




Trustees' annual report and accounts

(Directors' report and financial statements) **Year ended: 31st March 2009**



Accept difference. Not indifference.

Trustees' annual report and accounts

(Directors' report and financial statements)
Year ended: 31 March 2009

THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY

(A company limited by guarantee and a registered charity)

Other working names registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales

Autism UK

Action for Autism

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From the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

The last year has undoubtedly been a challenging one for the voluntary sector but I am pleased to report that we are perhaps in a better position to withstand the effects of the credit crunch than some. Prudent financial management by your Board of Trustees together with ensuring we keep our overheads as low as we can have meant our financial position remains sound. However, we know the environment will become tougher over the coming months and are taking steps to address this. There are three key strands to this: increased emphasis on marketing our services to local authorities and other purchasers; ensuring we always make the best use of all our resources; and stepping up our fundraising activity to support our charitable activities.

Despite the current difficult climate we have continued to make progress in a number of important areas. A number of major breakthroughs have been made on the political front. In England, in response to our lobbying activity, an autism advisor has been appointed to the Department of Health and work started on a strategy for supporting adults with autism spectrum disorders. While the NAS has been directly involved in the development of the strategy, we have also kept up lobbying pressure and worked with Cheryl Gillan MP to introduce a Private Members Bill on autism. At the time of writing, this has already encouraged the government to commit to even more action on autism, giving an unprecedented profile to autism in parliament, and may well lead to the first ever autism act of parliament. A groundbreaking achievement.

This progress in campaigning has not been at the expense of providing direct support. We continue to increase the number of people we help through our services, both those provided under contract to local authorities and those we fund through fundraising. For example, a massive 52,000 people contacted our Autism Helpline in the year under report,

highlighting the growing need for the support we provide. However, we struggle to meet the needs of all those who contact us and your continued support is essential if we are to make the difference we know we can to the lives of those living with autism.

Autism is much more common than many people realise; there are over half a million people in the UK with autism. It is only by working in partnership with you that we can hope to make sure that all people on the autism spectrum, and the many more families and carers affected by the condition, get the support they need.

This really is *your* autism charity.

Colin Barrow CBE
Chairman

16th July 2009

Annual report

1. Vision, mission and objectives

Everything we do at The National Autistic Society is guided by our overarching vision:

We want a world where autism¹ is understood and people with autism have the support they need to ensure that their rights are upheld and that they have the same opportunities as others in society.

To achieve this vision we champion the rights and interests of all people with autism and aim to provide individuals with autism and their families with help, support and services that they can access, trust and rely upon and that make a positive difference to their lives.

This mission, which reflects the public benefit that the charity provides, is further defined in four clear top-level objectives:

- › raise professional, political and public awareness and understanding of the needs of people with autism, their families and carers
- › deliver sustainable services, relevant to the needs of people with autism and their carers and to commissioners of services for people with autism
- › provide information and practical support to people with autism and their carers, either directly, in partnership with others, or through facilitating and supporting the work of other organisations
- › support research into the effective management of autism.

These objectives are underpinned by activities to raise the funds we need and activities to ensure all staff and volunteers share best practice and understand the work of the Society.

2. Activities, achievements and performance – the year in review and looking ahead

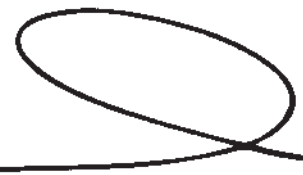
2.1 Raising professional, political and public awareness

Changing public attitudes and influencing national policy are critical if we are to improve the standards of support and care provided by others. We have steadily increased this area of activity over recent years, and this year we have made some great progress on our campaign to improve the lot of adults living with autism. We also continued to work to raise public awareness – something that has underpinned our success in lobbying.

Key highlights this year

- › Perhaps our biggest success was getting the Government in England to commit to the production of a strategy for addressing the needs of adults with autism. This followed on from a high-profile campaign, *I Exist*, run across all four nations. Our Chief Executive, Mark Lever, was asked to chair an external reference group to help guide the Department of Health's (DH) work on the strategy and a member of our policy team was seconded to the DH to support its production.
- › We also introduced a Private Members Bill in Parliament to underpin the strategy. This was taken forward by Cheryl Gillan MP who drew the first place in the ballot, which guaranteed the Bill would be debated in Parliament. The Bill subsequently made good progress and at the time of writing stands a good chance of becoming law. This would be an historic event with the first ever autism law in this country.

¹ Throughout this document we use the term 'autism' to describe all diagnoses on the autism spectrum, including classic or Kanner autism, Asperger syndrome and high-functioning autism.



- › The NAS is a UK-wide organisation and we have been lobbying hard in the devolved nations. We worked with Autism Cymru to secure a Wales Autism Plan and the NAS ensured that this plan included a focus on adults as well as children. We also launched our *I Exist* campaign in Northern Ireland and Scotland where we have been able to secure widespread media coverage and raise the profile of autism as a political issue.
 - › Awareness raising continued with a series of hard hitting adverts aimed at raising our public and political profile. The NAS has not invested in advertising on the scale of some charities and instead targeted decision makers and politically aware people to support our lobbying work. We have seen an increase in awareness of autism amongst this group and maintained similar overall public awareness levels to last year.
 - › This awareness-raising work has been underpinned by highly proactive media relations work. We now measure our media impact through Opportunities to See (OTS) – essentially the total circulation of the media in which we are covered. The average over last year was 42 million OTS a month – a very high level. If we had to buy this space for advertising this would equate to over £300,000 each month.
 - › A new area for us has been engaging with emerging forms of internet communications – or social networking. We now have an established presence on Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and Twitter. Our campaigns are increasingly engaging people online and we have both launched our own short films and encouraged others to do the same to help raise awareness.
 - › Improving the standards of support provided by those working with people with autism and their families has been a major feature of the last year. Our International Conference was attended by over 600 people and the evaluation showed that many learned a great deal. We have also produced new resources for professionals such as a guide for social care workers, user involvement resources and a guide to journalists interviewing people on the spectrum. Critically, as part of this work, we have continued to provide training in DISCO – a diagnostic tool – and through this enabled access to accurate diagnosis to even more people.
 - › A growing aspect of our work has been about involving our members and other stakeholders in our activities. The NAS is a member-led organisation: our members elect our Council who in turn elect our trustees. But we are clear that we need to achieve the widest involvement in our work that we can. We have advisory groups on our key policy areas, and we increasingly involve people living and working with autism in developing our communication messages.
 - › This involvement has also meant we are trying to support our local branches to become even more integral to the work we do. We were delighted that branches fully engaged in both the work around *think differently about autism* and our campaign to improve adult services, with 35 separate *I Exist* launches being delivered by local branches – something that has allowed us to develop strong links with local authorities.
 - › Last year we reported on the continued expansion of the Autism Accreditation scheme. This is run at arm's length from the NAS and accredits services that show good practice around supporting those with autism. This scheme has now grown to cover 350 services.
- The NAS has adopted a new strategic approach – one that will prioritise the role we play in supporting the autism community to work together to create a more autism-friendly world. A number of projects will be prioritised. Firstly, we will be relaunching our website following extensive work to understand how people want to interact with it. This will mean we have a more interactive website, more directly linked to our presence in social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter and with more opportunities

for people to tell us what they think of what we are providing. The new website will also, in future, support the delivery of our services such as DISCO and of our membership package. We will be developing more resources to support local campaigners and our local branches. We are also planning to strengthen involvement across the NAS – an organisation wide plan will be developed looking right across our services and communications to ensure we are giving those on the autism spectrum and their families the opportunity to help shape our work.

Measuring our performance in this area:

- › semi-prompted awareness of the NAS as a charity stands at 15% (16% in 2008)
- › our rolling monthly average of print media 'opportunities to see' is 42 million (2008 not available)
- › 9,380 days' training given to professionals (7,251 in 2008)
- › 86 diagnosticians trained in DISCO (92 in 2008).

2.2. Delivering sustainable services

2.2.1 Education

The Society was first set up in 1962 to provide education to children with autism who would otherwise have had no education. From starting as a group of parents sitting around a kitchen table we have grown to being the leading national autism charity providing education and related support to children and young people across six schools and in other settings.

- › Schools remain as central to the Society today as they were when we started out and over 400 students are being educated in our schools with a further 74 being provided with respite. We continue to invest in ensuring our schools are fit for purpose and we were delighted in the year under report to officially lay the first foundation block of the new accommodation at Broomhayes School.

- › Our support for children goes well beyond our own schools. We now provide out-of-school clubs, play groups and similar support to over 450 children.
- › We know that every child needs to have the right support for him or her as an individual and we have continued to look at new ways of making sure that a range of educational provision is available and that our expertise is there to support children in different settings. We have therefore continued to deliver outreach support from our schools, and currently support 25 pupils in this way. We have also provided training to a number of schools and a variety of other outreach support.
- › For many people even getting access to an appropriate school is a major struggle. Because of this, we were pleased to have been able to provide direct support to over 2,000 people through our Education Advice Line and Tribunal Support Scheme. Our Parent to Parent Line – providing essential support to parents – was also busy, receiving over 1,200 calls in the year.

2.2.2 Social and independent living support

For over 30 years we have provided residential homes and day services for adults, enabling them to live as full, enjoyable, meaningful and independent a life as possible. We continue to do that today, but we are also ensuring we take a truly person-centred approach by providing much more flexible support, and assistance in critical areas such as obtaining employment.

We continue to strive to improve the quality of our services through a number of initiatives. These include: developing – and training staff in the use of – an autism-specific assessment tool; reviewing our clinical and behavioural support; and developing our computer software to allow us to record and understand patterns of behaviour so that we can better prepare for and meet individual needs.



We continue to fill a crucial gap in the services available to adults on the autism spectrum and continue to look for new ways to ensure people can live more rewarding lives. This year we were able to provide direct support to even more adults with autism.

