



Taking Part

Report

2014-2015

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Annual Report 2014-2015

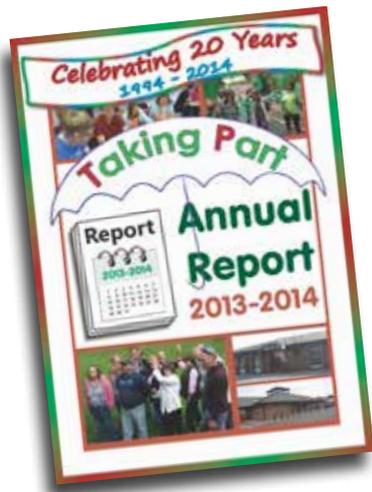




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A Message from the Trustees



In the Annual Report last year (2013/2014) we said that Taking Part will do everything we can to keep our much needed services going through all the changes and challenges.

We are very pleased to tell you that in October 2014 Taking Part in Shropshire secured some money for the charity to keep going for a few more years. This will be working with other organisations like ours to provide information, advice, and advocacy. This is very good news for Taking Part and people who use our service. It will be good to work with other agencies and learn from each other.



The role of Taking Part is to reach out to where we are needed and to meet that need. Working in partnership will mean that we can hopefully do this better for a lot more people.



As well as trying to secure funding for the future, Taking Part has continued to advocate for a lot of people and helping people become good self-advocates; speaking up for themselves or peer advocates; supporting each other to speak up.



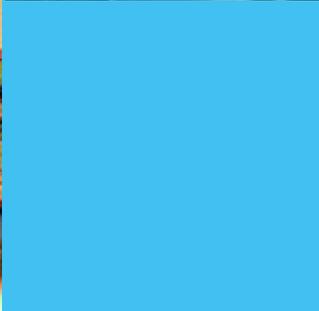
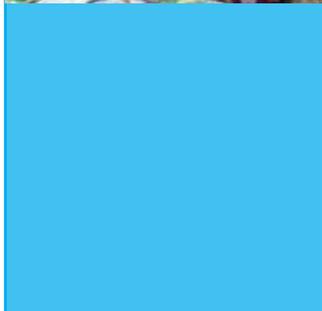
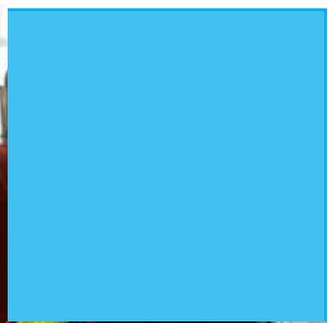
We have done a lot of group work too and been involved in lots of projects.



A charity is only as good as it's staff; `Taking Part` continues to be really good at delivering support and guidance and is always keen to try new things; change is seen as a good thing. We are lucky to have a really good staff team who continue to work very hard and stay very hopeful for our future.



So, having survived this year, Taking Part will be looking forward to trying to get further funding for Taking Part Telford and Wrekin, as well as for the organisation as a whole. We expect it to be more hard work and more change.



What We Have Done This Year

Telford & Wrekin Work



Issues Based Advocacy

From April 2014 to March 2015 we supported 89 clients with various issues on a 1:1 basis. This took over 1000 hours of advocate work time during the year and was provided by 3 advocates.

Taking Part Committee Meetings

During 2014 – 2015 we had 6 Committee meetings, each lasting 2 hours. At each meeting we had about 25 clients attending along with 5 support staff from various places. We had a range of visitors to these meetings including Cllr Bill McClements.



Citizen Advocacy

We continue to have 2 volunteer advocates working with us and their clients – they provide a valuable service to Taking Part and their partners.



My Options

In February 2015 we help to run 5 sessions for clients, carers and staff to help people to better understand the changes and future of services under My Options. We worked with 37 clients, 22 carers and 11 staff during these sessions.



my options

activity, wellbeing and care



Information, Advice and Guidance Forum

In September Taking Part worked with other agencies from the Voluntary Sector to run an information event at The Place.



Members of Taking Part put on a performance called 'The Royale Family' to help professionals understand some of the issues that families can be faced with as part of their every day life.



This was really well received and was a good example to help the audience think about they can help families in different ways.



Residential Homes

There have been changes for some residential homes and some providers now have to provide day activities for their residents.



Taking Part did some work with Accord to help their residents understand these changes and be involved in the decisions about what they do each day.



