



**Friends Action North East**

**SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO  
MAKE AND KEEP FRIENDS**

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018





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## 1. FANE Structure and Governance

FANE is managed and run by the Board of Trustees. The Trustees have control of the Charity and its property and funds. There are six Trustees in a named role in office in 2017/18.

The Trustees have the responsibility to ensure the activities of FANE are conducted in compliance with the rules of the Charity Commission and the Articles of the Memorandum.

The Trustees ensure the work programme is met and the finances are managed appropriately. Membership is open to any individual or organisation interested in promoting the objects of the charity. All the accounts are audited annually by an independent examiner.

The Trustees hold a Trustee meeting quarterly, and hold their Annual General Meeting every year. The minutes of all of these meetings are held at the office and are also circulated to members of FANE and anyone who wishes to access them. The Trustees undertake training about their roles and responsibilities as a trustee including safeguarding and update this accordingly.

Election of new Trustees is usually held at the Annual General Meeting, and all Trustees are required to complete an enhanced disclosure and barring check before being accepted as a Trustee. FANE is a Registered Charity, and unincorporated association. The Constitution of

FANE was agreed on 26th November 2008.

### (Objects)

1. To assist adults with learning disabilities to develop and maintain friendships and friendship groups to enable them to achieve their full potential as members of the local community.
2. To advance the education of the public and supporters of people with learning disabilities in all issues related to learning disabilities particularly friendship and socialisation.

## 2. Our core project work:

In 2010 the project received 5 years funding from the Big Lottery Reaching Communities fund and 1 year from The Bailey Thomas charitable fund and the Joseph Strong-Frazer trust to undertake a Friendship Mentoring and Supporting Friendship Toolkit projects.

In 2015 the project received funding from the Big Lottery Reaching Communities grant, the Joseph Strong-Frazer Trust and the Esmee Fairbairn foundation to continue our existing work as well as the newly developed digital inclusion training and website based elements of the project.

This financial year (2017/18) we also received funding from the Big Lottery Awards for All Grant to undertake our social access training project and The Garfield Weston Foundation, R.W. Mann Trust and continued support from The Joseph Strong Fraser Trust in order to carry out the core work relating to the digital and mentoring training programmes. This includes our training support model 'Friendkit' development and friendship pilot work.

Year four of our strategic project work began in February 2018



### The Mentoring project:

Research shows that having friendships and being involved in community activities is beneficial to a person's health and well being and can reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. The Mentoring Project model of support is based on the outcomes of FANE's prior work of supporting adults with a learning disability and autism, to make and maintain friendships. One of the lessons learned by FANE is that developing friendships is often still the most difficult, skilled, intensive and overlooked part of people's lives. The mentoring project is designed to address this need and allow the people who are referred onto the programme to directly inform and shape its content and methods of delivery. It allows a minimum of 20 adults with a learning disability or autism per year to make realistic friendship goals according to their individual needs, learn the skills required to put those goals into practice, and then make new friendships whilst

getting the specialised 1:1 support to sustain them. A further 20 people per year can access friendship support through our group meet up circles. All people referred to us have access to a full induction training programme and ongoing support to:

- Access community information in a digital format.
- Explore realistic friendship goals and make a plan to reach them.
- Find accessible and socially inclusive venues.
- Create ordinary social opportunities that can make lasting friendships and support networks.
- Practice social interaction with 1:1 support.
- Socialize on a limited budget
- Access to Digital inclusion training e.g. :‘using digital devices’, ‘staying safe on social media’, ‘using a mobile/smartphone’, ‘using a tablet’, ‘staying safe on the Internet’ ‘using Apps’ and ‘digital do’s and don’ts’!
- Handle money and basic numeracy skills.
- Keep safe and prepping for going out.
- Travel training skills and access to travel buddying.
- Learn about local ‘Safe places’ and support to access them.
- Overcome personal barriers to friendship
- Access to our toolkit and training workshops ‘Friendkit’
- Inform community venues and business how to be more. inclusive and accessible around their specific needs.
- Access social groups, activities and meet-up’s with friends.



