

Values Into Action Scotland reported that the centralisation, digitisation and outsourcing of the initial stages of recruitment by many large employers is a barrier to employer engagement and that there are challenges to removing successful apprentices from benefits and gaining confirmation of disability diagnosis to ensure support is not lost. IWORK4ME, who support autistic adults into self-employment, said the route taken is often non-linear and varied and can be a lengthy process.

While many projects did not report working directly in the employment field, there is a relationship between the work they are doing and assisting on an individual's journey to further education, voluntary opportunities and employment.

## Transitions

Many projects have commented on a continued need for a focus on transitions, particularly when making the transition from school into further education, voluntary opportunities, or employment.

The Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI) report commented that many young people are not enabled to explore non-traditional opportunities when transitioning from school and have no alternative options or provisions in place for when college courses come to an end – which they are actively pursuing through the CCI environmental volunteering programme.

The Highland Cycle Ability Centre draws from conversations with parents who have felt that their children just ‘fall off the precipice’ on leaving school and acknowledge the opportunity brought through social, mini or micro enterprises to allow people to forge their own employment opportunities (something that the centre is looking to pursue).

**Indepen-dance commented on their findings that children with autism move from one service or school to another and can often ‘fall through the system’ in terms of after school activities or age-specific classes tailored to their needs. Indepen-dance see their creative dance classes as playing an important role to prevent this from happening.**

Grampian Opportunities refers to the importance of thinking of transitions across an individuals' life span and that support is required through all of life's changes – including moving house, changing jobs, bereavement and more.

The Shirlie Project, has noted that there is a strong need to work with young people at the crucial stage prior to them leaving school and ensure they are engaged in meaningful activities of their choosing with a clear post-school action plan. They have found that their work in this space helps the young person make a meaningful transition from school and brings a huge relief for the families and schools involved.

ARC, who have done a lot of work in this area, noted from their research that generally young people with additional support needs are more confident about their future than their parents and carers who often feel burdened by the process of their child's transition.

***The Principles of Good Transitions 3, produced by ARC, provides a framework to inform, structure and encourage the continual improvement of young people. To download the report, go to: [www.scottishtransitions.org.uk/summary-download](http://www.scottishtransitions.org.uk/summary-download)***

## **Support for Parents & Carers**

Topics reported include varying level of provision across the country, practical support needed following diagnosis, on-going support required and additional attention to mental health, girls with autism and the importance of respite.

It was reported from the Richmond Fellowship from their extensive work with parents and carers that there is a lack of practical support for parents and carers following diagnosis and ongoing support. "One carer noted speaking to her health visitor for help around her son being physically challenging during school holidays specifically due to not coping with the lack in structure due to the holidays and as a response the health visitor provided a generic leaflet regarding improving parenting skills. Carers have reported that the strategies they have received from the training has been the most useful and empowering element."

East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre have reported that other than the CYGNET training which they deliver, there is not much support in the area. They have noted that this training only covers a specific age range (school age) and there is a gap in early years provision and ongoing support to put the learning in to practice.

With their transition work across the country, Autism Network Scotland reported that parents and carers said that they felt they have to actively look for support and that there is a real need across Scotland for regular and consistent support for parents, hearing the comment that “it still feels like a post code lottery and that services and information is not consistent”.

**Projects which do not primarily have a parent or carer focus, often find that the support they offer provides families with important respite.**

Indepden-dance noted many families who struggle financially to allow their children to access activities or who don't get the right support in the community are being supported through classes.

Projects also continue to innovate and develop services alongside what they see as gaps in provision or emerging needs. An example of this has been Glasgow Carers Partnership who translated their course material into Mandarin for the high number of Mandarin families who have children with an ASD diagnosis in the city.

## Independent Living

Being able to live independently is tied closely to the other themes presented. It can aid transitions, build friendships, seek education or employment opportunities and be an active citizen in the community.

Many of our projects are working towards enabling independent living in different forms and this type of preventative work can reduce the reliance on or intensity of the support required in the longer term.

This was summarised by Grampian Opportunities who are working in the Independent Living space:

**“There is no understanding that although [the autistic person] may be able to stand up and give a talk or go to work or into further education, they cannot manage many everyday tasks and struggle to cope with life and interactions with others socially. This is more disabling than many professionals understand but is a key part of the condition. However, many people with ASD have significant skills and talents and when used well, are more productive than their neuro-typical peers.”**

# Focus areas

Through interaction with the supported charities, Inspiring Scotland's Performance Advisors noted several emerging themes which, with some preventative input, we believe can significantly help organisations and reduce autistic people's need for support later in life.