Shropshire Work



We continue to visit all the Day Opportunities throughout Shropshire to talk to clients about what is happening in their lives. This has helped them be involved in changes to their services and share their views and concerns



In October 2014, a partnership of seven Shropshire based organisations won the Shropshire Council contract for 'Information, Advice and Advocacy Services for Adults'; Taking Part is part of this partnership. The contract is for 5 years so this is very good news.



Taking Part now works very closely with the 6 other partners but we still remain an independent organisation with our own name. We still work with our client group but we are finding out more about other services too.

These are the organisations we are working with:





As part of our CAAN contract we do quarterly reports to tell the council how many people we have been involved during the year.

From October to December we supported 526 clients which took 593 hours of advocate time.



From January to March we supported 628 clients which took 782 hours of advocate time.

So, for the first 6 months of our CAAN contract the total number of clients support by Taking Part 1,154 clients using 1,375 hours of advocate working time.

1,375 hours



From these facts and figures, the council can see how we using our funding wisely and providing a good service.



Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Work



Learning Disability Partnership Boards
We continue to be part of the Partnership Boards in both Telford and Shropshire and we support the Co-Chairs for these meetings in both areas.



Health Work

We helped clients tell their stories about their experiences with health services as part of the Annual Health Self-Assessment. This information was fed into the big reports which were sent off by each locality.



In January, 2 members of Taking Part attended a meeting in Birmingham along with 12 other regions of the West Midlands. We said that this is always a very big piece of work to do and that it takes a lot of time to complete. We said that they need to give us more time to look at what we find out from doing these assessments.

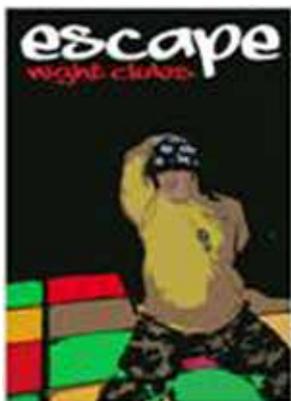


Each region in the West Midlands have seen lots of changes and it is only the advocacy groups that stay the same. It was said that advocacy work is like the 'glue' in many areas because we are so knowledgeable and we make sure things stick together.



Training

Self-advocates have been very involved in training around Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty – this has been done with Shropshire Joint Training team. This work has been recognised by lots of organisations in and outside of Shropshire and is a good example of training and joint working.



Escape Nights

Our social nights go from strength to strength and we continue to see lots of new and old faces coming to our social nights and having fun. People from all over Shropshire join us from a range of settings.



Staff Roles

The staff teams of Taking Part are becoming more and more involved in all sorts of meetings as well as supporting clients each day.



This is very good for our staff as it helps them understand what is happening locally and they can support Taking Part moving forward with change.

It also means that more of us are working with different organisations and team which only helps increase our knowledge and experiences.

Social Media



Website

During 2014-2015 we had 11,611 visits to our Website.

You can find us at www.takingpart.co.uk

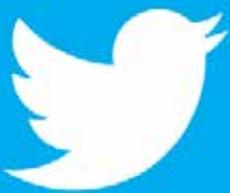


Facebook

We have 254 'likes' on our Facebook page.

If you are on Facebook, visit our page and give us a 'like'

www.facebook.com/takingpart



Twitter

On Twitter, we have 371 followers.

Find us at www.twitter.com/takingpart



Project Work

Working with the Police



We have been doing more work with the Police since West Mercia and Warwickshire police have been working together to form the Alliance. New structures have been put in place.



We attended eight Disability Independent Advisory Groups. Michael Ratcliffe is the Expert by Experience for this work.

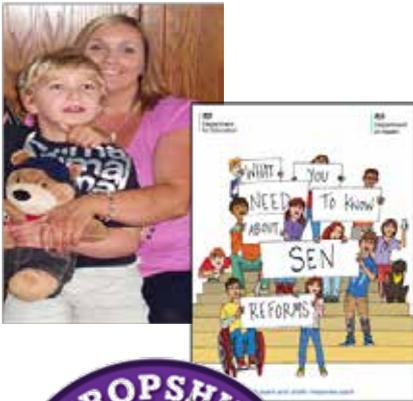


We helped to train twenty new police officers from across the Alliance area. We wanted them to know what it was like to have a learning disability. The work we did helped them to be more understanding in how to interview people who need more time to absorb information and make reasonable adjustments



The Safe Places Scheme is a very successful project with new places launched in another seven towns within Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

Children and Young People



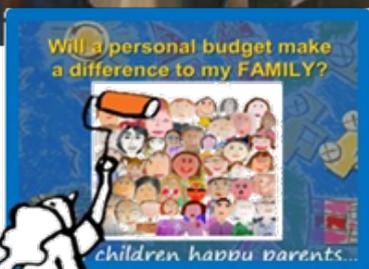
Taking Part's experience of working with children, young people and their families was recognised by The Council for Disabled Children (CDC). A project was funded to support these families by:

- Giving information, advice and guidance about Personal Budgets and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) reforms
- Working closely with the LA to develop its Local Offer
- Working directly with families to help them through the SEN and disability reforms locally



Taking Part attended a range of events sharing easy read information about SEN reforms. This was to help shape and change attitudes and thinking about the future for children, and young people.