Through our mentoring project work FANE has developed a friendship model of support and toolkit alongside the people that we have supported. Through training workshops we cover a number of topics relating to making and keeping friendship and our model of support offers training, support and resources to embed, track, monitor and record friendships skills for a wide range of skills and abilities in a person centred way. The training workshops include topics such as exploring how friendships are different from other types of relationships, what makes a good friend, what barriers people encounter when making and keeping friends and ways to overcome them. We have also developed workshops that address mate/hate crime and discrimination, staying safe when out and about in the community, when friendships break down and using digital tools to maintain friendships. Our workshops are continually developed to meet the needs of the audience and undertaken in a positive, engaging and accessible way which places an emphasis on the positive benefits of friendship for all level of abilities. The FANE model of support also helps inform people in local communities about a person’s support



and access needs and their goals and aspirations around friendship. It also provide a first contact for securing lasting community connections helping to make people feel more valued and included- which helps to reduce the impact of social isolation.

‘Friendkit’ training packages are available via the FANE **website [www.friendsaction.co.uk](http://www.friendsaction.co.uk)** or emailing **[info@friendsaction.co.uk](mailto:info@friendsaction.co.uk)**

They can be purchased by external organisations and supporters and will continued to be offered free of charge to people accessing the mentoring programme whilst our funding from grants and foundations continues.



## Digital inclusion work:

We know that people face a number of barriers when accessing digital technology. In consultation with our project users we have developed unique and accessible training methods that incorporate tools to support people with friendship skills using digital methods. This has also provided us with the potential to generate income for the FANE projects and over the past year training workshops have been commissioned by two local authorities. We hope to expand on this potential revenue so we are less reliant on funding and grants. Delivering a series of bespoke digital workshops has enabled us to tackle a range of current issues such as: staying safe on social media, getting online safely, digital dos and don'ts and getting the most from your mobile phone, which reflect peoples evolving needs.

## Enabling Access Training:

In 2017 FANE was awarded funding for a one-year project to carry out a series of social access training workshops to local venues and businesses. The Big Lottery Awards For All grant has enabled FANE and 10 of the people we have supported to work with over 65 organisations in the North East in a series of pilot training workshops to help their venues become more inclusive and accessible to help people overcome some of their specific barriers and help them to have more sustainable friendships.

By undertaking this particular piece of work it has supported people to maintain independent friendships and champion accessibility in the North East- which we hope will have a lasting social impact for others to benefit from. We have been able to give a voice to people that have experienced specific barriers, and offer them a sustainable solution to overcome them. We have also enabled people to form more interdependent community connections in their local areas. The FANE team feel positive about taking the next steps to move this piece of work forward over the coming months.



### 3. Our achievements: Mentoring project

This year we have recruited, supported and managed over 87 adults with a learning disability onto the 1:1 Friendship Mentoring programme and groups. There are over 64 people involved in FANE group activities where they are supported to put the skills they have learned into practice in social settings.

There are over 12 people on a waiting list to join the mentoring programme, including people from the areas of Newcastle, Gateshead, North and South Tyneside and Sunderland. To date we support 9 different social groups within the North East area ranging from health & wellbeing groups, to cinema/art and gardening social working in partnership with several different projects within the Gateshead, Sunderland, Newcastle and North Tyneside areas.

### Volunteers

Over the last 8 years we have worked with over 211 volunteers at events and open day sessions and trained as friendship mentors. The valuable work provided by volunteers has enabled Friendship Finders to be supported on a 1:1 basis through the project providing over 7,500 hours of support to the people involved since the project began.