- › We provide residential support to 246 people across the UK. But, reflecting the shift towards supporting more people in the community, we now provide outreach support to 273 adults and a further 223 adults attend our day services. Our network of resource centres offer a wide-range of activities, support and information to adults with autism allowing them to access support without having to move from their local community.
- › We re-developed our Longford Court service in Neath, providing the opportunity for people with very complex needs to live in state-of-the-art individual flats within a safe communal environment.
- › We developed a new, local authority-commissioned service in Rawcliffe, near Goole in East Riding, providing residential and supported living for eight people, again in individual flats with some communal living areas.
- › Research we carried out for *I Exist* showed that what many adults wanted was more low-level support – something we have lobbied hard on. We are also pleased that we are able to support over 550 adults through a total of 49 social groups – one of the resources people told us they desperately need.
- › Following a serious incident involving a service user from our Hayes hospital, a wide-ranging set of management and governance changes have been introduced. The service continues to provide highly specialised support to those with Asperger syndrome and mental health needs, with individualised programmes of rehabilitation and risk management.
- › People with autism have a huge amount to offer society, including in the workplace, but during an

economic downturn they may face even bigger barriers to finding work. We continue to campaign on welfare reform, but also provide support through our employment services. This year we supported 525 people through these services.

- › A key element of getting adults into work is making sure that they have appropriate further education opportunities, and we were pleased to be able to expand the number of people we supported in further and higher education to 89.
- › We appointed a Self-Directed Support Coordinator to help us to properly respond to the Government's personalisation agenda and make sure that people with autism and their families are able to benefit from the use of individual budgets where appropriate.

Having reviewed our strategy we are now keen to really focus on some key priorities. Looking ahead we want to bring all of our services up to the level of our best services. We want to ensure we innovate and show the way to tackle emerging and unmet needs, and that all our services are sustainable. This means we will continue to invest in our schools and residential services to make sure they are modern and fit for purpose; we will be linking new service development to developments in research and what people are telling us is needed; and we will be starting new services only where we are sure there is a sound business model in place to keep it operating.

Measuring our performance in the area of delivering sustainable services:

Education

- › the Advocacy for Education service responded to 2,080 calls (2,039 in 2008)
- › we provided 443 school places for children with autism (452 in 2008)
- › we are directly supporting 25 children in mainstream schools (12 in 2008).

Social and independent living support

- › 273 people were supported to live in their own homes through supported living or outreach (285 in 2008)
- › 246 residential places were provided in NAS services (244 in 2008)
- › day service support was provided to 223 people not resident in NAS services (196 in 2008).

2.3 Providing information and practical support


One of the biggest challenges for people living with autism is accessing appropriate, accurate and high-quality information and practical advice. As the only UK-wide organisation providing the breadth of services and support we provide, we are uniquely placed to bring together wide-ranging autism expertise in one place and make that available in an accessible and understandable way. We are continuously striving to improve the way in which we provide this.

Key highlights this year

- › Our branch network continues to expand and we now have 91 branches. The key challenge is keeping branches going and active, and our expanded network of regional officers has begun to provide more direct support to branches, while centrally we are developing more resources for our branches to use.
- › We have maintained our membership this year at around 18,000 (including corporate members) and have started putting in place the infrastructure to recruit and support an expanded membership.
- › Recognising the support that families need we have been able to increase the number of people supported through our *help!* programmes to 3,902. Over 2,000 families were reached by the EarlyBird Programme in the year as well.

- › One of our services that reaches the most people is our Autism Helpline. This received over 52,000 calls during the year – yet another record for us, far in excess of previous years. This meant that a lot of people didn't get through first time when calling us and we could only actually help half of this number, but we continue to achieve a high satisfaction rate with those we do help.
- › We continue to improve how we provide information online, and have produced more information sheets and other resources. We have also merged our Helpline and information services to ensure people are getting through to the right service. By signposting callers with basic queries to the rich information available through our website and information sheets, the skilled information professionals in our Information Centre have been able to concentrate on the more complex calls. As a result we were pleased to see a continued drop in the total number of queries dealt with by our information team to around 7,100.

We plan to continue looking for new and innovative ways to expand access to our advice and support. The generous support from the Trafigura Foundation has allowed us to reach even more people and we will be investigating options such as online forums to help even more people get the support that they need. Membership is critical to us and, following investment in getting the support right, we will be putting more emphasis on recruiting and retaining members in 09/10, while recognising that many people will not necessarily wish to be members. We plan to continue stepping up the support provided to local branches and to develop relationships locally with other groups to see where we might work together to provide support.



Measuring our performance in this area of providing information and practical support:

- › our membership reached 18,440 (18,000 in 2008)
- › our Autism Helpline received 52,375 queries (45,272 in 2008)
- › 2,455 families attended the EarlyBird programmes (1,707 in 2008)
- › over 3,900 families were supported by the *help!* and *help!2* programmes (over 3,000 in 2008)
- › 7,100 queries were dealt with by our information service (8,600 in 2008).

2.4 Supporting research

As the largest provider of autism services outside local government, we have an important role to play in increasing understanding of autism. We recognise that research is vital in making this happen and we work closely with Research Autism, a charity we helped establish, to provide information on interventions. We also work with others to develop and deliver research projects where our expertise has something to contribute.

Key highlights this year

- › We have invested in strengthening our commitment to best practice by appointing a new ‘action research leader’ to help evaluate our services, develop a research strategy which informs service development and link services research to the wider policy environment. Alongside this post we have introduced a new social policy post to inform our campaigns and to help ensure that the research linked to our services that we do has a social policy input.
- › We have developed a clear set of processes around approving and developing research proposals across the NAS, including how we handle ethical approval.

- › In recognition of the ageing population of people with autism, we are looking at the needs of adults with autism as they grow older: how to make sure that our services are able to support them; and how the Society can better respond to older people with autism living in the community.
- › Members of staff have made a number of research-based presentations in the UK and abroad.

Looking ahead we expect that future campaigns will have a far stronger research base upon which to build, that more of our new services will be evaluated providing the vital evidence we need to encourage others to offer similar support, and that the link between new service development and the wider policy environment will be stronger.

3. Financial review

3.1 Results

Total income rose by 3.6% to £84.5m (£81.6m in 2008) while total expenditure rose 7.6% to £86.0m (£79.9m in 2008).

Fee income mainly from statutory bodies for delivery of services continues to account for the majority of overall income – some £74.0m (£69.7m in 2008) or 88% (85%) of total incoming resources. Unreasonable pressure against annual fee uplifts by local authorities continues to be a major challenge for the Society, as it is for the sector as a whole. Once again the Society managed to negotiate adequate fees but in some cases only after many months of negotiation and again, in a few cases, having to resort to legal proceedings.

Combined voluntary income, activities income and investment income fell 13% to £8.2m (£9.4m in 2008) as a result of the overall economic climate.

Expenditure on charitable activities rose 7.5% to £83.1m (£77.3m in 2008). Expenditure increased in each of the activity categories at section 2 above.

£3.4m was spent on fixed assets (£1.9m in 2008). Additionally, funds have been designated at the year-end to allow for capital commitments. As a result the general fund decreased by £2.8m (decreased by £1.5m in 2008). The general fund is held to provide for the identified risk reserve, for the cost of essential modernisation of our existing services, and for developing new local services.

The Society continues to constrain its investment policy to short-term cash deposits because the available funds arise mainly from fees in advance, from restricted and designated funds linked to current projects, from general funds to modernise existing services, and from a modest risk reserve that might be required at any time (see 3.5 – Investment policy). The banking crisis in the autumn of 2008 meant interest received on cash deposits fell 13% over the year.

The FRS 17 notional negative pension reserve (the theoretical funding deficit shown as a negative reserve on the balance sheet) increased to £9.2m (after a fall to £4.0m in 2008) as a result of the external economic crisis. This negative reserve is not an immediate liability, but one that is required to be managed over the lifetime of the schemes. Increased employer contribution rates have now been fully phased in arising from the externally managed triennial actuarial review in 2007 and it is anticipated that there will be a further extraordinary increase at the next review. The trustees do not however consider it is necessary to make any additional payments other than as shown in Note 21.

3.2 Fundraising

Fundraising proved to be very challenging during the year. Voluntary income and activities for generating funds dropped to £7.2m gross (£8.2m in 2008).

We would like to thank all those charitable trusts and foundations, companies and individuals who have helped to raise hundreds of thousands of

pounds either directly through cash donations or indirectly by taking part in fundraising activities. Every pound counts and without their ongoing support and effort the Society would not be able to continue its important work.