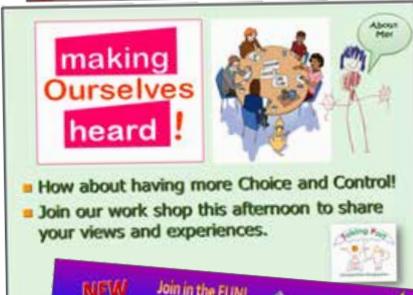
During the project Taking Part worked with a number of families to help them understand more about Personal Budgets, Direct Payments and the difference.



We were able to support some families to challenge Social Services decisions and challenge mainstream services to make reasonable adjustments.



Through a programme of creative work we were able encourage participation with services and explore other opportunities.



This work has helped us find gaps in service provision (such as for 14 to 17 year olds). It gave us more creditability with other funders because we had the backing from a national organisation. This enabled the successful Gee Whizz project and the evaluation work as an independent provider for the Enhance project.



Taking Part held a final event for families with a fun element to find out how they feel about the future for their children and how children feel about their own futures. We gathered families' views which were fed-back into the CDC so that they could compare the results from Shropshire families with other families' country wide.



Are You Prepared for Work?



Last Year Taking Part, through the Herefordshire Community Foundation, successfully bid for a grant from the European Social Fund. This supported us to provide learning support to people who want to work or get more training. The course was called 'Preparing for Work' and fifteen people participated from all over Shropshire and Telford. The Park Lane Centre in Telford and Louise House in Shrewsbury were the venues.



The course ran in February and March 2015 over eight days. It gave people the opportunity to talk about their work and training experiences. Over twenty four lessons people were able to take part in sessions which brought them up-to-date with information on job searching, interview skills, how to be positive, making a job plan and lots of other activities exploring the world of work.



Everyone enjoyed the course and felt that they would look more closely at getting a job, voluntary or paid. Many felt that good training and support would be very helpful.





The most popular subject was looking at the barriers which might prevent people from looking for a job or more training. Everyone had their story to tell of what kinds of things got in the way of getting a job.



Interviewing techniques were also popular. Through examples and role play people felt they could be themselves and not only be asked questions but be able to ask their own.

By being able to think about the future people were able to have deep discussions about what their aspirations are and how a job or more training would help them in their lives.



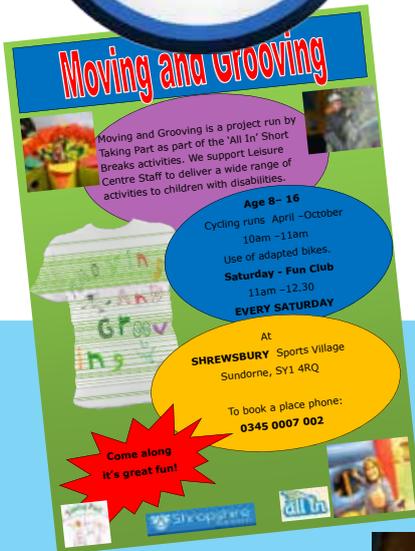
Shropshire Short Breaks



Art Start and Art Cart

During 2014-2015 Taking Part ran 39 sessions of Art Start and Art Cart throughout the county of Shropshire.

