



The Richmond Fellowship  
Scotland

# Autism Strategy

2020 - 2023





The Richmond Fellowship  
Scotland

## Mission & Values

### Our Values

#### What we ARE

- 😊 **Personalised**
- 🎯 **Outcomes Focused**
- 🤝 **Respectful**
- 💡 **Imaginative**
- 💬 **Problem Solving**
- 🏷️ **Cost Effective**

### Our Mission

#### What we DO

Develop and deliver the best personal supports that listen to what you want and achieve what matters to you.

## We Make Improvements

### Your Outcomes

#### So YOU can

- 🏆 **Achieve Things**
- 👍 **Be Responsible**
- ❤️ **Feel Good**
- 🔗 **Make Connections**
- 👯 **HAVE FUN**
- ☮️ **Be Safe**
- ✅ **Stay Well**
- 🌱 **Get Involved**
- 🚗 **Lead Your Life**

We recognise the complexities of people's lives, the challenges they face and the contributions and worth they bring. We believe everyone is unique and entitled to a fulfilling and meaningful life.

The Richmond Fellowship Scotland understand that autistic people form a valuable part of society. We believe that autistic people should be treated with dignity and respect, and receive the support they require to live full lives in the community. We are committed to working towards a future where the full potential of each autistic individual can be achieved. We believe our autism services can contribute to making this a reality.



### Whole of Life Approach

Regardless of what age you are, we realise that support has to be considerate of the events that may occur throughout anyone's life. Our services will be there to support times of grief, stress and depression or in times of joy and achievement to help you prepare for new employment or support you to develop an exciting new relationship.



### Individualised Support

We are dedicated to meeting the needs and wants of the people we support and acknowledge each individual's circumstances and life experiences. Many of the autistic individuals we support also have a secondary diagnosis or complex needs such as a 'Learning Disability' (59%), 'Anxiety', 'ADHD' or 'Epilepsy' being the most common (25%).

## Supporting Scotland

Access to high-quality support should not depend on living near a large city. This is why we have invested in providing local community support. In practical terms, this means that people we support get to live with or near their family without having to compromise on the support that they deserve.



## Who We Support

330



Around 330 autistic people across 28 Health & Social Care Partnerships in Scotland

65%



65% of autistic individuals at TRFS receive Supported Living Services

60



Around 60 autistic individuals receive outreach support across Scotland

28%



28% of autistic people receive over 100 hours of support

# Supporting Potential

## Alan's Achievements

Meet Alan, a young autistic man, who lives in one of our Supported Living Services. Alan loves being out and about, he loves cooking, and he especially loves learning about different cultures. **He wants to be part of his local community and he wants to feel valued by society.**

We first met Alan when he was 15, preparing for a transition from residential children's services into supported living with TRFS. Alan was described by social work as having significant and enduring challenging behaviours, including physical aggression, and who had experienced many restrictions in his life in an attempt to manage his behaviours of concern.

Alan is hypersensitive to certain noises. This means he finds some sounds made by other people and unexpected noises, such as dogs barking, to be painful and difficult to cope with. Alan's only way of knowing how to express his anxiety was by displaying physical aggression towards his environment and other people. Social work, family and staff were all concerned about how to support Alan safely **but most importantly how to help Alan develop a life of happiness full of opportunities and fun.**

During the last year of school, Alan was segregated from other pupils, educated on his own within a portacabin building on the school grounds. Alan's experience was one of loneliness from other children, being taught by himself supported by a teacher and support staff who during times of distress would use physical interventions in the hope to reduce his anxiety.

Our Positive Behaviour Support Team worked with Alan, completing a comprehensive functional assessment, to **understand the world through his eyes.** This included working together with Alan's parents, involving them in all staff training and consulting with them every step of the way to help develop new proactive strategies that would most importantly recognise the support and reassurance that Alan requires to meet his unique needs.

He began living in a home he could call his own, designed specifically for Alan. Trips to the local country park became a favourite activity, the walking helped Alan to cope with daily anxiety and has allowed him to slowly expand this to enjoy his other interests and activities. Alan is no longer segregated from his peers and his world is now full of opportunities, supported by staff who **understand his needs.**

**Alan has begun to enjoy the same experiences as anyone else of his age.** He spends Friday nights playing ten-pin bowling and eating pizza. He has enjoyed quality time with his family, including a holiday away.

Alan now volunteers at a local stable. He enjoys spending time with his family and particularly enjoys learning words and phrases in different languages. Alan continues to explore his new environments and new cultures with the help of his staff team.

Alan is at the start of his journey. The plan for the next few years is to attend college and become part of college life. We look forward to supporting Alan to continue to **realise his potential.**



“

Alan has gradually become more relaxed in the 5 years we have supported him and copes with change really well now. He still likes to plan his week but he is relaxed enough to ask staff to surprise him by asking for “a new walk”.

**Robert - Senior Support Worker**

# The Progress We've Made

## We Committed To

Developing services for autistic people with complex needs, but without a learning disability, for example, autistic people within the criminal justice system.

