

# SENAC

Special Educational Needs Advice Centre

**ANNUAL REPORT  
YEAR ENDING  
MARCH 2021**

# CHARITABLE MISSION



**The Special Educational Needs Advice Centre (SENAC) is a regional charity, set up in 2003, by parents of children with disabilities and special needs, to provide independent advice and advocacy, on the application of the statutory Special Educational Needs (SEN) system.**

**SENAC are committed to the promotion and safeguarding of parents' and children's rights within the Special Educational Need's legislative framework to advance children's educational opportunities and ensure the best educational provision is available within schools for individual needs.**

# CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The Special Educational Needs Advice Centre (SENAC) was established in 2003. We provide confidential, independent advice and advocacy on behalf of children and young people with special educational needs in Northern Ireland.

This Annual Report is for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Last year's Annual Report acknowledged the impact of the emergence of COVID-19. The past year has continued to present us with many external challenges, which the team have shown great resilience and determination in meeting with much success.

We have successfully delivered on projects, maintained all of our services, and are pleased to have supported over 700 families. I should stress that this figure only tells part of the story and the real impact of this work is unquantifiable.

The staff deserve immense credit for embracing change so quickly by pivoting to virtual/remote delivery. I was also delighted to see the launch of our fantastic new website, and this is already proving to be a very useful tool for families who are seeking support in navigating the increasingly complex SEN system.

It is important to note that SENAC does not receive statutory funding and we sustain our service provision through funding grants and charitable donations. The Board takes this opportunity to thank all of our funders for their support and also everyone who made a donation throughout the year.

It is imperative that we attract further grant support and voluntary donations if we are to sustain our full range of our services and meet the increasingly high demand.

We are constantly looking to strengthen the Management Committee team and in early 2021, we were delighted to appoint Stephen Keery,

Joanna Brown, and Susan McBride as new Directors. All have expertise in a number of vital areas and are welcome additions to the Board.

This coincided with the departure of a number of long-serving Board members as we said farewell to Dee Kelly, Karen Henderson and David Johnston. We thank them for their many years of service and significant contributions.

At this time, our Chair, Adele Davidson, also announced that she would be stepping down after almost ten years with the charity, including six years at the helm. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of everyone involved in SENAC, to thank Adele sincerely for the vital role she played within the organisation during that time and wish her well for the future.

The Board also wishes to extend its continued gratitude to Heather Larkin and to all the staff and volunteers for their profound efforts and achievements during the year.

The pandemic has not abated, and whilst we will undoubtedly face more challenges in the months and years ahead, we can face these with confidence in our people to deliver positive outcomes for children and families in need.

Richie Finlay

Interim Chair

# NEWS AND EVENTS

## MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF 20-21

This year has been dominated by the impact of the Covid pandemic both for SENAC's Services and those we support. The unprecedented and unique challenges and pressures of lockdowns, school closures and remote learning on the children, young people, and parents, were evident throughout all our services and engagement with families.

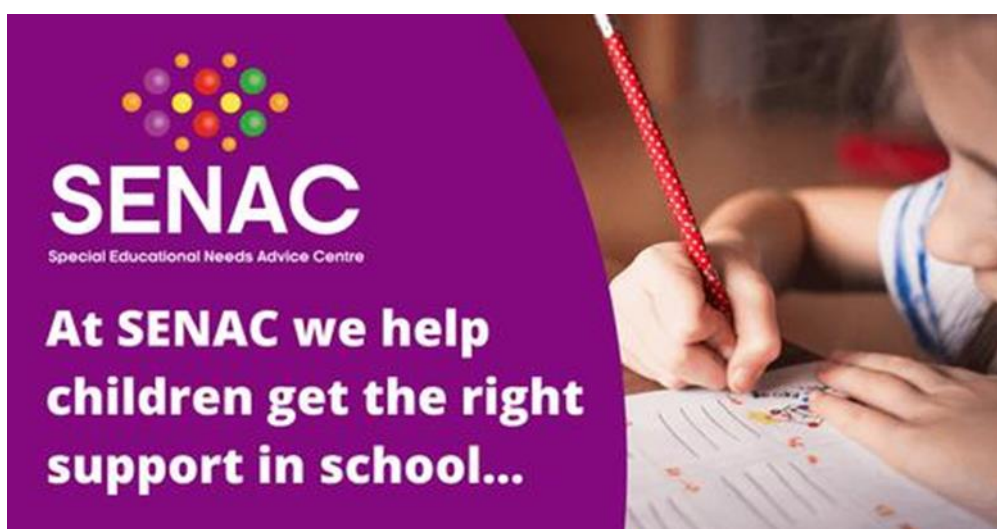
Understanding the nature of the issues for the children's education now being experienced and, the impact of temporary modifications on statutory duties relating to SEN decisions and provision, meant adapting our advice and information. For those children we support, the barriers to learning and inclusion already experienced in education, have been compounded further by school closures, the lack of appropriate remote tuition, the withdrawal of specialist SEN services and inadequate SEN provision. Adapting SENAC's services to continue to provide the advice and advocacy required and, ensuring our advice remained relevant to the changing educational environment and the needs of those we support, was our priority. All SENAC's services continued successfully throughout this difficult year, with increased availability of remote delivery of services where required, including the launch of online workshops on SEN for parents and community groups. SENAC were also delighted to secure additional short-term funding made available by several funders to support charities respond during the Covid crisis which enabled us to raise our service capacity to respond to demand for advice at the height of the pandemic.