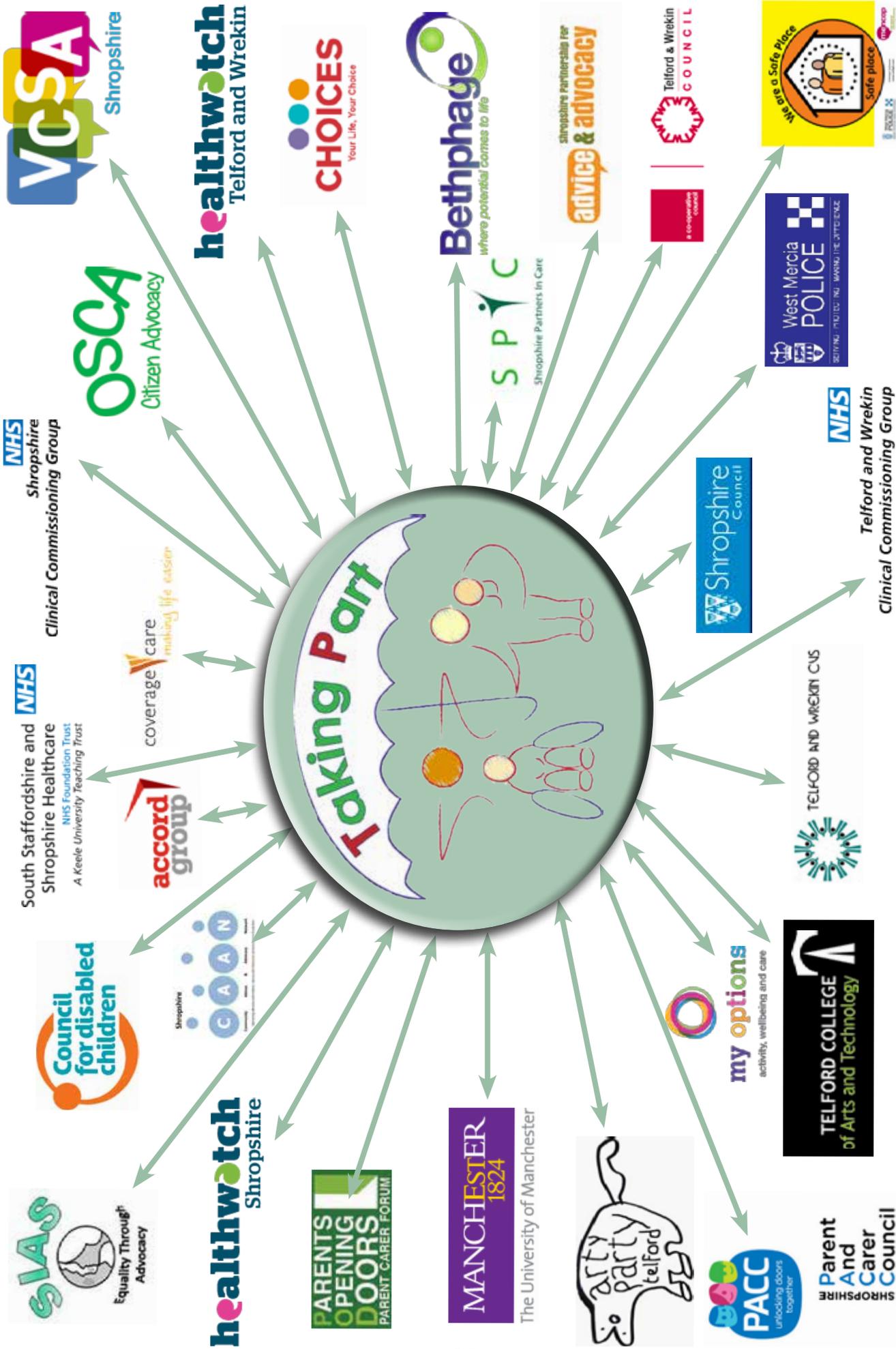
The total number of children and young people who attended these sessions is 120. These sessions gave families a total 117 hours respite.



Moving and Grooving

Moving and Grooving runs throughout the year. During 2014-2015 the project provided 615.5 hours of different activities for 25 families.



