



WE TOO!

SC045895

TRUSTEE ANNUAL REPORT



**1st
September
2023**

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**31st August
2024**

wetoo!
the inclusive what's on

Scottish Charity Number: SC045895

Charity Trustees



Victoria Chamberlain
Founding Trustee

Rebecca Lilley
Joined Board March 2024

Ryan Pirie
Joined Board March 2024

Adele Reid
Joined Board February 2020

April Schelbert
Founding Trustee

John Slater
Joined Board October 2022

The Trustees attend quarterly meetings, bound by the guidance provided within their Trustee Welcome Packs, they ensure:

1. They act in the interests of the charity goals to meet agreed objectives and purpose
2. A duty of care is applied to charity employees, volunteers and customers
3. The charity adheres to its constitution and complies with relevant legislation, including OSCR, company law, health and safety and data protection
4. The charity operates in a financially responsible manner and acts as a guardian of its assets.

Objectives & Activities



The charity, originally named “Me Too!”, was founded in Summer 2015 by Phionna McInnes. As a local parent frustrated with the fragmentation of information in both Aberdeen City and Shire when looking for activities for her disabled child, she decided to set up a magazine as an information resource that both “met the criteria” for participation and that together the whole family could enjoy.

Being a quarterly publication, this ensured the most reliable and up-to-date information on sessions and ideas of activities custom designed to meet needs, as well as regular mapping exercises to see where gaps exist in the community to be addressed.

In 2023 We Too! magazine has a readership of over 30,000 every quarter and has created a forum for people living in similar situations to contact and engage with each other, sharing similar stories and creating new social networks. The magazine also provides professionals a publication that can be handed to families receiving an ASN diagnosis to ensure they feel empowered, valued, and informed at a time when many can feel overwhelmed, unsure, and anxious.

The magazine also provides covert support for families who may be unable or unwilling to participate in traditional group session supports to ensure they can still feel empowered and connected on their terms and at a time that suits them.

“We really appreciate all the work that goes on behind the scenes to enable so many families to feel able to attend events like Spectra. Also, the visual guide was very clear and well written for us to be able to plan our visit. Thank you once again for everything you all do”

Where there are gaps identified in participation of activity sessions, We Too! has approached organisations with “Relaxed Sessions – Reverse Inclusion Model”, to encourage their participation with partnership working, training and empowerment. Such a collaboration helps business owners invest in their organisation and their staff to facilitated sessions and enabling participation by both ASN and “mainstream” customers.

Relaxed Sessions

Relaxed sessions are predominantly for ASN participants and are largely driven by the needs of our community; however, everyone is welcome to attend providing they are aware and mindful that they are participating in sessions which are largely catering for those with sensory challenges.

We have found that by managing everyone's expectations as they attend the sessions and keeping them informed, this allows inclusion to occur naturally within all participants, both children and parent/ carers alike. Ultimately, by identifying the environment as the most disabling factor to participation then assessing and adjusting the sensory stimuli, this allows many to participate and not just participants with a recognised ASN!



We work alongside organisations to train and empower the staff to provide Relaxed Sessions regularly and promote them in the magazine.

This ensures the sessions happen fluidly and naturally by the business themselves and negates the need to fund separate sessions that are exclusively for a specific charity of families that need the support or meet the criteria to access.

It also reduces the risk of disappointing customers when sessions stop due to cessation of funding and resources. As We Too! becomes more established, more organisations recognise the benefits of working alongside us and providing more opportunities for everyone.

We Too! doesn't have "service-users" nor do we call them "our families", quite simply they are customers, and we help businesses promote their Relaxed Sessions to this market in this inclusive and appropriate manner.

Structure, Governance & Management

We Too! is structured as a Single Tier SCIO organisation. This allows the charity to “trade” by selling advertising space within the magazine as well as training and relaxed sessions to fund the organisation as a self-sustainable entity. More information on single tier SCIO structures is available on: www.oscr.org.uk

Our Constitution

1. The organisation is established for charitable purposes only, for which, the objectives are:
 - 1.1 to relieve the needs of parents and informal carers of children with additional support needs; and in furtherance of this by -
 - 1.2 promoting the provision of information about available services for children with additional support needs; and
 - 1.3 making available such supportive information as the trustees may decide; and
 - 1.4 working in partnership with other bodies to promote the purpose.
2. The area within which the organisation shall operate (in this constitution referred to as the “Area of Benefit”) shall be the north-east of Scotland and the surrounding areas.
3. The organisation shall promote (but not promote exclusively) its activities and delivery operations to people within the “Area of Benefit” who are parents of children with additional support needs. These people will be the organisation’s beneficiaries.
4. The structure of the organisation consists of the charity trustees who are also the organisation’s only members and comprise the organisation’s board.

