

ANNUAL REPORT

FYE 2017

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ADVICE CENTRE



SENAC is an independent Charity set up in 2003 to help meet the educational needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities throughout Northern Ireland.

We are committed to providing the children, young people and their parents with the advice, information and assistance they require to get the best educational provision available within school for their individual needs.

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The SENAC Board is pleased to present the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

The Board is indebted to the SENAC team for maintaining an independent information, advice and advocacy service during the period - all in a climate of ever increasing demand from service users.

The impact of budget cuts continues to be widely felt across all sectors, not least in education. The provision of practical information and advice on support in school for children with learning difficulties and special educational needs continues to be a much-needed service. Despite the challenging financial circumstances, we pride ourselves on what we can offer to parents, carers and professionals. This would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of our staff.

One key work-stream is our new Tribunal Support and Representation Service and during the reporting period, we were delighted to receive a three-year grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This service offers independent advice, support and representation on SEN Appeals for families and those with parental responsibility appealing to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. Receipt of this grant ensures we can deliver this important service to families and carers at what is a significant and potentially stressful time.

SENAC receives no statutory funding to sustain our work and we rely solely on receipt of funding grants and on charitable donations from the public. We remain extremely grateful to all our funders for their financial support over the reporting period. Our gratitude is also extended to members of the Board and the SENAC team, friends and families and members of the public who fundraised for us during the year. In particular, we thank those involved in fundraising during the Belfast Marathon in May which raised over £2,000. We also held a Golf Day at Clondeboye Golf Club on April 29th and we thank the Club and all those involved in organising the event and supporting SENAC on the day.

Securing appropriate funding sources remains an absolute priority for the Board to maintain and develop our work-streams to meet demand. We will be seeking new members to join our Board and improve on our strategic capacity. We will also be preparing the charity for imminent changes to Data Protection Regulations.

On a final note, SENAC is only as good as the team behind it. The Board takes this opportunity to thank Heather Larkin and all the staff for their contribution during the year. The team is small with a significant and growing workload and often the extra mile is put in to ensure the best possible service and support is available. We in the Board are very proud of everyone in the team for their exemplary hard work and achievement throughout the year.



Adele Davidson, Chair

SENAC'S SERVICES

SEN ADVICE LINE

A confidential telephone advice service providing independent, immediate advice and information on the special educational needs system.

Funded and Supported by the Henry Smith Charity

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY SERVICE

Engaging with families, schools and the Education Authority to advocate for a child's educational needs.

Funded and Supported by BBC Children in Need

EVERY CHANCE TO LEARN PROJECT

Support and advocacy for children and young people with special educational needs living within the care system.

Funded and Supported by the Big Lottery Fund

FROM SERVICE USERS

'You have made a worried mum much less worried.'
(Mother)

'The help is absolutely fantastic. I don't know what I would do without you. You have made a huge difference to my wellbeing.'
(Parent)

'I'm feeling much stronger now knowing that I can be proactive and go ahead with the statutory assessment request.'
(Parent)

'You are a life line.. a weight off our shoulders.. always there listening to me.. ___ has settled into her new school and she is like a totally different person now.'
(Parent)

'Thank you so much. I couldn't have achieved this outcome without you
(Social Worker)

'___ would have remained at stage 2 without SENAC showing us the availability of stage 4 statutory assessment.'
(Foster Carer)

SENAC'S SERVICES

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND INFO SERVICE

Front line information and resources to community groups and other organizations.