Major receipts from organisations included:

- > £506,069 from Trafigura Ltd for Helpline Sponsorship. The first year of a three year award of £1,569,062
- > £153,833 from the Big Lottery Fund for the Q Chat research project. The final year of a three year grant of £461,420
- > £112,268 from the Big Lottery Fund for development work in Northern Ireland. Part of a three year grant of £345,114
- > £97,200 from the Big Lottery Fund for *help!2* (training programmes for parents). Part of a three year grant of £356,691
- > £49,845 from the Big Lottery Fund for Out of School clubs in the South West. Part of a three year grant of £141,884
- > £49,039 from the Big Lottery Young People's Fund for youth groups in Surrey. The second year of a three year grant of £149,320
- > £48,922 from the Big Lottery Young People's Fund for youth groups in Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire. The second year of a two year grant of £100,704
- > £23,178 from the Big Lottery Fund for the development team in the North of Scotland. Part of a three year grant of £272,371
- > £156,530 from the Bankers Benevolent Fund for the Investing in Brighter Futures partnership, supporting families in the banking industry affected by autism
- > £63,749 from The Three Guineas Trust for a Person Centred Planning project. The final part of a three year grant of £185,732

- > £46,144 from The Three Guineas Trust for a Welfare Rights Officer. The second year of a two year grant of £93,944
- > £50,000 from The City Bridge Trust to run *help!* programmes across London. The first year of a three year grant of £150,000
- > £50,000 from The Freemasons' Grand Charity towards our Advocacy for Education Service
- > £48,953 from LEGO UK and their staff and customers to refurbish the playground at the NAS Radlett Lodge School
- > £47,500 from Hesley Group to sponsor the International Conference and Autism Services Directory
- > £40,000 from Goldman Sachs for the Transitions graduate project. The first year of a three year grant (Oct 2007 – Sept 2010) totalling around £123,000
- > £34,061 from The Waterloo Foundation towards *help!* programmes in Wales. The first year of a two year grant of £68,122
- > £30,000 from The Toy Trust to fund Saturday clubs for children with autism in our three London resource centres. The second year of a three year grant of £90,000
- > £25,000 from The Co-operative Bank for Keeping Safe
- > £24,319 from Barclays, being the proceeds from the sale of Thomas & Friends merchandise
- > £15,000 from Priory Education Services to sponsor the Autism Services Directory
- > £12,501 from the Capita Trust to raise awareness and provide training and resources for carers in the Barnet area
- > £10,000 from the Financial Services Authority to train NAS Autism Helpline advisors in financial issues related to autism and to pilot the Autism Helpline text messaging service

- > £10,000 from The Gannochy Trust for social groups in Scotland
- > £7,000 from the Red Hill Charitable Trust towards a new quiet room at Sybil Elgar School.

We also received a number of grants from statutory bodies including:

- > £62,036 from the Department of Health for the "Advocacy Project for Adults with Autism". The first year of a three year grant totalling £191,448
- > £50,549 from the Department of Health for the "Brighter Horizons" project, to enable unemployed people with autism to prepare for employment and undertake extended voluntary work placements. The second year of a three year grant totalling £156,443
- > £320,000 from the Department for Children, Schools and Families to support Autism Education Trust. Second year funding with further funding agreed for 2009-10. The Society manages the AET on behalf of a coalition of autism partners
- > £66,400 from the Department for Children, Schools and Families for *help!* one day programmes. The second year of a three year grant of £199,252
- > £160,282 from the Parenting Fund for family support workers in Bristol, Croydon, Greenwich and Southwark
- > £101,209 from the European Commission for Research for work into helping autism diagnosed young people navigate and develop socially. The first year of a three year grant of €370,884
- > £52,000 from the National Assembly for Wales for development work in Wales. The first year of a three year grant of £159,000.

We would also like to thank the following organisations for their generous support by way of gifts in kind or direct support to our beneficiaries:

- › law firms Clifford Chance, Addleshaw Goddard and Harper MacLeod for the continuing pro bono support given to parents in support of our Advocacy for Education service
- › law firm S J Berwin for its pro bono support with our campaigning work, and this year in particular the drafting of the Autism Bill
- › HIT Entertainment for continuing to support us by granting a licence to use Thomas & Friends™ on our merchandise
- › LEGO UK for donations of LEGO products to NAS services.

There were also a large number of individual donors, some of whom have made very significant personal gifts (but wished to remain anonymous), all of which are very much appreciated.

Finally, we would like to thank all those local authorities around the country that are helping us to improve services for individuals with autism and their families by funding specific projects within their communities or by ensuring teams are licensed in their area to provide the NAS EarlyBird programme.

3.3 Risk management

The Board of Trustees fully recognises its responsibility for the management of risk, and there are standing Committees of the Board of Trustees (the Resources Committee and the Quality & Standards Committee) charged with identifying, assessing and minimising the major risks (based on likelihood of occurrence and potential impact) to which the charity is exposed. These Committees involve trustees, the Chief Executive, the Company Secretary/in-house Legal Adviser, other senior managers (including the Internal Auditor and the Quality Assurance, Environmental, Safety and Health Manager) and the Responsible Individuals (under the Care Standards Act and the Private and Voluntary Healthcare Regulations).


During the year the Committees have continued to maintain a close overview of management's implementation of departmental and inter-departmental action plans to mitigate the risks considered to have high levels of both likelihood and impact. The Board of Trustees as a body has undertaken an annual review of the Risk Register and is able to confirm that the major risks to which the charity is exposed continue to be properly identified, reviewed and evaluated, and that appropriate systems continue to be established and maintained in order to mitigate and manage those risks.

The Board considers that the major risks facing the Society are: maintaining and growing voluntary income; continuing to ensure that government bodies pay appropriate fees for contracted services; keeping vacancies in its schools and adult services to a manageable level; and ensuring that the Society does nothing that could damage its reputation.

3.4 Reserves policy

Reserves are defined in SORP 2005 (the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities) as that part of a charity's income funds that is freely available. Reserves do not, as defined, include restricted funds or any part of unrestricted funds not readily available for spending, specifically income funds which could only be realised by disposing of fixed assets held for charity use. Unrestricted funds earmarked or designated for essential future spending also reduce the amount of money readily available.

In terms of establishing a risk reserve, the work of the charity can be split into activities for which fees are charged at a level that covers revenue costs in full (principally schools and adult care services operated by the charity), and those activities which rely in whole or in part on grant or other voluntary funding. The fee based business is by far the largest part of the NAS. This business is not without risk, as indicated in 3.3 above, but is well managed and its specific exposure to uninsured financial risks is relatively low in value compared with its total income. Whilst one



or two individual services failed to meet their budgets in the year under report, overall costs relating to schools and adult services were covered by the fees paid by local authorities.

There is a greater risk within the non-contract, generally non-fee earning part of the charity. These activities are funded principally by grants and donations, together with rent from properties owned and occupied by the charity for the purposes of its fee based services, and also interest on cash deposits. Total budgeted costs for non-contract services during FY 09/10 are projected to be around £9m (£9m in the year under report). These expenses are funded from a wide array of sources and conceivably only a relatively small proportion would fail at or near the same time. The Board continues to believe that a prudent provision is to allow for a 25% funding drop over two years, necessitating a reserve of £4.5m as in the previous year.

Additionally, funds are needed for the modernisation of existing services and for the capital and start-up costs of new service projects, as well as to provide underwriting in case of significant unbudgeted expenditure on those new service projects. The size of this growth reserve depends on the scale of capital investment made and planned. This flexible growth reserve currently stands at £3.8m, and is depleted by ongoing expenditure on growth, but replenished by any annual surpluses. The charity's growth plans looking forward indicate a target fund of £0m to £6m, subject to ongoing review of projects and their associated risks.

The Board recognises that the holding of reserves at an appropriate level also allows the charity to be seen by purchasers, donors, beneficiaries, employees and other supporters as financially viable, and planning for the long term. The Board believes the sums noted above sufficiently satisfy the need for the charity to provide for long-term stability.

The Board takes the view after proper reflection that the reserve of £4.5 million to cover potential loss of grant and voluntary income should continue to be held in cash. The Board does not consider however that a cash reserve is necessary, or even appropriate, in respect of the fee based business. The charity typically generates a £3m+ positive cash flow from its fee-based activities and holds a significant unmortgaged property portfolio. In the event of a failure of a major fee based service, it is considered that the positive cash flow would allow time for appropriate borrowings to be made to fund any shortfall, even in the current difficult external economic situation. The Board recognises that fixed assets are not included in the definition of reserves under the charities' SORP but, in the particular circumstances of the NAS, believes that the prime duties of safeguarding the assets of the charity, and expending its resources on its charitable objects as soon as reasonably possible, are best (and prudently) balanced by not holding a cash reserve to cover a perceived, but extremely unlikely, uninsured catastrophic loss of a school or adult service.

Trustees review reserve levels as part of the monthly management accounts, as well as reviewing them annually as part of the strategic planning process. Currently General Fund reserves stand at £8.3m (£11.1m in 2008), the planned range being £4.5m to £10.5m.

3.5 Investment policy

The Society has power to invest moneys not immediately required for its general purposes in or upon such investments as may be thought fit. Trustees' investment objectives continue to be to:

- › generate income to further the objects of the charity
- › safeguard the assets and business continuity of the charity
- › comply with the conditions attached to restricted funds
- › ensure working capital and restricted reserves are kept in readily available cash

- › meet the requirements of the reserves policy and the strategic plan

whilst ensuring that the trustees fulfil their fiduciary responsibilities concerning investments without exceeding their powers of investment.

As mentioned earlier, it continues to be the trustees' policy to maintain diversified cash deposits rather than to invest in stocks and shares, property or any other investment product. This policy will continue to be kept under regular review.

3.6 Fundraising – ethical considerations

To date this has not proved to be an issue but as a matter of policy the charity will not accept donations, grants or other funding, or otherwise work with an organisation whose activities are considered illegal or whose business activities are carried out in direct contravention of the charity's charitable objects.

4. Structure, governance and management

4.1 Constitutional structure

The National Autistic Society, first registered as a charity in 1962, was incorporated in 1975 as a company limited by guarantee, and is registered as such in England under No.1205298 and as a charity in England and Wales under CR269425 and in Scotland under SC039427. It also operates in Northern Ireland and will register as a charity there when it is able to do so. This is likely to be in 2010. It has Working Names of *Autism UK* and *Action for Autism* registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

The services provided by the charity in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are managed from local offices operating under the working names of NAS Scotland, NAS Cymru, and NAS Northern Ireland. Details are on the back cover of this report.

4.2 Charitable objects & public benefit

The Society is established for the public benefit by way of the education, treatment, welfare and care of people with autism and related conditions. Under the law of Scotland, the Society is recognised as being established for the public benefit under the following purposes:

- › advancement of education
- › advancement of health
- › relief of those in need through age, ill-health, or disability.

In deciding what activities the charity is to undertake in England and Wales, the trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance produced by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and that guidance underpins the charity's activities across the UK.

The significant activities undertaken in order to carry out the aims of the charity for the public benefit, and the charity's achievements measured by reference to its aims and objectives as set by the trustees, are detailed in Section 2 of this report.