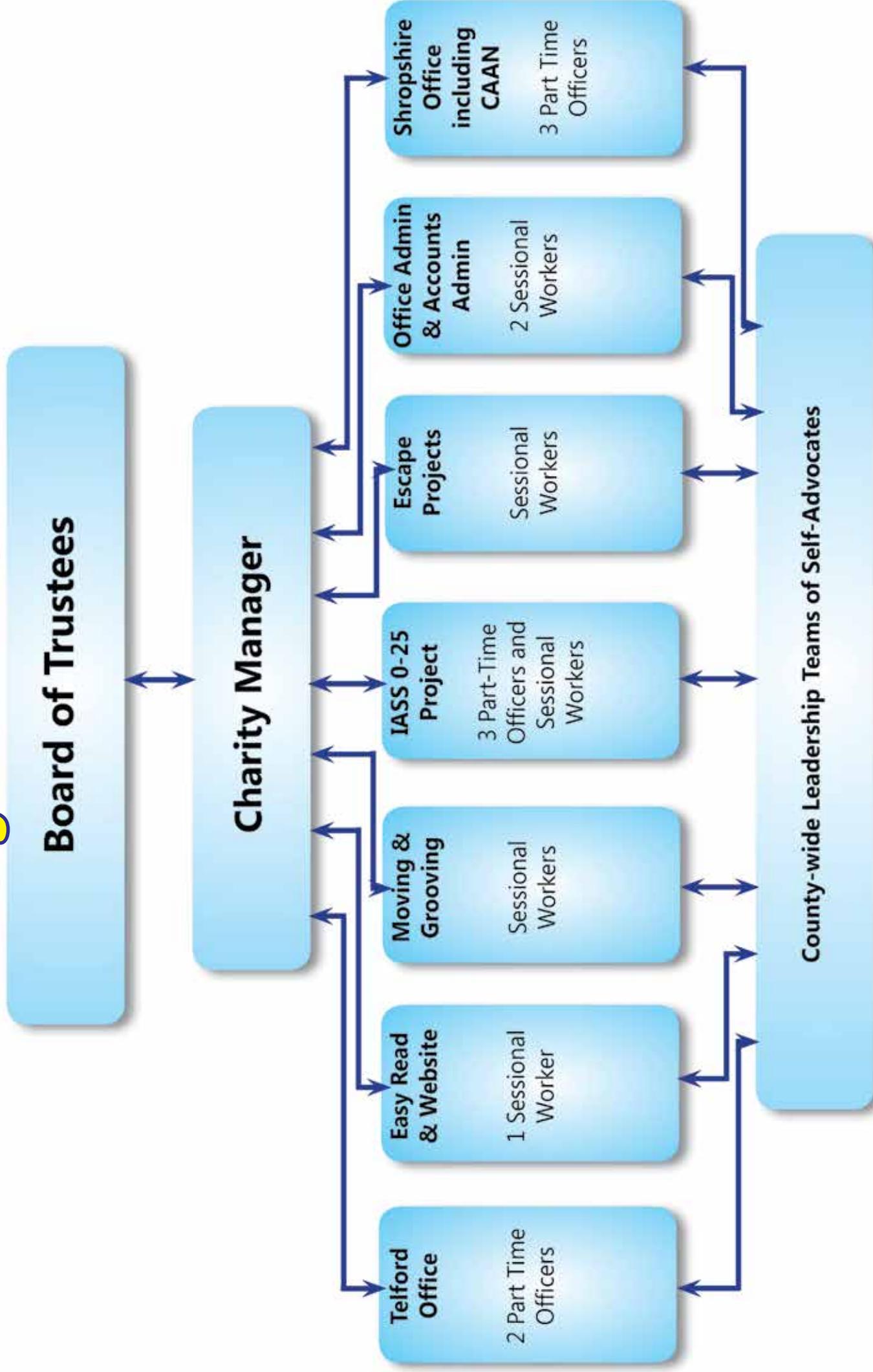


Accounts

Taking Part
Statement of Financial Activities
for the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014

	Unrestricted Money £	Restricted Money £	2014 £	2013 £
Money from charitable activities	226,436	-	226,436	260,717
Grants and Contracts				
Money Spent				
Charitable Activities	202,894	-	202,894	237,078
Total Money Spent	237,078	-	237,078	237,078
Money Left Over	23,542	-	23,542	23,639

Organisation Chart



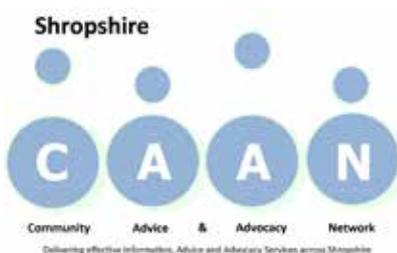
A Message from the Charity Manager



At the beginning of this financial year 2014/2015, Taking Part was very uncertain about our future funding. We were not sure how long we would be around for. It was a worrying time for us all. Now that we know we have funding until March 2017 it is a big relief.



It has been through the hard work of all our staff, volunteers and Trustees that we have been able to do so much work on different projects as well as our regular work. Some of this work has been very exciting; new in some cases and challenging some of the time.



We are very happy to be working with other agencies and organisations as part of the CAAN contract and project work. We know by working together more closely, we will achieve much more for the people in Shropshire and Telford.



I am very pleased and proud of what we have achieved this year and I will continue to do my very best to take Taking Part forward into the future.



Jeremy
Kyle show





Changing Times; Changing Lives

Taking Part:

Independent services for people with learning difficulties

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Company Registration Number Number: 04362949

Established 1994



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