

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



AUTUS, THE HAO2EU FOUNDATION

www.autus.org.uk

@autus4autism

Chairman's Remarks

At the start of 2016-7, the Autus team agreed to make this the year of stimulating growth and celebrating achievement. As I look back on the past year as well as the period since Autus started, I can confidently say that Autus has become synonymous with terms such as "growth", "development", "progression", "positive transitions" and "achievement".

I'm pleased to introduce the 16/17 Annual Report which is very much about highlighting the achievements of the organisation and its service users. The recipe for our success to date has certainly been prioritising user needs and flexible delivery. In this way individuals have been empowered to progress at their own pace with the support of our team of learning and development managers, mentors and volunteers.



Our flagship project of year was MentorMe3D, which enabled us to match people with an interest in working in the IT field with industry professionals. This not only brought fantastic results for our service users but increased our volunteer base, raised awareness of Autism in the IT industry and gave mentors a great sense of reward as they supported people using their knowledge, experience and insight.

Autus's job club has become a vibrant source of activity, inspiration and support to participants and is very well attended on a weekly basis. For some members it is the only social interaction and peer support they receive, breaking the isolation that many young Autistic people experience.

This year we have worked towards our strategic goals around growth and sustainability. Our founding company Hao2.eu Ltd has continued to provide invaluable support to Autus, although I'm delighted to say that we are less reliant on this support as we build our own capacity and resources. We are grateful to Nicola Herbertson of Hao2.eu Ltd for her hard work in promoting the work of Autus and introducing us to users, partners and supporters. We have had much support from funders and partners throughout the year and I would like to thank you on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Our little organisation gets up to a lot in the course of a year, so we have created a timeline with the main highlights and put a spotlight on key projects and case studies.

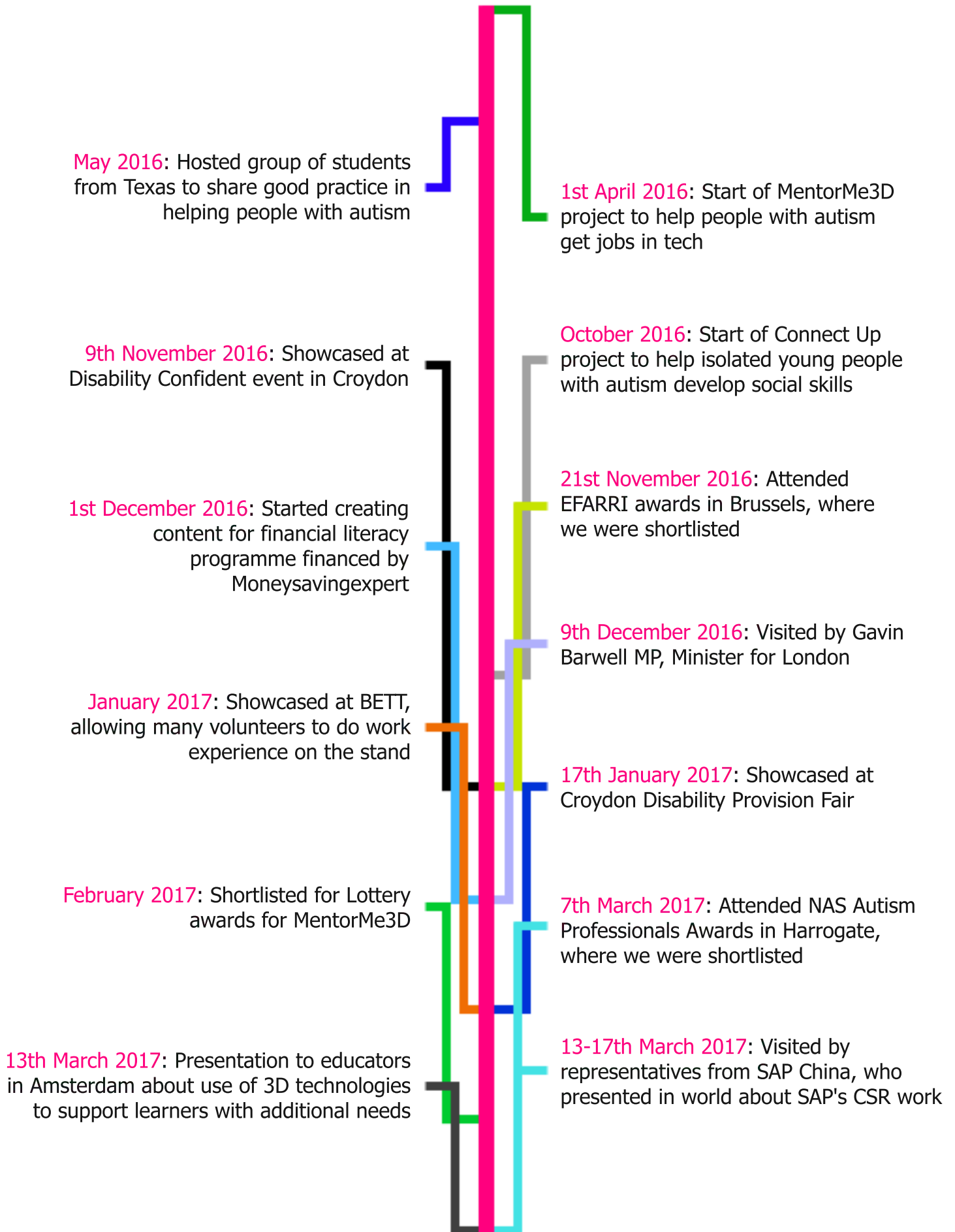
This is my last year as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and though I am stepping aside to allow someone else to take on this role, I will continue to be an active member of the team. It's been an honour to take on this responsibility in Autus's early years. I am proud of the work and achievements of my colleagues on the Board, the Autus staff team and volunteers and especially our service users. I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes for the future to the new Chair, Eleanor Fisk, as she steers us towards our 2017-8 goal of consolidating Autus's organisational independence. Reviewing a year where we helped so many others achieve independence gives me every confidence that we will succeed.

