



Potential Plus UK Annual Report 2013 -2014


Chair's Report

This last year has been another demanding year as we have sought to meet the challenges of providing advice and support to children with high potential, their families and the professionals who work with them. We remain the only charity providing this support and the demand for our services, particularly our assessment service, continues to increase. The challenge for the Board and the staff is meeting the growing demand for our services within the limited resources that we have. Our commitment and ability to provide high quality services remains but this has to be done in a way which meets the continually changing needs of our families.

There were some changes to the Board membership as we said farewell to Steve Kemp-King and welcomed two new Trustees, Ben Ramsden and Ian Wigston. Ben has been a member for many years and was the Chair of the Youth Board until going to University so his recent knowledge of using our services is invaluable. The determination and commitment of all our staff has been exceptional and under the leadership of our Chief Executive Denise Yates they have been vital in enabling us to continue our invaluable work in these difficult times. In the last months of the year the Board had to make some difficult decisions in terms of our staffing levels and accommodation requirements in order to ensure our income and expenditure are more closely aligned. These changes will provide greater security for the future and ensure we can continue to provide expert professional support to children with high learning potential and their families.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to my fellow Trustees for their work and support, to members of staff particularly Denise Yates our Chief Executive for all they have done, and to all our volunteers who give up their time to help and support us.

Chris Parsons
Chair of Trustees



“ We would like to pass on our sincere thanks for all your help in assessing our son at Potential Plus UK. There can be no doubt that your comprehensive and methodical examination of the matter and the findings have led to a turning point in his education. We are profoundly grateful...” - Parent

About Potential Plus UK



Trustees

Christopher Parsons (Chair) – appointed 2013
Laura Mckoy (Vice-Chair) – appointed 2012
Lorraine Mosley (Treasurer) – appointed 2013
Stewart Bailey – appointed 2013
Timothy Dracup – appointed 2013
Peter Flannery – appointed 2011
Pamela Powell – appointed 2012
Benjamin Ramsden – appointed 2013
Wenda Sheard – appointed 2012
Peter Trevelyan – appointed 2012
Ian Wigston – co-opted 2013
Nina Woodcock – appointed 2011
Our thanks to Steve Kemp-King who completed his term of office in October 2013.

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Articles of Association for a period of three years at the Annual General Meeting. They can be re-appointed for up to two further terms.

The work we do

Our core objective is to support the social, emotional and learning needs of children with high learning potential so that they grow in confidence, thrive and achieve fulfilment. We do this by supporting the whole family to give them the skills and confidence they need to support their child.

We deliver public benefit by providing support and guidance to parents and carers and by creating a sense of community amongst children with high learning potential and their families. We also help to educate parents and the wider community on a range of issues relating to the social and emotional wellbeing of a child with high learning potential.

“We all know there are many factors which hinder or facilitate our children’s (in order of importance!) happiness and success. One of the most powerful predictors for exceptionally gifted children is parental involvement, in terms of their capacities for: recognition (that giftedness/potential is there), championing (with schools), and, ability to make up for what is missing from schools during the advocacy process. Potential Plus UK has greatly assisted with all legs of that journey, recognition, in help with your fact sheets and helping via the forum to get an assessment, with advice on advocacy, and supporting us whilst we supported our daughter. Our daughter’s life will forever be positively impacted by your work.” - Parent

Services

Our Assessment Service

171 Families received assessment reports

Requests to the Assessment Service continued to grow and reports and action plans were prepared and provided to 171 families. 62 families also requested copies for submission to their child's school or other professional service. We are recruiting additional assessors in order to meet the growing demand.

"Without your report, matters would be far less positive. I have recommended Potential Plus UK to many others and the assessments especially. I hope Potential Plus UK are able to keep up this very important work." - Parent

Our Information and Advice Service

Over 1000 telephone calls were taken in addition to approximately 500 queries received through email or the website. Callers were provided with advice and information: 70% then became members and 60% of these registered for an assessment. We also continued to produce information leaflets available electronically or in print and free to members or for purchase by the public. The most popular leaflets this year were 'Characteristics of a Child With High Learning Potential', 'Getting the Best From your Child's School ' and 'Funding to Support my High Learning Potential Child at School'.

" This is a personal note of immense and immeasurable gratitude for the work of Potential Plus UK." - Parent

In 2011 we were awarded the Department of Health's Information Standard for the quality of our Fact Sheets and we have sought to uphold this standard in all the written information we produce so that parents and carers in particular can trust the reliability of our work.

The Potential Plus UK Scholarship Fund

Last year, we set up a Scholarship Fund to help to reduce the price of the paid services we offer for the growing number of lower income families who access our work. This is an extremely important initiative for us and we continue to seek funding to underwrite this. In 2013/4 we raised £3000 which directly benefited families through subsidising the support they receive. Further subsidies have been given in concessionary rates on services such as our assessment service, membership and events such as our Big Family Weekend. Altogether this equates to £44,591 we have 'raised' to support families in need.

"Our family is on low income so received an assisted place and I am really, really grateful for this provision. Without this we would have been unable to come and it was an extremely valuable and informative experience for our family." - Parent



Our Events

Two Big Family Weekends and one Big Adventure Weekend

369 participants attended the October weekend, 425 participants attended the February weekend and 96 participants attended the smaller Adventure weekend.

