



# Annual Review

2022-23

**ALL** ages

**ALL** conditions

**ALL** family members

[www.sensationall.org.uk](http://www.sensationall.org.uk)





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Introduction from our Chair

The past year has been one of growth and partnership for SensationALL and there has been much to celebrate. Our small charity continues to punch above its weight and supporting an increasing number of families from an ever-widening area in the Northeast. Services have evolved and increased to meet the demands of our beneficiaries and we continue to listen to requests from families about what their needs are to ensure that we are providing the best support possible when it is most needed.

Our staff are our greatest asset and without them we would not be the welcoming and respected charity that we are. Feedback from families is always full of praise and gratitude for our staff and I would like to mirror these sentiments.

We have been able to increase our output by delivering outreach sessions with staff running services from local community buildings, schools and other charity premises. A key development in our growth was achieved this year in securing the new Aberdeen city premises at Belgrave House. This milestone move enables SensationALL to have a greater impact on families who may not be able to access our Westhill centre. All this has been achieved while continuing to provide the much needed and requested services from our main site at the Old Schoolhouse, Westhill.

We remain fortunate in these financially difficult times to continue to receive donations and funding from a wide range of sources. No donation is considered too small and every penny is gratefully received. Without the generosity of funders it simply would not be possible to support all of the people that we do.

SensationALL is a community and without everyone working together as a team we would not be where we are today. I look forward to seeing what the coming year holds for SensationALL.

*Susau Kay*  
Chair of the Board of Trustees





## 2022-23 services

### Our mission

To provide therapy-based activities and support services for individuals of **ALL** ages, **ALL** conditions and for **ALL** their family members.

**No diagnosis** is required prior to entry.

The 2022-23 year started with a renewed enthusiasm to expand our provision in order to meet demand from our families. We were acutely aware we urgently needed to increase the timetable to accommodate more people.

Two exciting developments were essential in making this possible...

Firstly, we began delivering outreach sessions in locations across northeast Scotland - from Stonehaven to Huntly to Peterhead!

Secondly, after much searching, we found a fantastic venue in central Aberdeen for our second SensationALL centre and opened Belgrave House in spring 2023 thanks to funding from The National Lottery.

As a result of these achievements, we significantly increased the number of sessions we delivered and subsequently, helped more people than ever!



**690**  
sessions



**562**  
different  
individuals



**162**  
new  
registrations



**38**  
parent/carer support  
sessions



**60**  
outreach sessions



**52**  
advisory  
consultations



**29**  
training workshops



**65**  
self-regulation  
sessions



**69**  
social group  
sessions



# Key achievements

## Soft-play room upgrade

The facilities at The Old Schoolhouse were enhanced with the addition of a **new play frame** in the soft-play room.

Jul  
2022



## Parent/carer groups

Led by our new Family Support Practitioner, these informal get togethers are a chance for carers to chat about their challenges and share experiences.

Oct  
2022



Sept  
2022



The **SensationALL van** hit the road! The purchase of our first charity vehicle meant we can transport our sensory equipment all over the region and deliver specialist sessions to more families.

Mar  
2023



## Belgrave House opens!

We collected the keys for our Aberdeen city centre site in early 2023 with the official opening taking place in March.

## It's been another exhilarating year!

And what a pleasure it has been to see our community grow arms, legs, 4 wheels and even a new venue!

Not only have we been able to respond to feedback from our families with the second venue, but our van is touring the Northeast, bringing practical, social and emotional support and resources into the heart of local communities and schools.

I am inspired by our staff, whose dedication and persistence to bring advice, solutions, and often a much needed shoulder to cry on, is deeply heartening and humbling. And so I dedicate this successful year to them, and eagerly embrace the coming year of further developments and continued support to any and **ALL** who need us.

*Katie McNutt*, CEO





## Support for the whole family

Our support isn't only for neurodiverse individuals, but also for their wider family members.

In 2022, we dedicated a member of staff to coordinating these services and our Family Support Practitioner, Jo, set up several informal support groups for parent/carers to come together with a community of people facing similar challenges.