Professor Nigel Newbutt

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. A. Newbutt', written in a cursive style.

Chair

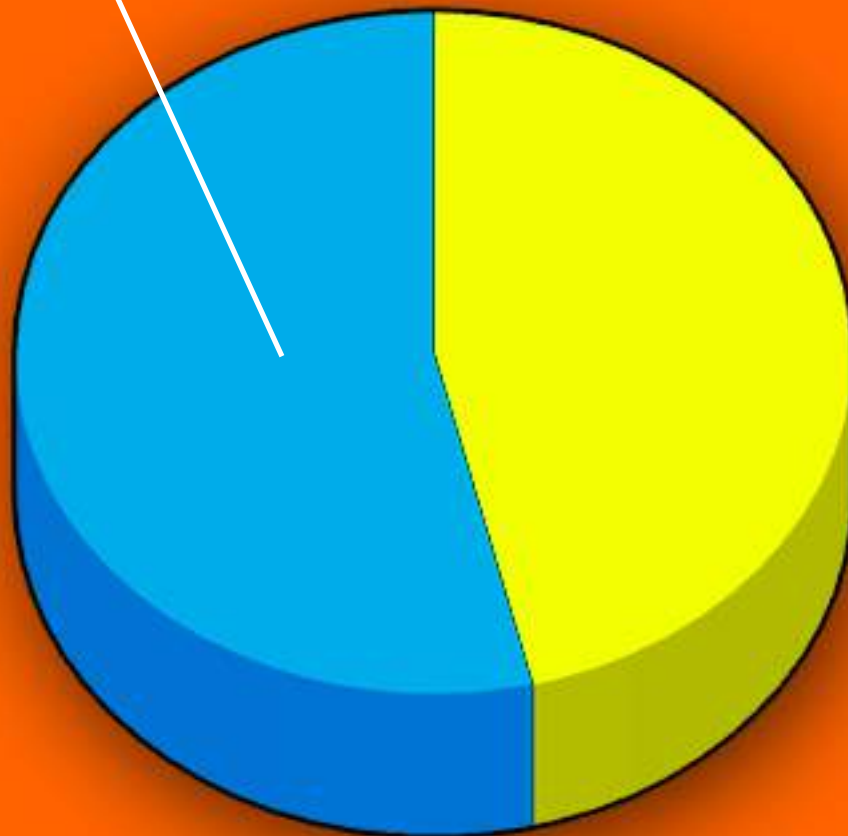
Timeline: 2016-7 Achievements



Project in Focus: MentorMe3D

We matched 26 autistic people keen to work in tech with IT professionals who know the tech jobs market and the results were phenomenal.

- 3 people in full-time work
- 1 person returned to higher education
- 6 people in work experience
- 1 person interning in a bank
- 1 person started self-employment
- 2 people volunteering



That's 53.8% of work-related outcomes overall

In contrast, the Work Programme only gets 18% of job-related outcomes for people with disabilities

MentorMe3D: Success for all to see



"I can see a real potential to earn a living while enjoying and getting satisfaction from the work"

Mentee



"Her confidence has definitely increased. I cannot recommend them highly enough"

Work coach describing mentee's experience



"It's been very rewarding to see him securing paid work opportunities within a short space of time"

Mentor talking about mentee



"I am an extremely proud Mum of a wonderful son who was going to waste, but thanks to Autus, I can see a better future for him"