A summary of the activities that the charity provides that are considered to be for the public benefit is as follows:

- › six specialist day and residential schools (with outreach) for children with autism and related conditions
- › care of adults on the autism spectrum through a mix of registered care homes, supported living, outreach and day services
- › an independent hospital for individuals with autism who are liable to being sectioned under the Mental Health Act
- › a diagnosis and assessment centre, which also provides diagnostic training

- > an increasing number of resource centres across the UK providing information and support to individuals with autism and their carers
- > family support programmes that indirectly benefit those with autism in the family
- > social groups facilitating individuals with autism to access their communities
- > early intervention and post-diagnosis support programmes
- > a national Autism Helpline
- > Advocacy for Education services
- > supported employment schemes
- > information by way of the largest autism website in the UK and by other means
- > the support of research into interventions (not causation)
- > the campaigning and lobbying of decision-makers and the raising of awareness of the difficulties faced by those affected by autism.

These activities are for the benefit of individuals with autism, either directly or indirectly by way of supporting the parents, carers or advocates of individuals with autism.

The opportunity to benefit is not restricted by way of any geographical constraint other than by way of the charity's capacity to provide the activity or service within the particular geographical location; nor by way of gender, although more beneficiaries are, due to the prevalence characteristics of autism, male rather than female. The services provided by the charity in its educational and care facilities are expensive and would be outside the funding capacity of all but a very few families. Those fees are almost invariably fully paid, directly or indirectly, by the State.

4.3 Honorary offices

The charity benefits from a Royal Patron, a President, and ten Vice-Presidents whose details are shown on page 18. Vice-Presidents are individuals who have served and continue voluntarily to serve the charity in a range of important ways. The valuable and valued work of our Royal Patron and of our President is reported on later in this report (see 4.12).

4.4 Related companies

As of 31 March 2009, the charity had nine wholly owned subsidiary companies, namely Autistic Cards Limited (No.888690), NAS Services Limited (No.2757062), Autism UK Limited (No.3133553), The NAS Network Limited (No.3270103), Autism North West Limited (No.3331914), Autism Northern Ireland Limited (No.3775060), Autism Scotland Limited (No.3775069), Autism Wales Limited (No.3775081) and Ideas on Autism Limited (No.3902836). These are further described in the Notes to the Accounts.

4.5 The Membership

The charity is a membership organisation. On 31 March 2009 there were 17,146 voting members (17,093 on 31 March 2008) on the Register of Members.

Our membership encompasses people on the spectrum, parents and carers and professionals working with autism. The majority of our members are people on the spectrum or parents and carers, but we hope to increase our professional membership further to enable us to help improve the standard of support they provide to people living with autism. The Society seeks to develop the expertise and confidence of members who have autism so that they may contribute successfully to the work of the Society at all levels. There are currently seven councillors (one of whom is also a trustee) who have a formal diagnosis of autism, but there is a wide range of other ways in which suitable individuals with autism are able to contribute to the future work and success of the charity.

Members who want to be active in a locality may join (or establish) a branch, operating under the name and charity number of the parent body. There are currently 91 branches (79 in 2008) UK-wide.

4.6 The Council

The membership elects a Council numbering 42 voting councillors, who normally hold office for a term of three years, but who may stand again for re-election. There are two categories of voting councillor: National (14 councillors) and Regional (28 councillors). Each of the 12 geographic regions into which the UK is split for electoral purposes elects two or three regional councillors. National councillors are elected by the whole membership, including those who live overseas. Ballots are conducted by a system of proportional representation under the supervision of Electoral Reform Services Limited.

The prime role of the Council is to act as the electoral college for the Board of Trustees (the Board of Directors under Company law). Additionally, councillors are expected to act as a sounding board for the trustees on major issues and to engage with regional management and branches, discussing in detail regional activity. Councillors are also available to be called upon at the request of the trustees to serve on Committees and Working Parties. For these reasons, the constitution requires councillors to disclose all matters that might disqualify them from acting as a trustee under law.

4.7 The Board of Trustees

The Council elects the charitable trustees of up to 12 members of the Society, who similarly hold office for a term of three years, and who again may stand for re-election.


Of those 12 trustees, eight are required to be councillors, but the Board of Trustees may nominate for the Council's election as trustees up to four members of the Society who are not councillors. This provides access to specific expertise

that may not otherwise be available. There are currently two such trustees. In this way a beneficial mix of experience and expertise is maintained. Current trustees cover a wide range of experiences, including commercial business, secondary and further education, special needs teaching, accountancy, organisational and financial management, investment management, law, and, of course, autism and parental care of individuals with autism. One trustee is an individual who has a diagnosis of autism.

The trustees elect from their number, the Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen, and the Treasurer. The other constitutional officer is the Company Secretary, who is appointed by the Board of Trustees and is salaried. He is not a trustee and has no management responsibilities. The Board of Trustees also appoints the Chief Executive, who is accountable to the trustees for the day-to-day management of the charity, and for implementing strategic policy approved by the trustees. He is similarly salaried and not a trustee.

No trustee has any financial interest in the charity or in its subsidiary companies. Trustees (and some staff) are covered by Directors and Officers insurance, whilst certain staff and volunteers involved in the provision of advice and accreditation are covered by Professional Indemnity insurance. No trustee receives any remuneration for his or her services, but reimbursement of reasonable and necessary expenses is made available; details are provided in the attached audited accounts.

Trustees meet formally as a body approximately every three months, but all trustees are additionally involved in one or more standing Board committees, which meet three or four times a year (see 4.8 *Decision making* below). Induction is both general and specific. All new trustees receive a comprehensive Trustees' manual, and pursue an induction programme, whilst part of each formal Board meeting is generally set aside for development purposes. Additionally, individual trustees may undertake



specific training (internal or external) in a particular aspect of trusteeship, and there is a mentoring process for new trustees. Trustees also attend the meetings of the Council (irrespective of whether or not they are councillors) and General Meetings of Members (all trustees must be subscribing members of the charity).

All trustees submit to a Criminal Records Bureau check at the enhanced level on being elected and re-elected.

The details of the trustees, Chief Executive and those who have acted in an advisory or professional role over the year in question follow at pages 18 and 19.

4.8 Decision making

Having approved the annual budget (reflecting the agreed strategic plan), the Board of Trustees delegates policy implementation and day-to-day management to the Chief Executive, outcomes being monitored through a governance committee structure of three committees of trustees – Quality & Standards, Strategic Development, and Resources – which all act under main Board delegated terms of reference, and which all report regularly to the main Board on their proceedings. There is also a Governance Coordination Committee, consisting of the Chairman and the Chairs of the three principal Committees, the prime duties of which are to act as a Remuneration Committee (in respect of staff, particularly senior staff, salaries and performance appraisal) and as a Nomination Committee (in respect of trustee and senior staff appointments). The Resources Committee currently acts as the Audit Committee but the plan is to separate the audit function from the finance function as soon as an appropriately qualified person is found to undertake the role of Chairman of such an Audit Committee.

4.9 Management of the charity

The activities of the charity are managed by the Chief Executive, supported by a Strategic Management Group of three Divisional Directors,

who lead the three functional activities – Services, Communications, and Resources.

Other senior managers who report direct to the Chief Executive are the Director of Autism Accreditation (a quality assurance programme available to all providers of autism-specific services throughout the voluntary, private and public sectors), the two Responsible Individuals (the statutory delegates of the trustees for standards in care facilities registered under the Care Standards Act 2000 and associated legislation), the Internal Auditor and the Quality, Environmental, Safety, & Health Manager, the latter four of whom also have direct access to the Board of Trustees where appropriate.

4.10 Staff and volunteers

The average number of staff employed during the year was 2,983 (2,782 in 2008). Senior staff remuneration is shown in the accounts. As already mentioned, the Governance Coordination Committee of the Board of Trustees is tasked with developing policy on the remuneration of senior staff and for determining their individual reward packages using a range of external benchmarks. It also maintains an overview of reward strategy across the charity.

The trustees again take great pleasure and pride in paying tribute to the dedication of the charity's staff, in whose professionalism and expertise the charity continues to invest, to the advantage of the many thousands of children and adults who benefit from the wide range of services the charity provides, or from the assistance it provides to others.

The trustees also pay tribute to the increasing number of supporters who undertake a wide range of voluntary work on behalf of the Society, for example by supporting the charity's Befriender and Parent to Parent schemes, the Advocacy for Education Service, in social groups and out-of-school clubs, in play schemes, and in many activities undertaken by branches throughout the UK. Without the dedication of these volunteers, many of whom have added

pressures on their personal lives as a consequence of having autism themselves or having a family member with autism, it would not be possible to provide these important services.

4.11 Diversity

As part of its commitment to providing quality services, the charity continues to strive to ensure equal opportunities and diversity in all aspects of employment and service delivery. This includes seeking to employ suitably qualified people with disabilities, in particular individuals with autism, wherever this does not conflict with caring for people with autism. Staff consultative processes exist and continue to be further developed.

The charity also continues to encourage the involvement of individuals with autism in the governance of the charity.

4.12 Patron and President

We are proud and honoured to have HRH The Countess of Wessex as our Royal Patron. The Countess lends her support in a variety of ways: visiting services to meet service users and staff; hosting events to encourage involvement in the Society; and speaking on our behalf to a range of audiences. The Countess is extremely well informed about autism and its effect on family life and her ongoing support of the Society is greatly appreciated.

Our President, Jane Asher, has continued to undertake a wide range of ambassadorial, fundraising and other duties for the NAS and also for autism generally. Her enthusiasm and commitment have been invaluable and she continues to engage public audiences and stakeholders alike on behalf of the organisation. Notable highlights this year include: Stars Shine for Autism, where she hosted a fundraising dinner which was addressed by our Patron; and, our creativity competition exhibition (part of the *I Exist* campaign) where she spoke alongside Minister Phil Hope MP.