- **Diagnosis:** There continues to be challenges around diagnosis, particularly for adults and diagnosis for women/girls. There also appear to be regional differences. For example, projects in Aberdeenshire have noted limited diagnostic services in Grampian NHS for adults and a lack of pathways for diagnosis.
- **Women/Girls:** The lack of provision for women and girls with autism has resulted in many projects expanding what they do to have to include specific services to support women and girls. For example, the National Autistic Society social groups were attended mostly by males. There has now been a pilot of a girls only group established which is providing to be very successful.
- **School Exclusion:** It has been reported that there is a lack of a cohesive approach to managing difficulties at school and a general lack of understanding in education. It has also been reported by several projects that teachers have been open to receiving training on support strategies. Currently the Scottish Autism School Refusal project based in North Lanarkshire is the only project working specifically to tackle school exclusions and refusals. This project has worked with eight young people with diverse presentations of autism to develop autism profiling and strategies with the pupil, teaching staff, parents or carers and other relevant parties. Overall, well-being, school attendance and, importantly, receptiveness to school have all increased through this work. However, there continue to be challenges extending this to the wider school community. Scottish Autism has noted that, unless the profiling approach adopted extends to all staff, pupils will likely continue experiencing high levels of anxiety and school refusal.
- **Arts, Outdoor Activities and Well-being:** Projects working in the arts are delivering significant impact on overall well-being of participants and it has been reported in this period that there is not enough inclusive arts provision for people with autism.
- **Connections at a local level:** 74% of projects have reported that they have connected with their local authority. This is a positive step but there is still an opportunity to improve. Several projects have referred to the differing levels of focus on autism support and financial support available amongst local authorities across Scotland. It is important that charities have the opportunity to discuss the requirements for support for autism with the local authority and demonstrate the value they can offer. Equally, the charities need to be able to clearly express the impact that their support can have.
- **Use of technology:** Most projects continue to operate at a local level, often working on a one-to-one basis with clients. Inspiring Scotland sees an opportunity to scale activities or automate back end functions using technology. Currently, there are three supported projects utilising technology through service delivery – Scottish Autism's Right Click project, Autism Network Scotland's partnership with the Scottish Drugs Forum to develop a sexual health education app and the National Autistic Society's app to help people manage their social club membership. Inspiring Scotland believes this is a huge opportunity for growth.
- **Transport:** Transport issues have also been reported by projects, particularly in rural areas where there may be support available but it is not easily accessible .



# Inspiring Scotland

## Together, we are social problem-solvers.

Inspiring Scotland brings together people, communities, organisations and government to drive social change and transform lives.

### Individual charity support

Through our Performance Advisor model, we work with the charity on a one to one basis to develop an understanding of each individual charity's needs. Performance Advisors have recently supported charities with requests for fundraising, strategy, social enterprise idea generation, crowdfunding, building sustainability and more.

### Driving collaboration

We are passionate about working together and we facilitate connections and encourage partnership working where possible. We are delighted that 74% of projects have reported that they have connected with their local authority or Integrated Joint Board and 67% of projects have made connections with other projects in the fund.

### Pro Bono support

Our network of professional volunteers – including lawyers, business managers, accountants, marketing specialists and photographers – have donated the equivalent of £9,800 of support to charities in the Autism Innovation and Development Fund.



### Project reporting

On-going informal updates and bi-annual formal reporting ensure projects are held accountable to financial metrics and social outcomes.

### Bringing charities together

Between October 2016 and March 2017, events have included 'Cost Benefit Analysis: Putting a value on Priceless Work' and 'Meet The Funders' in partnership with Big Lottery, Children In Need and other Scottish funders.

**The support we have received from Inspiring Scotland has been fantastic, the pro bono support with specialist advice and the lead officer meetings to discuss how we continue to provide our service have been an invaluable element to the whole project. It has also allowed us to look at other funding streams and think differently on how our organisation moves forward with future ventures and projects.**

Indepen-dance

**Our interaction with Inspiring Scotland has been very positive. We are pleased by the collegiate nature of their approach. They acknowledge and recognise our expertise in this field and have been understanding and supportive of the challenges of translating project plans into the real world context.**

Barnardo's Scotland

**It was helpful talking to Inspiring Scotland and attending events to hear what the other projects were experiencing. Some of the workshops were very inspiring. It felt like they really understood the challenges around autism services and could describe these challenges.**

Scottish Autism



# Conclusion

## A strong start with clear goals for the future.

Charities are making strong progress. Demand has been growing for projects and the impact is growing thanks to established trusted relationships at a local level. Referrals to projects are coming from schools, local authorities, NHS and direct from the autistic person and their families and carers.