Mentee's mother

Connect Up

Building
confidence,
breaking down
isolation

THE PROBLEM

SOCIAL
ISOLATION

Too many people with autism are facing the world
alone



66% of people with autism report feeling
socially isolated (Source: NAS Scotland)



44% of people with autism say that they sometimes don't go out because they are worried about how people will react
(Source: NAS Scotland)



Isolation and loneliness ruin lives

- The Mental Health Foundation found a link between loneliness and depression
- Clinical psychologists' experiments at McGill University, Montreal, into the effects of isolation on mental health observed risks of anxiety, paranoia and cognitive impairment
- Research at Yale University found that social isolation increases risks of cardiovascular disease
- Scientists at the University of Chicago and UCLA say that lonely people who view the world as a threatening place have less effective immune systems, leading to higher risk of ill health.

OUR SOLUTION



CONNECT UP



Using technology to break down social barriers



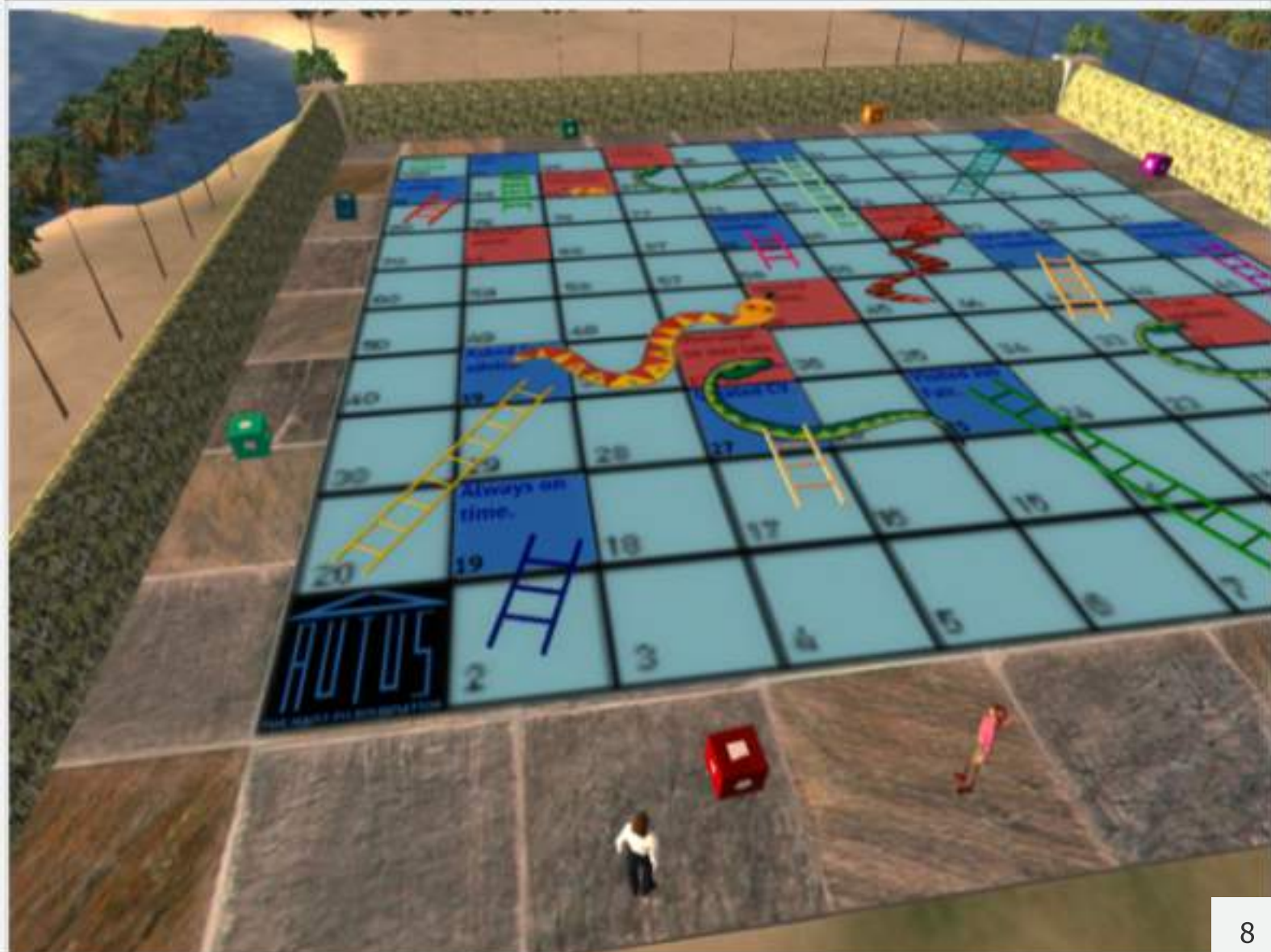
Virtual world communication provides a safe space for learners to interact without fear of being judged

Participants build communication skills and work on demonstrating their abilities and achievements



Opportunities to gain employability qualifications and participate in work experience

Activities participants undertake include:



Serious games like this vocational snakes and ladders game to promote positive job search behaviour



Presentations to build confidence speaking in public

Participants also follow a programme tailored to individual needs, which may include:

- Communication skills
- Punctuality
- Email
- Timekeeping
- Planning for Progression
- Employability skills qualifications
- IT skills qualifications
- Work experience

RESULTS SO FAR



LOOKING PROMISING



Since the start of the programme ...



