



Angels Support Group Hitchin

Charity No: 1117059

Trustees' Annual Report & Statement of Financial Activity for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

Trustees

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April 2026

Trustees' Annual Report & Statement of Financial Activity

for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

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Trustees' Annual Report & Statement of Financial Activity for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Charitable Objects

- Provide support and guidance to parents/carers/siblings of children who are diagnosed with (or are being assessed for) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and/or Autism and their associated conditions.
- Provide relief for the above children and their parents/carers by providing facilities in the interest of social welfare and for recreation and other leisure time occupation.
- Advance the education of the public and statutory bodies in matters related to ADHD and Autism.
- Promote other such charitable purpose as determined by the charity.

1.2 Overview (Executive Summary)

During the year from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025 the membership of the charity has increased by 352 families. On 31st Aug 2025 we had 3,644 families in our membership with at least 7,187 children including siblings. 4,077 of the children have a diagnosis of (or are being assessed for) ADHD and/or Autism (2,355 with/assessed for ADHD; 3,251 with/assessed for Autism; 1,529 with/assessed for both Autism and ADHD).

Throughout the year 265 parents/carers attended one or more of the support groups (a mixture of virtual and in-person meetings). Some members attended very regularly (over 25 times during the year) and some for just one or two meetings. On average they attended 2.7 meetings each this year with 78% of attendances at virtual meetings and 22% at in-person meetings.

In addition to our regular support groups, we have also run several workshops on the topic of EHCP application forms and Annual Reviews. These workshops provide more in-depth information in smaller groups. 72 parents/carers have accessed support through these smaller groups this year. We also ran an evening workshop on the topic of Autism and Anxiety which 22 parents/carers attended.

483 families used the one-to-one service during the year. They accessed support in a variety of ways with the service providing: 360 hours of face-to-face (or video call) meetings, 276 hours of support at meetings with other professionals (school, Health Visitor, multi-agency meetings etc.), 254 hours of support via phone/email and 29 hours of support through text/Facebook Messenger.

We also delivered, with some support from the Letchworth Family Support Team, another two small group courses for 11 parents from Letchworth who were at the start of the process of having their child assessed for Autism or ADHD or whose children have had a recent diagnosis. We are planning to continue these courses in the year ahead.

2. Activities & Achievements

2.1 Outputs & Outcomes

More detail about our main outputs

Access to our services

All our services are available to anyone who is a member of the charity. Membership is subject to only one criterion and that is that the member must be a parent/carer of a child who has been diagnosed with (or is being assessed for) Autism/ADHD.

There is no membership fee and no charge for attending any of our services. We give attendees the opportunity to make a small voluntary donation if they would like to but there is no pressure to do so. This ensures that all members can benefit regardless of income levels.

There is no geographical restriction imposed by the charity. The virtual meetings via Zoom have made it easier for members to attend regardless of their location. During the pandemic we saw an increase in the number of new members who are from a wider geographic area than the North Herts and Stevenage community, as our services became more accessible online, and this has continued with our hybrid way of delivering services. We now have members throughout Hertfordshire and also in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, and Greater London.

Most of the meetings are during the day as this enables parents/carers to attend while their children are at school. We have continued to offer some virtual meetings as these are accessible for those parents who have young children at home or older children that are currently out of school. Evening meetings (all virtual) are held every three weeks to enable those who work during the day to attend.

Regular support group meetings

Throughout the year we held one virtual daytime meeting for parents/carers each week during term time. In addition, we held a face-to-face meeting in Stevenage every 3 weeks, a face-to-face meeting in Letchworth every 3 weeks and a virtual evening support group every 3 weeks. Some of the meetings provided advice from external professionals or Angels staff on a range of topics related to Autism and ADHD. The other sessions were self-help groups run by our Angels team. We continued with the model of a blend of virtual and face-to-face meetings with the evening meetings also remaining virtual to enable a greater range of parents to access our support.

These meetings benefit the members of the charity in several ways:

- They provide the opportunity to find out about new strategies and ideas which attendees can use to support their children. This can help parents/carers to adapt their parenting skills to ease the stress and anxiety of children with Autism/ADHD.
- Having the opportunity to discuss issues in self-help groups with people with similar concerns helps to relieve parents/carers from some of the stresses and feelings of isolation that can result.
- They help parents/carers to feel confident in supporting their child in the education system which in turn helps the child to reach their potential.
- They help parents/carers and their children to have a more positive self-image following diagnosis.