4.13 Key volunteers, staff and advisers

Patron:

Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex

President:

Jane Asher

Vice Presidents:

Helen Green Allison, MBE

Dr Gillian Baird, MA, MB, BChir, FRCP, DCH

Professor Simon Baron-Cohen

Angela Browning, MP

Alan Cheyney, OBE

Professor Patricia Howlin

Professor Rita Jordan, OBE

Judy Lusty

Paul Shattock, OBE

Lorna Wing, OBE, MD, FRCPsych

Trustees:

Larry Arnold

(National Councillor)

Colin Barrow, CBE

(Regional Councillor, Greater London and Chairman)

Peter Borg-Neal

(Regional Councillor, East Anglia)

Virginia Bovell, OBE

(National Councillor)

Janet Corcoran

(Regional Councillor, East Midlands)

John Dickinson

(Regional Councillor, North West)

Ian Fairweather

(Regional Councillor, Scotland)

Alison Halsey

(Non-Councillor trustee and Honorary Treasurer)

John Kedar

(Regional Councillor, Mid Counties)

Gordon Maxwell

(Non-Councillor trustee and Vice Chairman)

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the group at the end of the year and of the group's net income or expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- > select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- > make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- > state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- > prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that proper accounting records are kept that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and the group and that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements

may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The following statements have been affirmed by each of the Trustees of the company:

- > so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information (that is, information needed by the company's auditors in connection with preparing their report) of which the company's auditors are unaware
- > each Trustee has taken all the steps that he/she ought to have taken as a Trustee in order to make himself/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of The National Autistic Society

We have audited the group and parent company financial statements of The National Autistic Society for the year ended 31 March 2009 set out in pages 22 to 40. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 235 of the Companies Act 1985 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and auditors

The trustees' (who are also the directors of The National Autistic Society for the purpose of company law) responsibilities for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) are set out in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (United Kingdom and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and comply with the requirements of regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. We also report to you if in our opinion the information given in the Trustees' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

In addition we report to you if, in our opinion, the charitable company has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit or if information specified by law regarding trustees' remuneration and other transactions with the charity is not disclosed.

We read other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. The other information comprises only the Chairman's Statement and the Trustees' Report. We consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. Our responsibilities do not extend to other information.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (United Kingdom

and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- › the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and of the group as at 31 March 2009 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including the group's income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- › the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985 and comply with the requirements of regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006; and
- › the information given in the Trustees' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Horwath Clark Whitehill LLP

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
30th July 2009

St Bride's House
10 Salisbury Square
London EC4Y 8EH

Consolidated statement of financial activities (incorporating income and expenditure account)

Year ended 31st March 2009

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2009 £'000	Restricted Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2008 £'000
Incoming resources					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	2	2,596	4,215	6,811	7,879
Activities for generating funds	3	340	–	340	311
Investment income		1,070	10	1,080	1,244
		4,006	4,225	8,231	9,434
Incoming resources from charitable activities					
Raising professional, political and public awareness		1,315	–	1,315	1,489
Delivering sustainable services:					
Education		36,773	–	36,773	35,304
Social and independent living support		37,200	–	37,200	34,404
Providing information and practical support		977	–	977	587
Supporting research		26	–	26	32
		76,291	–	76,291	71,816
Other incoming resources		–	–	–	337
Total incoming resources		80,297	4,225	84,522	81,587
Resources expended					
Costs of generating funds					
Voluntary income		2,325	101	2,426	1,936
Activities for generating funds	3	104	–	104	195
Investment income		40	–	40	40
		2,469	101	2,570	2,171
Charitable activities					
Raising professional, political and public awareness		3,028	6	3,034	2,916
Delivering sustainable services:					
Education		33,916	490	34,406	32,680
Social and independent living support		36,565	1,343	37,908	34,910
Providing information and practical support		5,182	2,174	7,356	6,464
Supporting research		207	171	378	376
		78,898	4,184	83,082	77,346
Governance	4	325	–	325	348
Total resources expended	5	81,692	4,285	85,977	79,865
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before other recognised gains and losses	6	(1,395)	(60)	(1,455)	1,722
Other recognised gains and losses					
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	21	(5,038)	–	(5,038)	2,000
Net movement in Funds		(6,433)	(60)	(6,493)	3,722
Reconciliation of funds					
Funds brought forward	14-15	24,876	4,274	29,150	25,428
Fund balances carried forward	14-15	18,443	4,214	22,657	29,150

The above results are derived from continuing activities. All gains and losses recognised in the year are included above. The deficit for the year, for Companies Act purposes, comprises the net outgoing resources for the year of (£1.46m), (2008: £1.72m).

The notes on pages 25-40 form part of these financial statements.

Balance sheets as at 31st March 2009

	Notes	Group		Charity	
		2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	7	19,328	16,780	19,328	16,780
Investments in subsidiaries	8	–	–	–	–
		19,328	16,780	19,328	16,780
Current assets					
Stocks		193	176	192	176
Debtors	10	24,834	27,010	5,695	6,488
Cash deposits		13,312	17,988	13,312	17,988
Cash at bank and in hand		300	493	285	373
		38,639	45,667	19,484	25,025
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	25,569	28,675	6,414	8,033
Net current assets		13,070	16,992	13,070	16,992
Total assets less current liabilities					
		32,398	33,772	32,398	33,772
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	12-13	566	569	566	569
Net assets excluding pension liabilities		31,832	33,203	31,832	33,203
Defined benefit pension scheme liabilities	21	(9,175)	(4,053)	(9,175)	(4,053)
Net assets including pension liabilities		22,657	29,150	22,657	29,150
Funds					
Restricted funds	14	4,214	4,274	4,214	4,274
Unrestricted funds:	15				
Designated funds – fixed assets		17,000	14,617	17,000	14,617
Designated funds – other		2,282	3,196	2,282	3,196
General fund		8,336	11,116	8,336	11,116
Unrestricted funds excluding pension liability		27,618	28,929	27,618	28,929
Pension reserve	15	(9,175)	(4,053)	(9,175)	(4,053)
Unrestricted funds including pension liability		18,443	24,876	18,443	24,876
Total Funds	16	22,657	29,150	22,657	29,150

The notes on pages 25-40 form part of these financial statements

Approved by the Trustees on 16th July 2009, signed and authorised for issue on their behalf

C Barrow CBE (Chairman)

Consolidated cashflow statement

Year ended 31st March 2009

	Notes	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities	1	(2,700)	3,153
Returns on investment and servicing of finance	2	1,197	1,202
Capital expenditure and financial investment	3	(3,363)	(1,461)
Net cash (outflow)/inflow before use of liquid resources		(4,866)	2,894
Management of liquid resources and financing	4	(3)	(2)
(Decrease)/Increase in cash in the year		(4,869)	2,892
Net cash resources at 1st April		18,481	15,589
Net cash resources at 31st March		13,612	18,481
(Decrease)/Increase in cash in the year		(4,869)	2,892
1. Reconciliation of net (outgoing)/incoming resources to net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities		2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources		(1,455)	1,722
Interest receivable		(1,080)	(1,244)
Depreciation		817	682
Surplus on sale of tangible fixed assets		(2)	(337)
Increase in stock		(17)	(7)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors (excl. interest receivable)		2,058	(1,508)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors		(3,021)	3,845
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities		(2,700)	3,153
2. Returns on investment and servicing of finance		2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Opening debtor balance		136	94
Interest income on cash deposits		1,080	1,244
Closing debtor		(19)	(136)
Net cash inflow from returns on investments and servicing of finance		1,197	1,202
3. Capital expenditure and financial investment		2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		(3,365)	(1,922)
Receipts from sale of tangible fixed assets		2	461
Net cash (outflow) from capital transactions		(3,363)	(1,461)
4. Management of liquid resources and financing		2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Repayment of interest free loan		(3)	(2)
Net cash (outflow) from management of liquid resources and financing		(3)	(2)



Notes Forming Part of the Financial Statements

1. Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in March 2005, the Charities Act 1993, the Companies Act 1985 and applicable accounting standards. The particular accounting policies adopted by the trustees are described below.

Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Basis of consolidation

The Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) and balance sheet consolidate the financial statements of the charity and its subsidiary undertakings. The results of the subsidiaries are consolidated on a line by line basis.

The charity has availed itself of Paragraph 3(3) of Schedule 4 of the Companies Act and adapted the Companies Act formats to reflect the special nature of the charity's activities. No separate SOFA has been presented for the charity alone as permitted by Section 230 of the Companies Act 1985 and Paragraph 397 of the SORP.

Incoming resources

All income is accounted for on an accruals basis. It is recognised in the SOFA when the conditions for receipt have been met, there is reasonable assurance of receipt and the value can be measured with sufficient reliability. The following accounting policies are applied to specific income streams:

Donations

Voluntary contributions

Donations and all other receipts from fundraising are reported gross and the related fundraising costs are reported in costs of generating funds.

Legacies

Legacies are accounted for when it is reasonably certain that they will be received, the value can be measured with sufficient reliability and any conditions associated with payment have been fulfilled.

Gifts in kind

Gifts in kind are recognised as incoming resources based on a reasonable estimate of the gross value to the charity. This is usually an estimate of the price that would have to be paid on the open market for an equivalent item. An equivalent amount is included as expenditure under the appropriate heading in the SOFA.

Grants receivable

Grants receivable for revenue expenditure
Grants are recognised in the SOFA when the conditions for receipt have been met. Where a grant is performance related, i.e linked to specific volumes of output, the grant income will be recognised to the extent that the service has been provided. Grants without preconditions are recognised immediately in the SOFA.

Grants receivable for capital expenditure
Grants in respect of capital expenditure are recognised in the SOFA when receivable and not deferred. Once the capital asset is acquired, the use of the asset is either restricted or unrestricted. Unrestricted capital assets are designated to a fixed asset fund and the value is depreciated annually. Where the restriction remains, the asset is allocated to a restricted fund and shown as restricted capital reserves. The reserves are then reduced each year by the amount of the annual depreciation charge to the asset.