1 participant has had a job offer

1 participant has started work experience



1 participant has been volunteering

4 participants have had job interviews



All participants have had the chance to socialise and communicate in a safe environment, reducing social isolation

And we're still only halfway through the project. Watch this space for more results from Connect Up!

Transforming Lives

Don't just take our word for it - see how individuals we have helped are succeeding

Elias has complex needs, including learning difficulties. He went to a special needs school, then to college, where he specialised in computing. He has completed over 250 hours in volunteering for various charities and won awards for his work with community projects. Elias had previously received support from Richmond AID, who had helped him attain an NVQ Level 2 in Business & Administration and find paid employment at Notonthehighstreet.com. However, he was made redundant after 3 years and Richmond AID referred him to Autus for help with filling out job application forms and writing cover letters. He began attending Job Club to get support with applying for work, helping Autus build training facilities in the virtual world and meeting online with a mentor. Elias has since secured two work experience placements, one as an IT assistant and one (ongoing) in data entry. He has also won a Breaking Barriers award for his progress.



James came to Autus already a capable, self-taught programmer. He enrolled onto the MentorMe project and was matched with IT professional, Andrew. He used his Autus job-coaching sessions to explore and identify areas where he would enjoy working. He has been working on an application for Android devices to facilitate the sharing of memories, especially for people with dementia. James is making such a success of his freelance work that his contract has been extended and his employer has given glowing feedback about his speed of uptake and can-do attitude.



James says: "I have really enjoyed my time spent on this course. I have found it very beneficial and have learnt a lot. I have enjoyed my time spent building things in open sim, although I have found the scripting side of open-sim far more appealing than the actual graphical design elements."

"I am very much looking forward to continuing my Android development work as I can see a real potential to earn a living while also enjoying and getting great satisfaction from the work. Also I would like to thank everyone involved in providing me with this great opportunity."

Rashaun is 19 and has autism. Croydon Autism Service referred him to our Connect Up project. His mother was concerned because he had not expressed interest in what to do since completing school, chose not to speak much, had difficulty forming friendships and did not travel independently. Since starting Connect Up in October, Rashaun has worked on improving his confidence, employability and IT skills. With the support of our mentors he developed 3D modelling skills very quickly and used them to create objects of interest to him. Some of his achievements include:

1. Travelling independently to meet Autus staff at morning meetings designed to ensure he wakes up and plans his travel to arrive on time.
2. Showcasing his work and speaking to the Minister for London, Gavin Barwell MP, in December 2016.
3. Volunteering to attend the BETT exhibition at the EXCEL Centre in London to talk about what he has learned and show his new skills.
4. Beginning a pre-apprenticeship course.

His mother has contacted us to say how impressed she is with his work and attitude. We look forward to continuing to help Rashaun and support an effective transition to paid work.



David went to a special school, then college. He got GCSEs and a GNVQ, did work experience and volunteering, but did not secure paid employment and was referred to Autus by Jobcentreplus. Autus appealed to him because he likes video games: the Jobcentreplus Advisor thought this would help him build the skills and confidence to secure paid work.