We have hosted regular volunteer events- which have proven to be a real success in sharing good practice and allowing volunteers to learn from one another's experiences, strategies and diverse backgrounds. In addition this year FANE has worked with 13 placement students from Newcastle University as part of their psychology/Health and social care degree course and have 15 new placements to begin in September 2018. This has proven to be a successful way of working which will continue next year. The students commit to working with FANE for 70 hours during their placement period, with regular contact taking place between FANE and the course leaders. We have also established partnerships with both Gateshead and Newcastle colleges to recruit 2 yearly placement students for a 70 hour placement over 2 weeks. We have 4 peer mentors who have successfully completed the volunteer training programme to mentor people on a 1:1 basis, and support our monthly social meetup groups.

We continue to work with our digital volunteers whose role is to update and maintain the FANE website and social media accounts. This year there has been 1 continuing and 1 new digital volunteer working both in the office and remotely.

### Fundraising

Our staff, trustees and fundraising team have taken part in several fundraising events this year to raise funds for our project work. To date we have undertaken a charity bag pack at Morrison's, Cowgate and Byker. Our members have also undertaken a sponsored autism walk in partnership with Autism Friendly Newcastle (AFN) and have another 10,000 step challenge planned for September 2018. Two of our staff team have run 3 half marathons for FANE and in total the team have raised over £1,700 in sponsorship and events this current financial year!

We have also received several donations totalling over a £1,000 from the good people and businesses in the North East. Thank you to everyone who has supported and donated to us -it means a lot.

### FANE Website

Our website continues to be successful and has consistently increasing traffic. We are exploring the possibility of it becoming a source of revenue for our project through corporate means, for example: community accessibility guide and map, pan-disability information, signposting, social prescribing and a member's area to purchase our training toolkit. It continues to be developed and used by our Friendship Finders, volunteers and organisations in the sector. As part of their planning time volunteers and Friendship Finders are using the website as a tool for planning activities towards their goals including use of the 'community map', 'what's on' and 'resources' pages.

[www.friendsaction.co.uk](http://www.friendsaction.co.uk)

### Events:

This year we have continued to facilitate one off and regular group activities taking place in order to meet the project outcomes.

- Film Group
- Social interaction through art
- Meet and Mooch
- Get Out There Group (an access review group)
- Gateshead Social
- Sunderland Social
- Gardening social
- Fundraising committee
- Street Dance
- Gaming social
- Newsletter group
- Becky's Beads
- Museum buddies
- Walking social - (in partnership with Active Newcastle)

# 1. Our Impact:

**87**

people supported with friendship skills on a 1:1 basis

**64**

people involved in group activities

**12**

new people ready to start a new friendship journey

**12**

new people connected from 5 North East regions

**87**

more people more confident & happier with their social connections

**87**

people going out more in their communities

**67**

venues & businesses are now more socially inclusive

**67**

venues in the NE trained to be accessible

**87**

people feel more confident using digital technology

**87**

people learned new friendship skills

**87**

people feel more safe to go out

**45+**

volunteer networking events attended

**87**

people have learned new skills to meet up with a friend

**87**

people learned how to be safer on social media

**87**

people are now less vulnerable to abuse & 'Mate crime'

**over 2,500**

people less socially isolated in the North East

**26,000**

people know what they can access in their local area

**28**

university and college placement students

**26,000**

people know what they can access in their local area

**7,740**

Overall hours of Volunteer support

**4**

volunteer events hosted

**211**

Supported & trained over volunteers

**2**

new digital volunteers

**26,000**

people are reviewing accessibility where they live

**2**

new trustees

**2**

university research projects undertaken

**6**

volunteers now in paid employment

## North East Accessibility Rating (NEAR) Awards

Friends Action North East's Community Map is a pan disability online resource for people to find out about the accessibility of venues in the North East. Our NEAR Guide allows people to find out information about the region's venues and rate and review venues for their accessibility.

We are continuing to champion our NEAR guide and award to celebrate and promote venues in the North East that offer a socially inclusive experience. We champion and support people to rate and review their experiences when visiting business and community venues around the region. People with autism, disabilities and their supporters have told us that having a place to go where they feel welcome and safe is a really important part of building and maintaining independent friendships. Our 'Rate Us' badges enables business owners to remind customers that they are a venue who cares about access, positive social experiences and inclusivity and their customers can rate and review them on the FANE community map.