Our Mission

We Too! produces a free quarterly magazine for families of children with additional support needs which is distributed throughout Aberdeen City and Shire. We Too! hosts many “Relaxed Sessions” in the area allowing full inclusive participation in activities that may ordinarily be difficult to access.

Trustee Appointment & Recruitment

Victoria Chamberlain has continued as Chair of the Board during this reporting period and was delighted to welcome Ryan Pirie and Rebecca Lilly to the Trustee team.

Adele Reid and April Schelbert, both experts in finance, remain actively involved in overseeing the Charity's accounts and expenditures. April will also assume the role of Secretary to the Board, while continuing her work with Adele on financial oversight.

John has taken on a more prominent role in managing marketing and press releases, ensuring the Charity stays visible in community news. He has also contributed to the creation and content for our new fully functional website, which now enables customers to book events directly.

Ryan brings extensive management experience and offers practical support, while Rebecca, an affected parent who has previously attended sessions as a customer, offers valuable insights into the needs of our clientele.

The Board is made up of both parents and business members, as specified in our constitution, and we are always eager to receive new applications for Board membership.



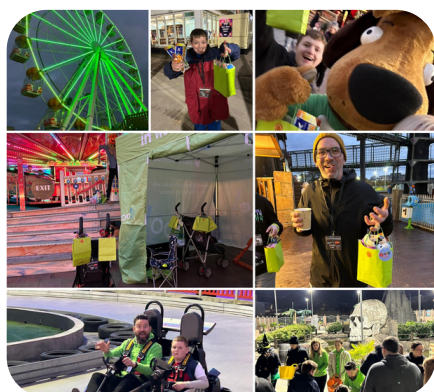
Partnership Working



Spectra Festival of Light 2024

We Too! successfully offered Relaxed Sessions every night of the 2024 Light Festival, further strengthening our previous successful partnership. Thanks to funding, we were able to provide an inclusive and accessible relaxed session each night, along with Sensory Chillville and Sensory Bags for all customers who needed them. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, and having sessions available every night made the festival more inclusive for our customers across the City and Shire.

Codonas Amusement Park



We were thrilled when Codonas invited us to continue the Dream Night Series, offering our customers full access to the park during events in Summer and Halloween nights. The joy experienced by the children and families, as they were able to enjoy the park with sensory adaptations while fully participating in the activities, is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive feedback we've received. We are incredibly grateful for Codonas' ongoing support, as they not only donate all proceeds from these evenings but also continue to display our Charity Cans throughout the park. In addition, they provide relaxed sessions for Bowling and Laser Tag and have added their Arcadia premises for Retro Gaming Sessions, further enhancing the experience for our families.

Aberdeen City Council / Aberdeenshire Council Holiday Programmes



We have continued to successfully secure tenders for holiday programmes across the city and shire. This has enabled We Too! to host sessions at Ninja HQ and collaborate with other local organisations to offer partnership relaxed sessions. These include events at the Zoology Museum, the Climbing Wall at RGU Sport, and the Aberdeen Ice Arena.

Partnership Working



Aberdeen Trinity Centre

Our ongoing partnership with the Trinity Centre Aberdeen has been instrumental in the growth of our Parent Support provision. Ninja HQ has become a central hub for our “Ask a Ninja” information sessions, a drop-in centre, and the base for our weekly Anime Art Academy sessions, Lego Club, and various holiday activities. Open five days a week and run by our Ninja Team, Ninja HQ has become a vital resource for families. We are deeply grateful for their continued support and collaborative partnership, which enables us to offer parents and carers a place to receive face-to-face support and guidance.



Charlie House Big Bounce

We were thrilled to partner with Charlie House to offer a Relaxed Session during their Big Bounce Summer Fundraiser. Union Terrace Gardens was transformed into a unique playground for families, featuring numerous bouncy castles, outdoor games, and activities. This collaboration allowed our customers to enjoy this fantastic event and participate in the inflatable activities in a way that was more accommodating to their sensory needs.



Aberdeen City Council

We were delighted to secure funding through the Carers Strategy Implementation Group for the sum of £44,000 for Parent Support. This is the largest single amount of funding secured by the Charity to ensure that we can continue to empower parents and carers within the City.

Customer Testimonial

"Had such an ace time tonight - thank you! Sitting next to my son, who was shrieking with delight, going up and down on dead man's tower for 45 minutes (something that wouldn't be possible without the relaxed session) I could clearly see how much fun and enjoyment everyone was having. You are all amazing and fab people!"
Ruana (Dream Night)

Fundraising Success



Aberdeen Kiltwalk 2024

The 2024 Kiltwalk team was once again a tremendous success, raising a total of £3,330. Volunteers took part in either the challenging 18-mile walk or the 4-mile Wee Wander, with teams participating in both events to raise funds for We Too! The dedication of these volunteers was truly remarkable, with many hours of training leading up to the walk. These funds have been used to provide Sensory Kits for our We Too and You - Ninja Natters group within Aberdeenshire, helping us to continue supporting families in the community



Collabz Makers Market

In December, we partnered with the Trinity Centre in Aberdeen to launch Collabz, an indoor craft bazaar where traders and crafters could rent space in a donated retail unit to showcase their talents. It was an ideal setting for Christmas gift shopping, and vendors were thrilled to have such a wonderful space to sell their products. All proceeds were donated to We Too!, and our team enjoyed building connections with the traders while also promoting the work we do with our customers.