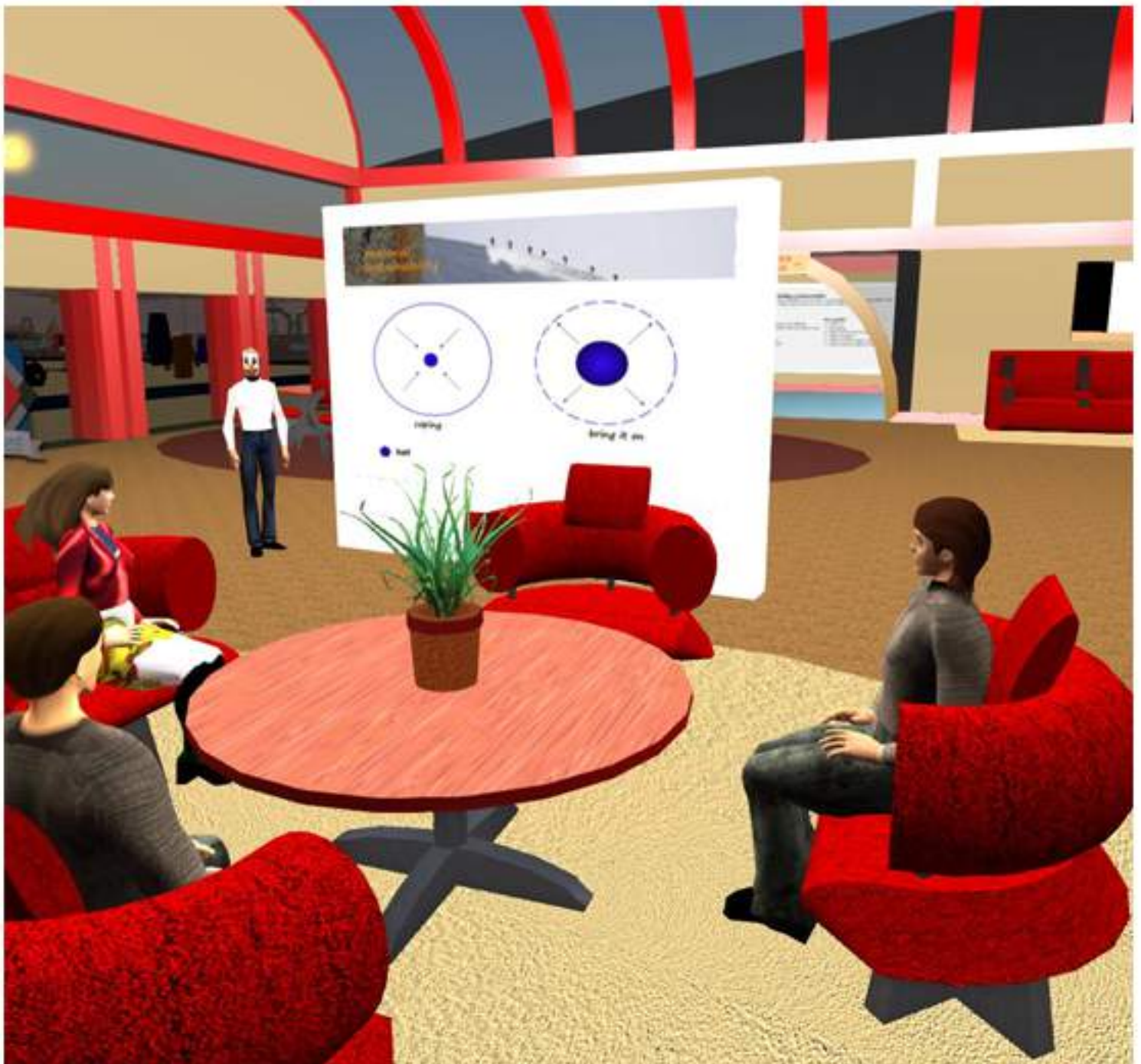
David took to the virtual environment quickly and assumed a leadership role supporting other users. His confidence has improved tremendously since participating in Job Club, which has helped him feel more confident in a group setting.

David says 'I've learnt how to conduct myself better at interviews. My first interview was for a Teaching Assistant role, which I didn't get because it went to someone more experienced. My second interview was for a Midday Supervisor - which is a casual role, but I succeeded and they contact me when they are short-staffed.'

David interviewed for another school-based job, unsuccessfully, but the only reason was his lack of classroom experience. David's response was to request an opportunity to build his classroom experience through a work placement. He continues to apply for permanent roles, saying: 'None of this has dampened my enthusiasm or confidence!'

TD has worked for a very short time with his mentor, but they were very focused on his interview skills as that was the main obstacle to him securing work (he has excellent skills, but tended to say the wrong things and put employers off). He recently attended a very important job interview with a global IT firm and had a pre interview session with his mentor, where they discussed his approach and role-played. The interview was conducted in an assessment day format and he got through all the rounds.

After performing exceptionally well in his final interview, he messaged us to say: "There were a couple of moments where I nearly did something silly, but I had my notes from when we chatted Friday and I put them into place. I think it went absolutely brilliantly. So, thanks a lot for your input, it really helped!" We have just found out that TD has succeeded in obtaining this graduate job in software development, which is due to start in the autumn. In the meantime, he also plans to get a summer job in a café to build his communication skills, as suggested by his mentor.



2016-7 Key Objectives and Achievements

Programmes

- > MentorMe3D has been a great success (see infographic on Page 4)
- > Job Club has 15-20 regular attendees every week
- > Connect Up has just begun but is already showing promise (see infographic on Page 5) and has allowed us to establish a presence in Croydon with a new Hub.