Across the North East we have over four thousand venues with detailed accessibility information listed on our website. We are now looking to award the most socially accessible venue as rated and reviewed by the public.

## ***We Want You to Review !!***

Please help FANE to reward great inclusive venues in your local area and tell us who does this really well. How to rate a venue on the Friends Action North East Community Map:

Go to the FANE website: [www.friendsaction.co.uk](http://www.friendsaction.co.uk) and register yourself as a member on the log in section. (You need to have an email address to do this) Then click on the page that says 'NEAR Guide': <http://www.friendsaction.co.uk/map-search>

Most people use our NEAR Guide to look up local venues and to find out more information about the places that are listed, including reading other people's ratings and reviews. When you rate a venue there are 3 key areas listed: **Accessibility, Service, Experience**

Please get in touch with Friends Action if you need any digital support or want to learn how to review on our webpage as we can provide a training workshop for you to do this!



How you can support our work:

## TO KEEP OUR CORE PROJECTS RUNNING UNTIL 2020 WE NEED TO RAISE OVER **£65,364** BY MARCH 2019.

Here are some of the ways you can support us to achieve our fundraising goals and help connect people together in the North East:



**DONATING  
VIA OUR WEBSITE:**

Go to: [www.friendsaction.co.uk](http://www.friendsaction.co.uk)

And to the 'Donate here'  
at the bottom of the  
homepage:

<https://friendsaction.charitycheckout.co.uk/cp/4f429/fundraiser>

**donr**

Donate to our social media crowd  
funding campaign

*Friendship, they say, is one of life's  
greatest gifts.*

<https://donr.com/friends-action>

**DONATE TODAY**

### Join our fundraising team

If you would like to help us raise money for our charity, are good at organising teams of people and have great ideas for inclusive fundraising events- then you may be a great person to help our fundraising team. Please get in touch with Keelie at:

