

SNAPS REVIEW OF THE YEAR April 2020 - March 2021

by the Chair, Chris Eatwell

Achievements and performance

The past year has been another highly challenging year, dominated by the series of lockdowns and restrictions placed on our organisation by National Government through the management of the pandemic. SNAPS has been unable to deliver face-to-face therapy, so has turned to a number of alternative methods of delivering support to the children and families who are our clients. It has been said that change is the one constant, and that is especially true for small charities in these turbulent times, where SNAPS has been even more creative. This review looks at 4 specific areas - Operations, Finances, Trustees, and the future of SNAPS.

Firstly, Operations - This has been the year of unmet needs for our families, suffering the double hit of being unable to access therapeutic support and being restricted to staying at home for much of the period. SNAPS has therefore stepped up its on-line support, through sessions from physiotherapists, and latterly regular phone, social media and email contacts from SNAPS staff and the Family Support team. In addition we have undertaken a number of initiatives, such as 'care packages' for Mother's Day, Valentines' Day, gardening and Christmas, in our attempts to maintain as high a level of regular contact with our families as possible. Many of the recipients have expressed their thanks for the positive support received. The search for a third possible site was put on hold in the circumstances, to be re-started once conditions allow.

We have fully developed plans to manage our return to therapy delivery once we are permitted, and are confident that we will be able to pick up where we left off, with obvious adjustments to suit whatever additional requirements are in place at that time.

We have also focussed on ensuring that our staff team, and in particular, their mental health, is supported at all times. We are pleased to have been to maintain our support for our Staff team as well, and through furlough and other support, have not lost any of the team to resignation.

We have continued to review and improve our management and policy structures, such as business and financial planning, and strategic development.

We have also maintained our support for the West Yorkshire Children's Additional Needs Network, now 67 organisations strong, which SNAPS co-founded in 2016, to improve the flow of information and communication between charities and statutory bodies from education, healthcare and Local Government across the region.

Secondly, Finances – Although raising funds has become very difficult in a market place which has been stretched ever tighter by the tough financial and economic conditions prevailing, our fundraising team has outperformed expectations and delivered a strong result. As a result of the generosity of our many supporters and a lot of hard work from the fundraising team, SNAPS ended the current year in an excellent financial position, and stronger than ever before, which helps the charity become as sustainable as possible. It is important to mention two particular contributors – Irwin Mitchell, which continue their long term and regular support, and the Alerce Trust, our wonderfully generous benefactor.

SNAPS has a good story to tell and we tell it well, and have shown that we can competently manage the steady growth required to build a successful organisation and expand the provision of service to the families of Leeds. SNAPS is an independent charity, not an agency of social services or Leeds City Council, and we take no financing from local or national government in any form. In the current economic climate, and with cuts to government grants so prevalent, our independence has been seen by our funders as a strength.

Thirdly, the Board of Trustees - We are fortunate in having a group of talented people with widely differing backgrounds and skills to be the current Board of Trustees, including hard pressed parents, to help set strategy and provide oversight of our work, and I would like to acknowledge their hard work and contribution in the last year in helping to deal with the issues facing the charity. During this difficult year, we have managed to retain the invaluable services of our 10 Trustees, which has helped to provide stability and certainty.

And lastly, the future of SNAPS – The challenges facing small charities cannot be under-estimated, but as Chair, I am confident that we will continue to develop and grow, supported by the good will and contributions of our many families, supporters and stakeholders. In the last six years, SNAPS has grown by

a factor of roughly 6 times in terms of provision of services to children with additional needs and their families, and in terms of income and reserves, which is a tremendous performance in a difficult period. The good news in this review is down to the hard work and determination of the team and the family that is SNAPS.