

Clearly Speaking
Specialist Children & Family Support Services
(A Not-for-Profit, Community-Based Organisation)

Company number: 05955506

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31st OCTOBER 2010

Supporting all children and young people with Special Needs/
Disabilities, their siblings and families to improve the quality of life for
all involved.

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Administrative Information	1
<u>Trustees' Report</u>	
Aims and Objectives	2
Achieving Our Goals	2
Services We Offer	3
Our Beneficiaries	4
Community Involvement	5
Our Achievements	6-7
To Conclude	8

CLEARLY SPEAKING SPECIALIST CHILDREN AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES
YEAR ENDING 31st OCTOBER 2010

Charity Name: Clearly Speaking Specialist Children and Family Support
Services (Not-for-Profit Organisation)

Company Number: 05955506

Registered Office: c/o Aldbury Associates
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Operational Address: The Old Caretaker's House
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Company Director: Janet Nicks

Trustees: Janet Nicks
Andrew J. Burns
John Lane
John S. Bercow MP
Andrew Code
Katie Wilkinson
Kim Speller

Company Secretary: Aldbury Associates
Mobbs Miller House
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Company Accountant: Michael Pilbro Consultancy Ltd
Whiteleaf Business Centre
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Buckinghamshire
MK18 1TF

Aims and Objectives

Our main objective is to improve equality of opportunity for children and young people with special needs and/or disabilities, not only within the education system and workplace, but also within their own network of family and friends and general social environments.

We aim to alleviate the anxiety and frustration of fighting for and coming to terms with medical diagnosis and to provide resources to enable children and young people to make progress in all areas of their development.

We feel that no child should be disadvantaged due to race, creed or their parent's difficulty in accessing a high quality of advice and support due to financial or educational restraints.

We aimed to provide access to specialist, individualised support and intervention in accordance with the needs of each child or young person, in partnership with referring and supporting agencies and practitioners. This includes social intervention, education, leisure activities and opportunities to access training and support within their local community whenever possible.

Achieving our Goals

We ensure all parents, carers and young people can 'self-refer' and receive access to all our organisation's specialist services free of charge. Families may also be referred by any of the local statutory agencies – health, social care, education, Connexions youth advisory service etc.

We provide a holistic service focused on enabling children/young people to live life to the fullest and happiest potential and to experience equality of opportunity.

Services We Offer

- Specialist courses for children and young people focusing on specific issues and life skills e.g. social relationships, sign language, bullying.
- Specialist Youth Club run fortnightly offering a safe, supported environment where children and young adults can be free to experience all the same activities enjoyed at a more typical Youth Club without having to worry about being judged or bullied. Any incident of anger, frustration or misunderstanding is worked through with the young people involved immediately by our trained volunteers.
- Computer club run fortnightly for gifted and able children/young people.
- National Arts Award Scheme providers.
- We recently became an approved Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme centre.
- Weekly learning and a range of accredited learning schemes for young people aged 14-25 years.
- School holiday activities including accredited courses in sport, learning, performing arts and music, weekend camping trips, themed activity days etc.
- We have built relationships with several local businesses and are able to place teenagers on suitable work-based training placements, potentially leading on to apprenticeships and paid employment.
- Accompanying and/or representing children and their parents/carers at annual reviews, tribunals, medical reviews and meetings to ensure the child's needs and views are understood and implemented.
- Support and intervention to assist with repatriation after prolonged school refusal or period of inpatient hospital care.
- Ensuring referrals to key agencies such as CAMHS, Connexions, Occupational Therapy etc.
- Assistance with the special educational needs statement process, applications for disability/carer benefits etc.
- Provision of training and support to schools, key practitioners, parents/carers and children to promote greater understanding of all aspects of hidden SEN/disabilities.
- Assessment using ADOS assessment tools for children and young people suspected as being on the Autistic Spectrum.
- A stepping-stone service to prepare young people for a return to school, move to college or train for the workplace.

Our Beneficiaries

Our beneficiaries range in age from pre-school children to young adults diagnosed with predominantly “hidden” disabilities covering a wide range including (not exclusively) all aspects of the autistic spectrum, ADHD, Dyslexia, ASD, Tourette's Syndrome, Dyspraxia, learning and behavioural difficulties and various mental health difficulties.

Typical symptoms of many of these conditions present as extreme sensitivity to a whole range of normal stimuli; inability to read body language and emotional changes; obsessive and strange behaviours. Sadly, our young people often find themselves unable to cope with school, social situations and/or family life. Bullying of these youngsters occurs with frightening regularity and by the time that they reach our organisation, they are likely to be isolated, frustrated, depressed and possibly suicidal, eventually shutting themselves off from as much human contact as possible. Serious self-harming and obsessive compulsive disorders are common features of this distress. School becomes intolerable and eventually they may find themselves either voluntarily, or forcibly, excluded. The parents/carers may be at the end of their tether and for some children, a period of inpatient psychiatric care is inevitable.

