



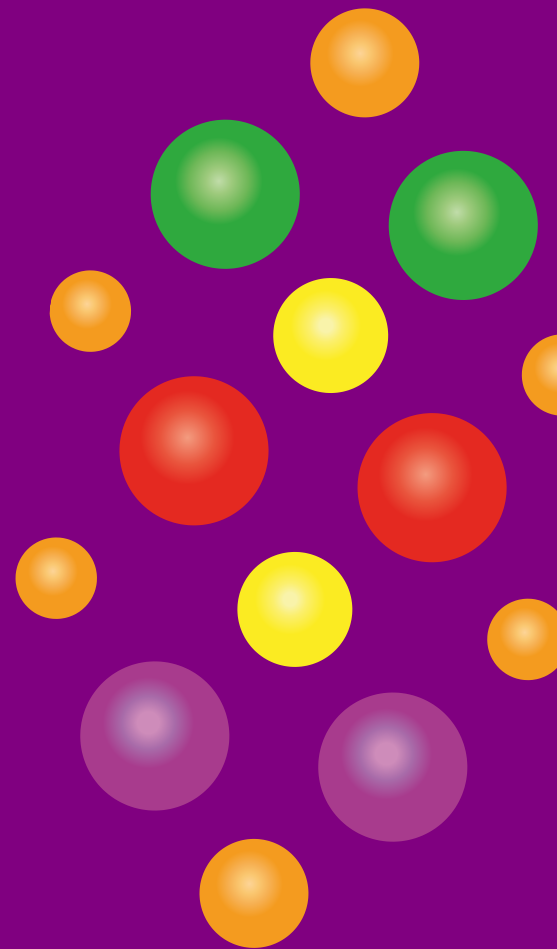
Special Educational Needs  
Advice Centre

# ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024

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

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# CHARITABLE MISSION

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

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.

**NI Charity Number: 101355**  
**Limited Company Number: NI48698**

# CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Mark Mc Cusker

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, on behalf of the SENAC Board.

During the reporting period, demand for SENAC services has continued unabated. Our Adviceline, Advocacy, and Appeals services supported 881 parents of children with SEN, including 616 new cases, delivered 33 workshops and handled 81 appeals. We also identified a trend of increasing complexity for typical cases, resulting in the average time to support each case extending accordingly. As a result, our frontline resources reached full capacity. During the period we secured funding from Ulster Garden Villages and the LFT Trust to allow us to increase our frontline capacity through our Adviceline and that increased capacity has subsequently been delivered post the reporting period. All of this points to a continued and growing demand for SENAC services.

SENAC operates in an environment where all the stakeholders are under pressure. The process for securing appropriate accommodations for a child with SEN can be daunting for parents to navigate. Teachers are working extra hours just to keep on top of their workload. The Education Authority is under huge resource and financial pressures. These pressures, coupled with the growing incidence of SEN amongst the student population, have come together to form a perfect storm and as a result, too often children with Special Educational Needs do not receive the support they so desperately need. SENAC exists to ensure that all children receive the support they need.

(Continued overleaf)

In addition to support from Ulster Garden Villages and the LFT Trust for SENAC's Adviceline we also secured support from Dormant Funds Accounts NI to recruit a Funding Development Officer. We completed the recruitment towards the end of reporting period, and although the benefits cannot be seen in this reporting period, subsequently the appointment has been very beneficial to the Organisation.

None of our services could be delivered without the continued support of all our funders and donors, and on behalf of the staff and Board at SENAC, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported us during the reporting period.

I would also like to thank my fellow volunteer Board members for their invaluable time and unwavering support throughout the past 12 months. During this time, two of our Board members have stood down, Richie Finlay, who as our chair for 3 years, provided constant high-quality leadership and direction; and Betty Donnelly, who served on the Board for over 7 years and twice in the role of Company Secretary, has been, and continues to be, a passionate supporter of everything SENAC does.



I would like to thank our staff for their unwavering professionalism and continuous dedication, without which SENAC could not exist. Every member of our team shares a passion for supporting children with SEN and ensuring they receive the best education possible.

We know that demand for SENAC services will continue to grow apace. The issue of SEN support has recently captured significant political and media traction. Although fine detail remains lacking, we believe change in delivery of SEN services is coming. Throughout this period of change, SENAC will continue to be there to help parents navigate their way through the system to ensure their child receives the support they need. To achieve this, we will face the continuing challenge of securing additional funding and exploring new ways to deliver our services.

I would like to conclude by once again offering my deepest gratitude to the dedicated staff, volunteers, funders, donors, and Trustees whose collective efforts enable SENAC to deliver an invaluable service to the community. Their continued support will help SENAC provide much needed support for many more children and their families.