Repeat Boutique

Repeat Boutique was a creative fundraising initiative, building on the success of Collabz Market, with the Trinity Centre kindly donating a second retail space for the weekend. The event was a one-day pop-up boutique featuring pre-owned, high-end women's clothing – essentially a real-life "Vinted" experience. Sellers dropped off their items the day before the boutique opened, and a dedicated team of volunteers worked tirelessly to craft a fantastic shopping experience. Shoppers enjoyed scoring luxury bargains, while sellers graciously donated 10% of their profits directly to We Too!.

Awards & Recognition



Inverurie Pantomime Rapunzel 2023

We were absolutely delighted and honoured to be chosen as the charity partner for the Inverurie Pantomime. This collaboration not only allowed us to benefit from their generous end-of-show donations but also provided us with the incredible opportunity to offer relaxed performances for our customers, ensuring a more inclusive experience for all. The support from the pantomime community was beyond our expectations, and we were completely overwhelmed when we learned that the total donation raised exceeded an amazing £8,000. This contribution will have a significant impact on the work we do, and we are so grateful to everyone involved for their kindness and generosity.



Weatherford Christmas Raffle 2023

We are incredibly grateful to Weatherford Aberdeen for selecting We Too! as their charity partner for their Christmas raffle. We were truly overwhelmed to receive a generous cheque for £2,860. It was a fantastic experience meeting some of the Weatherford team in person and hearing firsthand about the positive and lasting impact our Ninjas have had on Weatherford families.

Awards & Recognition



Relaxed Birthday Party for Alfie

We Too! was honoured to be asked to create a special and relaxed 6th birthday party for one of our valued customers, Alfie. We embraced the challenge wholeheartedly, working closely with Codonas to design an experience that would be enjoyable and accessible for everyone. With careful consideration, we ensured that the event featured easy access to sensory spaces, a variety of sensory aids for exploration, and integrated signing to support communication throughout the day. The result was a truly joyful and memorable celebration, filled with laughter and love, as we celebrated Alfie's milestone in the most inclusive and thoughtful way possible. We couldn't be more grateful to have been a part of such a meaningful day!



Topsy Cow Bar Quiz Night

We were absolutely thrilled to learn that the Topsy Cow bar had selected We Too! as the beneficiary of their Quiz night and raffle. The evening was a tremendous success, raising an incredible £700! This generous amount made a significant impact, as it went directly towards funding new sensory packs for our relaxed events. These packs are essential in ensuring that everyone can fully participate in our events in a comfortable and enjoyable way. We are incredibly grateful to the Topsy Cow and to everyone who contributed to this fantastic fundraising effort.

Staffing

During this reporting period, the Ninja Team has experienced significant personal and professional growth, with each member becoming more secure and confident in their roles within Ninja HQ. Carrie, Gillian, and Lynn have all excelled in their positions, sharing their expertise to support and guide our customers. They have also taken on the important task of creating and running the "Ask the Ninja" series of parent information sessions, which have been well-received by the community. These sessions have become a valuable resource for parents seeking information and support.

Jillian and Sophie have continued to thrive in their roles, with Sophie particularly focusing on expanding our team of volunteers, which has contributed to the growth and strength of the organisation. This reporting period has also seen the addition of Colin and Ben to the team. Although both are in funded fixed-term positions, they have settled in well and are already making a positive impact. Colin's signing videos, especially for our relaxed events, have been particularly popular, adding a personal and accessible touch to our content.



Doug has transitioned from a volunteer position to a paid role as Distribution Ninja. His contribution has made a remarkable difference to the team, as he is now responsible for sorting and distributing our magazines. This centralised point of contact has helped strengthen relationships with our distribution partners and improve our readership outreach.

In addition to the wonderful work that Chloe and Emma continue to do in running our We Too! and You group in Stonehaven, we are excited to have welcomed Lisa and Mags as permanent volunteers to the Laurencekirk We Too! and You group.

Both groups are located in the south of the Shire and play a vital role in offering support and guidance to parents of school-age children. Lisa and Mags bring expertise, passion, and dedication to their roles, enhancing the services we can offer to families in the area. Their involvement will ensure that more parents in the South of the Shire have access to the resources, community, and assistance they need as they navigate the challenges of raising school-age children.

