



SENAC

Special Educational Needs Advice Centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

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 Needs legislative framework to advance children's educational opportunities and ensure the best educational provision is available within schools for individual needs.



Visit www.senac.co.uk

Registered with the Charity Commission NI 101355

Limited Company Number NI48698

CHAIR'S INTRO

On behalf of the SENAC Board, it gives me great pleasure to present our Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

It was another period in which we played a key role in advancing the education of children and young people with special educational needs throughout Northern Ireland, despite facing many societal and economic headwinds.

Having grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic over the past couple of years, a global economic crisis has continued to make this an extremely challenging operating environment for all charity and community organisations. These pressures are also acutely felt by many of the families that we support, while schools are also facing very difficult challenges, with budget squeezes affecting their provision and priorities.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 children in Northern Ireland have special educational needs. Unfortunately, many children still do not have access to an education that meets their needs and demand for our services continues to be extremely high. During this reporting period, we supported 790 families through our Advice Line, Advocacy and Appeals services, an increase of 10% from the previous year.

The 39 community workshops and events we hosted, along with our new website, which was re-designed and re-launched in March 2021, are increasingly useful tool for parents and carers as they try to navigate the complex SEN system.

We had over 28,600 website visitors during this reporting period, which represents a 223% increase on the previous 12 months. This highlights the scale of challenge that we face, but also the important role SENAC can play for families who are looking for guidance and support.

As SENAC does not receive statutory funding, we are reliant on grants and charitable donations, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our funders and donors, whose support has been critical in sustaining our service provision.

Our dedicated and highly skilled staff team deserve immense credit for meeting the demands of their roles, and for doing so with a professional and child-centred approach. The same can be said for the Advice Line volunteers, who selflessly give up their time to help achieve better outcomes for the children we support.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their time and support over the past 12 months. We were delighted to appoint Aisleagh McConnell, who has expertise in several vital areas, as a very welcome addition to the Board. We also said farewell to Trustees; Bronach Doyle, Niall Adams, Joanna Gregg and Anna Ingram, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their notable contributions.

SENAC will continue steadfastly in our mission to ensure children with special needs get the best chance to learn with the education provision necessary to support their needs. To fulfil this mission, it is imperative that we attract further funding and look to diversify income streams. This will be a priority in the coming years.

Richie Finlay

Chair

NEWS AND EVENTS

Co-op Local Community Fund.

We were delighted this year to be chosen as one of the Co-op's local causes. Co-op members and shoppers have the opportunity to choose one charity for their support from a small number of selected charities. Three Co-op stores in Belfast promoted SENAC's cause, Knockbreda, Cregagh Road and Rosetta Road. Thanks to Co-op and its members £1781.35 was raised to support our advice and information services and resources. SENAC Trustees Betty Donnelly and Anna Bailie were delighted to receive the cheque from John Huyton, Manager at the Knockbreda Store.



SENAC Trustees Betty and Anna accept the cheque from Manager John

NEWS AND EVENTS

FANTASTIC FUNDRAISING, A FAMILY AFFAIR

While the challenges of Covid were still impacting on many fundraising events, one family were not deterred to continue to raise funds for SENAC in the great outdoors of Castleward. The McCorry/Bowman ladies joined forces to complete a 13K sponsored walk. Mum Patricia, with daughter Catriona, and daughters-in-law Sarah and Clare completed the walk in April 2021 raising over £3000. Huge thanks to these ladies and the family and friends who so generously donated and supported this event.



Patricia McCorry, Catriona Bowman, Sarah, and Clare McCorry together completed a terrific fundraising walk for SENAC.



Perfect day in Castleward for a 'long stroll'. Keep going Ladies, only a few more kilometres to go!



A triumphant finish. Well done!

NEWS AND EVENTS

BIRTHDAY GENEROSITY

Thanks to SENAC Trustee Stephen Keery who used his birthday to raise £80 for SENAC in lieu of presents.