**Keelie@friendsaction.co.uk** if you're interested and we would love to have a conversation with you!



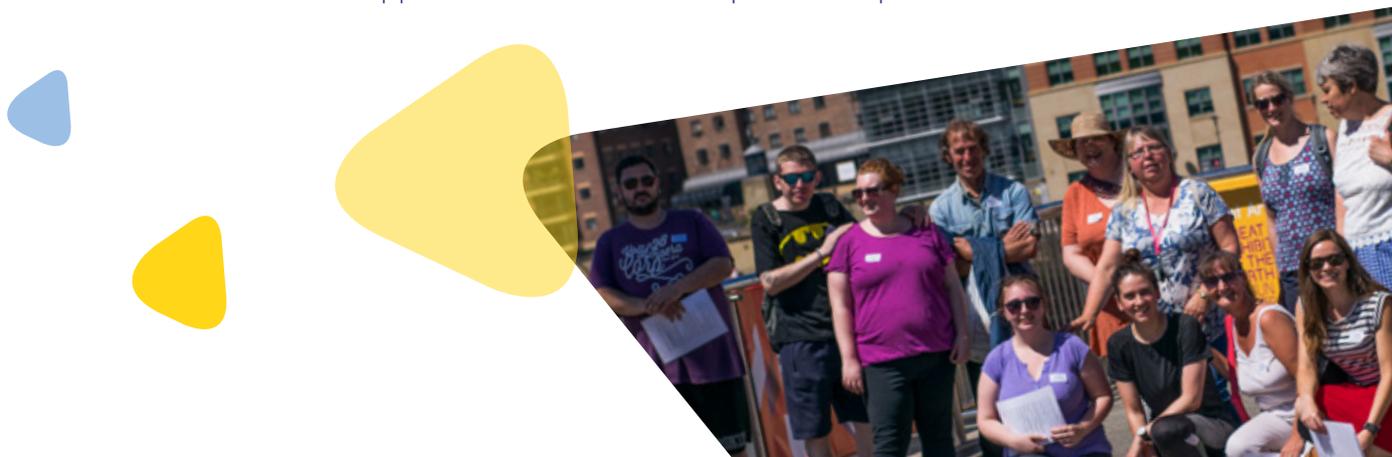
#### 4. Team message

## A BIG THANK YOU!

For all the support and dedication of everyone that has been involved in our projects this year. FANE has had another fantastic year of delivering our valuable project work by a dedicated staff team, our members and supporters. We are driven by our core values to continue to help people in the region have the right to ordinary lives, equal friendships and relationships.

At the heart of our project are the Friendship Finders that have been involved so far. They continue to prove to us that with the right support everyone can achieve their goals, become more involved in community life, create ordinary social networks, overcome barriers to friendship and take control of their lives in the way that they decide is right for them.

We look forward to continuing and developing the work of the charity over the next three years alongside adults with a learning disability and autism in the driving seat informing how they wish to be supported to make and keep friendships.



# FRIENDS ACTION NORTH EAST

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

### For the year ended 31 March 2018

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2018 £	Total 2017 £
<b><u>Income from:</u></b>					
Charitable activities					
Grants and contracts	6	36,890	124,978	<b>161,868</b>	121,531
Other trading activities	7	14,010	-	<b>14,010</b>	183
Investments	8	-	-	-	30
<b>Total income</b>		<u>50,900</u>	<u>124,978</u>	<u><b>175,878</b></u>	<u>121,744</u>
<b><u>Expenditure on:</u></b>					
Charitable activities					
Operation of the charity	9	26,337	125,853	<b>152,190</b>	143,480
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<u>26,337</u>	<u>125,853</u>	<u><b>152,190</b></u>	<u>143,480</u>
<b>Net movement of funds</b>		24,564	( 875 )	<b>23,688</b>	( 21,736 )
<b><u>Reconciliation of funds</u></b>					
Total funds brought forward		37,201	23,257	<b>60,458</b>	82,193
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<u>61,764</u>	<u>22,382</u>	<u><b>84,146</b></u>	<u>60,457</u>



# FRIENDS ACTION NORTH EAST

## BALANCE SHEET

### As at 31 March 2018

CHARITY NUMBER 1127153

	Notes	£	Total 2018 £	£	Total 2017 £
<b><u>Fixed assets</u></b>					
Tangible assets	16		1,082		2,346
<b>Total fixed assets</b>			<b>1,082</b>		<b>2,346</b>
<b><u>Current assets</u></b>					
Debtors	17	812		-	
Cash at bank and in hand	18	83,815		63,770	
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>84,627</b>		<b>63,770</b>	
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	19	<b>( 1,563 )</b>		<b>( 5,657 )</b>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<b>83,064</b>		<b>58,113</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<b>84,146</b>		<b>60,459</b>
<b>Total net assets or liabilities</b>			<b>84,146</b>		<b>60,459</b>
<b><u>Funds of the charity</u></b>					
Unrestricted income funds			61,764		37,201
Restricted income funds			22,382		23,257
<b>Total funds</b>			<b>84,146</b>		<b>60,458</b>



## What people say:

“

Friends Action North East has supported me since my autism diagnosis last year, at the age of 63. At the time, I was bewildered by the diagnosis and as I have no friends or family to talk to, I was feeling anxious, alone and isolated. I have depression and I'm disabled, which makes socialising almost impossible. After contacting Friends Action North East, I felt less anxious and depressed, because they gave me support to mix socially including transport to and from social events. I don't feel judged by them; they've encouraged me to participate in activities both within and without Ouseburn Farm. I've even had encouragement and support to coordinate an Autism Awareness Event in North Tyneside, to help raise awareness of autism. I would never have had the confidence to achieve this before. I sincerely appreciate everything they've done for me and hope they can continue to support people like myself in the future.