Innovation and Development Fund projects have become ‘go to places’ for information, support and advice.

It is clear that support for people with autism cuts across many different and complex issues – from housing to health, from education to transport and employment.

Through bold action and working together across policy areas, we will deliver improved lives for autistic people and their families.

Inspiring Scotland’s support has been well received by charities and will continue for the remainder of 2017/18.

Charities are helping to define what is needed as the ‘next phase’ of support at a local level.

Moving forward in 2017, Inspiring Scotland will continue to work closely with the charities, key stakeholders and the Scottish Government to:

- a) build capacity, sustainability and resilience amongst the charities;
- b) develop a picture of the landscape for autistic people in Scotland;
- c) quantify the impact the charities are having and opportunities for building a legacy;
- d) facilitate cross-project connections.

As we enter the final year of this fund, charities are clear on the priorities. It will be critical to share learnings and build the legacy beyond March 2018.



# Case Studies

**The Autism Innovation and Development Fund aims to help improve the lives of people with autism and their families and carers in Scotland.**

**These case studies are just three examples of the approximately 6000 activities which helped improve the lives of the autistic people, their families and carers and siblings in 2016.**

# Malcolm's story: Engaging with the world of work.

We first met Malcolm as a young autistic man who engaged with us on the Bigger Picture programme. Malcolm was very isolated at school. He enjoyed making up quizzes and would like to test people on their knowledge of celebrities and who they felt was the 'most famous'.

Malcolm thought he had an interest in becoming a handyman but in reality like lots of young people he really didn't know what he wanted to do after school. Through the Bigger Picture programme Malcolm engaged in activities such as badminton. We discovered he was very good and a very fit young man. He decided to stay on at school for another year to help him make the right choice about what he did after school.

Malcolm started to attend our N-Gage programme to help him understand the world of work. This time we saw a very different young man who had lost a lot of weight and was very into his fitness and diet. He fully engaged in the programme, clearly loving every minute of it. He pulled together a CV and as part of the programme he visited the Aquadome in Inverness where we met the managers. He started to express an interest in working in the sports industry.

Today Malcolm is completing work experience at the Jury's Inn Gym where he is gaining experience of working in a sports environment. In July he starts his Level 2 qualification in Gym Instruction with Fitness Training Scotland. He is also learning to drive which can only further support him in his future life direction.

So how has this contact with the Shirlie Project been for Malcolm, and for myself? I am happy to report a very positive experience. It is my belief that any organisation is only as good as its people; it is the people who make an organisation. All the paperwork can be in place; the programmes can appear perfect; the buildings can be elaborate and enticing ... but if the people are not engaged – and indeed engaging with the clients – that organisation will have little impact. I also believe this is especially true for those folks who are clients of the Shirlie and who require that extra bit of input; that extra understanding; that extra TLC.... Malcolm has experienced here genuine interest in him. It is imperative that the folks charged with bringing on our young folks are interested in them: for they – as well as their parents – soon sense a lack of interest. In the Shirlie, Malcolm is Malcolm; he is not just a number, not just another young person with autism. His job coach rightly – and needfully – has taken the time to first find out who he is, what his interests are and what makes him tick.

- Malcolm's mother

# Kieran's story: Growing confidence.

Before getting involved with the InterAct project, Kieran's mum described how anxious she felt about Kieran being out and about in the world: "Because he hasn't experienced it, I'm scared of the world around him."

She rated it as 'hard' or 'very hard' for Kieran to stay in touch with people, to try new places and things, to go out just with his friends and to travel on his own. She said her hope was that he would become more independent. Kieran spoke about how he wanted to socialise more with friends and that he hoped to be "more independent, to go places myself and my mum wouldn't be worried."

Over the last year, Kieran regularly joined the InterAct Watch Me Fly meet-ups, voting for what he was interested in trying and going along with friends to things like the Cosmo world buffet, a night-time ghost tour and a Stand comedy club show. Alongside this, he regularly met up with the Development Worker who began helping him learn how to use buses – something that he hadn't liked in school. He also learned how to use bus apps, which he found helpful. "They show me the bus times and sometimes I have to run down the road." The worker kept in touch regularly with Kieran's mum, to make sure she felt confident in how he was getting on.

Six months on and Kieran has mastered a network of routes with the Development Worker coordinating with school about him travelling there himself rather than getting a taxi. After the input from InterAct, his mum now rates him top of the scale ('easy') in terms of his social skills, ability to go new places and try new things, and confidence to get places by public transport.