Funded and supported by the Equitable Charitable Trust

TRIBUNAL SUPPORT AND REPRESENTATION SERVICE

Advice, support and representation for families appealing to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

Funded and supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

FROM SERVICE USERS

'It is one of the best things we have ever been able to provide information on.. we don't normally distribute a lot of leaflets so it is the best way to signpost parents, it is the key for some of our work, it is a bridge that was missing for us.. so vital.' (Children's Rights representative)

'We find your service to be hugely helpful. We really , really appreciate it and know that the families do also.' (Family Centre Manager)

'There was a good opportunity for group discussion and the parents got involved. Prior to that session no parents had ever opened their mouths to contribute or speak.' (Community Group)

SERVICE STATS

ADVICE, ADVOCACY and
REPRESENTATION
SERVICES CHILDREN
SUPPORTED

876 Children
(↑ 10%)



ADVICE LINE CALLS

621 New Callers
(↑ 6%)



COMMUNITY GROUPS
SUPPORTED BY
COMMUNITY SUPPORT +
INFO SERVICE

22 Workshops+
Events



REFERRALS FROM OTHER
ORGANISATIONS

85 Referral Sources
(↑ 13%)



EVERY CHANCE TO LEARN
PROJECT CHILDREN
SUPPORTED

71 Children
(↑ 42%)



NEWS AND EVENTS

Charity Golf

In April we teed off our fundraising activities at the scenic and beautiful setting at Clandeboye Golf Club in Bangor for SENAC's first Charity Golf Event.



Clandeboye Golf Course



Time to tee off

A great afternoon of golf was followed by a delicious meal and a bit of craic from comedienne Nuala McKeever who presented the prizes to the winning teams and players.



Thanks to the generous donations of gift vouchers and golfing items from many local businesses there was a great range of prizes for participants to play for including the winning prize which included vouchers from Open Fairways for the winning team.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Charity Golf Prizewinning Teams, well done everyone!



Eight teams of four ball took part, many playing Clandeboye's championship golf course for the first time. On hand to provide free fitness advice and massage weary shoulders was Exsto Fitness who provided their services for free for participants.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Charity Golf Continued...

Thank you also to Comel Florists who donated a beautiful bouquet of flowers to help SENAC show our appreciation to Nuala McKeever for her support.



Comel Flowers Proprietor and Fiona O'Donnell SENAC



Paul Mullan, SENAC Chair thanking Nuala

Finally, a huge thank you to Ken McMullan and Clondeboye Golf Club and to Nuala McKeever and to our golfers and volunteers who together helped make our first Charity Golf day a great success and raised over £1600.

Our day was also made possible by the generous support from our sponsors:

Sincere thank you to sponsors:

MTS Speers Chartered Accountants

EXSTO Fitness

Millar, McCaul and Wylie

Open Fairways

BPS Group

SD Management Services

The Bull and Claw

Genesis Advertising

A great day out, well done everyone!

NEWS AND EVENTS

Belfast Marathon

Once again SENAC were delighted to be represented at the Belfast City Marathon in May. Participating were SENAC staff, volunteers, friends and family. With six participants walking the 13km course, a relay team running the Marathon course and runner Joe McGurk taking on the course solo, the support and sponsorship generated was terrific, raising over £2000! Thanks to the relay team including SENAC Chair Adele Davidson and her colleagues from the Ni Fire and Rescue Service Paddy Gallagher and Alan O' Neill and SENAC's own Tracy Adams and Joanne McGurk. Huge thanks to all who took part and for the impressive commitment, enthusiasm and generosity demonstrated by participants and sponsors to support SENAC's charitable work.



Walking 13k, Patricia McCorry and daughter Catriona

Salsa

Learning to salsa dance was the aim of our Salsa evening on a chilly February evening. We were soon warmed up by the fun and enthusiasm of all taking part. Under the guidance of leading Salsa teacher David Hynes from Nu-Salsa we were soon salsa dancing and enjoying the music and great atmosphere. It was a fun and energetic night. Over 60 people attended, and we raised over £700.

Thank you to David and all the guys from Nu-Salsa for giving their time and expertise, to the Pavilion at Stormont for the use of their venue and to all who supported the evening.



Find them at www.nusalsa.com

NEWS AND EVENTS

Tesco Charity Collection

Thanks to the generosity of TESCO Newtownabbey's customers £375 was raised at a charity collection in July. We were made very welcome by TESCO and appreciated the opportunity to hold a collection at their busy store on Abbey Road in Newtownabbey. These events also give us a chance to meet and chat with families and visitors to our stand who can find out about SENAC's charitable services.