Given the challenges experienced by the children and their parents during the pandemic, SENAC welcomed the opportunity to support the National Children's Bureau in producing a report on the impact of Covid on children with SEN and, to connect our families with NCB, to participate in the survey. The report was a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of the issues faced by the families and offer recommendations. The report is available on NCB's website: [Impact of COVID-19 on children and YP with SEND in NI - FIINAL.pdf \(ncb.org.uk\)](https://www.ncb.org.uk/publications/impact-of-covid-19-on-children-and-young-people-with-sen-in-ni)

# NEWS AND EVENTS

## SENAC WEBSITE RE-LAUNCHED

Access to the information and guidance SENAC provide on the SEN Framework and processes is a priority to ensure parents are informed. SENAC's website is a key source for this information and this year, with greater reliance on accessing advice and information online, the website was re-designed and enhanced, to provide easy access to a range of information and guidance resources. The new website was launched in March 2021.



[www.senac.co.uk](http://www.senac.co.uk)

Thanks to the staff and volunteers for their contributions and support in developing content for the website. Special mention and thanks to Fiona O'Donnell, SENAC's Community Support and Information Officer who led on this project of redesigning the website and her tremendous work and effort to achieve this informative site for our Charity service users. Thanks also to Brian O'Neill at Fresh Ideas for his support with IT and web design.

# NEWS AND EVENTS

## CHARITABLE GIVING AND FUNDRAISING

### Co-op Community Fund

SENAC were delighted to be chosen as one of the Co-op's local causes to receive support from the Co-op's Community Fund. From October 2020 for twelve months, those Co-op members who chose to support SENAC would raise funds each time they shopped. SENAC was promoted through the Belfast Co-op Stores on Rosetta Road, Cregagh Road, and Knockbreda. At the end of the period under review in this report, we are almost halfway through our 12-month term as a locally chosen cause and over £700 has been raised so far by Co-op members.

### A Big Birthday

Huge thank you to Betty Donnelly, one of SENAC's most dedicated and longest serving Volunteers and Trustee who marked an important birthday this year by encouraging her friends and family to donate to SENAC in lieu of gifts and cards. SENAC were most appreciative to receive donations totalling over £500 with lots of good wishes for Betty.



### Black Santa Appeal

SENAC has been very fortunate over the last few years to have received a donation each year from the Black Santa Appeal, thanks to the commitment of the Dean of St. Anne's Cathedral in raising funds for many local causes. Despite the challenges of the pandemic the appeal again raised considerable funds through December 2020, and we were delighted to receive a donation of £725. Our huge admiration for this dedication to fundraising is matched by our gratitude.

# THANK YOU

SENAC's charitable work is enabled and sustained only 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 valued and appreciated.

## **Grant Making Trusts and Foundations funding SENAC's services.**

Support and flexibility from our Funders were most important in this challenging year. We were sincerely grateful for all our Funders' support and understanding, and new opportunities to secure specific Covid response funds. A sincere thank you is expressed to all the grant making Trusts and Foundations who have provided funding to support SENAC's mission and activities. Without their support, SENAC could not provide charitable services. As Funders, 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.

### **THANK YOU TO:**

BBC Children in Need

The National Lottery Community Fund

Wesleyan Foundation

St. Anne's Cathedral Sit-Out Appeal

Garfield Weston Foundation

St. James Place Foundation

Edward Gostling Foundation

John Moores Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Community Foundation for NI Covid Fund

Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland

Baily Thomas Foundation

Ulster Garden Villages

Awards for All NI

Community For Justice Fund



# BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Intangible assets	8		695		868
Tangible assets	9		<u>1804</u>		<u>2254</u>
			2499		3122
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Cash in bank and at hand		<u>168,595</u>		<u>112,465</u>	
		168,595		112,465	
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	7	<u>(5481)</u>		<u>(6135)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<u>163,114</u>		<u>106,330</u>
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>165,613</u>		<u>109,452</u>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>					
Unrestricted funds	10		21,376		22,059
Restricted funds	10		144,237		87,393
General Funds			165,613		109,452

The financial statement was approved by the Board on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

# SUMMARY INCOME + EXPENDITURE

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Year Total
<b>Incoming Resources</b>	<b>Notes</b>			
From generated funds:				
Voluntary income:		3026		
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4		170,687	
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>3026</b>	<b>170,687</b>	<b>173,713</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
<b>Costs of generating funds:</b>	<b>5</b>			
Costs of charitable activities		(3899)	(113,653)	(117,552)
<b>Total Resources expended</b>		<b>(3889)</b>	<b>(113,653)</b>	<b>(117,552)</b>