Contract income

Income from the provision of services under contract is recognised in the SOFA to the extent that the services have been provided. Where such income is invoiced or received in advance it is included in creditors as fees invoiced in advance and deferred income.

Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. This includes pension contributions, depreciation and surplus on disposals, direct costs of the charitable activities together with support costs that enable these activities to be undertaken. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on apportionment bases.

Costs of generating funds

The costs of generating funds include the costs of generating voluntary income and the costs of other activities for generating funds.

Charitable activities

The costs of charitable activities comprise all the resources applied by the charity in undertaking its work to meet its charitable objects as opposed to the costs of raising funds and governance costs.

Grants payable

In some limited circumstances, grant funding is provided to third parties to undertake work that contributes to the charity's objectives. In such cases, the total cost of the activity includes both costs incurred directly by the charity and funding provided to third parties through grant making activities. Grants payable are recognised when a constructive or legal obligation arises.

Governance

Governance costs represent expenditure incurred in the central management of the charity's assets, organisational administration, and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Fund accounting

The charity maintains various types of funds as follows:

Restricted funds

These are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

Unrestricted funds

These are funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in the furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Designated funds

These are unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for specific purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements. Where a fund is created for a capital expenditure project, transfers are made out of this fund to the fixed asset designated fund when a fixed asset is purchased.

Transfers between funds

Transfers between restricted and unrestricted funds are disclosed separately on the SOFA. Transfers between general, unrestricted funds and designated funds are disclosed in the notes to the accounts. Transfers arise from a number of circumstances, but most commonly:

- to transfer assets to and from the fixed asset designated fund
- to transfer assets between other designated funds and the general fund
- to transfer the value of fixed assets from restricted to unrestricted funds when the asset

has been purchased from a restricted fund donation but the asset is held for a general and not a restricted purpose

- to transfer assets from unrestricted income funds to clear a deficit on a restricted fund.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation to date, which is provided in equal instalments over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

The financial threshold for capitalising an asset is £5,000.

No depreciation is charged on freehold land. The rates of depreciation applied to other assets are:

Freehold properties	– 2%
Leasehold properties	– over the terms of the leases
Motor vehicles	– 25%
Fixtures and office equipment	– 33%

Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Capital commitments

Material commitments of a capital nature are recognised at the end of the year in the notes to the accounts. These are major contracts entered into by the charity on which liabilities are due in future years.

Branches

The charity carries out some activities through a national network of branches. As part of the charity they use the same charity number, raise funds for both national and local activities and receive central support through advice and publicity materials. All branch transactions are accounted for gross in the

accounts of the charity and all assets and liabilities, including cash retained in separate bank accounts are included in the charity's balance sheet.

Irrecoverable VAT

A significant amount of VAT is irrecoverable because the group has a mixture of activities which are zero and standard rated, exempt and outside the scope of VAT. The irrecoverable VAT is either allocated or apportioned to the relevant costs in the SOFA.

Pension contributions

The charity operates both defined benefit and defined contribution pension schemes.

Defined contribution pension schemes

The charge to the SOFA is the contribution payable to the pension scheme in the relevant accounting period.

Defined benefit pension schemes

The costs of providing these benefits are assessed by a qualified actuary on a periodic basis and charged over the expected remaining service life of the current employees with the charity. Within the SOFA, the current and past service costs are recognised as part of the operational costs, interest costs and expected returns on assets are shown as part of finance income, and actuarial gains and losses are disclosed on the face of the SOFA. Further disclosures as required by FRS17 and the Charity SORP paragraph 443 are contained in Note 21 Pension commitments.

Related parties

In accordance with the provisions of FRS 8, the charity discloses in the notes to the accounts material transactions with related parties. See Note 20 for further details.

2. Voluntary income

	Unrestricted Funds 2009 £'000	Restricted Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2008 £'000
Donations and gifts	2,242	1,260	3,502	3,992
Legacies	242	–	242	408
Grants	112	2,955	3,067	3,479
Total	2,596	4,215	6,811	7,879

3. Activities for generating funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2009 £'000	Restricted Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2008 £'000
Incoming resources				
Sponsorships	169	–	169	68
Christmas cards	171	–	171	238
Rental income	–	–	–	5
Total	340	–	340	311
Resources expended				
Christmas cards	104	–	104	195
Total	104	–	104	195

4. Governance

	Unrestricted Funds 2009 £'000	Restricted Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2008 £'000
Company secretary	116	–	116	118
Internal audit	78	–	78	79
Meeting expenses	87	–	87	113
External audit	38	–	38	32
Trustees expenses	6	–	6	6
Total	325	–	325	348

5. Analysis of total resources expended

	Direct Costs 2009 £'000	Support Costs 2009 £'000	Total Costs 2009 £'000	Total Costs 2008 £'000
Costs of generating funds	2,412	158	2,570	2,171
Charitable activities				
Raising professional, political and public awareness	2,913	121	3,034	2,916
Delivering sustainable services:				
Education	32,609	1,797	34,406	32,680
Social and independent living support	36,050	1,858	37,908	34,910
Providing information and practical support	6,868	488	7,356	6,464
Supporting research	376	2	378	376
Governance	319	6	325	348
Total resources expended	81,547	4,430	85,977	79,865

Support costs is made up of:

	Costs of generating funds £'000	Raising professional, political and public awareness £'000	Education £'000	Social and independent living support £'000	Providing information and practical support £'000	Supporting research £'000	Governance £'000	Total £'000
Human resources	13	14	356	367	36	–	1	787
Information technology	109	68	487	495	381	2	5	1,547
Finance & business services	20	22	534	557	40	–	–	1,173
Chief executive & quality assurance	7	8	190	198	14	–	–	417
Marketing & customer relations management	9	9	230	241	17	–	–	506
Total	158	121	1,797	1,858	488	2	6	4,430

6. Net (outgoing)/incoming resources

	Group		Charity	
	2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year are stated after charging:				
Auditors' remuneration:				
Statutory audits	38	32	25	32
Other services	2	10	2	10
Depreciation:				
Tangible fixed assets	817	682	817	682
Operating lease rentals:				
Rent payable on properties	2,524	2,472	2,524	2,472
Hire of equipment	145	144	145	144
Hire of vehicles	594	592	594	592

7. Tangible fixed assets applied for charity use

	Freehold properties	Short leasehold properties	Motor vehicles	Fixtures and office equipment	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	2009 £'000
Cost					
As at 1st April 2008	16,420	3,708	355	1,821	22,304
Additions	1,540	1,418	–	407	3,365
Disposals	–	–	(67)	–	(67)
As at 31st March 2009	17,960	5,126	288	2,228	25,602
Accumulated depreciation					
As at 1st April 2008	3,044	811	326	1,343	5,524
Charge for year	318	252	12	235	817
Released on disposals	–	–	(67)	–	(67)
As at 31st March 2009	3,362	1,063	271	1,578	6,274
Net book value					
As at 1st April 2008	13,376	2,897	29	478	16,780
As at 31st March 2009	14,598	4,063	17	650	19,328

Freehold properties include land at cost of £505,295 (2008: £451,580).

The trustees have considered the condition and value of the freehold and short leasehold properties occupied by the charity and, in their opinion, the recoverable amount of the properties is not less than the book value shown in the financial statements. In addition, there are no legal, maintenance or other restrictions which would prevent the charity using the properties for its current purposes.

8. Investments in subsidiaries

	2009 £	2008 £
NAS Services Ltd.		
The Society owns all of the share capital of NAS Services Ltd., a company registered in England, engaged in the provision of services.		
2 Ordinary £1 Shares	2	2
Autism UK Ltd.		
The Society owns all of the share capital of Autism UK Ltd., a company registered in England, engaged in fundraising including Christmas card sales and promotional work.		
2 Ordinary £1 Shares	2	2
Other subsidiaries		
The Society has the following dormant subsidiaries all registered in England.		
Autistic Cards Ltd.	100	100
Autism North West Ltd.	2	2
Ideas on Autism Ltd.	2	2
NAS Network Ltd.	2	2
Autism Scotland Ltd.	1	1
Autism Wales Ltd.	1	1
Autism Northern Ireland Ltd.	1	1
	113	113

9. Results of trading companies and parent charity

	National Autistic Society 2009 £'000	National Autistic Society 2008 £'000	NAS Services Ltd 2009 £'000	NAS Services Ltd 2008 £'000	Autism UK Ltd 2009 £'000	Autism UK Ltd 2008 £'000
Turnover	76,813	74,296	73,189	69,680	329	334
Covenanted income from subsidiaries	7,309	6,791	–	–	–	–
Operating charges	(85,577)	(79,365)	(66,090)	(63,032)	(108)	(180)
(Deficit)/surplus	(1,455)	1,722	7,099	6,648	221	154
Administration and other costs	–	–	–	–	(11)	(11)
(Deficit)/surplus before (losses)/gains	(1,455)	1,722	7,099	6,648	210	143
Actuarial (losses)/gains	(5,038)	2,000	–	–	–	–
Amount covenanted to the charity	–	–	(7,099)	(6,648)	(210)	(143)
Retained (deficit)/surplus for the year	(6,493)	3,722	–	–	–	–

10. Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Trade debtors	23,353	25,246	258	939
Other debtors	328	416	328	416
Prepayments and accrued income	1,153	1,348	1,127	1,276
Amounts due from group undertakings	–	–	3,982	3,857
Total	24,834	27,010	5,695	6,488

11. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Charity	
	2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Fees invoiced in advance and deferred income	19,633	20,994	496	459
Trade creditors	1,162	1,603	1,142	1,502
Taxation and social security	2,878	3,497	2,878	3,497
Accruals	1,896	2,581	1,898	2,575
Total	25,569	28,675	6,414	8,033

12. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Group		Charity	
	2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Interest free mortgage (Note a)	350	350	350	350
Interest free mortgage (Note b)	200	200	200	200
Other interest free loan (Note c)	16	19	16	19
Total	566	569	566	569

Note a

The Hayes Unit property was mortgaged to the Development Trust in two separate amounts of £150,000 and £200,000. No repayment will be called upon provided the property is used as a residential care facility for adults with autism. The charge of £150,000 could then be released on 25th October 2009 and the charge of £200,000 could be released on 5th October 2010 at the discretion of the Development Trust.