One-to-One Clinic meetings

Angels provided several types of one-to-one appointments each week during the school terms. These offered members the opportunity to access more targeted, specific support where needed. The appointments allowed members the time to discuss particular issues related to their child on a one-to-one basis with a trained Specialist Support Practitioner (SSP). They also provided the facility for a SSP to attend a school meeting or other appointment to provide support for the parent/carer. This year we have continued to offer remote appointments using a variety of applications e.g. Zoom, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp alongside in-person meetings to support at meetings with professionals or if it was essential due to the specific needs of the parent. We have also continued to offer some shorter one-to-one appointments via phone and zoom, as well as the hour sessions, to help meet the increased demand for the service.

The clinic appointments provide the same benefits to the members as the support group meetings but are just more flexible. They allow members, who do not feel comfortable discussing issues in a group setting, access to support and provide a more suitable time for issues which are too complex and would take up too much time in a group meeting.

The service has been popular, and the number of appointments limited because of funding restrictions so there has often been a waiting list in place.

Parent Support via phone, email, and Facebook

In addition to the one-to-one clinic appointments, members have also accessed advice and support from the SSP's remotely via phone, email, or Facebook Messenger. This support was available during term time and a limited service was also available over the school holidays. There was also a "secret" Facebook group which was available only to members and allowed them to discuss issues and get advice from other parents as well as the SSPs. This online group was fully moderated by the SSPs and enabled parents to access support at a time that suits them.

This support provides the same benefits to the members as the support group meetings but just in a more flexible, virtual way. It allows members, who do not feel comfortable discussing issues in a group setting or face-to-face, access to support and provides support to parents who can not attend the support groups due to their location or timing.

Letchworth small group courses

We continued working in partnership with Letchworth Family Support Team to deliver small group courses for parents from Letchworth who are at the start of the process of having their child assessed for Autism or ADHD or whose children have had a recent diagnosis. The project took the form of a set of five workshop sessions for small groups of parents (maximum 5-6) who had previously found it very hard to attend larger groups. The workshops covered basic understanding of the conditions and how they impact the child, understanding of the child's rights and how to work positively with professionals to secure access to services for the children, including education and health. Due to the small groups the content could be tailored to meet the needs of the parents present, including adjusting for their own learning needs. The idea was to give families a good understanding of how to support their children at the beginning of their journey. Following on from the set of workshops we ran during 2024, we continued with a further two sets of workshops during 2025. During the 2025 workshops the feedback was very positive; All the parent/carers made progress against at least 2 of our measured outcomes and 33% made progress against all 4 outcomes. The project has been funded by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

Networking with various organisations

The Parent Support Manager and other team members regularly meet with local statutory agencies such as health professionals (GP's, Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, CAMHS workers and Community Paediatricians and their teams) working with children with ADHD and Autism, the Herts County Council Communication and Autism Specialist Advisory service, Herts and Central Beds Children Services social workers, Family Support Worker teams, Family Centre Managers, local school SENCO's and Outreach workers, the Herts Parent Carer Forum and other agencies supporting parents and representatives from other similar support groups supporting parents/carers of children with ADHD and/or Autism from across Hertfordshire and surrounding counties, as a way of pooling resources and avoiding duplication of effort. The Parent Support Manager has also been involved in work to develop the Autism and ADHD diagnostic pathway in Hertfordshire, in partnership with NHS and County Council colleagues, and also to develop a county-wide support offer for all families and young people diagnosed with the conditions. We are continuing to build working relationships with services in Central Bedfordshire as well.

The benefits of this are as follows:

- It enables the Parent Support Manager and other team members to keep up to date with the available support for children/families and ways of accessing it. They can then pass this information on to members as required.
- It ensures that local statutory services are kept aware of the needs of children with Autism/ADHD and their families.
- It ensures that health professionals in the area are aware of the charity and the support provided and so will pass on the details of the charity to families with a newly diagnosed child.
- It enables them to talk directly to teaching professionals which helps improve understanding of the conditions within local schools.

The beneficiaries include our member families as they can access the information through support group meetings. The benefit of this activity also extends beyond our membership as consultation with local teaching professionals/ statutory services can help to improve services for all children with Autism/ADHD in the local area not just those who are members of the charity.

Outcomes

In order to be able to measure the benefits to our members, of accessing Angels services, we have implemented a ladder scale for 4 outcomes that we have identified as important to our members. The four outcomes are:

- Parents will have a greater understanding of their child's conditions and how they impact on their child's learning and behaviour.
- Parents will have improved confidence in their parenting skills having gained a wider range of strategies to support their child.
- Parents feel less isolated, with a network of local parents to talk to who understand the issues they are facing.
- Parents are working more effectively with their child's school, services and community resulting in a positive experience for their child.