APPEALING TO SENDIST: ONLINE WEBINAR

In November SENAC invited parents to join us online for a seminar to learn about the processes and expectations of appealing Education Authority decisions to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). This also provided an opportunity to share the findings of a survey SENAC carried out on the parental experience of SEN Appeals and a reflective analysis report on SENAC's Tribunal Service. We were delighted to receive a video contribution from SENDIST Chair Patricia Crossin on the SENDIST Hearing and what parents might expect when attending a Hearing. 37 parents attended the seminar. The report is available on SENAC's website and Patricia Crossin's video is available on SENAC's You Tube channel and Facebook.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ADVICE CENTRE

HOW TO APPEAL SEN DECISIONS & EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS

Please join us online
Tuesday 23rd November 2021
From 11am – 12.15

- **Appealing to SENDIST: key information for parents**
Jennifer McNally, Tribunal Representative SENAC
- **Attending a Tribunal Hearing, what to expect**
Patricia Crossin, SENDIST Chairperson
- **Main findings from SENAC's parent survey and review of SENAC's Tribunal Service: what we can learn and exploration of recommendations for addressing challenges**
Heather Larkin, Education Policy Officer, SENAC

Register via email to info@senac.co.uk

Service Statistics

April '21 - March '22

790
Children
supported

790 Children supported by Advice, Advocacy & Appeal services

572 New callers to the Advice Line from parents, carers and professionals

572
New Callers

75
Appeals

75 Cases taken to SENDIST to appeal EA decisions

71 organisations, charities and professionals referred their clients to SENAC

71
Referrals

39
Workshops & Events

39 Community Information sessions and networking events

'Thanks so much for the advice, very clear and helpful, as the advice-line volunteers always are.'

'Every time I ring SENAC, I am so thankful for their advice, they always listen and help'

'I feel more confident to talk to school, thanks again, you have been fantastic help'

'I don't feel alone with this anymore. It was not knowing what to do that was so hard.'

'Glad to get clear advice and next steps for our appeal. At a time when I was lost you helped me.'

'The offer of ongoing support as I navigate the next stages of my son's statement draft is just brilliant'

'Fabulous session, so informative and perfect timing in our case'

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.

SENAC's charitable services are only possible thanks to the Grant-Making Trusts and Charitable Foundations who support and invest in SENAC's mission and activities. We have been very fortunate to receive income from a range of Funders committed to investing in the lives and futures of children and young people and like SENAC, recognise and promote the importance of equality of educational opportunities and helping all children overcome challenges they may face.

Sincere thanks to all those who have funded SENAC and our services throughout this past year.

THANK YOU TO:	
BBC Children in Need	Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
The National Lottery Community Fund	Nationwide Community Fund
Garfield Weston Foundation	Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland
St. James Place Foundation	Co-op Local Community Fund
John Moores Foundation	Awards for All NI
Ulster Garden Villages	Community For Justice Fund

BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Intangible assets	8		557		695
Tangible assets	9		<u>2016</u>		<u>1804</u>
			2573		2499
Current Assets					
Cash in bank and at hand		<u>147,095</u>		<u>168,595</u>	
		147,095		168,595	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	<u>(4390)</u>		<u>(5481)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>142,705</u>		<u>163,114</u>
Net assets			<u>145,278</u>		<u>165,613</u>
Capital and reserves					
Unrestricted funds	10		24,818		21,376
Restricted funds	10		120,460		144,237
General Funds			145,278		165,613

The financial statement was approved by the Board on 5th of December 2022.

SUMMARY INCOME + EXPENDITURE

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Year Total
Incoming Resources	Notes			
From generated funds:				
Voluntary income:		7047		
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4		98666	
Total Incoming Resources		7047	98666	105,713
Resources expended				
Costs of generating funds:	5			
Costs of charitable activities		(3418)	(122,630)	(126,048)
Total Resources expended		(3418)	(122,630)	(126,048)