The benefit of having peer support can be huge! Many of our parents tell us how alone and lost they feel so the groups really help them cope with the emotional burden of caring for someone with complex needs.

## Kelly's story

Kelly's daughter Georgia-Rose has a diagnosis of Autism and suspected ADHD.

"Georgia-Rose really struggles with her meltdowns which, I originally thought were just bad tantrums but the older she got it became apparent they were so much more!

She was a huge masker - keeping everything bottled in at school, playing a character to fit into society but, when she gets home the mask comes off and she often explodes.

From a young age Georgia-Rose has experienced sensory difficulties, certain sounds, textures and smells would trigger her and we didn't know how to deal with it".

When Kelly started attending the parent support group she said it was the best thing she did for herself since Georgia's diagnosis.

"I had no idea how much I needed it! Being around other parents facing the same day to day difficulties is just priceless! I believe it has helped me become a better parent to not only Georgia-Rose, but her youngest sister Ellie-Jane too. Not feeling alone on this crazy journey of parenting with additional support needs is the BEST thing ever!"

*"SensationALL means the world to me! The support is irreplaceable. - it is somewhere I won't be judged."*

*Kelly*



Family Support Practitioner, Jo, is also a parent of a young neurodiverse son and has experienced many of the situations as our families:

"I know firsthand that being a parent of a child with additional needs can be isolating and lonely. Parents of neurotypical children try to be supportive but, through no fault of their own, they can't relate to our unique struggles. Sharing experiences allows parents and carers to be heard, feel accepted and less alone. It is a privilege for me to watch the magic happen in our sessions."





## New venue

A key step towards increasing our reach and engaging with more families was made in early 2023 when we took on the lease for a suite in Belgrave House in central Aberdeen.

A large proportion of SensationALL families are Aberdeen city residents and to make it more accessible for them to attend our sessions we felt it was time to branch out and open a second venue.

Thanks to the funding provided by The National Lottery, we secured the space in Belgrave House from where we will be able to not only replicate our sessions for neurodiverse individuals but also hold training events and parent/carers support groups.

We were excited to hold sessions there from Easter onwards!



## A Family's Story

"We first came to SensationALL several years ago when our young son attended even before he received his Autism diagnosis. As no diagnosis is needed to access the services, my son was going there for 2 years before his diagnosis was complete. This is unique and special within our region.

Their services were the only open door I found offering support in the way we needed. We were both suffering extreme stress when we found them and they have been instrumental in turning things around for us.

The wide range of ways to access the service is so essential, from soft play for younger children, to the social groups and teen sessions, parent support and training, and the Chill-OOT programme to help children develop self-regulation skills and build resilience. Plus, the vital holiday activities. So many wonderful ways to feel included, accepted and understood.

Due to his Autism, our son struggled with attending school full-time and, as a result, found it difficult to make friends. He often behaves or interacts in ways neurotypical children find unusual which has made it harder for him to settle in groups and public settings.

SensationALL is the one place he feels a sense of belonging. He says it makes a huge difference to his life, as he has made friends and has somewhere to go that is fun, with people who understand him.

Having SensationALL over the years has had a huge impact on all of us, particularly me as a parent. They are a door that has always been open to us, when many others were closed.

The staff are fantastic on every level! They have helped us through this journey. All their advice is a huge help to us as we've faced evolving challenges throughout his development.

SensationALL has a wonderfully accepting environment, inclusive, with a family atmosphere that fully embraces everyone with its warm and welcome ethos.

SensationALL is of vital importance for families like ours."

*"My son absolutely loves his time at SensationALL!"*

*Testimonial from a parent in February 2023*

**Everything we do at SensationALL is only possible thanks to grants towards our service delivery costs from key donors including...**





**With thanks to the board  
of trustees:**

- Susan Kay
- Theresa Roper
- Tom Pates
- Stuart Bews
- Dawn Brown
- Darren Aggasild
- Nick Pickering
- Dominic Kite

**[www.sensationall.org.uk](http://www.sensationall.org.uk)**

**[info@sensationall.org.uk](mailto:info@sensationall.org.uk)**

**01224 746699**



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