- > Partnered with All Inclusive Training to create interesting financial content and games to help us deliver money management and financial literacy projects
- > Promoted 3DNovations Hubs and created positive partnerships with organisations such as Share Community, Lewisham Contact a Family and Matthew's Hub to enable their users to access our programmes
- > We started delivering an exciting pilot programme focusing on independent living, employability skills and confidence building to learners from Weston College



Finance

- > Won core funding for service manager from Mercers' Charitable Trust
- > Won funding from MSE Charity for Moneysmart financial literacy project
- > Won funding from London Community Foundation for Sandbox game design skills project
- > Obtained formal designation as a supplier for local authorities in Surrey
- > Joined DWP Dynamic Purchasing System.
- > Won Bailey Thomas small grant which enabled us to provide additional support to people on our Connect Up programme



LEARNING AND WORKING TOGETHER TO

DESIGN A GAME

TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE

SANDBOX PROJECT

GAIN INDUSTRY SPECIFIC SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

USE YOUR CREATIVITY AND CODING SKILLS
COLLABORATE WITH LIKE MINDED OTHERS
LEARN THE GAME DESIGN PROCESS



REGISTER NOW
www.autus.org.uk/register

EMAIL
info@autus.org.uk
Registered Charity No: 1162297

The London Community Foundation



AUTUS
THE GAME BY KNOWLEDGE

Staff Training

- > We are in the process of applying for our own accreditation centre status to facilitate training for both learners and staff
- > Managers have begun compiling portfolios of evidence and undertaking internal training ready to take the Assessor qualification later this year
- > Mentors working towards certificates in youth work practice as planned.