Once again we held three national events, all of which were highly successful and provided a range of activities for children, plus information sessions for parents and carers. Over 90% of attendees at these events said they thought they were good or excellent. In addition we continue to assist and encourage local Branch activities and are working to try and establish more activities at a local level.

We also delivered 42 courses, some to parents and some to schools or other educational professionals. This work is extremely important in providing face to face support to parents and professionals as well as raising awareness about the needs of children with high learning potential. It also reinforces our position as the professional organisation which supports and advises both families and educational professionals.

Our Website and Social Media

We have revised and re-launched our Members Area on the website and started work on the redevelopment of the Children's Area, which we hope to re-launch before the end of 2014. In addition we have continued to develop our social media where our Facebook page in particular has grown in popularity, with 527 parents active on the Facebook Group 'Parenting for High Potential'.

We also carried out further research on whether there is demand for webinars on popular subjects associated with high potential learning with the aim of running regular monthly sessions next year.

The Partnerships we have made

We have continued to develop partnerships with other organisations such as Peterborough Learning Partnership, British Mensa Ltd and IGGY. We have also continued to work with GT Voice; our Chief Executive continues to be its Chairman as we believe it is essential that organisations which support children with high learning potential should work together and learn from each other.

"We really enjoyed the informative training session with practical examples that can be easily taken back to school and shared with colleagues."

Deputy Head Teacher, School

"I feel I have stumbled across a gold mine! I was beginning to think there was something wrong with my child and that no one would understand what I was going through. You've given me lots of useful ideas to try out, with fact sheets and books."

Parent

"MENZA are pleased to have worked with Potential Plus UK; they provide valuable assistance to the parents and carers of gifted children, by raising awareness of their abilities and needs."

British Mensa Ltd

Our Finances

Principal Funding Sources

Our funding has come from four principal sources:

- **Membership.** Membership has increased by 66% this year largely because of the growth in the number of disadvantaged families who are accessing our services. Membership now generates approximately 22% of our income.
- **Grants and Donations.** Major grants or donations were received from organisations such as The Comino Foundation, Mensa Foundation for Gifted Children, the Fitton Trust, Waterloo Foundation, The Eranda Foundation as well as a range of individuals.
- **The Assessment Service.** The Assessment Service continues to grow and generated approximately 16% of our income.
- **Other services.** This includes sales of information leaflets, items at events and income from training sessions all continue to generate income. We were also able to claim Gift Aid on 8% of funds donated.

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2013	Total Funds 2012
Incoming resources	£266,997	0	£266,997	£218,731
Resources expended	£278,289	0	£278,289	£274,259
Net outgoing Resources for year/ net expenditure for year	(£11,292)	0	(£11,292)	(£55,528)
Net movement of funds	(£11,292)	0	(£11,292)	(£55,528)
Total Funds 30th April 2013	£101,876	0	£101,879	£157,404
Total Funds carried forward	£90,584	0	£90,584	£101,876

We were disappointed not to have broken even this year and we have tracked the deficit back to the subsidies on our services which we give to lower income families. Our challenge in 2014/5 is to generate enough income to ensure that we can support these families whilst becoming self-sufficient in our core work.

We have a Reserves policy, which we are meeting, which requires us to ensure we have a cash reserve to cover all our liabilities calculated at approximately 50% of our expenditure in that year. This would give us a reserves requirement of approximately £139,145. We did not meet that this year but we are working towards this figure. Full audited accounts are available on request. The Auditors are Keens Shay Keens of Milton Keynes

Report from the Chief Executive

This year represents Year 4 of a five-year strategy which is seeking to ensure we become self-sustaining without over-reliance on fundraising to cover our core work. This has not been without its challenges, in particular, as a result of the growing number of lower income families who are seeking to use our services.

Building on our work this year, we have 5 key operational priorities for 2014-15, subject to funding:

1. An expansion of our Scholarship Fund which has been set up to enable lower income families to access our paid services.
2. An Anti-Bullying initiative in partnership with Kidscape and other charities.
3. The expansion of our Assessment Service including the establishment of a handwriting support service.
4. The expansion of our communications work to raise awareness of what we do, both through social media and our website.
5. The production of a report summarising what parents/carers are looking for from the education system. We will then work with key external organisations to raise awareness and influence Government policies.

We are also hoping to obtain funding for three additional areas:

1. Work to support children and families with emotional health issues. This is a growing issue for us and we have not yet managed to secure funding to set up the support our families need.
2. Work to extend and develop local activities for children and families around the country.
3. Work to expand the telephone Helpline, including providing a free service, ideally for five days a week.

I would not be able to do my job if it were not for such a strong and supportive staff team or for a Board of Trustees who have been so positive in embracing change within the organisation; for which I thank them. I would also like to thank the many volunteers we have who continue to give their time to the organisation and who believe in the work we are doing to support children with high learning potential and their families. And last but not least, my thanks go to our members, without whom we would not be here. I am very grateful to each and every one of you for the time you have put in and for your support for the organisation.

Equal opportunity for children and young people with high learning potential is as important today as it always has been. I look forward to ensuring we continue to make a difference through our work in the coming year.

Denise Yates,
Chief Executive

The Trustees declare that they have approved this Report

Signature: 

Full Name: Chris Parsons
Position: Chair of Trustees
Date: October 2014.



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