Also welcome are the brothers and sisters of these youngsters who may find themselves the target of their sibling's frustration. Often, they find themselves the object of verbal and/or physical attack and feel sidelined due to the attention demanded by their sibling. Intervention is required to help these children regain control of their lives and to ensure their schooling and social progress is not adversely affected.

We support all children and young people who have a diagnosis of Special Needs and/or disability and ensure they are provided with access to a wide range of services and interventions designed and adapted to suit their needs, when at the same time, broadening their experiences and improving essential social, emotional and communication skills.

Community Involvement

We enjoy good working relationships with various local authorities, organisations and groups, including:

Buckinghamshire County Council Youth Services -We have a Service Level Agreement with BCC which provides us with three hours assistance per week from a trained youth worker; reduced rates for hiring the local Youth Club and access to and inclusion in various activities.

Connexions – We have a named Connexions worker attached to our project who helps with funding applications for college placements; acts as a link between our project and school/college Connexions workers; keeps us up to date and generally assists with our statutory obligations.

CAMHS – We liaise closely and frequently attend meetings with individuals' psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, family therapist and families to ensure the most appropriate Care Plan is implemented, that all parties are working towards the same goal and that the child's needs are being met in between CAMHS appointments.

Local Schools – The provision of training and support for school staff ensure they are armed with sufficient knowledge and skills to understand and work successfully with children with special needs thus creating a happy environment for staff and pupils.

Third Section Providers – We receive referrals from all local mental health teams working with young people in need of a highly specialised support and intervention plan to enable them to begin their community based, supported recovery at Clearly Speaking.

Our Achievements

Over the past twelve months, we have ...

- Attended 21 annual reviews.
- Attended 4 tribunals.
- Provided the views of 29 children and young people to schools, local authorities and social care services.
- Provided access to work based training for 4 young people.
- Provided work experience and training at our centre for 6 young people.
- Provided intervention and support regularly to 74 families who have children or young adults with a range of special educational needs or disabilities.
- Ensured referrals to key agencies including Children & Family Services, Connexions, occupational therapy, psychologists, CAMHS teams, Great Ormond Street Hospital etc. for exploration of syndromes, disabilities and health conditions.
- Provided assessments and repatriations for over 24 children, young people and young adults.
- Co-ordinated reviews of 11 Statements of Special Educational Needs due to changes in individual requirements.
- Provided support and intervention enabling the return of 8 children to education following significant periods of school refusal, exclusion or breakdown of education provision.
- Provided training to 4 schools, 39 Children & Family practitioners, 160 front-line professionals and over 120 parents.
- Provided specialist training to 64 children and young people to improve social interaction, communication and relationship skills.
- Assisted 4 young people to identify their chosen learning and career paths and co-ordinate a collaborative approach to intervention thus enabling them to enter further education, higher education and apprenticeships.

....continued

Our Achievements (continued)

- Helped 2 young people gain employment.
- Provided opportunities for 14 adults to enjoy volunteer work at our centre.
- Run a residential camp for 14 young people to encourage acceptance and inclusion.
- Run 8 regular specialist clubs.
- Run a fortnightly specialist club for approximately 43 families.
- Run 22 activity days providing holiday respite support.
- Run accredited courses for young people in sport, learning and the arts.
- Provided helpline support to young people, parents and practitioners.
- Provided new drop-in facilities at our Children and Family Support Centre in Buckingham.
- Run a twice weekly drop-in centre for parents and practitioners working with children and young people who have special needs/disabilities and more challenging behaviours.
- Carried out 4 Common Assessment Framework assessments and lead the co-ordination of cases as the appointed lead professionals in a further 6 cases.
- Our specialist consultant carried out 14 clinical assessments using international assessment tools such as ADOS. 11 individuals were diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome/ASD/Autism – 7 children & 4 adults all received intervention and support. 3 individuals had autism ruled out and were supported through specialist intervention to improve key areas of difficulty & behaviours. Referrals came from GP's, paediatricians, schools & parents' own self-referral.

To Conclude

The very essence of our charity is to teach and promote self-awareness, self-esteem, confidence, life and social skills to our children and young people.

We encourage *all* of our children and young people to come forward with ideas and plans for games, crafts, activities and workshops and these are implemented wherever practical and possible.

We endeavour to promote an atmosphere where all our youngsters feel equal, valued and their ideas are listened to and acted upon. We are rewarded by witnessing growing self-esteem, confidence and achievement.

We support all those who find their way to Clearly Speaking to develop their skills and achieve their true potential (what ever this may be), whenever this is possible and achievable.

We celebrate success and help all children and young people and their families to feel confident and positive about the effort and progress.