**SNAPS REVIEW OF THE YEAR April 2021 – March 2022 by the Chair, Chris Eatwell**

**Achievements and performance**

The past year has been another highly challenging period, dominated by lockdowns and restrictions placed on our organisation by National Government through the management of the pandemic. SNAPS was unable to deliver face-to-face therapy until September 2021, and so 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 another time of unmet needs for our families, suffering the double hit of being unable to access therapeutic support through any NHS, Council or charity route, and being restricted to staying at home for some of this period. SNAPS therefore stepped up its on-line support, through sessions from physiotherapists and counsellors, and latterly regular phone, social media and email contacts from SNAPS staff and the Family Support team.

Many of the recipients have expressed their thanks for the positive support received. We developed plans to manage the return to therapy delivery in September, and were able to pick up where we left off, with a number of adjustments to accommodate whatever additional requirements, both from the authorities and from families, were required at that time. We have also focussed on ensuring that our staff team, and in particular, their mental health, is supported at all times. Whilst we were pleased to maintain our support for our Staff team, in common with many other organisations we did lose some staff as we emerged from furlough. This led to a recruitment exercise which caused some stretch for the team, but they worked through and resolved the challenges concerned. Much of the second half of the financial year from September 2021 to March 2022 has been spent ensuring that the team is fully back up , trained and delivering our services to the required standards.

We have continued to review and improve our management and policy structures, such as business and financial planning, and strategic development, and have developed an ambitious plan for further growth in the ‘post-Covid’ period and next financial year, after April 2022. The search for a third possible site has been integrated into a broader plan to include delivering a more extensive range of supportive therapies on multiple sites, which are provide more spaces where therapies can be delivered.

We have also maintained our support for the West Yorkshire Children’s Additional Needs Network, now 86 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 out-performed 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, and grow our services in the future. 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 11 Trustees, which has helped to provide stability, certainty and continuity.

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. Since 2015, SNAPS has grown by a factor of roughly 6 times in terms of provision of services, income and reserves, which is a tremendous performance in a difficult period, and an excellent advertisement for the hybrid business model which we have adopted, developed and used to such advantage. The new development strategy offers promise of further expansion and an even more exciting future.

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