

# D.A.S.H.

## Discovering Autistic Spectrum Happiness

Registered charity no: 1116852

Registered office: 284 Marlborough Road, Swindon SN3 1NR

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## Annual Report 2015 – 2016

DASH is a local registered charity launched in 2006 as a response to a shared concern for the unmet needs of adults with high-functioning autism and Aspergers living in Swindon.

DASH was launched with the purpose and determination to help improve the quality of life of those individuals by raising professional, public and political awareness and understanding of autism and by developing local services, directly and in partnership, to help meet their needs.

We believe that a specialist, post-diagnostic support service for adults with Aspergers/High Functioning Autism is an essential part of an effective Adult Autism Strategy. Also, post-diagnostic support for parents and carers, as well as employers and statutory services is essential to help people access the right resources to help them lead more independent, more fulfilled, safer, more engaged and happier lives.

### **Our primary aims are to:**

- Raise awareness and understanding of Aspergers
- Promote and enhance access to assessment & diagnosis, welfare, housing, education and employment
- Research, promote and help to deliver a local model of support and services

and in this way we will help people with Aspergers to enjoy safer, healthier, more social, more productive and happier lives.

**Trustees, staff and volunteers are crucial to the continued success of DASH. This is our dedicated team.**

#### **DASH Trustees**

Peter Ethelston  
Rebecca Martin  
Sally Grubb  
Jerome Ma

#### **Management/trustee support**

Tom Krantz  
Lorette Jobbins

#### **Formal DASH Volunteers:**

Adam Smith  
Rachel Edwards  
Ember Moody

Informal volunteers are too numerous to mention but huge thanks go to all who have given their time and energy to support us.

#### **DASH Staff**

Manager: Adrian Embling  
Finance: Richard Parrett  
IAS: Ceri Gardiner

#### **Social group team leaders:**

Julie Welsh  
Karen Day  
Sam Webb  
Ceri Gardiner  
Angie Ingram

#### **IAS:**

Lindsay Grant (psycho-educational training and CBT)  
Peggy Rosser  
Dona-Marie Paoletta

#### **Social groups**

Mark Clayborough  
Gill Robinson  
Hannah Carter  
Gemma Owen  
James Gaunt

#### **And here are some of this year's achievements**

**In February 2016** DASH moved to new offices at the Swindon Advice & Support Centre (SAASC) in Sanford Street. We now have a dedicated office, which acts as a meeting room for 1-2-1 sessions, as well as a permanent venue for the Young Women's Group. The Men's Group also uses the room once a month for social activity and peer support. SAASC is also home to other third sector support services including, Citizens Advice Bureau, Swindon MIND, Swindon Advocacy Movement, Mediation Plus, Developing Health and Independence, Swindon Carers Centre and Wiltshire Law Centre. Being so close to other key services has helped us improve the referral process and increased our knowledge of the wide range of services and resources available to our clients.

**DASH continued to support** 5 social groups for young women, men, young adults (mixed gender), a monthly group for over 30s and the allotment group - with a total membership of over 70 individuals.

**We piloted a Social Thinking course**, to help people manage emotional responses and thought patterns when in crisis, particularly to help manage situations where they are at risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system.

**DASH continued to provide** the Swindon Autism Information & Advice Service. Demand for support through the IAS has grown enormously over the last 12 months, highlighting the gap in client needs and service provision.

Some of the trends we have noted include:

- *People are reluctant to use existing statutory services without some kind of intermediary referral or brokerage, usually to explain Autistic communication requirements.*
- *An increase in the number of parents seeking advice after a child has been diagnosed. Typically, parents lack information about educational support structures so feel confused and anxious about their child's future.*
- *A growing need for more Autism-tailored 1-2-1 Cognitive Behavioural Therapies. Existing provision through LIFT Psychology is acknowledged as excellent but often accessible only via group psycho-educational courses. These venues and environments often present enormous obstacles for Autistic people with social and sensory difficulties. Clients report that existing 1-2-1 services lack the continuity to allow development of trust and rapport – essential for 1-2-1 work with Autistic adults.*

The **1<sup>st</sup> DASH Bluebell Fun Run** took place on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May. It was a great day out and we raised over £3,000. Thank you to all the volunteers for their tireless efforts and to the wonderful participants for their support (and fitness).



*The warm up for the big event.  
The sky looked ominous but it didn't stop everyone having a great time.*



**DASH was chosen** as one of the sponsored charities for Swindon Cares <http://swindoncares.co.uk>, a local charitable committee currently represented by Swindon Advertiser, The Rotary Clubs in Swindon, GWE Business West, Arval, Zurich, Bluefin, BBC Wiltshire, Swindon Borough Council, The Pear Tree at Purton, De Vere Venues and Arkells Brewery. Swindon Cares aims to engage all areas of Swindon's community, schools, businesses, groups and individuals, to support people in our town.

In 2015-16 Swindon Cares donated £7,000 to support the work of the Young Adults Social Group, The Young Womens Group and the Allotment Group.



*Adrian and Ceri receiving the Swindon Cares cheque from the High Sheriff of Wiltshire, Lady Gooch*

**Summarised Draft Financial Statement  
for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

Income & Expenditure: 2015 – 16	<b>£</b>
<b>Restricted income :</b>	
Grants	21,667.00
Fees (social groups)	711.00
<b>Unrestricted income:</b>	
Donations & fund-raising	7,142.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>29,790.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
<b>Direct charitable costs:</b>	
Project costs	32,855.00
Professional fees, insurance, fund-raising expenses	3,424.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>36,279.00</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	
Balance at start of period	20,437.00
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	-6,489.00
<b>Balance at end of period</b>	<b>13,948.00</b>

## A BIG THANK YOU

to the following organisations and individuals who have supported us with grants, donations & fundraising without whose help, we would have not been able to continue to deliver our services.

- Awards for All Lottery Programme
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Wiltshire and Swindon
- Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation
- Swindon Cares
- Smiths News
- Nationwide Building Society
- Ember Moody for producing the DASH Spring Newsletter
- Freya Mears for admin support at the IAS