Note b

Carpenter's Close was mortgaged to East Anglian Autistic Support Trust (EAAST). The loan of £200,000 is not required to be repaid provided the property is used for the benefit of adults with autism. The charge will be released on 30th November 2036.

Note c

The interest free loan is repayable in equal instalments over 6 years.

13. Borrowings

The creditors shown in Note 12 are repayable as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Loans repayable by instalment:				
Interest free loan, instalments falling due between one and five years	12	12	12	12
Interest free loan, instalments falling due after five years	4	7	4	7
Total	16	19	16	19
Loans due after 5 years and not repayable by instalment:				
Interest free mortgages	550	550	550	550
Total	566	569	566	569

14. Movement on restricted funds

	Balance 1st April 2008 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Balance 31st March 2009 £'000
Costs of generating funds	–	101	(101)	–
Raising professional, political and public awareness	10	–	(6)	4
Delivering sustainable services:				
Education	2,272	203	(490)	1,985
Social and independent living support	976	1,297	(1,343)	930
Providing information and practical support	876	2,323	(2,174)	1,025
Supporting research	140	301	(171)	270
Total	4,274	4,225	(4,285)	4,214

Significant funds (with a balance of over £200,000) are:

	Balance 1st April 2008 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Balance 31st March 2009 £'000
Robert Ogden School Appeal	294	–	(7)	287
Helen Allison – Extension	466	–	(11)	455

The Robert Ogden School Appeal was set up to raise funds for the The Robert Ogden School. The balance of £287,478 represents capital assets which are being depreciated in accordance with the relevant accounting policy.

The Helen Allison Extension fund was set up to raise funds to extend the Helen Allison School at Meopham in Kent. The balance is represented by £455,446 of capital assets which are being depreciated in accordance with the relevant accounting policy.

15. Movement on unrestricted funds

	Balance 1st April 2008 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Capital transfers £'000	Other transfers £'000	Balance 31st March 2009 £'000
General fund	11,116	80,297	(80,362)	(713)	(2,002)	8,336
Designated funds:						
Fixed assets	14,617	–	(635)	3,018	–	17,000
Longford Court	768	–	–	(768)	204	204
Rawcliffe	955	–	–	(955)	–	–
Broomhayes	274	–	–	(274)	1,211	1,211
Maintenance and repair	1,199	–	(611)	(308)	587	867
Total unrestricted funds excluding pension reserve	28,929	80,297	(81,608)	–	–	27,618
Pension reserve	(4,053)	–	(84)	–	(5,038)	(9,175)
Total unrestricted funds	24,876	80,297	(81,692)	–	(5,038)	18,443

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Capital transfers These are amounts transferred to fixed asset designated fund from general reserves or other designated funds to match expenditure on new fixed assets.

Purpose of designated funds:

Fixed assets	To identify net funds held as fixed assets (net of long term loans used to finance fixed assets) used in the charity's operations which are not therefore available to fund short term expenditure.
Longford Court	This fund is being used to underwrite modernisation costs at our site in Neath, South Wales. This project is now in its second phase.
Rawcliffe	This fund was set up to underwrite the costs of a new registered home for adults in Yorkshire. This was formerly the new services development fund, the original balance of which has been used on this project. Project is now complete.
Broomhayes	This fund has been created to underwrite initial costs on a project at our school in Devon. The project will create additional on-site accommodation and a new on-site sixth form college facility. Work is currently ongoing on the on-site accommodation and is expected to finish in the next financial year.
Maintenance and repair	To fund plans for non standard maintenance and repairs to existing facilities in the next 12-18 months.
Pension reserve	Represents the theoretical deficit on the defined benefit pension schemes as calculated using FRS17 methodology. Comparative figures are disclosed under FRS17 with reference to a change in method of scheme assets measurement. See Note 21 for further details.

16. Analysis of assets & liabilities between funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2009 £'000	Restricted Funds 2009 £'000	Total Funds 2009 £'000
Fixed assets	17,568	1,760	19,328
Net current assets	10,616	2,454	13,070
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(566)	–	(566)
Defined benefit pension scheme liabilities	(9,175)	–	(9,175)
Net assets including pension liabilities	18,443	4,214	22,657

17. Operating lease commitments

Annual operating lease commitments at 31 March are analysed as follows:

	Property		Other Leases	
	2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Operating leases which expire:				
In the first year	482	192	451	310
In the second to fifth years inclusive	626	569	364	512
After the fifth year	1,699	1,610	10	4
	2,807	2,371	825	826

18. Capital commitments

	2009	2008
	£'000	£'000
Committed building projects are:		
Ongoing projects:		
Robert Ogden – Clayton Croft	24	–
Rawcliffe	30	955
Longford Court: Ty Coed and Ty Mynydd	204	681
Broomhayes – New Accommodation	1,211	113
Somerset Court	–	24
	1,469	1,773
Completed projects:		
Ladbroke Grove – resource centre	–	120
Total committed	1,469	1,893

Funds have been set aside as designated funds to meet these commitments. See Note 15 for further details.

19. Taxation

The charity's activities are exempt from taxation under section 505 of the Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1988. The group is not liable for taxation because of the policy of the trading subsidiary companies to covenant all taxable profits to the charity.

20. Information regarding employees and trustees

Average number of employed, bank and agency staff calculated on a full time equivalence (FTE) during the year:	2009	2008
	FTE	FTE
Costs of generating funds	35	34
Raising professional, political and public awareness	42	41
Delivering sustainable services:		
Education	1,300	1,225
Social and independent living support	1,704	1,354
Providing information and practical support	156	136
Supporting research	2	2
Governance	3	3
Support	104	108
Total	3,346	2,903

The average number of employed staff (excluding bank staff) in the year was 2,983 (2008: 2,782).

Staff Costs comprise:	2009	2008
	£'000	£'000
Gross Wages & Salaries	53,294	49,255
Agency Staff	2,598	2,538
Social Security Costs	4,886	4,418
Pension Costs	1,790	1,901
Total	62,568	58,112

The number of senior staff paid over £60,000 during the year (salary and taxable benefits excluding pension contributions) was as follows:

Salary range	2009 Number	2008 Number
£60,001 – £70,000	11	12
£70,001 – £80,000	7	6
£80,001 – £90,000	6	5
£90,001 – £100,000	3	2
£100,001 – £110,000	–	1
£130,001 – £140,000	1	–
Total	28	26

The number of senior staff to whom retirement benefits are accruing are as follows:

	2009 Number	2008 Number
Defined contribution schemes:		
NAS Stakeholder Scheme	13	10
Scottish Equitable (Private Pension Scheme)	–	1
Defined benefit schemes:		
Brent Pension Scheme	5	5
Teachers Pension Scheme	7	9
Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme	2	1
Total	27	26
NAS contribution was:	£'000	£'000
Defined contribution schemes	54	63
Defined benefit schemes	165	159
Total	219	222

Further details of all NAS pension schemes are shown in Note 21.

No trustee or person related or connected by business to them, has received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

There is one trustee of Research Autism who is also a trustee of the NAS. This relationship does not however constitute a related party as defined by FRS 8.

Five trustees were reimbursed expenses during the year totalling £6,077 (2008: £6,260, seven trustees). This principally represents reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses incurred in attending trustees' meetings.

The charity purchased insurance costing £33,093 (2008: £34,038) to protect the trustees and directors from loss arising from liability for negligence, default or breach of trust or duty, other than a breach committed in reckless disregard of whether or not the act or omission was such a breach.

21. Pension commitments

The National Autistic Society (The Society) operates both defined benefit and defined contribution pension schemes for the benefit of its employees.

Defined benefit schemes

The disclosures below relate to the funded liabilities within the London Borough of Brent Pension Fund (Brent scheme) and Somerset County Council Pension (Somerset Scheme), which are part of the Local Government Pension Schemes. The Society participates in the schemes which provide defined benefits, based on members' final pensionable salary.

Alongside the above pension schemes, the Society also contributes to the national, statutory teachers pension funds on behalf of its teaching staff. See details below.

Teachers Pension Scheme. Teaching staff employed by the Society are eligible for membership of the Teachers Pension Scheme, which is a national, statutory contributory, unfunded defined benefit scheme administered by the Teachers Pension Agency, an executive agency of the Department for Education and Skills. Pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of the Government Actuary. The Society has 83 active members (2008: 81 active members).

Every 5 years the Government Actuary conducts an actuarial review of the scheme, using normal actuarial principles. The cost of pension increases is excluded from the valuation and consequently neither teachers nor employers contribute to this added value, which is met directly by the Exchequer. Employer's contributions in the year totalled £413,521 (2008: £406,402).

Scottish Teachers Superannuation Scheme. Teaching staff employed by the Society in Scotland are eligible for membership of the Scheme, which is a national, statutory contributory, unfunded defined benefit scheme administered by the Scottish Public Pensions Agency. Pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of the Government Actuary. The Society has 17 active members (2008: 20 active members). Employer's contributions in the year totalled £87,573 (2008: £71,866).

In accordance with Financial Reporting Standard No. 17 – Retirement Benefits (FRS17) disclosure of certain information concerning assets, liabilities, income and expenditure relating to pension schemes is required. This information is set out below.

Contributions

The employers regular contributions to the Brent Scheme for the accounting period 31 March 2010 are estimated to be £670,000. In addition, a strain on fund contributions may be required. The contribution to the Somerset Scheme for the same year is expected to be £58,000.