Since October 2016, on joining Angels, we have asked members to complete an initial questionnaire to find out how they rated themselves on the scales for each of the four outcomes. 6 months later we asked them to redo the questionnaire and have captured the improvements they have made.

In recent years, for members joining after October 2021, we have gathered initial and follow-up questionnaires for 647 members. Parents join us for a wide range of differing reasons and have differing needs, therefore some of the outcomes we measure may not be relevant to all, but when looking at the outcome data overall; 85% of members made progress against at least one target outcome, 63% made progress against more than one outcome and 13% made progress across all the outcomes. Improvements for individual outcomes have been as follows:

- 57% have improved their understanding of their child's conditions.
- 57% have improved confidence in their parenting skills.
- 45% have reported feeling less isolated.
- 37% have reported that they are working more effectively with their child's school and other services.

2.2 The Roles & Contributions of Volunteers

Although the charity employs several staff it is still very dependent on the contribution made by volunteers. There is a loyal team of volunteer members working hard in all the following areas:

Completing various administrative tasks.

Fundraising and Funding Applications.

Promoting our services within the local community.

Planning and overseeing services through being on our Board of Trustees.

The Trustees would like to thank all our volunteers for their hard work without which we would not be able to provide the same level of service.

2.3 Looking Ahead

As we have continued to grow our membership and adapt our services in the aftermath of the pandemic, we have found more effective ways of working to enable us to support more parents.

We have continued with our weekly online meetings on Zoom, but have added in more face-to-face meetings, including a new monthly group in Letchworth and a new venue for our monthly meeting in Stevenage. We have seen numbers of parents attending all our meetings increase.

Our one-to-one service has seen increased demand and by supporting parents mainly via Zoom or phone we have been able to support higher numbers of parents. We have worked with different models for our service, offering one-hour, 30-minute or 15-minute appointments and then regular contact through Zoom or phone for those parents who need ongoing support. We have continued to develop a localised model where a member of staff is based in one particular area, supporting families from that area, and are trialling this in Letchworth with a grant from the LGCHF. We are finding that having one dedicated member of staff gives greater consistency for parents and offers the chance to build strong relationships with local parents and other stakeholders such as schools. We are investigating funding to do this in other areas.

We have developed a suite of podcasts – short 20–30-minute information chats on issues of interest to parents of neurodivergent children, that aim to provide key information on a given topic that is accessible and can be listened to by parents at any time. These are available free for the general public through our website and on Apple and Spotify under the name Neurodiversity Chats.

We are now sub-contracted by ADD-Vance to deliver one-to-one support for parents who call the Herts Neurodiversity Helpline, that they run, after a successful pilot and partnership working, with ADD-Vance being commissioned to deliver the service in partnership with us until March 2028.

3. Financial Review

3.1 Financial Position

The charity is in a good financial position at the end of August 2025 with actual reserves of £51,992 which is slightly below our planned reserve level of £52,368.

We had to use all the surplus reserves we were holding at the end of the last financial year to support our services after the National Lottery funding stopped in November 2024. This was a planned temporary measure while we secured replacement funding. We have now replaced the National Lottery funding with a range of different grants, so our funding is more diversified and we expect to be able to increase our reserves to the target level.

We are incredibly grateful to all the funders, community organisations, companies and individuals including our members, their families and friends who have supported us during the year and allowed us to adapt and continue the services we provide to our members. Thank you.

3.2 Details of Any Funds Materially in Deficit

The Charity has no funds which are materially in deficit.

3.3 Policy on Reserves

The Trustees have decided that the charity needs to hold reserves to cover the possibility of a grant being cut short or not renewed. Holding reserves will allow the Trustees time to find alternative sources of funding without having to make immediate redundancies. It was agreed that holding 6 months of payroll and 6 months of rent costs would allow enough time for alternative funding to be found or cutbacks in expenditure to be planned and implemented.

This gives a planned reserve of £52,368 based on 6 months of budgeted salary and 6 months of budgeted rent costs (as of September 2025).

The actual reserves held at the end of this financial year were £51,992. This is slightly lower than our target. When the National Lottery Community funding ceased in November 2024, we had to use our surplus reserves along with a small amount of our planned reserves to cover the drop in grant income. We have now secured most of the core cost funding that we need for the next financial year and plan to build the reserves back up to their target level over the next few months.