*Thanks for everything!*

- PAT

”



“

It was lovely to come and meet you all at the farm a few weeks ago, Jackie and I both enjoyed the interview too! We were so pleased to hear the sponsored walk went well. We were so proud of Jackie, she really enjoyed doing it. Sadly we were unable to get to town that weekend to show our support for the rest of your gang. But we celebrated Jackie's achievement! Thank you to all at Fane again, for all you do for Jackie. It really is a brilliant service you provide.

- Micki

”

“

I am the support worker for a person that requires 1:1 support. This person has physical And learning disabilities so requires a support worker to do all physical stuff for them. They really enjoy meeting new people and being part of a group. FANE is a fantastic service which allows people to have a social life with others who have difficulties of their own.

- Patricia

”



Katie and I managed to make the film group last night, and I just have to say what lovely bunch of people they are. Katie was a bit nervous at first, but she soon settled in and they made her feel very comfortable. She's looking forward to meeting them next Tuesday to see the movie they chose.

Through **FANE** J has gained new skills which have enhanced her life.

The work **FANE** does is excellent.



Good organisation and activities.

Alistair had a brilliant time at dance, and definitely wants to come back. His support worker said the teacher was great with him, and the whole event suited him really well. He'd love to come back, and probably attend some of your other things too.

Improved confidence and happiness with the help of **FANE**.

## 6. A word of Thanks...

Friends Action North East would like to thank the Big Lottery for its funding, help and continued support in recognising FANE's vision for supporting friendship for adults with a learning disability and autism in the North East region, through the Reaching Communities fund. We would like to thank the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for their support of the mentoring project from 2016 to 2018, and for their support from the Grants plus award to help us write our new business plan. We would like to thank the Joseph Strong Frazer Trust for all its support and donations, and also like to thank the Garfield Weston Foundation for our awarded grant for our next financial year as well as the R.W. Mann trust and RTC North.

We would also like to thank skills-bridge and the Home housing group for supporting and mentoring us to undertake product development and marketing planning for Friendkit - this service has been invaluable for our product and project sustainability plans. Without the support from our funders and community organisations and the wider community FANE would not be able to carry out our project work for the people we support on a day to day basis. Our impact on people's lives can be small, meaningful - but life changing and without access to these grants and funding our project would cease to exist!

FANE would also like to say a 'BIG thank you' to all the volunteers for all their time and hard work they have given to support all the Friendship Finders to achieve their goals on the Mentoring programme, our group friendship circles and digital project work. Without our amazing volunteers our project would not happen. The staff team would also like to thank the Board of Trustees for all their hard work and support throughout the project.

Finally.... A BIG Shout out and Thank you to the patience and professionalism of Mark & Mickey from 'Everything' design company <https://everything-studio.co.uk/#> your mentoring and advice have been so valuable to us in the branding and designing our training packs and resources for Friendkit - Cheers guys.

### Becoming a volunteer....

If you would like to become a volunteer for the FANE mentoring project, be a Trustee or are interested in volunteering for the project please contact us on

We are particularly interested in recruiting digital and fundraising volunteers as well as Trustees, so if you have any of the following skills please get in touch:

- Social media and digital skills/experience
- Local, community/charity or statutory sector knowledge
- Content Management System experience for Drupal websites
- Fundraising /crowd funding and digital media marketing campaigns
- Marketing and PR experience
- Film making and editing
- Google analytics
- Social outcome monitoring systems including impact analysis
- Accounting and book keeping

### Getting involved...

There are many ways you can get involved with Friends Action North East.

If you would like to donate or raise funds for FANE please contact us on

**0191 231 4327**

**[info@friendsaction.co.uk](mailto:info@friendsaction.co.uk)**



**[info@friendsaction.co.uk](mailto:info@friendsaction.co.uk)**

**[www.friendsaction.co.uk](http://www.friendsaction.co.uk)**

Friends Action North East - registered  
charity 1127153

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(off lime St)

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE1 2PA