**Overall he's got more outgoing. He has already made a trip to town and back on his own, this is so exciting! I see him getting his independence – because he didn't have it before at all. He used to be just with me but now he is asking if it's OK for him to nip to the comic book store and such things. He is saying what he would like to do and initiating things – and does them as well! He's making friends from a mixed group, and not just school. It makes me really happy that he's not just going to sit at home after school finishes.**

- Kieran's mum

**I feel confident travelling on my own. Like, if I'm going to go somewhere, I think now I don't have to take four sessions to learn to get there. Hopefully I can only do one now. Like if I wanted to go somewhere, I don't need to worry, I can just go there. I think my street-smartness has gotten better. I've taken a big jump. From last year till now I'm more confident. What caused it? Me not giving up and trying and trying. I kind of knew before, but now my mum knows I can go to these places by myself...if she knows I can do it, I can do it. I know I'm very capable, I just wanted someone to say it.**

- Kieran

## Alan's story: Work experience and confidence.

Alan is a young man with Asperger's Syndrome who started his journey at CheckIn/Giraffe in March 2014 as a volunteer to gain work experience. Alan had previously attended university but, due to the pressures of the environment and a subsequent period of mental ill health, was not able to sustain his studies.

He was anxious about engaging with people after his break, but wanted to get into the workplace. Recognising that he needed support to do this, Alan came to CheckIn/Giraffe through the One Stop Shop run by Perth Autism Support, another of the charities supported by the Autism Innovation and Development Fund.

Alan progressed really well over a year, both in gaining work experience and also in receiving accredited training. He achieved Worldhost customer service training and helped to design a basic numeracy training

course for other jobseekers. We had given Alan his first experience of paid work and he had been working well in our South Street café and shop. Through attending our weekly jobclub, he had applied for and was successful in securing a supervisory post with the WRVS. Again, Alan's health declined and he had to take time to recover.

In March 2016, an opportunity arose with Community Job Scotland and we felt that Alan would be the right candidate to assist with a new project called the Great Perthshire Picnic. Alan has thrown himself into the role and is very keen to show what he can achieve.

Although very capable, Alan needed to build up his confidence again and to expand upon his work skills and experience.

Alan says he enjoys the structure and variation of his shifts and he is always punctual and well presented.



**It gives me a boost that I am doing useful stuff and valued in employment. I feel less alienated and more included. It has also given me the confidence to move out of my parent's house.'**

- Alan

Alan still requires support and reassurance, but is now interacting more confidently with others. He is a valuable member of the team and has been a huge help in launching and promoting the Great Perthshire Picnic. Alan is pleased with the improvement in his admin skills, organisation and time-keeping that the role has provided opportunity for. "I have made good friends here and I really enjoy the walking group. My health has improved too." Alan benefits from a range of social and health and well-being activities that the organisation also runs.