3.3 Principal Sources of Funding

Grants

This year we had £10,124 of grant funding from **The National Lottery Community Fund**, carried forward from the final instalment of the five-year continuation funding which ended in November 24. This funded some of the staff costs related to our support groups, one-to-one staff time, and overheads.

The remaining service costs were covered by the following grants:

Herts County Councillors Steve Jarvis and Graham Lawrence from their Locality Budgets. We had £314 of funding carried forward from the previous year which funded one-to-one support for their constituents.

Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF). We had £1,290 carried forward from the previous year and we also received an additional grant of £10,000 in July 2025. In total HCF funded £3,488 of one-to-one costs for this year.

Tesco Community Grants. We had £2,951 from Cheshunt, St Albans and Royston stores carried forward from the previous year and we also received additional funding of £1,500 from the Letchworth store. Tescos funded £4,188 of one-to-one costs this year.

Albert Hunt. In September 2024 we received funding of £4,000 which funded one-to-one costs during the year.

North Herts Area Committees. In October 2024 we received grants of £1,828 from **Baldock Area Committee** and £2,232 from **Southern Rural Area Committee** which funded £2,818 of one-to-one costs relating to members in their areas this year.

Hitchin Youth Trust. We received funding of £5,696 in March 2025 and used £2,124 of that to fund one-to-one costs this year for members living in Hitchin and other villages supported by the fund.

We used funding of £3,681 carried forward from the previous year, from the **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF)** to continue with a joint project with the Letchworth Family Support Team to develop and deliver a programme of workshops for families in Letchworth who have not yet been able to access our services, to build up their confidence and knowledge, so they can support their children and feel able to access our services going forward. In March 2025 we also received a further grant of £12,030 from LGCHF to continue running the workshops, run a monthly support group and to cover more of the one-to-one costs for Letchworth families.

North Herts Area Committees. In October 2024 we received grants of £1,063 from **Royston Area Committee**, £1,940 from **Hitchin Area Committee** and £1,502 from **Letchworth Area Committee** which funded £4,397 of virtual support group costs this year.

Masonic Charitable Foundation. We had £3,756 carried forward from last year and also received £5,000 in May 2025 which was the second instalment of a three-year grant of £15,000 to put towards our core cost funding.

Costco. We received £1,500 in December 2024 which was used to fund the Stevenage support group and also one-to-one costs for Stevenage members.

Garfield Weston. We received a £10,000 core cost grant in April 2025 which has funded £4,393 of our costs this year.

Simon Gibson. We received a £10,000 unrestricted grant in June 2025 which funded £9,522 of our costs this year.

Baily Thomas. We received a grant of £5,000 in June 2025 to fund one-to-one support for families with children with Learning Disabilities and also to fund coffee mornings at various Learning Disability and Severe Learning Disability schools to advertise our services to families with children attending them. We spent £988 of the grant this year.

Shanly Foundation. We also received a £2,500 core cost grant in June 25 which will be used to cover costs in the following financial year.

Throughout the year, we received £10,063 from **Add-Vance** which covered the cost of seconding one of our Specialist Support Practitioners to provide a one-to-one service for referrals from the Neurodiversity hub phone line that they are running. This was a pilot project running this year which has now been replaced by a 3-year contract which started in October 2025.

Donations and Support

In October 2024 we received a donation of £500 from the Rotary Club of Royston

Also, in October we received £330 from a raffle and arranged by and held at a Hertfordshire Card Event. We also received an additional £350 in April at their Pokemon event.

In November we received a donation of £225.28 raised by the Letchworth, Baldock and Ashwell District Scouts who raised money through a collection at their annual St George's Day parade and service.

During December, we received the first of many donations raised by Devon Gardner along with the staff and customers of The Cock in Baldock from various fundraisers including pub quizzes and a sponsored "Brave the Shave". In total over the year, they have raised an amazing £2757.50. We also had an additional £1000 donation from the Independent Baldock Beer Festival Charitable Trust.

We received donations of £72.57 from a collection at Singthusiasm Hitchin's Christmas concert.

Also, during December, we held a Christmas prize draw with prizes generously donated by local businesses, our members, and Trustees. This year we raised £1,795 in ticket sales.

In January 2025 we received a donation of £300 from Puddleducks Day Nursery in Baldock which they raised at their Christmas Fair.

We also received the first donation from Hyperfocus Art Project which was set up by Paul Towns to raise awareness of ADHD and Neurodiversity through various art-based projects. Over the year we received donations of £138 from this project.