Staff Development

In January, we held our first Trustee Away Day with Steve Allman, which was both educational and insightful.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for our Trustees to reflect on the charity's rapid growth and to set achievable goals for the coming year.

The day included workshops with all Trustees and the Ninja team, whose frontline experience is essential in shaping the charity's direction. The feedback from the workshops was overwhelmingly positive, and the day also served as an excellent team-building exercise.

The Trustees especially appreciated the Ninjas' openness in sharing their experiences and perspectives, highlighting the significant impact of our work within the City and reinforcing the strong partnership between the Board and the team.



Financial Review

The charity's financial year concludes on August 31st, and all accounts are fully up to date with no backlogs. The accounts have been audited by SPB.

This year, donations have risen to £52,092, marking an increase of £3,152 compared to the previous year. However, this growth is at a slower pace than in prior years, which continues to reflect the ongoing impact of the current cost of living crisis.

Donations

£52,092

Grant Funding

£64,805

Statement on Charity's Policy on Reserves

The Trustees are thrilled to observe continued financial stability within the organisation. It has always been our policy to maintain a reserve equivalent to three month's operating expenses, so witnessing this reserve grow alongside the charity's expansion is particularly good governance.

This growth not only reflects the sustainability of the magazine but also the ongoing success of the Parent Support Centre. While operational costs have inevitably risen, we have been able to offset some of these increases through initiatives such as running in-house clubs, offering relaxed sessions, and providing space for community groups and meetings.

These efforts play a crucial role in ensuring that the charity remains independent and does not heavily rely on third-party funding.

Like many third-sector organisations, we have experienced a notable reduction in funding from local councils and the Scottish Government. However, by adhering to a clear and strategic fundraising approach and consistently striving for self-reliance, we are pleased to report that the charity has been able to grow significantly during this reporting period.

Future Outlook

We Too! is entering the 2024/2025 year in a strong position, with continued growth and expansion as key priorities in our strategic decision-making. We are excited to have been appointed as the accessibility lead for the Tall Ships 2025 event, and we are thrilled to be working in close consultation with Aberdeen City Council, the Port of Aberdeen, and Aberdeen Inspired. Together, we are committed to ensuring that families and customers will have the best possible experience at this historic event.

We Too! currently serves customers in Aberdeen City and Shire. As part of our continued growth, we plan to expand our reach, ensuring that the magazine is not only accessible but also relevant to customers in Angus. To support this expansion, we aim to establish a parent support group in a central location within Angus. This initiative will foster greater engagement and provide new customers with the opportunity to benefit from parent-led support.

Our ethos and commitment to our Ninjas remain steadfast, as we continue to support their personal development while also nurturing and shaping their roles within the team. This approach ensures that they are always working to their strengths, which in turn allows for the highest quality of output.

Some positions within the team during the last reporting period were funded through external grants and were always fixed-term contracts. Moving forward, it will be crucial to the charity's success that we maintain the quality of our output, even if these positions no longer exist. Ensuring continuity and high standards despite potential changes in staffing will be key to our future growth and impact.

We are excited to announce that our first fundraising ball since 2019 will take place in April 2025.

This event will feature the Inclusivity Awards, an initiative we first explored back in 2018 during our We Too! Roadshow at RGU. As awareness of sensory and additional support needs grows within our city, we believe it is essential to recognise and celebrate the efforts of organisations that are making a positive impact in this area.

This event will not only highlight the contributions of these organisations but will also serve as a celebration of our We Too! upcoming 10th anniversary. It will be a special occasion to honour the progress we have made, the partnerships we have built, and the continued support for our customers and the wider community.

Fundraising

We are optimistic that our fundraising efforts in 2025 will match the success of 2024, with our dedicated Kiltwalkers already committed to supporting our charity. In addition, we plan to explore more individual fundraising opportunities, such as abseiling from buildings and bungee jumping, to further engage and inspire our supporters.

Our goal is to strengthen and expand our partnerships with key organisations such as Codonas, Inverurie Pantomime Group, the Trinity Centre, and Aberdeen City and Shire Councils. We will also continue to pursue third-sector grant funding for specific projects that align with our mission and vision.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the potential of high-profile events like the Tall Ships and the Spectra Light Festival to significantly boost the charity's visibility. We believe these events will not only raise awareness but also provide important opportunities to increase both our profile and our fundraising success. Through these events, we hope to further engage with the community and generate crucial support for our ongoing work.

Contact Us

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Declaration

We provide this annual report as a true and accurate description of We Too! SC045895 by empowering Parents and Carers of Children with additional support needs.

We trust this report is an enjoyable read and hope that it offers some inspiration.

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Trustees:

Print Name:

Victoria Chamberlain

Designation:

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date:

25th March 2025