**SNAPS REVIEW OF THE YEAR April 2019 – March 2020 by the Chair, Chris Eatwell**

**Achievements and performance**

The past year has been a year of significant changes, both in operational as well as financial terms. It has been said that change is the one constant, and that is especially true for small charities in these turbulent times. My review looks at 4 specific areas – Operations, Finances, Trustees, and the future of SNAPS.

**Firstly, Operations** – We have continued to deliver our high quality therapeutic support to the many children coming to SNAPS, along with very valuable support for parents and the extended family. The level of need has continued to grow and we have had to adopt a more stringent session allocation policy to ensure that new families are able to benefit from our services. Operating at the maximum number of sessions available to us on our two sites means that, inevitably, there are unmet needs – we strive to help as many families as possible. The search for a third possible site is on-going and more challenging than anticipated through issues around availability and costs, although we are very aware of the financial impact of such a plan, and have made provision accordingly.

SNAPS has experienced staff changes during the year, but our processes and teams have proved robust enough to cope with departures and arrivals, and we delighted that those team members with whom we have worked and trained, leave us in due course to further their experiences in new roles elsewhere, including taking Rebound Training to Toronto, Canada, for the first time in that city. We have continued to review and improve our management and policy structures, such as business and financial planning, risk management and reserves policies.

There were several highlights during the year – firstly, the successful launch of the Sunday football sessions at Hunslet, which have been very well received by children and families, as well as providing an opportunity for three young people to train as football coaches. Secondly, the SNAPS ZOOM event took place in September at John Charles Sports Centre, and was well supported, including an appearance by the Lord Mayor of Leeds. This involved children and their family members and friends doing laps of the athletics track, an activity in a non-judgemental setting which they don’t generally have access to – many laps were completed, much fun was had and it was agreed that this will be an annual event!

And thirdly, the launch of the expanded Leeds Children’s Additional Needs Network (Leeds CANN) to become the West Yorkshire CANN, drew in large numbers of supporters. During the year the Network, a communications and information venture which SNAPS co-founded in 2016, continued to grow to over 60 children’s charities and statutory bodies across all parts of West Yorkshire. The model for the Network is being emulated elsewhere in the country, which is a great compliment.

**Secondly, Finances** – The end of the previous financial year had been very challenging, leaving SNAPS with a significant shortfall in funding. Raising funds had become increasingly difficult in a market place which has been stretched ever tighter by the tough financial and economic conditions prevailing. The last few years of carefully managed growth for SNAPS means that we have built some credit and experience in managing the ‘ebb and flow’ of funding. Consequently, we both put in place a contingency plan for reducing expenditure, as well as appealing to funders who had supported SNAPS in the past. As a result of their generosity 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, where SNAPS was Charity of the Year, and the Alerce Trust, both wonderfully generous and supportive. SNAPS has a good story to tell and we’ve 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.

I will add a few words about the impact of the pandemic, which hit us all in February / March 2020 – operating as we do in two schools, both of our bases were quickly closed until at least mid June 2020. The Board has been able to continue salary payment for some staff, and will furlough and top up salaries for all others – treating our staff as well as possible is important for SNAPS, reflecting our values of care and good management. We have developed plans for managing our return, and will continue to actively manage the situation, communicating with and supporting all of our families and staff to the best of our ability.

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 year, we have lost the services of 4 Trustees and recruited 2 more.

In addition, Anne Gait, one of the founders of SNAPS in 2004 and our longest serving Trustee, stepped down, but was persuaded to take on the new honorary position of President, which we are delighted with.

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. The good news in this Review is down to the hard work and determination of the team and the family that is SNAPS.