In March 2025 we held a fundraising event at Mecca Bingo in Stevenage. Donations from Mecca Bingo and our members who supported the event raised £197.40 for Angels.

In April we held an Easter prize draw with prizes of Easter Eggs generously donated by local businesses, our members and Trustees and raised £602 in ticket sales.

We also received a donation of £53.10 from Melbourn Village College which was raised at a Spring Concert.

In May 2025 Connie Codling ran the Battersea Half Marathon and raised £896 in sponsorship and gift aid for Angels.

Also, during May, one of our member's kindly grew a variety of plants which we were able to sell various Letchworth events raising £198.11.

In June 2025 Gregor Smith ran the Hitchin Half Marathon raising an impressive £1489 in sponsorship and gift aid for Angels.

We also received donations of £82, raised by students from John Henry Newman School during Autism Awareness week.

Also in June, we held another Mecca Bingo event this time raising £399 from Mecca Bingo and our supporters on the night.

Throughout the year we have also received regular income from the North Herts Community Lottery. This is a community lottery that has been set up and allows people to buy tickets in this weekly lottery and choose a charity to donate 50% of the ticket income to. In this financial year we received £4,537 in ticket income and donated prizes.

Over the year we have also been supported by many members making one-off and regular donations which we are very grateful for.

3.4 Remuneration of Trustees

All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration or other material benefits from their services to the Charity.

Out-of-pocket expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred by Trustees in promoting the purposes of the Charity are reimbursed at cost.

4. Reference and Administration Details

4.1 Charity Name & Registration

Name of the Charity: Angels Support Group Hitchin

Any other names by which the charity is known: **Angels Support Group** or **Angels**

Charity No: 1117059

Registered with HM Revenue & Customs Yes / **No**

4.2 Charity's Principal Address

Unit 19, The Letchworth Business Centre, Pixmore Avenue, Letchworth, HERTS, SG6 1JG

e-mail: info@angelssupportgroup.org.uk

website: www.angelssupportgroup.org.uk

4.3 Names of the Trustees Who Manage the Charity

<i>Name</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Resigned</i>	<i>Appointed by</i>
Clare Slater	Chair			Trustees/Members at AGM
Oluwakemi Adejare				Trustees/Members at AGM
Hilary Forrester	Secretary			Trustees/Members at AGM
Rowena Crabtree				Trustees/Members at AGM
Nicola Ager				Trustees/Members at AGM
Tammy Smith			10/03/2026	Trustees/Members at AGM
Helen Osment	Interim Treasurer			Trustees/Members at AGM
Mark Temperley		15/07/2024	30/03/2025	Trustees/Members at AGM
Suresh Banarse		15/07/2024	03/02/2025	Trustees/Members at AGM
Sarah Greig		15/07/2024	03/02/2025	Trustees/Members at AGM
Andrew Kyle Webster		04/11/2024		Trustees/Members at AGM

4.4 Names of Advisors & Senior Members of Staff

The charity employed the following senior staff members during the year:

Parent Support Manager: Leise Cooper

Specialist Support Practitioners: Penny Howarth & Judith Russell

Financial Manager: Raine Simcox

Meeting Supervisor and Specialist Support Practitioner: Kirsten Bennet

Administrator and Specialist Support Practitioner: Caroline Upcraft

Fundraising, Marketing and Administration Assistant: Bethan Desai

4.5 Bank

HSBC, 1 Market Place, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 1DR

Unity Trust, Four Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2JB

4.6 Independent Examiner

Philip M Jones FCA, 13 Walled Garden Close, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 3GN

5. Structure, Governance & Management

5.1 Type of Governing Document

Constitution adopted on the 19th January 2005. As amended 29th September 2015

5.2 Statutory Declaration

The Trustees confirm that they have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities the charity should undertake. For all the above activities there have been no identified harmful effects associated with providing the benefits. The charity does employ people to provide various services and so does provide private benefits to people other than the beneficiaries. These private benefits are all incidental as they all contribute directly towards achieving the charity's objectives.

5.3 Trustee Selection Methods

There must be at least three charity trustees.

In accordance with the Constitution, Trustees are appointed or re-appointed for a term of one year by a resolution passed at the AGM. New Trustees can be appointed in the interim by agreement of the existing Trustees. In appointing Trustees due consideration is given to ensuring that the Trustees have, between them, the skills and experience necessary to manage the charity effectively and in accordance with charity law.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf.

28th April 2026



Clare Slater (Chair)



Helen Osment (Treasurer)