**Mark Mc Cusker, Chair**

# NEWS & EVENTS

## 'Go Your Own Way' Sponsored Walk

Sponsored walks are a great way to support the Charity and in July SENAC's own Patricia McCorry with husband Cathal, daughter Catriona Bowman and Daughters in Law Sarah and Claire McCorry once again stepped out to complete a 13 km walk for SENAC. Despite inclement weather they completed their walk in the beautiful surroundings of Castleward. As seasoned walkers the ladies along with their family and friends have completed several sponsored walks over the last few years for SENAC, raising thousands to support the Charity's work. Once again, the support was generous and over £2000 was raised. SENAC is hugely grateful to Patricia, Catriona, Sarah, Claire and Cathal and the McCorry and Bowman family and their friends for their support and generosity.



Sarah, Catriona & Claire ready to brave the weather!



Sarah, Patricia and Catriona

## Breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus

SENAC were delighted when Alison Hill asked us if she could host an event to raise funds for SENAC. In December 2023 'Breakfast with Santa and Mrs Claus was held at Huxo Restaurant, Lisburn.

With a yummy breakfast on offer, including decorating your own pancakes, colouring in fun and a gift from Santa the children had lots to entertain them, and it was a fun morning for all. An amazing £1300 was raised for SENAC. Everyone's generosity and contributions were most appreciated. A very special thank you goes to Alison and everyone at Huxo for organising and hosting the event and of course thanks to Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Mrs. Claus and Santa with Alan Hanna, SENAC's Funding Development Officer



Mark McCusker, SENAC Chair, with Alan Hanna and Betty Donnelly.

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 greatly valued and appreciated.

# IMPACT AT A GLANCE

**APRIL 2023 -  
MARCH 2024**

## SUPPORT

**881**

Children and young people supported through Advice, Advocacy and Representation services



## NEW CALLERS



**616**

New callers to the Advice Line from parents carers and professionals

## APPEALS



**81**

Appeal cases taken to SENDIST to appeal EA decisions

## WORKSHOPS/EVENTS

**33**

Information workshops and networking events



## REFERRALS

**72**

Referrals from other organisations, charities and professionals





## The voices of our service users

SENAC'S Advocate 'was a breath of fresh air...I'm a very quiet person, I would not have known what to say or how to argue my point. She ran everything by me first to make sure I was happy and then she phoned or wrote on our behalf.'

'I feel really empowered now to talk to the school.'

'Having \_\_\_(Advocate) was unreal. She told me what to do and she gave me other pathways for help too. She came to the school with me, and I know that if I hadn't her with me, I couldn't have done it.'

'I had no one else. There were always obstacles in the way. She (Appeals Officer) was my eyes and my ears to help me through.'

'I feel so much better after speaking with you today and found the info you gave very useful'

'I can't thank you enough for your help and support ...totally delighted that my child will be getting the help she needs and deserves without the need for a further battle with the EA!'

'Sometimes it just helps to talk to someone who understands. I am my child's voice.'

'Appeals Officer 'knew all the key words. She made me feel I was able to take it on'.

'I wasn't getting anywhere with the EA and the school, but now I know what to do.'

'I always got an immediate response from \_\_\_(Advocate) either a phone call or an email. She was our 'go to' person and gave me reassurance and help with the Statement.'

'SENAC is an amazing charity that is so much badly needed by all communities'



## 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.



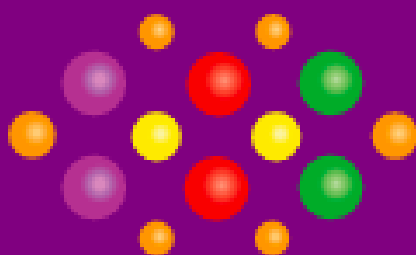
# BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Intangible assets	8		357		446
Tangible assets	9		<u>1291</u>		<u>1613</u>
			1648		2059
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors	10			2462	
Cash in bank and at hand		<u>218,713</u>		<u>131,432</u>	
		218,713		133,894	
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	7	<u>(4307)</u>		<u>(3770)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<u>214,406</u>		<u>130,124</u>
<b>Net assets</b>			<u>216,054</u>		<u>132,183</u>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>					
Unrestricted funds	11		29,163		25,985
Restricted funds	1 1		186,891		106,198
General Funds			216,054		132,183

**The financial statement was approved by the Board on 10th September 2024.**

## SUMMARY INCOME + EXPENDITURE

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Year Total
<b>Incoming Resources:</b>				
From generated funds:				
Voluntary income:		4616		4616
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4		211,242	<u>211,242</u>
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>4616</b>	<b>211,242</b>	<b>215,858</b>
<b>Resources expended:</b>				
<b>Costs of generating funds:</b>				
Costs of charitable activities	5	(1438)	(130,549)	(131,987)
<b>Total Resources expended</b>		<b>(1438)</b>	<b>(130,549)</b>	<b>(131,987)</b>



# SENAC

Special Educational Needs Advice Centre