Adele Davidson, SENAC Chair and one of the team of volunteers who supported our charity collection at TESCO

Coffee Morning

Thanks to Dee Kelly, SENAC Director and her family and friends who got together in October for a coffee morning for SENAC. The keen bakers amongst us delighted attendees with their baking skills to provide a delicious range of fancies and a great morning of chat and cake. Their support and efforts raised a terrific £385.



NEWS AND EVENTS

Britannic Event

The Belfast Titanic Society hosted a visit to a private residence to view wood panelling originally part of the White Star Line ship, Britannic and sister ship to the Titanic. The proceeds of the tour and a generous donation from the Titanic Society was gratefully received by SENAC. We were delighted to have the support of the Society and learn a little history as well. The Britannic was refitted to serve as a hospital ship during the First World War and all fittings removed were auctioned off and can be found in various locations. A sincere thank you to the Belfast Titanic Society and all those attending the tour. Over £300 was raised and donated.



Members of the Titanic Society view wood panelling from the Britannic

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Project News

This has been a busy year for SENAC and demand for each of SENAC's services continues to grow. This reflects the increasing challenge parents and schools face in meeting the educational needs of the children in a testing and restricting financial environment. As government savings continue to compromise the children's access to the appropriate assessment and special needs provision, providing families with the independent advice and advocacy needed to secure that provision remains vital.

In early 2017 we were therefore delighted to receive a three-year grant award from the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation** to set-up and deliver a Tribunal Support and Representation Service for families appealing to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. We anticipate this will be a much-needed busy service giving more children the chance to get the education support they need.

Looking Ahead

The impact of diminishing funds in the Education sector and the reform of the statutory special educational needs framework strengthens our resolve and mission to ensure families have the advice and information needed to progress the children's educational interests. As well as promoting and delivering our new Tribunal Support and Representation Service, future priority will focus on sustaining the quality and capacity of SENAC's projects and services and to respond to the changing special educational needs environment. To advance this aim we also plan to further develop our Community Support and Information (CSI) Service to deliver a structured programme of practical advice, tools and knowledge through workshops and presentations which will strengthen the knowledge base and confidence of parents of children with special needs.

Through engagement with parent support groups and community groups we identified the need to develop these programmes and to be responsive to the requests and needs of parent groups to tailor workshops where required. For example, workshops specific to particular areas of the special needs framework such as 'understanding Statements of SEN' or 'Parents rights and statutory assessment'. The benefits of providing this service within communities and developing and strengthening relationships and contacts with community and family support groups throughout Northern Ireland has been key to the ongoing development and delivery of CSI Service and central to our ability to reach more parents and their children who need SENAC's support.

THANK YOU

SENAC's charitable work is enabled and sustained by the commitment, effort and dedication of everyone who has donated, raised funds and supported the charity. The generosity of time and funds from all who have supported SENAC is respected and appreciated.

Our Funders

A sincere thank you is expressed to all the grant making Trusts and Foundations who have provided funding to support SENAC's services and projects. As Funders of charitable activities, they are committed to investing in the lives and futures of children and young people and understand the importance of equality in education and helping children overcome the challenges they face.

<i>Thank you to:</i>	
BBC Children in Need	Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
The Big Lottery Fund	Souter Trust
The Henry Smith Charity	Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland
The Equitable Charitable Trust	Clothworkers Foundation
St. Anne's Cathedral, Sit-Out Appeal	Goldsmith's Charity
Garfield Weston Foundation	

BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	2017		2016	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Intangible assets	7		1924		2404
Tangible assets	8		3583		2,881
			5507		5,285
Current assets					
Debtors	9		-		399
Cash in bank and in hand			68,376		35,889
			68,376		36,288
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10		(3,561)		(2881)
Net current assets			64,815		33,407
Net assets			70,322		38,692
Capital and reserves					
Unrestricted funds	11		13,037		8,065
Restricted funds	11		57,285		30,627
General funds			70,322		38,692