Who we have worked with



The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund



in partnership with



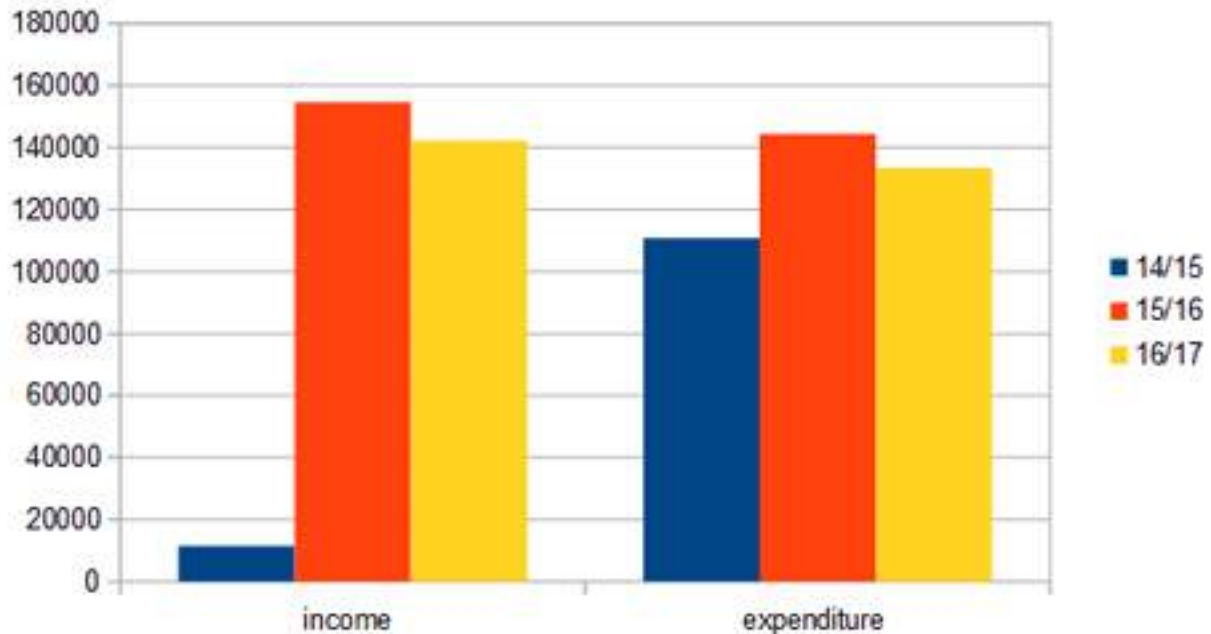
Robert Bosch Stiftung



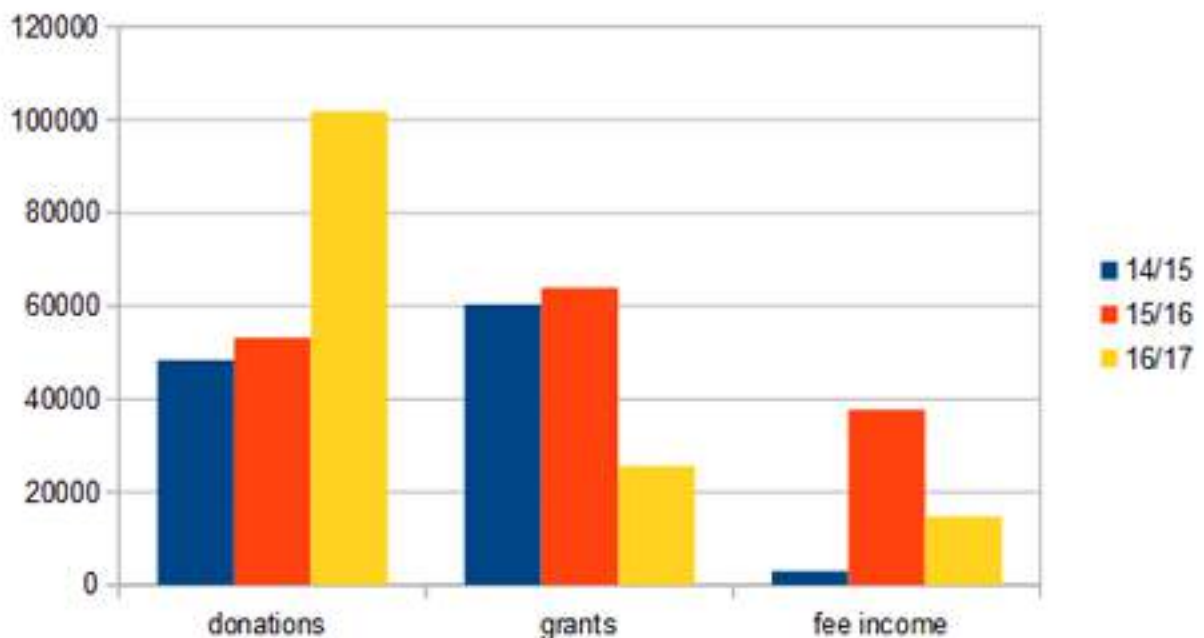
Resources and Financial Management

This year was another where we used very limited staff resources to achieve ambitious goals for beneficiaries.

Our income/expenditure is indicative of the challenges we and many other charities face in the current climate wherein kind contributions have played a significant role.



The chart above shows our income and expenditure over last 3 years. The chart below depicts our income types for the same period.



In the coming year core funding for CEO costs (secured) and for mentees (not yet secured) will ease pressure and enable us to support the many young Autistic people not eligible for our fully funded programme but no less in need of our personalised programmes. It is our goal to generate more income through sales and commissioning.

***independently examined accounts available on request**

Vote of Thanks

The achievements displayed in this report are made possible thanks to the kindness and generosity of all those who believe in what we are doing and put their resources and time into making it happen. We would like to take this moment to express our gratitude to all those who support Autus:

Volunteers

- > Our professional mentors who made such a success of MentorMe3D
- > Our peer mentors who help many people through Job Club
- > All our support volunteers, be they training support, admin or Hub Buddies
- > Our Board of Trustees
- > Our service users and alumni who promote Autus, either as Autus Ambassadors or by showcasing their skills and how we have helped them to potential customers and promoters.

Donors

- > London Community Foundation, both for funding us and for informing us of other funding opportunities that are a good match for Autus
- > Big Lottery
- > Sport Relief
- > Baily Thomas
- > Transform3D
- > HIVE-RD.

Other

- > The National Autistic Society and the European Foundations for shortlisting us for awards
- > Jobcentreplus for their support, particularly in Croydon and Bromley
- > Croydon Autism Service for welcoming us enthusiastically and helping us get set up for the Connect Up project
- > Wandsworth Council and Share Community.