## We Delivered

A Criminal Justice Strategy that sets out the needs of autistic individuals within our services. In line with our values and aspirations, we developed a suite of bespoke forensic training that includes the needs of autistic people within the criminal justice system. This was created in partnership with the NHS School for Forensic Mental Health.

- 44 of our staff have completed the programme.
- We support around 35 autistic individuals who have criminal justice support needs.
- Our National Autism Advisor continues to provide consultation and direct support in our forensic services.



## We Committed To

Further develop our profile as an autism-specialist organisation through a programme of staff development, capacity building and successful service delivery.

## We Delivered

- A bespoke autism qualification, unique to TRFS providing autism qualifications to 55 managers across Scotland.
- 2019 Care Inspectorate result of 98.8% in grade 4 or above.

We celebrate Erin Stevenson, one of our Senior Support Workers, who was recognised by the SSSC for her outstanding achievement of embedding the model of Active Support in practice throughout her services for autistic individuals.



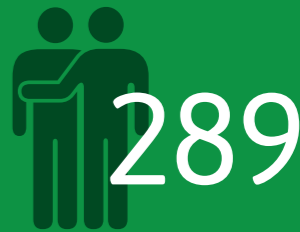
## We Committed To

Continuing our programme of specialist behavioural training and support to family carers of autistic people, through our unique Positive Pathways Programme.



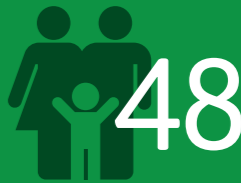
## We Delivered

289 carers attended specialist behavioural training addressing family carers stress and providing practical behavioural support to implement at home.



We delivered classroom training and home visits across 14 Health & Social Care Partnerships.

We provided additional intensive one to one input within the family home for 48 families.



490 family carers across Scotland signed up to our Positive Pathways E-Learning programme.

## Here's what people said

“ I feel more informed, have a better understanding and now feel confident in going forward working together with my son through difficult times.

“ As a direct result of this training and especially the 1:1, my son has improved his quality of life and wellbeing.

# Strategic Aims Moving Forward 2020 – 2023



## Autistic People & Family Carers

- We will continue to develop support services for autistic people of all ages.
- We will provide support for families and carers within their home and local community through programmes similar to Positive Pathways.
- We will create and champion assistive technological solutions through the use of individual ecological assessments.
- We will establish a user-led internal network of autistic individuals to ensure that any decisions are made together.
- We acknowledge that any goal is worthy, whether that is finding employment improving your social skills or even maintaining and sustaining your household.



## External Partners

- We will continue to develop our services for autistic people, including those with complex needs throughout Scotland and share our developments with other organisations.
- We will work with our partners to ensure our support environments are tailored to the individual.
- We will work together with local Health and Social Care Partnerships to provide solutions to the need for appropriate local services.
- We will contribute to the wider discussion regarding best practice for autistic people through forums such as The Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group for Autism.



## Our Staff

- We will train all our staff to match the appropriate levels of the NHS Educating Scotland's Autism Training Framework.
- We will expand the capabilities and duties of our 'Autism Resource Workers' to meet local and individual needs.
- We will expand our ongoing training to ensure it is both accessible and specific to individual services.
- We will continue to create and adapt internal processes to ensure autistic colleagues can reach their full potential.
- We will further develop our profile as an autism-specialist organisation through a programme of staff development, capacity building, and successful service delivery.

# Autism Training Framework

As part of our last strategy, we committed to adopting the new NHS Education Scotland training framework, 'Optimising Outcomes' as our approach to autism training. By employing this framework we can evidence best practice in our approach to training our staff to work with autistic people. Within 'Optimising Outcomes' there are detailed competency standards, described at different levels concerning autism knowledge and practice. We have developed our training so that every role in the organisation can be cross-referenced to a recognised competency standard within the framework. This will ensure that our whole organisation is well placed and skilled to be able to provide person-specific support for individuals with autism across their lifespan.

Over the last 3 years we have developed an autism qualification, unique to TRFS so that we can get our managers, and our support staff, qualified with an autism-specific qualification. Our Certificate in Outcome Based Support for Autistic People has been credit rated by Edinburgh Napier University and is worth 30 credits at Level 8. It is the highest level within our Autism Training Framework which is shown below. The increasing levels represent increasing levels of skills and expertise.

“

Through this training I learned that the people we support are unique; I have to have the knowledge and tools to enable me to provide the support which meets their needs. This will give them the ability to communicate in their preferred way, learn new skills, have coping mechanisms, to become more confident in their environment leading to a more fulfilled life.

**Maria Murray - Autism Resource Worker**

## Interactive E:Learning

- For all TRFS staff
- Understanding Autism
- Practice led knowledge development

## Classroom Training

- For staff supporting autistic people
- Implementing sensory profiles and augmented communication methods
- Putting knowledge into practice

## Credit-Rated Certificate

- Developing local specialist practitioners
- Enhanced support planning & review skills
- Evaluating outcomes



## Listened to and Respected

TRFS signed up to the Charter for Involvement in 2018 and have worked to ensure that the people we support are listened to and respected, especially when it comes to matters of their support.