# Portfolio of charities & areas of operation

## The charities in the Autism portfolio:

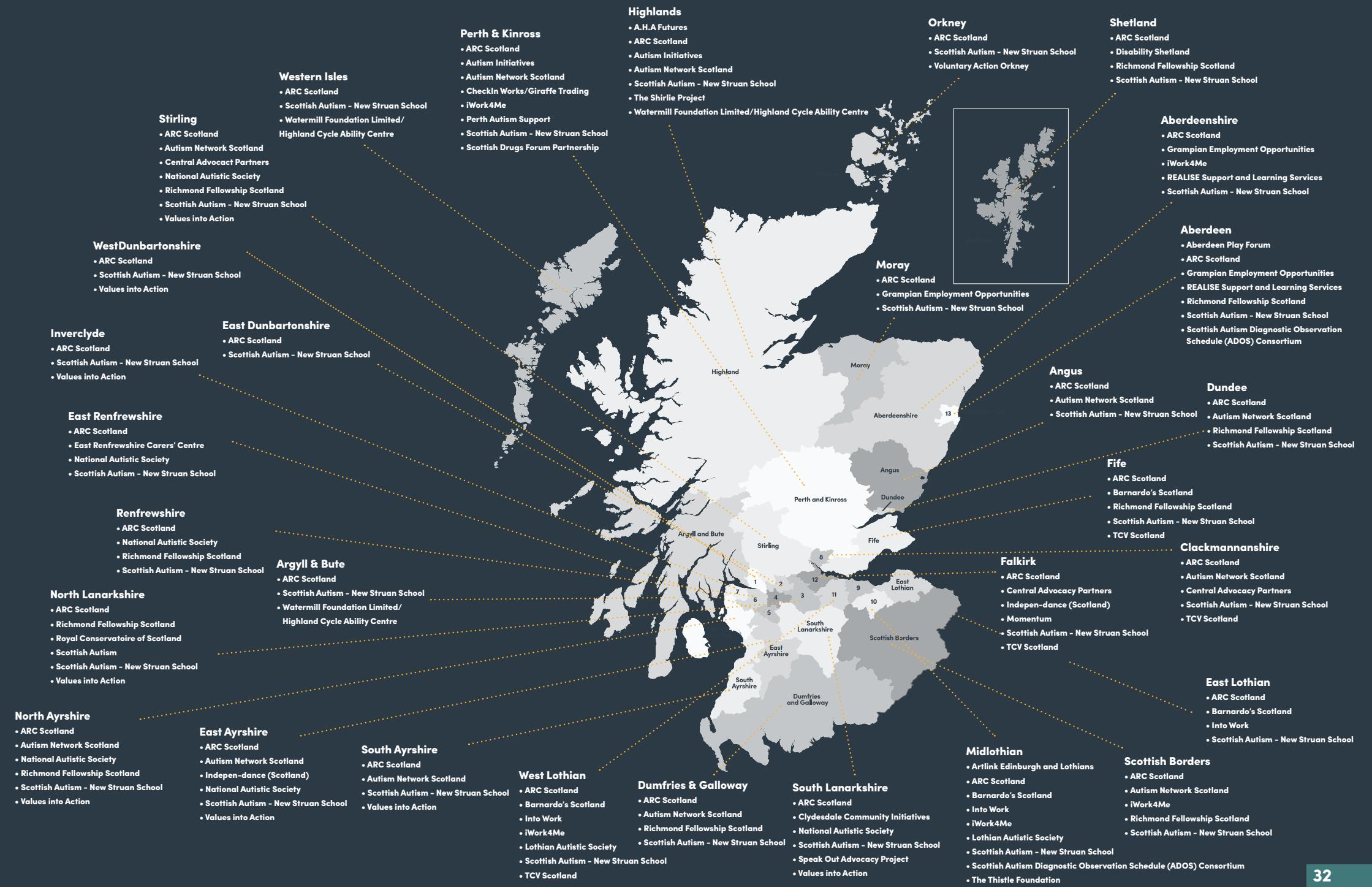
- A.H.A. Futures
- Aberdeen Play Forum
- Artlink Edinburgh and Lothians
- Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland
- Autism Initiatives
- Autism Network Scotland
- Barnardo's Scotland
- Central Advocacy Partners
- CheckIn Works/Giraffe Trading
- Clydesdale Community Initiatives
- Disability Shetland
- East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre
- Glasgow Carers Partnership
- Grampian Employment Opportunities
- Indepen-dance (Scotland) Ltd.
- Into Work Limited
- IWORK4ME
- Kindred Advocacy
- Lothian Autistic Society – Family Enrichment
- Lothian Autistic Society – Summit Awards
- Momentum
- National Autistic Society
- Perth Autism Support
- Project Ability
- REALISE Support and Learning Services
- Richmond Fellowship Scotland
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (in collaboration with the National Theatre of Scotland, National Autistic Society and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)
- Scottish Autism
- Scottish Autism - New Struan School
- Scottish Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) Consortium (The University of Edinburgh)
- Scottish Drugs Forum in Partnership with Autism Network Scotland and Common Knowledge UK
- Sleep Scotland
- Speak Out Advocacy Project
- Tailor Ed Foundation
- TCV Scotland
- The Shirlie Project
- Thistle Foundation
- Values Into Action
- Voluntary Action Orkney
- Watermill Foundation Limited / Highland Cycle Ability Centre
- SWAN

### Glasgow

- ARC Scotland
- Autism Initiatives
- Glasgow Carers Partnership
- Indepen-dance (Scotland)
- iWork4Me
- National Autistic Society
- Project Ability
- Richmond Fellowship Scotland
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Scottish Autism - New Struan School
- Scottish Drugs Forum Partnership
- Values into Action

### Edinburgh

- ARC Scotland
- Autism Initiatives
- Barnardo's Scotland
- Into Work
- iWork4Me
- Kindred Advocacy
- Lothian Autistic Society
- Richmond Fellowship Scotland
- Scottish Autism - New Struan School
- Scottish Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) Consortium
- Sleep Scotland
- Tailor Ed Foundation
- TCV Scotland
- The Thistle Foundation
- Values into Action



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