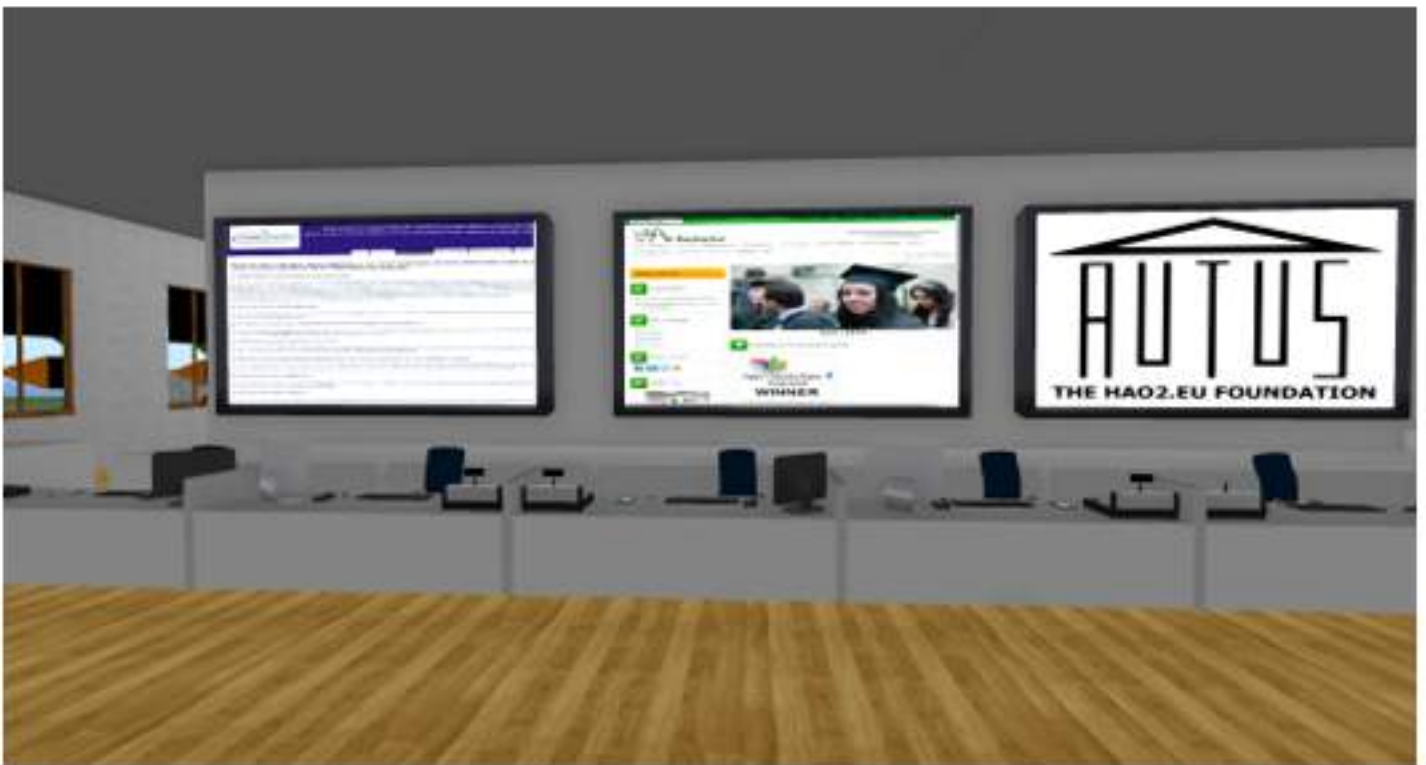


Looking Forward

2017-8 is set to be a year of progress for Autus as we build a stable foundation for our future as a sustainable independent organisation. This strategy will involve many areas of Autus' activity:

Service Delivery

At the close of this financial year, we have two ongoing projects (Connect Up and Job Club) and two about to start (MoneySmart and Sandbox). We are also seeking funding to launch a new cohort of our wildly successful MentorMe3D project and if possible, expand it to include other industries. In addition, we aim to grow our community of users with new projects and improved access to our network of Hubs, as well as strengthening our connections with employers to facilitate access to employment for alumni.



Income Generation

We seek to obtain funding from a variety of sources, including government (central and local), charitable trusts, donations and selling our services. This will require a focus on maintaining relationships with current and potential funders.

Marketing

We are aiming to raise awareness of our work and boost relationships with key partners through case studies, social media, press releases and by seeking nominations for more awards. To make this task easier, we intend to improve our process of recording and publicising outcomes for participants.

Quality Assurance and Service Improvement

One of our key strategic goals in 2017-8 is to become accredited as an Approved Centre by a recognised awarding body for qualifications. We also plan to start the process of achieving London Youth's Quality Assurance Framework, attending meetings regularly and gathering evidence for assessment. These two goals are likely to require a review and possible update of Autus' policies and procedures.

Board of Trustees

Autus needs more trustees! We are keen to recruit trustees with experience in accounting/finance and marketing/social media, as well as more people with lived experience of autism to maintain the strong representation of people with autism on the Board. To help us achieve this goal, a new trustee pack is in the process of being finalised at the time of going to press.

How You Can Help...

Volunteer

If you can offer time to mentor young people with autism; if you are interested in becoming a trustee; if you can spare an hour or so to log into Job Club and give a talk to our service users; if you can help us with training or admin; if you want to promote us to potential funders, donors and customers – then we would love to hear from you. Our volunteers are our lifeblood and we value their contribution immensely.

Donate

We are always on the lookout for more donations. Most of our funding is ring-fenced for specific projects, which often have restrictive conditions on who can participate. Our unrestricted funding from donors helps people who don't fit these criteria but need support to get it. We are extremely grateful to all our donors. If you can give, please get in touch.

Tell Us About Potential Funders

Do you know of an organisation that makes grants to charities like Autus? Is your local authority seeking to expand transition and employment provision for young people and adults with autism? If so, please let us know so we can apply.

To volunteer, donate or tell us about a possible funding source, please email us at info@autus.org.uk. Thank you.