Assumptions

Brent Scheme. The latest actuarial valuation of the Society's liabilities took place as at 31 March 2007. The principal assumptions used by the independent qualified actuaries in updating the latest valuation of the scheme for FRS17 purposes were:

	Brent Scheme			Somerset Scheme		
	2009 %p.a	2008 %p.a	2007 %p.a	2009 %p.a	2008 %p.a	2007 %p.a
Principal financial assumptions						
Inflation	3.6	3.7	3.2	3.0	3.7	3.3
Rate of general increase in salaries*	5.1	5.2	4.7	4.5	5.2	4.8
Rate of general increase in salaries – real	–	–	–	1.5	1.5	1.5
Rate of increase to pensions in payment	3.6	3.7	3.2	3.0	3.7	3.3
Rate of increase to deferred pensions	3.6	3.7	3.2	3.0	3.7	3.3
Discount rate **	6.5	6.8	5.3	6.7	6.6	5.4
Discount rate ** – real				3.6	2.8	2.0

* Brent Scheme: In addition, allowance for same age related promotional salary scales have been made as used at the actuarial valuation for the scheme as at 31 March 2007.

** Somerset Scheme: The discount rate is the yield on the Merrill Lynch Non Gilt Sterling AA Over 15 year Corporate Bond Index with an adjustment of -0.2% to reflect the duration of the liabilities relative to the duration of the index.

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Principal demographic assumptions:

Brent Scheme	31 March 2009	31 March 2008	31 March 2009	31 March 2008
	Males	Males	Females	Females
	PNMAOO with allowance for MC	PNMAOO with allowance for MC	PNFAOO with allowance for MC	PNFAOO with allowance for MC
Post retirement mortality Base table (in 2007)	improvement factors to 2007	improvement factors to 2007	improvement factors to 2007	improvement factors to 2007
Scaling to above base table rates	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cohort improvement factors (from 2007)	80% of LC	100% of MC	60% of LC	100% of MC
Minimum underpin to improvement factors	1.25%	1.00%	1.25%	0.50%
Future lifetime from age 65 (currently aged 65)	23.1	22.1	25.0	24.1
Future lifetime from age 65 (currently aged 45)	25.4	24.0	27.3	25.3

Somerset Scheme

We have adopted a set of demographic assumptions that are consistent with those used for the formal funding valuation as at 31 March 2007. The post retirement mortality tables adopted were the PA92 series projected to calendar year 2007 for current pensioners and 2017 for non-pensioners with a 2 year age rating and a 120% scaling factor.

	31 March 2009	31 March 2009	31 March 2009	31 March 2009
	Males	Males	Females	Females
Future lifetime from age 65 (currently aged 65)	19.76	20.42	22.46	23.10

We have continued to assume that 50% of retiring members will opt to increase their lump sums to the maximum allowed.

	Brent Scheme			Somerset Scheme		
	31 March 2009	31 March 2008	31 March 2007	31 March 2009	31 March 2008	31 March 2007
Expected Return on assets	%p.a	%p.a	%p.a	%p.a	%p.a	%p.a
Equities	7.0	7.6	7.7	7.3	6.9	7.2
Private Equity	7.0	7.6	7.7	–	–	–
Hedge Funds	6.5	7.1	7.2	–	–	–
Currency	10.0	10.0	10.0	–	–	–
Property	6.0	6.6	6.7	6.4	5.9	6.2
Government bonds	4.0	4.6	4.7	4.0	4.3	4.6
Corporate bonds	5.8	6.8	5.3	6.5	6.6	5.4
Cash/Other	5.0	7.1	5.6	3.0	5.0	5.0
Average	6.7	7.4	7.3	–	–	–

The Society employs a building block approach in determining the rate of return on the Brent scheme assets. Historically markets are studied and assets with higher volatility are assumed to generate higher returns consistent with widely accepted capital movement principles. The assumed rate of return on each asset class is set out within these notes. The overall expected rate of return on assets is then derived by aggregating the expected rate of return for each asset class over the actual asset allocation for the scheme at 31 March 2009.

The expected return on the Somerset scheme assets is based on the long-term future expected investment return for each asset class as at the beginning of the period (i.e. as at 1 April 2008 for the year to 31 March 2009). The return on gilts and other bonds are assumed to be the gilt yield and corporate bond yield (with an adjustment to reflect default risk) respectively at the relevant date. The return on equities and property is then assumed to be a margin above gilt yields.

Reconciliation funded status to balance sheet

	Brent Scheme			Somerset Scheme		
	31 March 2009 £'000	31 March 2008 £'000	31 March 2007 £'000	31 March 2009 £'000	31 March 2008 £'000	31 March 2007 £'000
Value as at:						
Notional value of assets	7,870	10,310	10,120	1,586	2,235	2,309
Present value of liabilities	16,420	14,150	15,360	2,211	2,449	2,827
Net pension asset/(liabilities)	(8,550)	(3,840)	(5,240)	(625)	(214)	(518)

Analysis of Income and Expenditure

Period ending	31 March 2009 £'000	31 March 2008 £'000	31 March 2009 £'000	31 March 2008 £'000
	Current service cost	420	710	62
Past service cost	–	170	8	–
Interest cost	970	830	160	151
Expected return on assets	(750)	(730)	(142)	(169)
Expense recognised on SOFA	640	980	88	46

Changes to the present value of liabilities during the accounting period

Opening present value of liabilities	14,150	15,360	2,449	2,827
Current service cost	420	710	62	64
Interest cost	970	830	160	151
Contribution by participants	190	180	18	21
Actuarial (gains)/losses on liabilities	1,050	(2,780)	(357)	(381)
Net benefits paid out	(360)	(320)	(129)	(233)
Past service cost	–	170	8	–
Closing present value of liabilities	16,420	14,150	2,211	2,449

Changes to the fair value of assets during the accounting period

Opening fair value of assets	10,310	10,120	2,235	2,309
Expected return on assets	750	730	142	169
Actuarial (losses) on assets	(3,620)	(1,050)	(724)	(111)
Contribution by employers	600	650	44	81
Contribution by participants	190	180	18	21
Net benefits paid out	(360)	(320)	(129)	(233)
Net increase in assets from disposals and acquisitions	–	–	–	–
Settlements	–	–	–	–
Closing fair value of assets	7,870	10,310	1,586	2,235

Actual return on assets

Expected return on assets	750	730	142	169
Actuarial (losses) on assets	(3,620)	(1,050)	(724)	(111)
Actual return on assets	(2,870)	(320)	(582)	58

Analysis of amounts recognised in STRGL*

Total actuarial gains/(losses)	(4,670)	1,730	(368)	271
Total gain/losses in STRGL	(4,670)	1,730	(368)	271

* STRGL (Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

History of asset values, present value of liabilities and surplus/(deficit)

Brent Fund:	31 March 2009 £'000	31 March 2008 £'000	31 March 2007 £'000	31 March 2006 £'000	31 March 2005 £'000
Fair value of assets	7,870	10,310	10,120	8,960	7,040
Present value of liabilities	16,420	14,150	15,360	14,250	11,780
Deficit	(8,550)	(3,840)	(5,240)	(5,290)	(4,740)

In accordance with paragraph 77(o) of FRS17 (as revised), the assets for the current period and previous two periods are measured at current bid price. Asset values previously measured at mid-market value for periods ending 2008 and 2007 have been re-measured for this purpose. Assets values for periods ending 2006 and 2005 are shown at mid-market value and have not been re-measured as permitted by FRS17 (as revised).

History of experience gains and losses

Experience gains/(losses) on assets	(3,620)	(1,050)	110	960	130
Experience gains/(losses) on liabilities	(30)	(410)	–	–	200

Somerset Fund:	31 March 2009 £'000	31 March 2008 £'000	31 March 2007 £'000	31 March 2006 £'000	31 March 2005 £'000
Fair value of assets	1,586	2,235	2,309	1,980	1,564
Present value of liabilities	2,211	2,449	2,827	2,740	2,370
Deficit	(625)	(214)	(518)	(760)	(806)

History of experience gains and losses

Experience gains/(losses) on assets	(724)	(111)	124	260	50
Experience gains/(losses) on liabilities	–	(51)	–	–	–

For consistency, we have shown the assets at bid price (estimated where necessary) for the periods prior to 31 March 2009. Assets values for periods ending 2005 are shown at mid-market value and have not been re-measured as permitted by FRS17 (as revised).

The table below sets out the impact of a change in the discount rates on the total obligation and projected service cost along with a +/- 1 year age rating adjustment to the mortality assumption on the Somerset fund.

Sensitivity analysis	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adjustment to discount rate	+0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
Present value of total obligation	2,167	2,211	2,255
Projected service cost	48	50	52
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption	+1 year	none	-1 year
Present value of total obligation	2,122	2,211	2,300
Projected service cost	47	50	52

Defined contribution scheme

Standard Life Stakeholder Scheme. The stakeholder scheme is the Society's main scheme. The scheme is administered by Standard Life Assurance Company. There are currently 656 active members (2008: 660 active members). The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Society. Pension costs charged in the SOFA represent the contributions payable by the Society in the year. Employer's contribution for the year totalled £702,892 (2008: £678,851).

The National Autistic Society

(A company limited by guarantee)

Other working names registered with the Charity Commission for England

Autism UK

Action for Autism

The National Autistic Society
393 City Road
London EC1V 1NG

National Office Scotland
Central Chambers
109 Hope Street
Glasgow G2 6LL

National Office Cymru
6/7 Village Way
Greenmeadow Springs Business Park
Tongwynlais
Cardiff CF15 7NE

National Office Northern Ireland
57A Botanic Avenue
Belfast BT7 1JC



The National
Autistic Society

Registered as a charity in England and Wales – CR269425

Registered as a charity in Scotland – SC039427

A company limited by guarantee, registered in England – No.1205298

Registered Office – 393 City Road London EC1V 1NG