We have established a national network of participation forum supported by our Directorate. We regularly review and update the mechanisms we utilise to ensure that individuals with alternative communication methods are included and encouraged within our decision-making process.

As we move forward our internal networks and Autism Resource Workers ensure that decisions are being made with the involvement of the people we support.

## CHARTER FOR INVOLVEMENT



## Pioneering 'Participatory Funding'



Since 2013, TRFS has committed to funding 'Outcomes are Fun', a project run each year in each of our regions that champions participation as a tool to support community engagement. We have committed £100,000 of annual investment, passing over control and funding decisions to people we support. Individuals that use our services are supported to develop their ideas and projects and then decide, through voting, which projects get funding.

The organisation firmly believes that support should not only focus on support needs, but also on the importance of outcomes that consider activities, interests and hobbies that ensure overall wellbeing, inclusion and involvement within local communities.



# Developing for the Future

## Autism Specific Environments & Adaptations

We believe everyone should feel comfortable, safe and secure in their own home throughout their lifespan.

That is why we are investing in building new state of the art developments uniquely designed to proactively account for the sensory preferences of autistic individuals. By utilising the latest assistive technology we can increase the independence and tailor the environment for each individual we support. The option to change lighting, noise levels or even the smell of a room can be achieved through the touch of a button or on a schedule defined by the autistic individual.

This approach can be seen in the £2.3 million capital build project at Todhill in North Ayrshire, designed to fit naturally within community settings and designed around the needs of each supported individual.

For people with alternative augmented communication needs or impaired physical capacity, their preferred adaptation can be implemented into the environment. That might be using common symbology, the use of applications or physical modifications.

# Autism Resource Workers

Throughout Scotland, we have invested in a dedicated team of Autism Resource Workers who are highly skilled and knowledgeable practitioners. Each of our Autism Resource Workers has successfully completed the unique qualification: Outcome-Based Support Planning for Autistic People Certificate, our highest level of qualification mapped against the Scottish Government NES Optimising Outcomes framework.

This qualification teaches our staff how to review and make ongoing adaptations to support plans to ensure we are supporting individuals to continually progress and realise their potential. The work of our Autism Resource Workers helps to ensure we are building expertise at a local level. We have a network of 55 staff across Scotland and continue to invest in ensuring all autistic services have the expert guidance and support of an Autism Resource Worker.



The most valuable thing I have gained since doing the course is not just to hear people but how to truly listen to people. Every individual is an expert of themselves and we need to appreciate every person's skills and interactions and I am fortunate to be in a position where I can mentor and coach this throughout my staff team.

**Morna Cowley - Autism Resource Worker**



# Meet the Team

## National Autism Advisor



Since 2014 The Richmond Fellowship Scotland has invested in a dedicated National Autism Advisor to ensure we meet and go beyond our Autism Strategy goals. As an organisation, we recognise the need for this post to continue in perpetuity. Understanding of Autism at all levels is ever improving and evolving. The challenges we are aware of now will be different from the challenges we face in 3 years. The Richmond Fellowship Scotland is committed to facing these challenges alongside the Autistic community.

Callum McCrosson, our National Autism Advisor helps to drive forward our vision for the future. "My interest in autism began when I was diagnosed at the age of 22. From that pivotal moment on, I have dedicated myself to understanding the condition as best as I possibly can. Throughout this process, I've met many other autistic people who have the same questions that I had and were often seeking support, which wasn't always readily available.

Being the National Autism Advisor allows me the opportunity to assist our support staff in answering these questions and providing that support. Before this role, I have worked in a variety of supportive roles including Employment Support Advisor, Befriending & Mentoring Coordinator, and Autism-Access Trainer/Consultant for public venues across Scotland. I believe that my insight backed up by my years of professional knowledge will help to improve practice and change attitudes both internally and externally."

# Positive Behaviour Support Team



The Positive Behaviour Support Team is part of our unique approach to supporting autistic individuals or individuals with complex or challenging behaviours. The team was set up in 2000 and was the first social care Positive Behavioural Support Team in Scotland. They have a wide range of experience and their work underpins our reputation as a provider of quality support to individuals with autism and complex needs.

## The work of the team includes:

Carrying out specialist behavioural assessments, particularly in relation to autistic people who demonstrate emotional difficulties or behaviours which challenge.



Developing innovative behavioural strategies to improve outcomes for autistic people.

Delivering training on Positive Behaviour Support and Autism, to support and enhance our staff's skills.



Providing practical and direct support to staff and carers, including ongoing consultation and advice in relation to autism and behavioural support issues.



The Richmond Fellowship  
Scotland

## Head Office

3 Buchanan Gate  
Buchanan Gate Business Park  
Cumbernauld Road  
Stepps  
North Lanarkshire G33 6FB



AUTISM

If you would like to find out more information  
about our Autism Service in your area please contact:  
[autism@trfs.org.uk](mailto:autism@trfs.org.uk)



Charity No: SC 021621